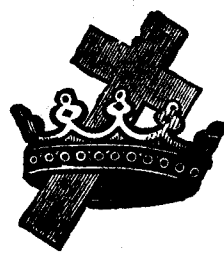




Northwest



Review.

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CURRENT COMMENT

It is not often that one meets with a great musician who is at the same time a thinker. The study of harmony and melody seems to absorb all the grey matter of the average musician's brain. But Ottokar Malek, the Bohemian pianist, last Saturday gave the Tribune an interview that was full of suggestive ideas. Having taught the piano in Europe and the United States, he says with the authority of experience: "The great defect of the American pupil is his over-ambition, his tendency to hurry. He wants to do in one year what we take four to do in Europe. He has talent, and works hard, but he does not work correctly. He sees things more quickly than the typical European student, and advances more rapidly up to a certain point—and then, just when he should begin to become an artist, he fails. He lacks the foundation; he prefers a fast start with ultimate failure to a slow start with final success." After saying that the American student need not go to Europe, for the best European teachers are attracted to the United States by higher pay, he adds: "The chief defect here is the fault of the pupils themselves—they force the teachers to hurry along lest they lose their pupils. Again, American pupils are weak in not being able to work without a teacher; they do not seem to think for themselves." Ottokar Malek certainly hits the nail on the head. American methods in intellectual matters are decidedly second-rate. The second-rate man runs to seed before middle age; the first-rate man goes on developing into fairer fruitage till the decrepitude of extreme old age. Short cuts are all very well in machinery and commerce, but they are fatal to those pursuits in which the higher faculties of the mind are brought into play. The mellowing process of time alone produces the man of original ideas. He must have winnowed the chaff during a long course of years before he gets to the golden grain. Hence it is that America has produced so few great thinkers, great writers, or great artists. Whistler had to live in France and England before his originality burst into vigorous bloom. Emerson had to adopt European hatred of haste before he wrote thought-provoking essays, and even at his best he lacks the consecutive-ness and balance of the great thinker. Brownson is the nearest approach to the European standard of high thought. The few American writers who have left their mark on English literature excel, not so much by their great thoughts, as by the finish and directness of their style.

The Free Press calls our recent appeal to Sir Wilfred Laurier "a vain dream." We dreamt no dreams. We did not express any hopes. We simply reminded the Premier of Canada that if he were really "strong and righteous of purpose," now, if ever, was the time to redeem his promise about settling the school question. Our appeal was to the conscience of one who is universally considered an honourable man, not to the partisan blindness of such organs as the Free Press. These latter are hopelessly rooted in unreasoning prejudice. The Free Press in particular, which praises Premier Combes for robbing and persecuting the best citizens of France, has no conception of freedom as applied to others. Like the French Radicals, it wants all the freedom for itself and its own party. This is the besetting sin of all those who misapply that beautiful word "liberal." The third volume of the life of Louis Veillot, recently published by his brother Eugene, shows how even Catholic prelates, when they try to graft the liberal parasite on the stock of

Catholic truth, become the most despotic of tyrants. It is ever the old story of crimes perpetrated in the sacred name of liberty.

The Free Press is strong on prophecy. About 1894 it began to prophesy that the school question, being dead and buried, would never be resuscitated. It still keeps harping on the same string. The school question may be deemed buried pretty much as the proverbial ostrich's head is buried in the sand, only that the position of the pretended corpse must be reversed: the school question is buried up to the neck, with its head, and especially its tongue, very much alive. The humbug, who, in the name of equal rights, and civil and religious liberty, deprived us of our school taxes and forced us to pay taxes to schools which our children do not attend, felt quite sure that ten or fifteen years of this hypocritical but very real oppression would bring us to our knees and force us to send our children to the public schools. But here we Winnipeg Catholics are in the fifteenth year of unjust ostracism fighting more vigorously than ever. We have just erected, at a cost of \$42,000, a splendid Catholic school which will entail for its support and the payment of interest on debt, an annual outlay of \$8,000. Assuredly a pretty lively corpse. Thus is the oft repeated prophecy of the Free Press fulfilled.

The pretext for forcing us into the public schools was the supposedly greater efficiency of the latter; the real motive was to ruin Catholic belief in the minds of our children. The pretext has been continually belied during the past fifteen years by the superior success of our Catholicly trained children in school and college competitions. The real motive is coming more and more into prominence, as Protestants themselves realize more keenly the growing absence of a Christian atmosphere in the public schools. The dead level of uniform national schools is a distinct bar to educational progress. Competition is the life of pedagogy as it is of trade and many other pursuits. There can be little or no competition so long as government grants are not based on results. In Great Britain, where the various denominations compete on a footing of equality the practical results of education in all its grades are far more satisfactory than in the public schools of Canada and the United States. Those who deny this are superficial sporters who seek to win favor with the unthinking multitude. Neither Canada nor the United States dare send to England, Scotland or Ireland a commission of educational experts such as visited the United States from the British Isles recently; they foresee too clearly how humiliating could be the contrast between our boasted American schools and the really efficient schools of the Old Country.

