

Northwest Review



THE ONLY CATHOLIC WEEKLY PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH BETWEEN LONDON (ONTARIO) AND THE PACIFIC COAST

Senate R. Room

VOL. XXI, No. 51.

WINNIPEG, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1905

(\$2.00 per year
\$1.50 if paid in advance
Single Copies 5 cents)

CURRENT COMMENT

In all our very natural jubilation over this year's bountiful harvest and the fine weather that enables the farmer to make the most of it, it is well not to forget our Heavenly Father to Whom all these blessings are due. In nothing is the hand of God so visible as in that most uncertain and yet most necessary of factors, the weather. Gratitude to the giver of all good gifts is the mark of a noble and wise soul, whose chief occupation during its endless life hereafter—compared to which the present life is but as the brief flight of an arrow—will be to thank God in grateful transports of ecstatic love.

Nor should we forget that each bumper crop diminishes the probability of the next one being a bumper. With all our modern improvements we have not yet improved away the possibility of drought or excessive rains or scorching heat or untimely frosts or rust or destructive insects. Hence the wisdom of not spending this year all that the harvest has brought in. Foresight and economy are always in order.

Although the change may be painful, it is one that was inevitable in these days of real Papal reform. We mean the removal of Protestants from St. Mary's choir. Let them play and sing in their own churches; but, when you come to think of it, it is almost a travesty on religion to hear a Protestant sing "Adoro te devote, latens Deitas," "Devoutly do I adore thee, hidden Deity," before the Blessed Sacrament exposed, when the same Protestant does not believe in the Real Presence. Of course the converse holds good: Catholics must not sing nor play in Protestant churches; but, apart from the sin of actively participating in the worship of misbelievers, their position when they do so is far less anomalous than that of Protestants singing in Catholic choirs: for most Protestant hymns are sufficiently vague and general to admit of a Catholic interpretation, whereas Catholic church music is often exclusively Catholic.

The case is somewhat different for a High Church Anglican who believes in Transubstantiation, auricular confession, purgatory and the Primacy of the Pope. There is hardly any thing in our church music that he cannot enter into with all his heart. And this is the paramount question with our church choirs. Can they really enter into the spirit of what they sing? Even Catholics do not meet this requirement if they are merely nominal members of the Church. Their faith, at least, must be lively. It would be shockingly unbecoming that a Catholic who neglects his Easter duty should pretend to represent the universal Church in its praise of the most pure God. Better have no singing at all than to have it performed—we use this word advisedly because it is all a piece of insincere acting—by blasphemous or licentious men and women.

One of our readers has kindly sent us a clipping taken, at second hand, from a Catholic paper already some months old. We reproduce it because we think it worthy of more than mere quotation or space-filling. When we showed it to an extremely fastidious French literary critic, he thought it a perfect gem and asked, in evident surprise, who was its author. We could only say that this admirable lesson in charity was clipped from the Toronto Star, a pearl dropped by some nameless genius, as generous as he was modest in the vast waste of daily journalism. Here it is.

He Gave to the Lord

Yesterday he wore a rose on the lapel of his coat, and when the plate was passed he gave a nickel to the Lord. He had several bills in his pocket and sundry change, perhaps

a dollar's worth, but he hunted about and, finding this poor nickel, he laid it on the plate to aid the Church Militant in its fight against the world, the flesh and the devil. His silk hat was beneath the seat, and his gloves and cane were beside it, and the nickel was on the plate—a whole nickel. On Saturday afternoon he had a gin rickey at the "Queen's," and his friend had a fancy drink, while the cash register stamped thirty-five cents on the slip the boy presented to him. Peeling off a bill, he handed it to the lad, and gave him a nickel tip when he brought back the change. A nickel for the Lord and a nickel for the waiter! And the man had his shoes polished on Saturday afternoon and handed out a dime without a murmur. He had a shave, and paid fifteen cents with equal alacrity. He took a box of candies home to his wife and paid forty cents for them, and the box was tied with a dainty bit of ribbon. Yes, but he also gave a nickel to the Lord. Who is the Lord? Who is He? Why, the man worships Him as Creator of the universe, the One who puts the stars in order, and by whose immutable decree the heavens stand. Yes, he does, and he dropped a nickel in to support the Church Militant. And what is the Church Militant? The Church Militant is the Church Triumphant of the great God the man gave the nickel to. And the man knew that he was but an atom in space, and he knew that the Almighty was without limitations, and knowing this, he put his hand in his pocket and picked out a nickel and gave it to the Lord. And the Lord, being gracious and slow to anger, and knowing our frame, did not slay the man for the meanness of his offering, but gives him this day his daily bread. But the nickel was ashamed, if the man wasn't. The nickel hid beneath a quarter that was given by a poor woman who washes for a living.

The last touch, which is perhaps the best of all, accentuates the fact, so often observed by priests, that the poor are immeasurably more generous than the rich. Not long ago a Catholic pastor announced to his congregation that having to travel a great distance on important business, he would be absent several weeks. Although he asked for no contributions to the expense of his long journey, no sooner had he returned to his house than the poorest man in his parish called on him and begged him to accept ten dollars as a small offering towards his unforeseen expenses. The good man hardly waited to be thanked, and when he was gone the priest turned to a visitor and said: "Ten dollars is more of a sacrifice for that man than would be a hundred dollars for A, B and C," mentioning three of his wealthy parishioners who had heard the announcement and never offered anything.

