

The Northwest Review

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The editor will always gladly receive (1) ARTICLES on Catholic matters, matters of general or local importance, even political if not of a PARTY character. (2) LETTERS on similar subjects, whether conveying or asking information or controversial. (3) NEWS NOTES, especially such as are of a Catholic character, from every district in North Western Ontario, Manitoba, the Territories and British Columbia. (4) NOTES of the proceedings of every Catholic Society throughout the city or country. Such notes will prove of much benefit to the society themselves by making their work known to the public.

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Mr. Molyneux St. John has once more left this country for this country's good. A more superficial, time-serving, heartless conventional weathercock it would be difficult to find throughout the length and breadth of the British Empire: a man without convictions, a clever little mind without a shred of conscience. The Free Press, which he was fast hurrying into a decline, has revived a little since his departure; but consumption in its later stages is incurable. At any rate the atmosphere of this great country is distinctly fresher now that the snickering, slippery fine fellow is gone.

The Standard, a Baptist newspaper of Chicago, has this sly note in its last number: "If you do subscribe for the paper, you may find it a little 'damp' when you take it out of the post-office. If so, it may be that there is some 'due' on it." Alas! the papers of some of our subscribers must be wringing wet, those, for instance, who have the figure 9 after their names on the mailing slip. That figure represents the unit column of the year up to which they have paid. How about the delinquent subscriber that owes us his subscription since 1889?

The quotation from Cardinal Newman with which Mr. Ewart begins his answer to Mr. Pringle (reprinted in another column from the Mail and Empire), besides being admirably suited to the Gravel-Bryce declarations, is, like so many of Newman's passages, a startling presentment of a great truth that was never so wonderfully well put before Protestants as well as Catholics are realizing ever more and more vividly that Newman is the most eloquent and suggestive controversialist the world has ever seen. There is an honesty, a thoroughness and withal a picturesqueness of startling reality in his controversies the like of which we fail to find elsewhere. Then, his style is so perfect as to have won for him the fame of being the best writer of English prose in this or any other age. And, as to his transcendent ability, everyone knows that, before his conversion at the mature age of forty-four, he was the "King of all that is talked sincere without the fold," that is to say, the greatest religious force outside the Catholic church; and yet by far his best controversial and literary work was written in the subsequent forty years of his Catholic life.

This is the season when well-to-do Catholic parents are anxiously debating the question: Where shall I send my boy? Now, granting that a college training is the best system of mental culture and that Catholic training in the classics, mathematics and philosophy is the best of all, Catholics in the Northwest would be wise in not overlooking the advantages of St. Boniface College at their very doors. Its fame may not be as widespread as that of more largely patronized and better advertised institutions; but we very much doubt if any Catholic college in America has a more able staff of professors, teaches more Latin and Greek, gives better training in elocution, mathematics, the natural sciences and philosophy, and maintains a more admirable moral tone than St. Boniface college. And if habits of assiduous labor are valued as they ought to be, there certainly is no college in Canada where the students work so hard. This is due to the keen competition with the three Protestant colleges, with the Collegiate Institute and with non-collegiate candidates for University honors. Parents would, therefore, do well to think twice before sending their boys far away at greater expense for an education that may not be worth what is within easy reach.

DR. BRYCE'S INCONSISTENCIES.

Dr. Bryce is, to say the least, one of the most peculiar fellows it has been our fortune to meet. It would be difficult to find words in our language, to fittingly express our meaning. A man always setting his sails to catch the popular breeze and to gain a little cheap notoriety, yet distrusted and disliked by all who know him intimately and who have the best opportunities to judge of his merits. A man, whose opinions are rendered worthless by the fact that he is ever ready to change them to advance his own material interests, or to give him a topmost place on the popular wave of passion or prejudice. A man, who, when peace and harmony were in the ascendant and it was dangerous to play the role of a demagogue, placed himself in the very front rank of those who lavished praises on the then condition of educational affairs. Of course, the Doctor Bryce of those times was the same breezy, meddling busy body that he is to-day; and, although his opinions then, as now, were aimed at catching the popular sentiment and, therefore, lacked originality or importance, yet the public of that day had them imposed upon them in books, in speeches, in letters, and even in histories, so worthless that they have since disappeared from public notice, except when, on occasions, they are unearthed to confound their author and show how dangerous it is to write a book, even though its worthlessness is sure to bury it deep from public view. As an instance of what we mean, we will quote two short extracts from the Rev. Dr. of 1887. The public, who have watched the trend of sentiment in Manitoba for the past five years, and who have read the many unasked for and breezy pronouncements of the many-sided doctor about "National schools" and "homogeneous people" and many other borrowed expressions of the "cheap John" style, will find in these two quotations as compared with his conduct of the last five years, what value is to be placed on the unoriginal and borrowed platitudes of Dr. Bryce. In 1887 Dr. Bryce wrote: "The 'separate school supporters are viewed 'in the light of being exempt from the 'general law which establishes a national system of education. In Manitoba, the Roman Catholic schools are 'as much national as the Protestant. 'No special rights are given to either 'Catholics or Protestants.' In the same year he again wrote: "The government grant 'is voted for one system of schools, 'and is divided according to the population of children. No special rights are 'given either to Catholics or Protestants. 'All moneys are equitably distributed."

