



CURRENT COMMENT

Having received from the editor of the Ave Maria a courteous and cordial reminder that "Mrs. Bentley's Surprise," written for that excellent magazine, paid for and duly copyrighted, had "by some accident" appeared, without due credit, in our issue of April 4th, we looked up the "copy" and found that the title "The Ave Maria" had been correctly inserted by our publisher at the end of the story, but that the compositor had overlooked the reference. It affords us great pleasure to rectify this unfortunate omission.

The Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate are now erecting upon Laurel Heights, one of the most desirable sites in the city of San Antonio, Texas, a large and modern Seminary which will be a Philosophical and Theological School for the training of their own subjects as well as of all the ecclesiastical students whom the Rt. Rev. Bishops may confide to their care. The staff of professors has already been chosen. It includes several priests who have studied in Rome and who are Doctors in Philosophy, Theology and Canon Law. San Antonio is an ideal place for the location of such a Seminary on account of its salubrious climate, its religious and historical associations and its varied natural attractions. The property upon which the Seminary is being built covers an area of over twenty acres. Students from the Northern and Eastern States, whose health may require a milder climate, will here be able to complete their courses of studies in the dry, bracing atmosphere of Southern Texas, and at even less expense than in the North.

The solemn blessing of the corner-stone will be given by His Excellency, Most Rev. Diomed Falconio, Apostolic Delegate for the United States, on Sunday, April 26th, at 4 p.m. The Seminary will be formally opened on October 4th, of the present year, with complete Philosophical and Theological courses.

We learn from the Free Press of Tuesday last that the Rev. A. E. Dawson, after having vented his Christian Missionary Alliance zeal among the Timber Creeks to the north of Edmonton, tried his hand lately at converting the benighted inhabitants of Chili. Some idea of Mr. Dawson's mental fitness for his task may be gathered from this sentence of his carefully prepared interview: "Most of the inhabitants are of humble origin, being of Spanish (sic) and Mapouche stock, the latter name being that given to the original natives." How utter must be the lack of historical knowledge in a man that can advance as a proof that the Chilians are of humble origin the fact that they are Spanish! Has he never heard of the grandees of Spain? If there is one thing which even the bitterest enemies of Spain have never denied to her, provided they were tolerably well informed, it is the courtly dignity of the Spanish people; which curiously intensifies the absurdity of alleging Spanish descent as a proof of humble origin. The other proof Mr. Dawson draws from the "Mapouche stock," though less absurd, is not very convincing. It is better to be descended from a king of men, even if he be a red Indian chief, than from a white blackguard or dunce.

Mr. Dawson says drunkenness exists all over Chili to an alarming

extent; but when he attempts to explain his meaning, we find that he has no drunkenness at all to describe; he does not even mention any distilled spirits; all that the people drink is fermented fruit juice, cider and light wines. Of course these generally harmless drinks are for sale everywhere, because they are, as in all Latin countries, the only beverage. But we happen to know a good deal about Chili, and we can assure Mr. Dawson there is less drunkenness there than in Manitoba.

One of the rare truths in Mr. Dawson's interview is that the Protestant missionaries are not popular in Chili. Knowing as we do the type of ignorant, impudent, unteachable adventurer that is usually sent out to such far off regions, we do not wonder at the Chilian people stoning the corrugated iron schools in which these salaried liars slandered our holy faith; still less do we wonder "that the rattle of the hail of missiles on the outside prevented any continuance of the classes." The Chilians are evidently humorous. Perhaps, had they heard of Shakespeare, they might have said to the Rev. A. E. Dawson and his "rattled" friends what the servant says to Coriolanus, who is trying to get admitted to the house of Aufidius: "What an ass it is!—Then thou dwellest with daws too?"

