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Northwest Review.

TUESDAY, MARCH 7 1899

CURRENT COMMENT

Leo XIII. puts the counter claims of truth and kindness in a nutshell when he says: "There is nothing closer to our heart than to have those who are separated from the fold of Christ return to it, but in no other way than the way pointed out by Christ."

Another very striking remark of the Sovereign Pontiff's in this his latest pronouncement is the interrogative argument he uses against the supposed excellence of merely natural virtues: "Can it be that nature conjoined with grace is weaker than when left to herself?"

The Holy Father's letter to Cardinal Gibbons sets at rest for ever a question which had of late seriously exercised many thoughtful Catholics in and out of the United States. The Sovereign Pontiff, though gentle in the form of his reproof, is very definite in his solution of the difficulty. There is to be no more trimming away of unpalatable doctrines on the plea of converting non-Catholics, no more nonsense about "the passive virtues" or the guidance of the Holy Ghost, no more contempt of religious vows, no more setting up "Americanism" as a superior brand of Catholicism.

It is much to be regretted that the *American Messenger of the Sacred Heart* does not make more of the General Monthly Intention, which is the very soul of the Apostleship of Prayer. This month even the title of the Intention is not accurately given. In the *American Messenger* it figures as "For Souls in Affliction." On the other hand, in the *Canadian Messenger* for March we read, "Christian Forbearance in suffering," which conveys a far more definite idea to the mind. The development of the subject, too, is much more satisfactory in Father Jones's hands than in those of the anonymous American writer, though, of course, this is only a matter of relative perfection, either article being excellent. The *Canadian Messenger* contains an

admirable paper on "Catholics in the Public Schools." Dr. Thos. O'Hagan writes, for the *American Messenger*, a charming description of the Old Mission Church in Tadoussac.

Chief McCrae deserves great credit for keeping himself so well posted up on criminal cases as to be able instantly to detect that Russian whom he arrested the other day in the Manor Hotel for a crime committed in Russia two years ago. There was another crime committed right here in Winnipeg last summer on which we trust he is still keeping his Argus eyes focussed. The Molson bank robbers under his very nose have been more fortunate than the handsome Russian.

In the death of Rev. Dr. King Manitoba College loses a highly respected and singularly able Principal, to whom it will be no slight task to find a worthy successor. As Professor of Philosophy he wielded great influence with his pupils and, owing to his conservative training in Scottish schools of thought, that influence was healthier than it generally is in contemporary Protestant colleges. His loss will also be keenly felt in the Council of the University, where his experience of Old World culture often acted as a useful make-weight against a crude and noisy element which mistakes aimless unrest and cramming for education and the worship of Toronto for largeness of mind.

Rev. Father Fallon, O. M. I., must be gratified with the success of his mission in St. Mary's Church. The attendance kept up wonderfully well and was largest at the closing exercise. The fruits of the retreat are already visible in the return of many a negligent Catholic. Nor will the parishioners readily forget those instructive and eloquent sermons, equally full of light and warmth, with which Father Fallon held their undivided attention for eight memorable days. While thanking the learned and fascinating Oblate for his devotion to their best interests, the Catholics of Winnipeg trust that his career, already so brilliant though he has barely turned thirty, may be one of long and ever increasing usefulness for the glory of God.

When, some time ago, we indirectly approved a man calling himself Rev. Father Giraud, an Armenian priest, we based our favorable mention on the testimonials he presented and on the Melchite Greek missal he carried, with which we had long been familiar. Nor was his behavior here other than edifying. But the day after our last issue His Grace of St. Boniface showed us a letter in which the Archbishop of Philadelphia wrote that, having noticed Father Giraud's name in the *NORTHWEST REVIEW*, he hastened to inform Mgr. Langevin of this man's misconduct in Philadelphia, confirming this information by circumstantial details and a life-like portrait of the individual forwarded by Archbishop Ryan's secretary, from whom the nature of these details may be learned. We therefore distinctly withdraw any approval we may have given to the man calling himself Rev. Philip Giraud.

