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Northwest Review.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27.

**TERMS OF
OUR SETTLEMENT.**

THE CATHOLIC PLATFORM

- 1 Control of our schools.
- 2 Catholic school districts.
- 3 Catholic teachers, duly certificated,
but trained in our own training
schools as in England.
- 4 Catholic inspectors.
- 5 Catholic readers, our own text
books of history and descriptive
geography, and full liberty to
teach religion and comment on
religious questions at any time
during school hours.
- 6 Our share of school taxes and govern-
ment grants, and exemption
from taxation for other schools.

CURRENT COMMENT.

**THE
CHURCH
MILITANT.**

The N. Y. Catholic Re-
view has the following:—
"The elec-
tion of Doctor Marcotte in Champlain
County, Province of Quebec, has been
declared void. Clerical intimidation
was alleged. Bishop Lafleche and some
of his priests, summoned to appear, re-
fused to testify, and the doctor, to save
them from imprisonment for contempt
of court, admitted corrupt practices by
agents and so made the election null.
The doctor made a grave mistake—he
should not have admitted corrupt
practices when no such practices took
place and he should not have prevented
the clergy from testifying before the
courts their right to give official in-
structions to their people in matters in-
volving faith, morals, or Catholic
rights. This question should and must
be settled, and the sooner it goes before
the tribunals of justice, the better."

Quite right. If governmental inti-
midation with its threats of persecu-
tion, and journalistic intimidation with
its threats of popular upheavals, are to
be tolerated, why should 'clerical inti-
midation' be made a bugbear? The
Catholic Germans owe their present
comparative freedom from tyranny to
the fact that their bishops and priests
did their duty in spite of fines and im-
prisonment. And things would have
gone better with Catholic France, had
its clergy had a taste of government
goals. Persecution by imprisonment
acts as a wonderful eye-opener on
honest non-Catholics and enables them
to see the prodigious injustice of
muzzling the clergy in the name of
liberty. The Pall Mall Gazette, of the
18th inst., is therefore lamentably
ignorant of history when it warns the
Catholic Church of Canada that, "un-
less it abandons its arrogant assump-

tion of governmental powers and clerical
interference in politics it will en-
danger its existence." The Church
makes no "arrogant assumption of
governmental powers," she merely
points out the line of duty; nor does
she interfere in politics so long as the
latter do not attack religion. But,
whenever she fearlessly points out the
line of duty and exercises her divine
right to instruct in faith and morals,
she is sure to thrive in the very throes
of governmental oppression. The Catholic
Church in France, after losing thou-
sands of her clergy by the guillotine
during the orgies of the Revolution of
1792-4, came out of the ordeal stronger
than ever. On the contrary, because
the subservient prelates of Henry VIII.
in England would not go to prison and
die, the Catholic hierarchy disappeared
(with the short exception of Mary's
reign) for three hundred years.

**The
Century
Cyclopedia.**

The Casket's
masterly ar-
ticle on "The
Conspiracy of
Silence," which
we print elsewhere, is a very opportune
exposure of the "Cyclopedia of Names"
contained in the new edition of the
Century Dictionary. This dictionary,
as it originally appeared, was fairly
explicit as to Catholic matters, the de-
finition of Catholic terms being con-
trolled by a priest. But now that the
keen competition brought about by the
publication of the Standard Dictionary
at less than a quarter of the Century's
price has forced the latter to try to
float its heavier article with a supple-
ment in the shape of a cyclopedia, the
publishers seem to have lost their
heads and confided this part of the
work to some incorrigible bigot.
Catholics should not subscribe to this
book, which leaves out some of the
greatest names of the nineteenth cen-
tury simply because they were borne by
Catholics. The Sacred Heart Review,
reproducing and praising the Casket's
article, hints that the publishers may
perhaps remedy these glaring defects.
Until they do—which is very doubtful,
considering the expense of a third
edition—it would be well to turn a deaf
ear to the blandishments of two agents
for this work who were lately and may
still be canvassing Winnipeg. They are
making capital out of a few words of
approval from a well-known priest;
but these words refer only to the
Dictionary, not to the Cyclopedia of
Names.