"At the present time the foremost opponents of Catholicism in France—M. Combes included—have all received their education either from the Jesuits, the Christian Brothers or some other Order; and what is equally curious the champions of the Church, men like Brunetiere, Le Maitre, Daudet, Jr., Drumont, Francois Coppee, Lasies, Uzanne and a host of others, have come from the University, where religion certainly does not occupy a predominating position." This passage from a recent Fortnightly Review shows, on the one hand, that you cannot make a purse out of a sow's ear, and on the other that natural rectitude and fidelity to Divine inspiration may make amends for most of the shortcomings of an unchristian education.

Last Saturday one of our city dailies published a cablegram from

London, gloating over the story, now told for the first time, of how the British government obtained its Erhardt guns during the Boar war. It would have been useless to approach the German government openly; but, luckily about this time the Chinese government was considering the advisability of getting some of these Erhardt guns, and Lord Lansdowne took advantage of this to send two English officials, disguised as Swedes with an imperfect knowledge of English, who followed in the wake of the Chinese representatives and inspected much more closely and minutely every part of the guns. The report was entirely satisfactory. The guns were shipped to Southampton in piano cases, while the German government was induced to believe that their destination was China, the negotiations being carried on through a German financial journalist, who felt no scruples about deceiving his government. Had all this low trickery and lying been carried on by any other nation, the British papers would have branded it as jesuitical, but under the circumstances they do what Stacky called "a gloat," they glory in the clever way the German government was fooled.

The Marquise des Monstiers, nee Mary Gwendolin Caldwell, has solemnly announced by cablegram from Rome, dated October 30, her apostasy from the Catholic faith. She is well known as the first foundress of the "Catholic University of America" in Washington, D. C. She is a daughter of William T. Caldwell and his wife, who was a Miss Breckenridge of Kentucky. Shortly before his death, Mr Caldwell became a Catholic and left his two daughters in the care of some Irish Catholic friends in New York. There they met the Right Rev. J. L. Spalding, Bishop of Peoria, a man of great ability and force of character, who persuaded the eldest daughter, Miss Mary Gwendolin Caldwell, to devote \$250,000 to the foundation of a post-graduate University for the higher training of priests. The intention and purpose were every way admirable. The name of Miss Caldwell became an honored and beloved one throughout the Catholic World, for this was the first time so large a donation had been made to any American Catholic Educational institution. The new University was highly recommended by Leo XIII. and started under the auspices of some of the most celebrated bishops in the United States. The first structure was the Divinity Building, in the reception room of which figures a life-size portrait of Mary Gwendolin Caldwell, dressed in a black silk gown and painted as reclining or rather sprawling on her back on a sofa with an immense train trailing away into the background. When we saw it fifteen years ago we remember being disgusted at the lack of taste or congruity which such a portrait posture for the foundress of a Catholic school of divinity reveals.

Some years later a Father McMahon bestowed on the same university three or four thousand dollars; many other large donations poured in; chairs were founded; last year all the dioceses of the United States were called upon to contribute; this year's collection, we are told, amounts to one hundred thousand dollars. No other Catholic college ever had such magnificent pecuniary support, no other was so highly encouraged by the clergy and the episcopate, no other was so repeatedly favored by Papal recommendations. Yet the whole history of the Catholic university, from its very beginning, has been most unfortunate. At the laying of the corner stone of the first building connected with this university, a famous prelate, who is saturated with Emerson and has caught the Emersonian trick by which "naught of sequence links the far and near of those terse versesets" in his crisp essays, spoke disparagingly of St. Thomas Aquinas, whom he cannot appreciate because the Angel of the Schools is logical and consecutive. Among the first professors were two or three eminent men who were squeezed out as soon as they were found to be haters of Liberal Catholic shams. The only

remaining professor that had some real theological lore switched off into hazardous propositions which have since been condemned by all the clergy. The professor of English Literature in the "Catholic University of America"—sweet, modest title, by the way, ignoring Canada, Mexico, Central and South America—lately boasted that it was no longer chiefly a Divinity School, the purpose for which it was first founded, no longer even a strictly Catholic school, since a Protestant taught the course of Political Economy and many of the pupils were Protestant. In fifteen years this much coddled university has produced nothing but a very small number of students and a few doctors of divinity, two or three of whom have written brilliant articles in defence of the faith. Its first Rector was deposed by the Holy See and later on made archbishop, its second has been transferred to the government of a diocese, its third is the author of the term "Americanism" applied proudly to himself and all those who shared his peculiar opinions, which now of course he repudiates. Many of the theological students attending the university lectures, far from being, as the original purpose was, priests ordained after a full seminary course of theology, are recent converts with a year or two of wretched Latin rudiments and no theology at all before they entered the university. The chief result of this great effort at establishing a university for the improvement of the clergy has been to inspire its students with a vulgar pride in fine buildings, in freedom from rule and in showy, shallow lectures.