HOW THEY READ THE POPE'S LETTER.

The first of our Canadian Catholic exchanges to comment on the Holy Father's latest encyclical is *The Canadian Freeman*. Its article is so flippant as to suggest the authorship of some ill-informed, but pretentious, layman. He says the storm about "Americanism" is but a "tempest in a tea-cup," an "artificial rumpus now disposed of finally."

We had got thus far when we thought of consulting the *Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times*, the first Catholic paper on this continent to publish the full text of the Papal pronouncement, in order to see what the editor had to say on so opportune an utterance. Our astonishment may be imagined when we discovered that the editorial which we had just read in the *Canadian Freeman* was filched bodily from the *Catholic Standard and Times*. The former had merely changed the latter's heading, substituting for "A Welcome Word from Rome," "His Holiness Speaks." The opening sentence of the Philadelphia paper's editorial was printed in inverted commas with the added words, "says the Philadelphia *Catholic Standard and Times*." Then follows the rest of the latter's article without a word or a sign that the fifty lines that follow are copied, slavishly copied even to the misprint "intremural" for "intramural," from it. Had a respectable editor in France or England committed such a barefaced literary theft, his career would forthwith end in disgrace.

The fact of the theft, however, does not change our view of the *corpus delicti*. It was certainly not worth stealing. It adopts a well known ruse, dating from the days of Jansenism, which consists in aiming a Papal encyclical at those whose denunciations of error provoked the condemnation of that error. According to the *Catholic Standard and Times* the Holy Father's letter is a warning, not to the Heckerites, but to Abbé Maignen, not to Liberal Catholics, but to over-zealous Ultramontanes, whom the Philadelphia editor describes as having "a mistaken zeal for the interests of the Church," as a "whole pack of quibblers and hair-splitters and fault-finders from within." Verily, this is a nice compliment to Leo XIII. The good old man, deafened by "the clamor of supersensitive alarmists and busybodies," has magnified "into a spurious importance" "an episode in American affairs intrinsically puerile and trumpery."

The C. S. and T. goes on to say that Father Elliott's biography of Father Hecker had "been seven or eight years before the public in its English dress without a word of demur . . . but when a garbled translation appears in French . . . the cry is raised 'The Church in danger.'" Now, the fact is that, as soon as the Life of Father Hecker appeared ten years ago in the *Catholic World*, the errors which the Pope condemns in his recent letter were so manifest, in the original, not in a translation, that many learned priests in Canada and the United States then discussed whether these opinions could be called heretical or only theologically untenable;

but, as the admirers of Father Hecker were acknowledged to be very weak in theology and utterly deficient in erudition, every allowance was made for these well-meaning men and few public protests were uttered. This shows that the French translation, even if it were garbled, which is not in any sense true, did not originate the errors. These errors, now pointed out by the Holy Father, can all be read in the *Catholic World* issues containing "The Life of Father Hecker."

The reception given to the Pope's letter is an excellent test of the soundness of a Catholic paper. The *Hartford Catholic Transcript* does not stand this test. Its first page for Feb 25th is flanked on the right by the scarehead, "The Holy Father's Views on Americanism," as if one were speaking of the "views" of a Depew, a Lyman Abbot or a Tolstoi, and on the left by another scarehead, "Mgr. Ireland is the most interesting personage in Rome," not excepting the Pope himself. The *Transcript* will, we trust, soon tell its readers that Archbishop Ireland published, on Feb. 27th, in the *Osservatore Romano*, a full and cordial adhesion to the Pontiff's letter to Cardinal Gibbons. "With all the energy of my soul," says the noble Pauline prelate, "I repudiate all the opinions the apostolic letter repudiates and condemns."