But darker days came to Manitoba and with them came a different sentiment towards Catholics and their schools. The Rev. Doctor saw in these changed

sentiments his opportunity of becoming "prominent" in educational affairs, a position not allowed him by the prudent men who previously ruled the educational affairs of Manitoba. What did he do? Why, of course, he trimmed his sail to catch the gusts of bigotry and passion, threw all his previous opinions overboard and became the biggest demagogue of the whole army of demagogues in Manitoba. The schools that were national in 1887, became French and denationalized in 1890! In 1887, "no special rights were granted to Catholics;" in 1890 the Catholics were receiving special favors for which Protestants had to pay! In 1887 "all moneys were equitably distributed;" in 1890, the Catholics were receiving more than their just share of the public moneys! In 1887, "the government grant was voted for one system of schools and was divided according to the population of children" in 1890 the government grant was misappropriated and improperly applied, giving the greater amount to the Catholics! This is the record, these the inconsistencies, of the breezy individual who poses as the champion of the present system of education in Manitoba. What confidence can the public place in the utterance of such a man? And when they study the motives that underlie all these changes; when they realize that all these inconsistencies have the consistent object of advancing Dr. Bryce's material and ambitious projects, without regard to truth or justice; then, indeed, that distrust, which his closest intimates have ever felt towards him, will be accentuated, and the real character of the man will be understood and, we trust, fittingly appreciated, by the public on whose credulity and gullibility he has been imposing his views, or rather the borrowed views of others. Whatever may be the outcome of this unfortunate agitation, one thing is certain, and that is that the part the Rev. Dr. Bryce has played in this drama of treachery, violated promises, broken faith, and deepest duplicity, will reflect no honor on himself, nor on the church which is unfortunate enough to number him among its shining lights.

DR. BRYCE'S DENIAL.

The Rev. Dr. Bryce has been writing to the papers, trying to extricate himself from the tangle in which his imprudence and weakness for boasting placed the Synod of the Presbyterian church of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. In 1892, the Rev. Dr. Robertson read before the synod the usual stock-in-trade resolutions in favor of "national schools," and in supporting that motion Dr. Bryce said: "He knew that the action of the Presbyterian Synod, as representing the strongest religious body in the Northwest, in declaring for national schools two years ago, AND WHICH WAS SENT TO THE PRIVY COUNCIL, had an important effect in the matter of the decision which was given." Here is a statement made by a learned Professor of English literature, containing three distinct assertions, (1) that the synod passed resolutions; (2) that these resolutions were sent to the Privy Council; and (3) that they had an important effect in the matter of the decision which was given. If there is any meaning to be placed upon the language of the learned doctor, that, we submit, is the only rational construction to be put upon it. That is the construction which we placed upon it at the time, and that, too, was the understanding of it by the other journals who commented upon it. But now the learned doctor, feeling that there is a chance to raise a storm over the letter of Mgr. Gravel, and fearing that his unfortunate and immoral language would lessen that chance, hastens, after the lapse of three years, to explain his meaning. And what is the explanation? It is "Jesuitical" in the worst meaning which non-Catholic fiction has placed upon that expression. The learned Professor of English literature explains that his language did not mean what it said.

Here is the explanation:

"The circumstances were these. In the case of Barrett vs. Winnipeg the solicitors of the provincial government came to me and asked me to make the chief affidavit in rebuttal of Archbishop Tache's affidavit in the case. This I did, and included, as showing the view of the Presbyterian church, one of the largest bodies of the province, its resolution passed in the synod of 1890, as well as the opinions on the subject of Presbyterians generally. This affidavit became a part of the pleadings and was, of course, forwarded to the privy council. In the synod of 1892 I was supporting a resolution similar to that of 1890, and in doing so said that such a course would be advisable as the views expressed in the former resolution had been forwarded to the privy council (of course only in the regular legal proceedings), and, had, I had reason to believe, been of service in the case."