**The
Cross
Of
Constantine.**

On Monday
evening, the
18th inst.,
dwellers in
these parts,
who happened
to look through their windows between
ten and eleven o'clock, were treated to
a magnificent sight. The moon was
encircled by a small halo, intersected by
two larger halos north and south. At
the points of intersection were distinct
mock-moons. The moon itself was the
centre of a cross of light. On this
phenomenon a Free Press paragrapher
remarked: "This appearance is of
rare occurrence even in northern lati-
tudes and is never seen by residents
further south. It was a phenomenon
such as this that the Emperor Con-
stantine saw in the heavens about noon
when marching against Maxentius, 313
A. D., and which was the cause of his
conversion to Christianity." As the
apparition of a luminous cross to
Constantine is not a matter of divine
faith, we would not charge the Free
Press writer with being an habitual
unbeliever simply because he treats a
well-authenticated fact in so flippant a
fashion. We would merely remark that
his explanation is quite up to the aver-
age level of similar attempts made by
the most noted infidels of our time to
explain miracles away. In fact it is
much more plausible than most of
Renaissance efforts in that line. And yet
it is utterly unreasonable. In the first
place, the Free Press writer volunteers
the information that a phenomenon like

that witnessed on the 18th inst., is never
seen by residents farther south than
our latitude. But, though the precise
spot where the luminous cross appeared
is not known, Eusebius, in his Life of
Constantine says the miracle oc-
curred when the latter was marching
against Maxentius. Now that march
southward toward Rome began at
Arles (in Provence), which is six
degrees farther south than Winnipeg.
Therefore the explanation contradicts
the previous general statement. Second-
ly, if what Constantine saw was mere-
ly a natural phenomenon, it would have
been a solar, not a lunar, halo, and
solar halos are not unknown in Italy;
so that the sight of one would not have
produced so profound an impression on
Constantine. Thirdly, had it been a
collection of halos, the circular form of
the phenomenon would have been
chronicled as the most striking feature
thereof, the cross-bands of light being
merely subsidiary to the rings. But
nothing is said of a circle surrounding
the cross. What Eusebius says is:
"About the middle of the day, as the
sun was turning to the west, he saw
with his own eyes, he asserted"—
Eusebius has just said that he had
heard the story from Constantine's own
lips—"immediately over the sun, a
figure of the cross made up of light, and
with it the inscription 'En touto nika'
(In this conquer). At this vision, both
he and the soldiers, who were following
him and were witnesses of the miracle,
were thoroughly stupefied." Fourthly,
as appears from the above quotation,
the sun was not in the centre of the
cross, as it must have been if the phe-
nomenon had been merely a halo, but
below the cross. Fifthly, no natural
phenomenon can account for a Greek
inscription appearing in the sky. This
last difficulty is absolutely insurmount-
able, and therefore the flippant para-
grapher has, as all infidels do, sup-
pressed the most telling feature of the
miracle. Sixthly, this vision was not
"the cause" of Constantine's conver-
sion to Christianity, though it certain-
ly was one of the first circumstances
that drew his attention to the new reli-
gion. If anything so remote as an
event occurring twenty-four years be-
fore his baptism in 337 could be called
the cause of his conversion, that was
rather the explanation of the vision
and its result than the vision itself.
For the following night Christ himself
appeared to Constantine, and, explain-
ing to him the meaning of the cross
and its inscription, ordered him to
adopt the cross as his standard and
promised him victory. And Constant-
ine did defeat Maxentius, and the coins
and medals struck by the former in
memory of the vision have come down
to us. The Rev. Reuben Parsons, D.
D., in his wonderfully able "Studies in
Church History," says: "If a wish to
disbelieve be any reason for rejecting
an assertion, then those who are in-
credulous as to this miracle are not un-
reasonable. As for any more solid
argument against it, the rules of critic-
ism furnish none."

