



CURRENT COMMENT

The Casket, of the 12th inst., has no less than three leaderettes on the very live question of pictures suitable to a Catholic home. The first reads as follows:

Sitting in a parlour one evening, the gloaming being relieved only by firelight, we caught a faint glimpse of the outlines of a large photograph, and asked the lady of the house if it were hers. "Good gracious! no!" she replied with some asperity. "I hope I'd put more clothes on than that to get my photograph taken." At once the question rose to our lips, though we did not utter it.—if the lady had been a Catholic, we would have uttered it: "Why should you hang on the walls of your home, for your children or any one else to view, a picture of a woman dressed in a manner which you would consider shockingly indecent for yourself?"

Our Antigonish contemporary's second editorial comment begins with a side-slap at the Toronto News which that paper richly deserves. This extract also contains a fine tribute to the Blessed Virgin from the Presbyterian Witness.

When the Rev. Clarence McKinnon on his way from Sydney to his new charge in Winnipeg, allowed himself to be interviewed by the Toronto News,—the most suitable vehicle in the country for misstatements concerning Catholics,—and informed the interviewer that the evil influence of the Church of Rome had grown so strong in Nova Scotia that the portrait of Dr. Forrester in the Normal School had been forced to yield its place to one of the Virgin Mary, the Presbyterian Witness, assuming that Mr. McKinnon knew what he was talking about, lamented that such a state of things should have come to pass. When Principal Soloman gave the statement a flat contradiction, our esteemed contemporary was ready to go about and stand on the other tack. Mr. Soloman having explained that Titian's "Assumption" is merely one of many works of art adorning the walls of the School, the Witness remarks:

"No one wishes to place the Virgin Mary on a level with mythological inventions. She has ever been regarded as the most highly favored of holy women, the mother of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We would feel a little nervous about placing her picture in the same category of works of art as the "Eurydice" or the "Sybil" of any master. She is to be sacred for that."

Excellent remarks, though scarcely consistent with the spirit which insisted that Dr. Forrester's portrait must have the first place. To that reverend gentleman we owe a great deal: he gave us our public-school system. To the Blessed Virgin we owe more; she gave us our Redeemer. We set up his portrait for a remembrance; why not hers? The spirit which would have the Blessed Virgin's picture nowhere but in the church and in the home, as being too sacred for any other place, would at least be consistent with itself. But we have the gravest doubts whether our esteemed contemporary would approve of any such picture in the home; we are sure he would not in the church.

That tribute from the Presbyterian Witness is so suggestive that the Casket makes it the theme of some further remarks which find their application here as well as in Nova Scotia. Catholics who have grown rich without the proper training for the responsibilities that attach to wealth are too apt to court the vulgar plaudits of equally unchastened parvenus by decorating their homes with risky pictures and statues.

The editor of the Presbyterian Witness would feel a little nervous about placing the Blessed Virgin's picture in the same category of works of art as

the "Eurydice" or the "Sybil." We share his nervousness. We have felt, when looking at the walls of some Catholic homes, that either Our Lady, or the semi-nude creatures of shady reputation in mythology or history, should go. We don't like to see sacred pictures confined to the bedroom; it looks like a hesitancy in making profession of one's religion, but if you must have in your sitting room or parlour so-called works of art, such as that which Mark Twain, speaking of one of them, by no less an artist than Titian, said was fit only for the walls of a bagnio, by all means keep the sacred pictures in your bedroom. At the time we first read his remark, many years ago, we wondered, and still the wonder grows, why any Catholic, trained to purity and reverence from his infancy, should be less sensitive about such matters than this irreverent but cleanhearted, American humorist.

At the risk of making this a special Casket number we quote one more paragraph from the editorial page of our Antigonish friend.