Our learned contemporary, the Casket, sums up with remarkable brevity and point the upshot of the controversy between the Emperor of Germany and Professor Delitzsch on Babylon and the Bible. In December, 1901, and January, 1902, there was discovered at Susa, in Persia, a splendid diorite stone, about 7 feet 2 inches in height, and from 5 feet 3 inches to a little over 6 feet in width. The front exhibits a representation of the sun-god dictating the law to Hammurabi, who is generally identified with the king of Sennaar named Amraphel in Gen. 14, and is therefore contemporary with Abraham. Some Assyriologists think this Code of Hammurabi is the most important Babylonian document thus far discovered. With this prefatory remark we append the Casket's statement of the present controversy. "Emperor William is Head of the Lutheran Church, therefore when he specially requested Professor Delitzsch, the distinguished Assyriologist, to repeat the lecture 'Babel und Bibel' (Babylon and the Bible) in his presence, and at the conclusion called the lecturer to the royal box and presented him to the Empress, all the orthodox Lutherans shivered with fear. For Delitzsch maintains that the civil code of King Hammurabi which he has discovered in the ruins of Babylon afforded Moses a basis for the Decalogue and the various regulations contained in the Pentateuch. The most radical of German Biblical scholars, however,—and Germany is the home of this sort of radicalism,—utterly scout Delitzsch's conclusions. Cornill of Breslau calls the Berlin professor's theory "an extravagant glorification of Babylon at the expense of the Bible, against which it is the duty of the Old Testament specialists to protest vigorously"; Noldeke of Strassburg says that outside of purely Assyriological problems Delitzsch's judgment is very unreliable; Merx of Heidelberg, Kautzsch of Halle, Barth of Berlin, and Jeremias of Leipzig have also entered their protest, the last named declaring that the spirit of the Old Testament is vastly superior to that of Babylon, however much they have in common in the literatures. So that when the Kaiser issued his "pastoral letter" assuring his subjects that he still held

fast to the Bible he had plenty of scholars behind him."

Father Searle, the distinguished Paulist, who is also a practical astronomer, contributes to the Catholic World a most satisfying article on "The Sun's Place in the Universe." Taking into consideration Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace's now famous article—which we reviewed at some length in our issue of March 14—on "Man's Place in the Universe," Father Searle puts the question into more definite and practical shape. "Though it is certain, 'a priori,' that the universe must have a limit,"—a point on which we insisted strongly, when denying, on philosophical principles, the infinitude of the universe—"and (though it is) fairly certain that with our large telescopes we now can see pretty nearly to the limit, it is also evident that our knowledge of its dimensions, its shape, and the arrangement of the bodies it contains, is, and probably will for centuries be too vague for anything like" Dr. Wallace's conclusion "to be announced as a definite result. It seems indeed that there will never be a possibility of obtaining the requisite knowledge by any method of scientific observation. The remotest stars would seem to be—just to name a figure—ten thousand times as far away as the nearest ones. But the apparent displacement of even these nearest ones by the motion of the earth in its orbit, which appears to be the only even tolerably accurate means of surveying available, is so small that to ascertain it with anything like precision requires an immense number of very careful observations; and the error in measuring one ten thousandth part of it, which no one would now dream of attempting, will probably always be very much larger than the quantity itself. And this measurement, probably impossible even in a single case, would have to be made millions of times for our survey of the universe to be completed."

With this initial difficulty staring him in the face, Father Searle says we have nothing better to go by than the relative brilliancy of the faint and bright stars. "A star of what is known as the 21st magnitude is estimated to give only one hundred millionth of the light given by one of the first magnitude; if then, it is of the same intrinsic splendor—a fairly reasonable assumption on the whole—it must, by a well known law of optics, be ten thousand times as far away. The assumption is, of course, open to criticism; but it does not seem that we shall ever get anything materially better."

Applying this gigantic and vague foot-rule to the Milky Way, Father Searle draws this matter-of-fact conclusion:—"That we are, strictly speaking, at the centre of the universe is, then, a statement which not only cannot be proved, but one which has no definite or intelligible meaning, unless we are determined to believe that the universe has a symmetrical shape; but for this there is no real evidence; and from what has been said it should be plain that unless some entirely new method is discovered of measuring the relative distance of the stars it will never be possible to obtain any" such evidence.

Father Searle disposes of the fond fancy for a central position in the following happy way:—"Everyone, somehow, seems to feel that the locally central position in the universe which Mr. Wallace claims for the sun would imply a special importance for it in the plan of the Creator of the universe. But really such a position seems, when we look at it rationally, to be an un-

important matter. In our own physical organism, we do not look on the brain as being an insignificant organ, because it is off at one end of the body, or the heart as being so because it is somewhat off to one side. The idea that a mere geometrical centre carries importance with it seems after all a rather puerile one. We should not take much account of it in any construction or arrangement which we ourselves might contrive. The capital city of a nation may be preferably located at or near the centre of its territory, but this would be done in order to make it more easy of access to the nation itself, or more secure from attack from outside. No such reason can be urged in the case of our great stellar system. The most important point of an organism may be located anywhere in it. That our sun should be in one point or another of the universe really has nothing to do with its importance."