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

We dip the following letter from
the first number of "The Church
Record," a new monthly organ of the
Anglican Church in British Columbia.
We thank our separated brethren for
these words of sympathy and truth.

EDITOR CHURCH RECORD—My Dear
Sir: Through the columns of the se-
cular press I notice that our Roman
Catholic friends in the east are having
a fierce struggle for Religious Edu-
cation, and I think they are to be highly
commended for their earnest efforts to
secure the training of the soul along
with the training of the mind. I
would suggest that the Anglican
Church ought also to be more alive to
the fact of the evils resulting from a
mere secular education. Are we to
have a country of infidels? Are we
going to allow our children to grow up
in utter ignorance of the important
matters pertaining to a knowledge of
God and the precious truths of our
holy religion? Is not Religious Edu-
cation a duty of the State? These are
pertinent questions, and will have to
be dealt with sooner or later, if we
wish our fair Province to be spoken of
as having that righteousness which
exalteth a nation. Let every Church-
man be up and doing in this matter,
and use every effort to obtain a sound,
systematic, RELIGIOUS, combined, with

a good secular education, for our young
and rising generation.

SINE QUA NON.

Just one word of fraternal correction.
Religious education is not a duty of the
State, except in this sense that the
State should encourage every effort to
teach religious truth. But the State
has no mission to teach the truths of
religion. However, it should help
those who do.

SIR ISAAC PITMAN

The death of Sir Isaac Pitman, last
week, in his eighty fifth year, removes
one of the most original and interesting
personages of the century. He is best
known as the inventor of a system of
shorthand, which, with sundry modifica-
tions by American adapters, is used by
seven eighths of the best stenographers in
the English-speaking world. In the
United Kingdom, thanks to the vigilance
with which Sir Isaac defended his copy-
right, the proportion of his disciples in
the winged art was still greater, amount-
ing, it is said, to 96 per cent. of all pro-
fessional shorthand writers. There he
was practically the Pope of phonography.
The wisdom of having an ultimate au-
thority even in such matters is shown by
the greater average efficiency of phono-
graphers in the Old Country as compared
with those of Canada and the United
States, where, instead of abiding by the
decisions of the venerable inventor and
putting them faithfully into practice, too
many fritter away their energies in vain
attempts to improve on the parent system.
Of real improvements Sir Isaac was a
consistent advocate until his last hour of
intellectual effort. In fact his system is
the outgrowth of the experience treasur-
ed up by English stenographers during
three hundred years—for England is
pre-eminently the birthplace and home
of modern shorthand—and of his own ex-
perience during sixty years of laborious
life. And the result is scientific, artistic
and practical. No intelligent person can
study the framework of phonography
without acquiring thereby a rare insight
into the phonetic structure and basis of
the English language. In fact few
teachers, who have not examined the
Pitman scheme, have any real synthetic
grasp of the sounds that constitute our
English speech. Moreover this short-
hand is artistically perfect. The more
graceful and aesthetic an instrument is,
the more welcome, and therefore the
more enduring will be its daily use.
Other shorthands may be as swift, though
that is doubtful; but certainly none is so
beautiful as the Pitman phonography.
Hence the enthusiasm it kindles in its
adepts. Keen as is the charm of its ac-
quirement by the naturally gifted
stenographer, the continued possession
of skill in its use is, like the proverbial
'thing of beauty,' 'a joy forever.'
Writers of other shorthands often cease
to care for the rapid writing as soon as it
has ceased to be a breadwinner for them.
The skilled phonographer, on the con-
trary, delights in using his art for the
ease and the beauty of it, even though it
never brought him a penny. And, from
a utilitarian point of view, no other sys-
tem of shorthand for the English lan-
guage can point to such practical
triumphs as Sir Isaac Pitman's phono-
graphy. The most rapid public speak-
ers cannot outrun the first-class phono-
graphic penman. When the late Bishop
Phillips Brooks was reported verbatim in
Westminster Abbey during a half-hour
sermon, it was found by actual count of
the written words that this most fluent
of orators had spoken 213 words a minute.
And some three or four years ago a young
Irish phonographer wrote under dicta-
tion, for half an hour, at the rate of 250
words a minute, more than four words a
second at a speed double that of the
average speaker.