A few weeks ago one of our exchanges made a satiric comment upon the "mutual admiration society" which the Northwest Review of Winnipeg, the Catholic Fortnightly Review of St. Louis, The Casket and a few other papers unnamed had formed among themselves. Among the unnamed ones, we presume, should be included the Ave Maria of Notre Dame, the Sacred Heart Review of Boston and the Catholic Record of London, Ontario. Now, as far as The Casket is concerned, we have really abstained from paying the compliments we felt like paying to the journals above mentioned, for the simple reason that they had said so many kind things about us that we might be suspected of making them a perfunctory return for favours received. After all, mutual admiration, if it only be genuine, is proper enough, and, as our St. Louis confrere points out, has the sanction of such a writer as Oliver Wendell Holmes, to who, a breach of good taste was almost as serious as a breach of the Decalogue. Said the genial Autocrat: "A man of genius or any kind of superiority is not debarred from admiring the same quality in another, nor the other from returning his admiration. They may even associate together and continue to think highly of each other." This does not mean that they shall be in complete agreement on every point.—Brother Preuss and ourselves, for instance, are at opposite poles on the question of the Catholic University and the Knights of Columbus; but that need not hinder them from telling each other that they agree when they do agree, nor need it compel them to discuss the subjects of their disagreements with bitterness.

The Catholic Standard and Times, of Philadelphia, in an excellent editorial on "The cry for Religious Education" says that "No matter how earnestly great papers like the "Sun" deprecate continuance of the discussion on the feasibility of religion in education, the issue will not down. It is not merely Catholics who keep on raising it; teachers and preachers all over the United States, alarmed at the fast spreading infidelity, and its concomitant criminality, are urging a radical change in the present Godless system. There is not one of the evils which now afflict society that cannot be traced to the lack of the religious leaven in the general mind. No religion is inculcated in the home, none in the weekday school. Only for an hour or two on the Sunday are young people allowed a chance to learn anything pertaining to God and the future of their souls. In the Catholic system is found the only exception to this appalling and blind condition of things."

From an article written by the Rev. Morgan M. Sheedy, of Altoona, for the commissioner of Education, Dr. Harris, our Philadelphia contemporary quotes the following instructive facts, which confirm what we said lately that the pupils of Catholic schools, when offered a fair chance of competition with the pupils of non-Catholic schools, generally

surpass them. It may be as well to remind our readers, before quoting this passage, that Rochester is the cathedral city of the venerable and dauntless champion of parochial schools, the Right Reverend Bishop McQuaid. Says Father Sheedy:

"Wherever a test has been made the parochial school boy or girl more than holds his or her own.

At a banquet of school principals held in Rochester, N. Y., recently, Principal Wilcox made a statement to the effect that the present freshmen classes of the Rochester High School are so poorly prepared that it would be next to impossible to promote more than a small percentage of their membership. This statement excited much interest, and some doubted its accuracy. Inquiry brought fourth a comparison, in which it was shown in the Rochester "Post-Express" that out of 6,390 papers submitted by pupils of the Rochester High School June, 1901, and January, 1902, 5,531 were allowed; 2,528 were honor papers; 86.6 per cent. of the examined papers were allowed, and 45.7 per cent. were allowed with honor. In the Nazareth Academy, a Catholic school, at the same time, 4,830 pupils submitted papers of which 3,800 were allowed; 2,157 were honor papers; 78.7 per cent. of the examined papers were allowed and 57 per cent. allowed with honor. In January 1903, out of 2,269 papers submitted by pupils of Rochester High School, 1,679 papers were allowed and 633 were honor papers, being 74 per cent. of allowed papers and 37.7 per cent. of honor papers. The Nazareth Academy (Catholic school) submitted 1,411 papers, of 1,147 were allowed and 532 honor papers, giving 81.3 per cent. of papers allowed and 46.4 per cent. of honor papers. The percentage shows the comparative efficiency of the public and parish schools.