As to the ever recurring objection, "Why should God make such an immense number of suns, which might all have systems of planets like our own, and make no use of them for purposes as important as any that He has in view here?" Father Searle goes to the root of the difficulty. The mischief is that we "insist on pinning the Lord down to our way of looking at things." We are stingy; we have cramped, city ideas of standing room and waste spaces. He scatters his wealth without stint or measure. All the planets of our system collect only a few billionths of the heat and light of our sun. The rest all goes to waste. "Matter has value in our eyes, just because we cannot create it. But to God all these blazing suns are, for their own sake, of no more intrinsic value than so many tallow candles. He can make one as easily as the other. And though the same is true of His spiritual creation, we cannot doubt that it is what the rest is made for, not it for the rest. It is what He has at heart."

Clerical News

Rev. Father Blais, O. M. I., returned east on Wednesday, after attending Miss Gauthier's funeral, with Rev. Dr. Beliveau, last Monday at St. Agathe.

Rev. Father Hudon, S. J., returned from East Grand Forks last Monday. He was surprised to find that about half the parish was made up of French Canadians farming within a radius of fifteen miles.

Bishop Glennon, coadjutor of Kansas City, has been transferred to St. Louis in a similar capacity and with right of succession to that archiepiscopal see.

Mgr. Rooker, secretary to the Apostolic Delegation in Washington, has been named Bishop of Nuova Caceres in the Philippines.

Archbishop Montgomery, coadjutor of San Francisco, has been appointed by the Holy Father metropolitan of Manila. He speaks Spanish fluently.

Invitations are out for the Grand Public Act (a public examination in the whole of theology) by Father Villalonga, S. J., in the great hall of the St. Louis University on the 29th inst. The President of the United States and Cardinal Gibbons, will honor the occasion with their presence. This is the third time this great argumentative ordeal has been undergone in the United States. Father Villalonga's

predecessors were also both Jesuits, Father Rudolph J. Meyer in 1875 and Father de la Mothe in 1891, both at Woodstock College, Maryland.

Rev. Father Gauthier, parish priest of Auburn, Maine, returned to his home last Wednesday.

Rev. E. Proulx, S. J., stayed over at Rat Portage last Wednesday, on his way back from Port Arthur, and returned to St. Boniface College on Thursday.

Rev. Father Blanche, Euclid, returned from Prince Albert early this week and continued eastward on Wednesday.

Rev. Fathers Fillion and Rocan were the Archbishop's guests on Wednesday.

HAIRY HORRORS.

(Town Topics, April 4.)
The style of hair dressing that has prevailed among women for the last few years has certainly not added to their beauty.

If you want to get a full realization of its hideousness, take a front seat in the first balcony of the theatre some night.

Since the beginning of romance writing it has been the custom to describe the heroine as having a small, well formed head proudly set on a beautifully rounded throat.

Masses of hair, gold and otherwise, have always been in order, but they have been so arranged as to show the full beauty "of the proud little head."

If any writer is rash enough, in days to come, to attempt to describe a beauty of 1903, he or she will be confronted with the task of describing something that looks uncommonly like the last mold of a cheese press, the wooden pattern of a car wheel, or, in fact, like anything but a well modeled human head.

Surely the average woman of Winnipeg has not such a badly shaped head that it is necessary to hide its defects under enormous pads of horse hair, for that is the foundation of the present style. Nothing could possibly be more unnatural than the mountainous pompadour extending all round the head, unless it should be the loop or depression over the left eye, that is the very latest horror.

Such a style of hairdressing would have made a fright of Venus. Would romance be possible in connection with Psyche, Helen of Troy, Cleopatra, Juliet, Desdemona, Lucretia, Rosamond, Portia, or even Tennyson's Maud, if painter or sculptor had depicted them with heads like bushel baskets? Hair should be the crowning glory of a woman, and the present style is not only fatal to beauty—a blotter out of all the noble lines of the head—but is extremely injurious to the hair, and productive of an endless succession of headaches, as all the weight and heat are gathered to the top of the head.

It was a real pleasure to me one evening last week to note that one of our local elocutionists—Miss Palk—was setting a praiseworthy example in this respect.

Her abundant dark hair, was parted in the middle, waved softly on each side, braided in one heavy braid, and coiled well down on the back of the head.

It followed the natural lines of the head perfectly, and gave a pleasing sense of harmony and proportion. One style will not suit all faces, but every woman can choose a style that suits her and adhere to the general idea, while making slight concessions to the prevailing mode, sufficient to avoid an appearance of eccentricity.

THE WOMAN ABOUT TOWN.