Considering that the *Western Watchman* plumes itself on having been "the first to raise its voice against the teachings condemned in the letter of Leo XIII.," we can afford to draw a veil over its amusingly inaccurate sketch of the history of "Americanism." The editor affirms that Archbishop Ireland recently said to him: "Father Hecker was crazy." This fact, though of common report in New York twenty years ago, is only now beginning to be admitted by the quondam admirers of the founder of the Paulists. They are giving up Father Hecker and they will presently give up his views now that Rome has condemned them.

THE POPE'S LATEST LETTER.

(Continued from First Page.)

be there told to thee what thou must do."

THOSE LIABLE TO STRAY.

Nor can we leave out of consideration the truth that those who are striving after perfection, since by that fact they walk in no beaten or well-known path, are the most liable to stray, and hence have greater need than others of a teacher and guide. Such guidance has ever obtained in the Church; it has been the universal teaching of those who throughout the ages have been eminent for wisdom and sanctity—and hence to reject it would be to commit one's self to a belief at once rash and dangerous.

A thorough consideration of this point, in the supposition that no exterior guide is granted such souls, will make us see the difficulty of locating or determining the direction and application of that more abundant influx of the holy spirit so greatly extolled by innovators. To practice virtue there is absolute need of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, yet we find those who are fond of novelty giving an unwarranted importance to the natural virtues, as though they

better responded to the customs and necessities of the times, and that having these as his outfit man becomes both more ready to act and more strenuous in action. It is not easy to understand how persons possessed of Christian wisdom can either prefer natural to supernatural virtues or attribute to them a greater efficacy and fruitfulness. Can it be that nature conjoined with grace is weaker than when left to herself?

VIRTUE, NATURE AND GRACE.

Can it be that those men illustrious for sanctity, whom the Church distinguishes and openly pays homage to, were deficient, came short in the order of nature and its endowments, because they excelled in Christian strength? And although it be allowed at times to wonder at acts worthy of admiration which are the outcome of natural virtue—is there any one at all endowed simply with an outfit of natural virtue? Is there any one not tried by mental anxiety, and this in no light degree? Yet ever to master such, as also to preserve in its entirety the law of the natural order, requires an assistance from on high. These single notable acts to which we have alluded will frequently upon a closer investigation be found to exhibit the appearance rather than the reality of virtue. Grant that it is virtue, unless we would "run in vain" and be unmindful of that eternal bliss which a good God in His mercy has destined for us, of what avail are natural virtues unless seconded by the gift of divine grace? Hence St. Augustine well says: "Wonderful is the strength and swift the course, but outside the true path." For as the nature of man, owing to the primal fault, is inclined to evil and dishonor, yet by the help of grace is raised up, is borne along with a new greatness and strength, so, too, virtue, which is not the product of nature alone, but of grace also, is made fruitful unto everlasting life and takes on a more strong and abiding character.

"NO MERELY PASSIVE VIRTUE."

This overesteem of natural virtue finds a method of expression in assuming to divide all virtues into *active* and *passive*, and it is alleged that whereas passive virtues found better place in past times our age is to be characterized by the active. That such a division and distinction cannot be maintained is patent—for there is not, nor can there be, merely passive virtue. "Virtue," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "designates the perfection of some faculty, but the end of such faculty is an act, and an act of virtue is naught else than the good use of free will," acting, that is to say, under the grace of God if the act be one of supernatural virtue.

He alone could wish that some Christian virtues be adapted to certain times and different ones for other times who is unmindful of the apostle's words: "That those whom he foreknew He predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son"—Romans, viii., 29. Christ is the teacher and the example of all sanctity, and to His standard must all those conform who wish for eternal life. Nor does Christ know any change as the ages pass, "for He is yesterday and to-day and the same forever." Hebrews, xiii., 8. To the men of all ages was the precept given: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart."—Matt. xi., 29.

To every age has He been made manifest to us as obedient even unto death; in every age the Apostle's dictum has its force: "Those who are Christ's have crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences." Would to God that more nowadays practiced these virtues in the degree of the saints of past times, who in humility, obedience and self-restraint were powerful "in word and in