A year ago the writer of this paper wrote to one of the professors of the Pittsburg High School, asking for information on this point. The comparative results of one year's examination show that 89 per cent. of the public school pupils passed into high school, 4 per cent. failed and 5 per cent. were re-examined. Out of the number of parochial school pupils who presented themselves for entrance examination, 93 per cent. passed, 1 per cent. failed and 4 per cent. were re-examined. These figures speak for themselves."

The recent death of Eugene Veillot—it would be almost a misdemeanor to add the usual prefix "Monsieur" to so celebrated a name—raises a selfish regret in the minds of the world-wide readers of his biography of his still more illustrious brother, Louis Veillot. That biography had reached its third volume and its most palpitatingly absorbing period when Atropos came and slit the thread of Eugene's own octogenarian life. One of his sons will no doubt continue and complete the great work, but, however copious may be the notes left by the father, the son can hardly give to his pen-picture of the Homeric fights of the seventies that personal equation which a fellow-fighter in the maturity of his manhood alone could give. The English "Catholic Times" rather happily characterizes the two famous brothers in the following paragraph:

"The late Eugene Veillot was an able writer, but he was not, of course, looked upon, like his brother Louis, as a national asset. Owing to his style, Louis was an immense power. A man of strong convictions, he lectured Bishops almost as freely as he attacked opponents. Eugene was more diplomatic and more tactful. As family men both were models in their conduct. Eugene has left two sons and two daughters, one of these being a nun."

Our Liverpool contemporary would, however, have been historically more accurate had Pius IX's approval of the lecturing of Bishops been mentioned. The Bishops whom Louis Veillot lectured were lacking in devotion to the Holy See and suffering from an old leaven of Gallicanism which his trenchant pen helped to destroy. With the subjoined remarks of the "Catholic

Times" we are in full sympathy, merely premising that Eugene Veillot's obedience to Leo XIII's policy of supporting the French Republic cost the Unvers the loss of some of its ablest contributors.

With the death of Eugene Veillot, Catholic France loses a notable defender of her interests. Since 1883, when his brother Louis died, he has directed the policy of, and written numberless leading articles in, the "Unvers." Throughout his long journalistic career he has been a faithful champion of the Catholic cause, and, indeed, of every cause which tended to the welfare of man. Of his devotion to the Holy See it is needless to speak; Rome was his polestar and by the wishes of the pope he set his course. Whether it was Leo XIII or Pius X, he did not fail to accept their ruling and was indefatigable in carrying out the policy they adopted. His death makes a void in the ranks of French Catholic journalists, and his sharp and often personal articles in the "Unvers" will be deeply missed. The expression of sympathy are innumerable, even in the columns of the hostile press, and everywhere his long and stubborn fight for Catholic principles is spoken of with admiration and respect. To those numerous expressions of kindly regard we gladly add our own.

"Why is it" says the Catholic Times, "that the Irish executive are ever irritating Irish feeling needlessly? At present the majority of the people are enthusiastically in favour of the Gaelic movement, the object of which is to preserve the Irish language, without interfering with the use of the English tongue. The Government does not oppose the movement, but prosecutions are got up against owners of cars for having their names painted on them in Irish, and the other day a peasant was sent to jail for this crime. The only result of such prosecutions will be to beget hostility against the authorities. The Gaelic movement will not be checked. His Eminence Cardinal Logue has been expressing the belief at Longford that the use of the Irish language is a safeguard against the inroad of unwholesome customs. At any rate, he has found that the Irish-speaking portions of the country are more virtuous than the non-Irish speaking parts. The Cardinal is an earnest advocate both of the preservation of the old language and the creation of fresh industries, so that Irishmen who are inclined to emigrate may be induced to remain at home. His pleading will, it is to be hoped, win many additional friends for the language and leaders of industrial enterprise for the land.