This condition, known of course to the first foundress, together with the recent bankruptcy of Mr. Thos. E. Waggaman, treasurer of the university, whose failure may seriously embarrass the Board of Directors, accounts in a measure for the Marquise des Monstiers' petulant profession of Protestantism. In her long declaration she gives no valid reason for her return to Protestantism. She is known to have been ailing for several years. The Board of Directors have had no official communication from her and cannot explain her present state of mind. But may not the sad failure of her pet project have influenced her evidently emotional nature?

Brother Edward's remarkable speech at the Silver Jubilee banquet in honor of the Brothers of Mary deserves careful perusal. He shows how the constitution of the religious order to which he and his brethren belong embodies one of the fundamental principles of the New Testament—the equality of all religious in their tendency towards spiritual perfection. The Institute of the Brothers of Mary is unique in that, although composed of priests as well as laymen, the former are ordained solely for the benefit of the more numerous lay brothers, to serve as their confessors and spiritual directors, and to act as superiors, general and provincial, and rectors of classical colleges. In all other cases a Brother may be the superior whom a Father has to obey. Although this arrangement is unique in our time it is not new in the history of the Church. St. Francis of Assisi was the Founder and General Superior of a large Order containing, even in his lifetime, thousands of priests, and yet he himself was only a deacon. Many monasteries of the early ages were ruled by men not in holy orders, who had priests under them. The reason of this is that the priesthood, although imprinting a sacredness to the recipient thereof, does not necessarily imply a tendency towards spiritual perfection, whereas the religious state does. Our Lord did not say, "If thou wilt be perfect, be ordained and preach the gospel"; but, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all thou hast." He thus made religious poverty the indispensable requisite for a state of perfection. Communities of priests who observe celibacy and obedience to a rule are not religious if they take no vow of poverty, that is, if their property is not held in common and used only by permission of superiors. But once that vow of poverty is faithfully observed, priests and laymen in every religious order are perfectly equal as regards their tendency to perfection and their spiritual advantages. This was the

condition of the apostles and of all the disciples of the Lord: "And all they that believed had all things common. Their possessions and goods they sold, and divided them to all, according as every one had need" (Acts II, 44-46). Gradually, as this was not the fulfilment of a command, but only the practice of an advice or counsel given by the Master to fervent souls, when fervor waned the practice became less general, although it remained much more common during the first ten centuries of the Christian era than during the eleventh and twelfth, when most of the clergy were secularized. Then came the great revivals of the thirteenth, sixteenth and nineteenth centuries when the religious orders increased and multiplied anew.

The following paragraph from the Liverpool "Catholic Times" of Oct. 14th, confirms what we have already written of the abortive Congress of Free-thought in Rome.

"Freethinkers in France are displeased at the fiasco which resulted from the insolent gathering of their brethren in Rome. In revenge they have been celebrating a high week at Amiens. The Town Hall, the circus, the staffs of the municipality were given over to them. Meetings of the approved type took place, and a decree was issued which doubtless was meant to prove the importance of the Congress. Here it is: 'Morality is a product of human evolution; as it is methodically perfected, so will it become more and more scientific; it is absolutely independent of all religious doctrine'. There we have the naked aim of all modern freethought. It intends not simply to discard dogmas, but to root up ethics. As we said last week, its object is to bring back the license of paganism. It hates religion because religion is the sanction of moral restraints. A gospel of the body, it seeks to hide away every sign of the gospel of the spirit. Thus, at Lorient, on the representation of the Society of Free-thought, the Municipal Council has forbidden the public carrying of Holy Viaticum by the clergy. What power has the Society of Free-thought to demand such a municipal prohibition? None whatever; but apparently in France City Councillors dread to do anything which would meet with the disapprobation of the men to whom all religion is a subject of mockery because it turns the mind to, contemplate the consequences of disregarding the duties it teaches. And, after all, if a man may think as he likes, why may he not do as he wills?"

In the middle of last month a number of French physicians visited London in a body. One of these doctors who was on the staff of a great Paris hospital and had had practical experience of hospital work in Berlin and Vienna, said to a reporter of the Pall Mall Gazette: "What has impressed us most, perhaps, is the high standard of the nursing staff not only here but in every hospital we have seen. You seem to be able to attract a socially higher and better educated class for the work than we can. Of course, at present we are very badly off in France. Many of our best nurses were nuns. They have now been deported, you understand. They were kind to the patients, but 'enfin' they were nuns. Now we have to educate a new supply of nurses, and I hope we shall be able to attract the type of woman you have." We have pretty much the same type here among our lay nurses; the very best bred, but educated and best working girls take to the noble nursing profession. One ambitious girl went too far on the ladylike tack. Applying for a place as nurse in a famous Montreal Hospital, she sent the only photo she had of herself, a low necked one, and was promptly refused.

Other countries will profit by the loss which French hospitals are enduring. We are thankful for a large share of this profit. Six Daughters of the Holy Cross, lately expelled from France, have taken the former boys' school adjoining St. Mary's Church on Hargrave Street and offer a safe and comfortable shelter to Catholic girls momentarily out of work or absent from their homes.