Out of the practice of phonography and
its accurate representation of sound came
to Isaac Pitman the idea of reforming
our absurd spelling. At this project he
toiled with unflagging energy for over
fifty years, and, though he did not suc-
ceed in effecting a general phonetic re-
form, he enlisted in the cause the great-

est philologists like Max Muller and
Professor Sayce, and convinced the
thinking world that the essence of lan-
guage is, not the written, but the spoken
word, and that our present conventional
spelling is both unhistorical and un-
scientific.

Sir Isaac Pitman preserved to the end
all the enthusiasms of his youth and
early manhood. Not only was he an
ardent advocate of total abstinence, but
also a strict vegetarian. Albeit strange-
ly mistaken in his adherence to the
Swedishborgian creed, he seems to have
been thoroughly sincere and deeply reli-
gious in his own peculiar way, without
the slightest prejudice against the Cath-
olic Church. As he labored honestly and
generously for the benefit of his fellow-
men and really conferred an inestimable
 boon on all users of the English lan-
guage, we may hope that He who reads
the inmost hearts of well meaning men
has had mercy on his soul.

**THE BURNED CONVENT
OF ROBERVAL.**

Madame Jean, of St. Boniface, whose
sister Emma (Sister Marie de la Provi-
dence) perished in the burning convent
of Roberval, has received additional
details of the catastrophe and its sequel
in a letter, dated the 15th inst., from
another sister of hers who was, until
August last, the Mother Superior of
the Ursuline Convent of Quebec.
Mother La Nativite, mentioned in the
letter, is a third sister of Madame
Jean's, whose six sisters became nuns.
Madame Jean kindly allows us to
translate the following passages:—
"You are already aware that on the
morning of the Epiphany, about half
past five, the assistant sacristan, while
lighting the lamps of the Christmas
Crib, let drop a bit of burning taper
which, in the twinkling of an eye, set
fire to the gauze, paper, flowers and
woodwork. Immediately a pungent,
thick, hot smoke filled the chapel and
all the neighboring rooms. The window
next to the altar at once burst into
splinters and thus unfortunately set
up a current of air which fanned the
flames so vigorously that from the first
spark of fire till the moment of immi-
nent peril there were not more than
five minutes.

Mother St. Francis of Paula and our
dear Emma immediately ran up to the
dormitory and got our four pupils (the
only ones who had remained during
the holidays) down the staircase that
was farthest away from the fire. The
two nuns retraced their steps and on
their way rang up the Chaplain. Then
it probably was that they were stifled
by the smoke. It is very likely that
they had turned back to look for
Mother La Nativite (the Mother Super-
ior) whom they had not seen in the
chapel, or perhaps they were looking
for the extinguishers. They must have
fallen near the chapel, for the crucifix
of Sister Marie de la Providence and
the bunch of keys which Mother St.
Francis of Paula carried were found
among a few half-burnt bones opposite
the chapel staircase.

As soon as the Chaplain was awak-
ened by the bell, he broke open the door
of the cloister, carrying his cassock in
his hands. It was all he could do, to
cross the nuns' dormitory, so stifling
was the smoke. It was fortunate he
did not go down by the tower staircase;
for on his way he obliged four or five
nuns to give up everything else in order
to save their own lives. Among these
was Mother La Nativite.

Nothing was saved from the stone
building; but almost everything was
saved from the housekeeping school:
the three pianos, the spinning wheels,
looms, etc.

So you can imagine how great is the
material loss; but what is that compared
to the loss of life? Seven nuns out of
twenty-eight!

Mother St. Francis of Paula was both
treasurer and Mistress of Novices, and
also one of the seven laundresses in 1892.