

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE GENERAL OF A FRENCH RELIGIOUS ORDER.

The third Superior General of the Brothers of Christian Instruction, founded by Jean de Lamennais, brother of the once famous Felicite de Lamennais spent a day here lately. on his way from the Rocky Mountains to France. The Very Rev. Brother Abel, as he is called, was most entertaining and suggestive in the many conversations we were privileged to have with him.

The mother house of his order, from which he and his brethren were expelled by 1,500 soldiers, is at Ploermel in Brittany, the most Catholic part of France. The Bretons are deeply wounded by this persecution of their beloved Brothers and Sisters. So strong is the feeling against the Government and so determined are the people that Combes' satellites have not yet dared to dislodge the religious from certain particularly valiant strongholds of Catholicism, where they are met by open threats of armed resistance. The rank and file of the Breton soldiery are only waiting for the next war to kill those of their officers who are known to sympathize with the persecuting government. The very allegiance of Brittany to France is seriously undermined by these wanton insults to that religion which the Bretons so nobly defended in the Vendean wars of the French Revolution. The Bretons foresee a probable dismemberment of France and in that event they would gladly welcome union with Great Britain.

Brother Abel has more than eighty lawsuits on his hands and expects to serve two months in prison as soon as he sets foot on French soil. The lawsuits cost him nothing. The best lawyers in the country consider it an honor to plead the cause of the hunted religious, and they do so from court to court with true Breton pertinacity. When one case has passed from the local tribunal to a superior one, and has been finally lost in the Appellate Court, another one is taken up, and so the fight promises to go on forever, or at least until the government improves. Brother Abel was expostulating with one of these chivalrous lawyers. "Be careful, you might yourself be thrown into prison." "What if I am?" was the answer, "It runs in the family. My ancestors were imprisoned and died on the scaffold during the French Revolution. Why should I not be as brave as they?"

The recent municipal elections have been favorable to Catholics in Brittany. Thus the gentleman who organized the protestation against the expulsion of religious in Ploermel has lately been elected mayor of that town. However, Brother Abel entertains little hope of a general Catholic revival so long as the majority of Catholics are only nominally such and do not approach the sacraments.

Some twenty years ago St. Mary's College, Montreal, secured the services of three of these Brothers of Christian Instruction. Their success in teaching elementary classes was so great that there are now 250 of their brethren in the province of Quebec. Several of them recently attended the Normal school at Plattsburg, N.Y., and were easily the most successful of the students. The Professor of Mathematics marvelled at the directness of their mathematical methods and inquired where they learned them. Had they replied "In France," American pride would have forthwith revolted. So they simply said, "O, they are an improvement on your latest methods."

While in the west Brother Abel had many interviews with Father de la Mothe, Superior of the Jesuit Rocky Mountain missions, who already employs several of these Brothers in his Indian schools. Their success with Indian boys is positively marvellous, they teach them to govern themselves as pious Christians. Father de la Mothe told Brother Abel that he could find employment for at least forty more of his brethren in trades, such as carpentry, shoemaking, tailoring, gardening, farming, etc. Brother Abel regrets that he did not know

of this opening, or he would not have disbanded most of his brethren who are now living with their respective families in France. He hopes, however, to be able to reach enough of them for Father de la Mothe's Indian Missions.

One of these Brothers will teach in St. Boniface College this year, and several more will probably be employed in subsequent years.

Brother Abel, one of the last novices received into the order by its founder, whose process of canonization is under way, is a charming talker, a man of wide and accurate information and a fearless servant of God.

THE ONWARD WEST.

The hand that moulds the Nations' mighty clay
And fires their gathering substance with His breath,
Ordains them for a day
Nor leaves them to their death.

Ere the cursed burden of their growing age,
That props, like Shinar's shaft, their pride in bloom,
Unbinds high Heaven's rage,
And shakes them to their doom.

So has the stricken sun of nations set;
Nor is the race of awful vengeance run:
That Hand is busy yet
Unmaking what is done.

But thou, O Virgin Land, that with no guile,
Uplitest thy fair face, unswilled still—
Unto the Father's smile
Under His guiding will,—

What onward golden paths are thine to tread,
What eras of the Future are for thee!
O Queen, thy course unsped,
Yet kneeling at God's knee.

Not all the fruitful compass of thy fields
Shall win for thee a home in Heaven's eye,
Justice and Love that wields
A nation's destiny,

Counts not the glitter of increasing gold,—
O sternest lesson for thine urging prime,
Yet fruitful to be told,
If heeded ere the Time.

And as consenting Favor shall incline
To bless thy maiden banners once unfurled,
A story shall be thine
Unwritten in the annals of the world.

W. A. REYNOLDS, S.J.
St. Boniface College,
Aug. 25, 1904.

PROTESTANTS SAY THAT NUNS ARE THE BEST TEACHERS.

From the Catholic Sentinel, Portland, Ore.

The school board of the local episcopal church purposes turning one of its girl's schools over to "a sisterhood of the Episcopal church." The reasons for the transfer, as given by a local clergyman of that church are interesting: "The school can be more effectively managed and accomplish the purpose for which a church school distinctly exists better under a sisterhood of consecrated religious women, whose lives are an unselfish devotion to educational and religious work. The women in this sisterhood give their lives to the work of the church, without any compensation whatever, because of a love of the church and its mission to mankind. It is just that deep, spiritual interest with which we desire to surround the girls, who are committed to our trust to educate, without sacrificing the scholastic work in any particular, but keeping before us the duty of endeavoring to mold a beautiful character as well as to give an accomplished education.

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