Why did not Dr. Bryce, instead of using the language he did at the time, simply use the language of this explanation. Why, indeed? The affidavit of which the Rev. Doctor speaks with such evident complacency was the only one sent to the Privy Council that was ridiculed by one of the learned judges and laughed at by both the Bench and Bar. When this wonderfully clever affidavit of Dr. Bryce, which the Provincial government had begged him to prepare in rebuttal of Archbishop Tache's affidavit, came up for consideration, Lord Morris, one of the learned judges remarked: "This is the affidavit of a gentleman who gives it as HIS INDIVIDUAL OPINION, that the Roman Catholic church should be something entirely different from what she is." And this scathing rebuke of His Lordship created a general laugh at "the chief affidavit in rebuttal of Archbishop Tache's." Oh Dr. Dr. Dr. If you could only persuade yourself to be more modest and less egotistical to be more truthful and less ignorant, how much more importance might be attached to your denial! Your affidavit was not prepared for transmission to the Privy Council, as your explanation falsely asserts, but to go before Judge Killam. If it afterwards passed through all the courts up to the Privy Council, is it reasonable to suppose that it had not so much weight and was not so deserving of consideration in the other courts as in the Privy Council? In fact, the only court where that "chief affidavit" was ridiculed was the Privy Council. So the Rev. Dr. would be justified in supposing that this "chief affidavit" had much more influence upon the judges of the Manitoba Courts than it had in England, where it was ridiculed in open court. The fact remains that it had no effect in England, and that, therefore, the Rev. Doctor's explanation is, to say the least, very far fetched, in fact an after-thought rather cleverly devised to extricate the rev. and breezy doctor from the dilemma in which his weakness for boasting unfortunately placed the Presbyterian Synod, and for the further laudable purpose of increasing the agitation against the Gravel letter.

Knowing the unreliability of the public utterances of the Rev. Doctor when his passions, prejudices or self-interests are to be gratified, or his precious person to be shielded from censure; and taking his language as reported in the public press and not denied by him although several times repeated during the past three years; and taking also into consideration that his affidavit was the only one ridiculed and contemptuously remarked upon by their Lordships; remembering also that for three years and until Mgr. Gravel's letter became public the Rev. Doctor remained as dumb as an oyster, although charged with an act disgraceful to himself and the Presbyterian body; bearing in mind all this, and knowing the cunning and resourceful capabilities and, we are sorry to add, the unscrupulous tactics of the learned doctor, we must decline to believe that this latest explanation is the correct one. We prefer to take the gentleman's language in its literal sense and believe what he said, viz: "He knew that the action of the Presbyterian synod, as representing the strongest religious body in the North-West, in declaring for national schools two years ago, and which was sent to the Privy Council, had an

important effect in the matter of the decision which was given." There is nothing ambiguous about this language. It can have but ONE MEANING.

SCHOOLS AND ENGLISH PRECEDENT.

To the Editor of the Montreal Star.

SIR,—I read with much satisfaction your editorial in a recent issue entitled, "The People and the School Question," and quite agree with you that, when the first excitement is over, wiser counsels will prevail, and all will be willing to accord to others the same rights and privileges they would wish to enjoy for themselves. Surely we are too wise a people to endanger the interests of confederation for the crude and illogical theory of a purely secular education, which after all is little more than a Yankee fad, that is ruining their own country and every other country that has tried it.

We know something from the daily papers of the state of things in the United States, which may be justly styled the birthplace of secular education. And in France, where the Public Schools were secularized in 1882, the most deplorable results are following. The official inspectors of workshops and factories in Paris report that for the want of moral education the children are losing all notions of respect and duty, and becoming addicted to bad language and obscene expressions. Their misconduct in the public streets is often scandalous.

One of the Paris papers—an anti-clerical paper, too,—recently stated that the Houses of Correction are gorged with boys and girls, and juvenile crime is increasing at a frightful rate. Nor are things any better in the Australian colony of Victoria, where the secular system has been in operation for some twenty years.

Our Provincial Legislatures would have acted more wisely in educational matters if they had followed the English precedent, rather than that of our neighbors to the south of us. The English Government insists that a certain standard shall be reached in secular education by all schools sharing in the public funds. But, when this standard is attained, each school is paid according to the work done, in proportion to the number of pupils attending.

This system has many advantages over ours. It is economical, as it utilizes existing schools and school buildings, thus saving the enormous cost of erecting new ones. It gives scope to individual enterprise and effort in the cause of education. It secures full liberty of conscience to those who wish their religious belief to be the foundation of that which their children are taught.

While, at the same time, it enables the Government to insist on the thoroughly efficient character of the work for which the public funds are expended. The English system, therefore, is more elastic, and gives greater liberty than ours. And that these features of it are duly appreciated by the public, is shown by the fact, that seven-elevenths of the whole school population of England are taught in the parochial and denominational school, as compared with four-elevenths attending the Board schools, which correspond more directly with our public schools.

Here, too, we may find a solution of the Manitoba school question. For the English system shows that separate schools are quite possible, without the cumbersome machinery and dual assessment that characterizes its working in the province of Ontario; and that the liberty which that system gives may be enjoyed without in any way imperiling the efficiency of the schools.

Here, as in many other things, shall we find the English precedent a safer guide than the less practical theories of our Republican neighbors. And well will it be for our country if our public men will look to England, rather than the United States, for guidance in our political affairs, whether relating to Dominion or provincial matters.

J. M. B.

Toronto, July 20, 1895.