The Cosmopolitan for November has a pretentious but unsatisfactory article by Miss Gabrielle Renaudot on the total eclipse of the sun as viewed from a Spanish mountain. Almost the only scientifically interesting feature of that rambling production is one for which the editor, and not Miss Renaudot, is responsible, viz., a photograph of "Father I. J. Kavanagh, S.J., of Loyola College, Montreal, at Northwest River, with his telescope and sighting device for confining visual observation to the outer corona and sketching the streamers to scale." Although this ingenious instrument was made useless by the cloudy weather at Northwest River, it is a more valuable contribution to future astronomical research than is the fact, carefully lugged into the heading of the article, that Miss Renaudot is the lineal descendant of Theophraste Renaudot, who founded the first French newspaper.

One of the city dailies recently mentioned that a Catholic from the east, piloted through the city by a Winnipeg Catholic of the popularity-seeking stripe, had expressed his admiration for the splendid public school buildings with which our city is so liberally provided; but the local cicerone seems to have omitted to show his guest St. Mary's Catholic school, which is as well appointed as the finest of the public schools. The reason of the omission

is obvious. A visit to St. Mary's school would have revealed the unwelcome circumstance that this school is a voluntary one, imposing a double tax on the devoted Catholics who support it. They have first to pay for the public schools which they cannot conscientiously patronize, and then to go down into their pockets for a second payment which their conscience makes imperative. While showing off the public school buildings as a proof of non-Catholic generosity in the educational cause, a sincere and well informed Catholic would have added that the Catholics of Winnipeg contribute annually for the building and equipment of those schools, not used by them, no less a sum than thirty-two thousand dollars, one-half of which would be enough to run their own schools with an efficiency superior to that of the public schools.

The principle underlying both the visitor and the cicerone's admiration for the fine school buildings is that the size and splendor of these edifices is a sure test of the superiority of the education imparted therein. The mere enunciation of this principle is sufficient to expose its fallacy. The qualifications of the teacher, we need hardly point out, are immeasurably more important than bricks and mortar. To infer the excellence of the education from the palatial exterior of the schools is considerably worse than puerile and almost always misleading. We have in mind a small Ontario town where the large and imposing solid brick, public school with its airy class rooms and costly furniture, forms a striking contrast to the wretched little wooden separate school, with its primitive benches and generally dilapidated air. But the Catholic trustees, having learnt a lesson which our Winnipeg School Board refuses to learn—the superiority of a man over a woman in the conduct of a school for boys and girls—have chosen as their teacher a man of unusual ability. The result is that the Catholic pupils surpass the public school pupils in those mathematical branches on which the latter especially plume themselves. Arguing from this case in the way our Catholic visitor to Winnipeg argued, one might conclude that the worse the building, the better the education. Both arguments would be equally illogical. Of course, the ideal condition is a combination of comfortable surroundings with solid training. But when you cannot get both, the capable teacher is the first requisite.

As some of the agents of the "Encyclopedia Americana" have exaggerated the extent of Father John J. Wynne's relations with the Board of Editors of that work, we deem it advisable to disengage the responsibility of one who, as director of the forthcoming "Catholic Encyclopedia," and editor of the important Jesuit monthly, "The Messenger," has a reputation to maintain which such exaggerated statements might imperil. We, therefore, publish the following card sent to us by Father Wynne himself.

"The Rev. John J. Wynne, S.J., editor of 'The Messenger,' announces that he has ceased to act as associate editor of the Encyclopedia Americana. He had been acting in that capacity at various intervals during the past few years, advising the editors in their choice of contributors and topics of interest to Catholics. He had helped them also to revise certain things that were erroneous or offensive to Catholics in their historical and doctrinal articles. Henceforth no agent of the Americana is authorized to use his name in behalf of this Encyclopedia; and, lest there should be any misunderstanding about his opinion of the work, he notifies Catholic purchasers that it was never within his province as associate editor to exclude from it articles that were defective or erroneous in any respect, except in so far as they concerned Catholic doctrine, history and practice."

There appeared in the Free Press of last Saturday a letter signed "A Liberal" purporting to be a scathing criticism

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