In the west of England there lived, some twenty years ago, a rich Catholic widow who had a Catholic servant girl. The latter, whose wages were seven or eight dollars a month, frequently offered her parish priest four times the usual stipend for a Mass, and when he would expostulate she would invariably reply that she had so great an esteem for the Holy Sacrifice that she would feel mean if she did not do as she insisted on doing. Her mistress, with a surplus of several hundred pounds a year, seldom made any offerings but such as she was in conscience bound to make to the Church. If wealthy Catholics were to give of their surplus in the same proportion as their poor brethren give of their necessities to the Lord and to one another the spectre of Socialism would loom less large in the future, all church and school debts would be soon paid off, and the devil would not have such a free hand among the heathen.

The neighboring State of North Dakota is greatly exercised over the case of a criminal sentenced to be hanged on circumstantial evidence. The case has been rehearsed over and

over again by the Board of Pardons and thoroughly threshed out in the local papers, especially those of Pembina County. So strong was the feeling in favor of the man's innocence that a parallel case was recently manufactured out of whole cloth in order to prejudice the popular mind against circumstantial evidence. This parallel case, reciting how a man who had murdered a girl thirty years ago had just confessed on his deathbed how, by changing his blood stained clothes with another man, he had fastened suspicion so strongly upon him that he was sentenced to death and actually hanged. The telegram announcing this startling confession appeared two or three weeks ago in all our Manitoba dailies, and the impression it produced of instinctive distrust of circumstantial evidence is still fresh in many of our readers' minds. A news agency, having since examined into the origin of that telegram, has discovered that all the new and startling parts of it are utterly foundationless. There was, indeed, a girl murdered in that place thirty years ago and the man who was executed for the crime protested his innocence till the end. But the name and existence of the man who made the dying

**We Have
Removed**

TO
**Cor.
Princess St.
AND
Cumberland
Ave.**

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confession lately, the place where he was supposed to have made it, and every detail of that confession, all this is pure fiction. Thus is exploded one of the many tales condemning circumstantial evidence.

And yet there remains the difficulty of choosing between two alternatives. Shall all judges refuse to execute any criminal on purely circumstantial evidence, because this kind of evidence is sometimes misleading? Or shall they continue to inflict the death penalty after carefully sifting the only kind of evidence that is, generally speaking, obtainable, even if an innocent man occasionally suffers? Is this latter alternative not better for the common good of society than the former, which would deprive murder of nine-tenths of its terrors?

This is the view taken by Mr. Grant S. Hager, a learned North Dakota lawyer, who sums up the history of the case in question and insists strongly on the finality of judicial sentences, a final-

ity the absence of which in criminal cases is greatly deplored by the best American jurists. What Mr. Hager says of "dreams" is an allusion to a dream which one of the county officials had and which, because it exonerated the condemned murderer, was much used as sensational testimony by the local press. We quote from the St. Thomas Times, edited by Mr. Hager.

Within the past three weeks many articles have appeared in papers of this State expressing the belief of the writers that Joseph Till, sentenced to life imprisonment from this county ten years ago for murder was innocent. Unquestionably these writers are sincere in their beliefs, and moved with sympathy for Till, are anxious to aid him secure his liberty. At the time Joseph Till was tried for murder Justice N. C. Young, of the State supreme court, was prosecuting attorney for the county. No man who knows Justice Young will believe that he ever lent his abilities as an attorney to send an innocent man to life imprisonment. During the trial Judge Kneeshaw, of this district, then practising before the bar, acted as Till's attorney. He used all his legal knowledge and energies to bring before the jury such evidence as would prove the innocence of the defendant. In this case he was aided by the chief deputy sheriff and jailor of the county, D. E. Morden, who had a firm belief in Till's innocence, and who has since been untiring in his efforts to secure a pardon for the condemned man. A jury of twelve just men, citizens and tax payers of this county, with all the evidence before them, and guided by the charge of an impartial judge, found that Till was guilty of the murder of Adam Miller and so recorded their verdict in open court. Since Till's incarceration in the State penitentiary his case has been before the board of pardons twice, and every mitigating circumstance in his favor weighed again and again, yet the men who are appointed by the State to inquire into these matters, with the record of the trial before them, and after hearing the arguments of his friends and counsellors, have refused a pardon. At one of these hearings before the board of pardons Justice Young, by virtue of his office as chief justice of the State supreme court, was a member of the board and acted upon the application. With his full knowledge of the original trial supplemented by the facts produced by Till's friend, Justice Young voted against the granting of a pardon. Statements have been made that the record of the trial had been purposely lost in order to hinder the securing of a pardon; that the facts which could be proven by the record were sufficient to procure a pardon. But in spite of these statements the record was easily found in the possession of the former court stenographer who had been ready to furnish a transcript of his minutes at all times. The Times does not believe in the punishment of an innocent man, and is always ready and willing to lend its aid in righting any wrong, but is not moved by maudlin sympathy and does not take kindly to beliefs founded on dreams or illusions. Joseph Till was convicted after a fair and impartial trial by an honest jury. He had the benefit of every doubt, and was defended by one of the ablest lawyers in North Dakota. His case has twice been reviewed by the State board of pardons which has refused to change the sentence of the court; and to insist that the man has been "railroaded into prison," or dealt with unfairly because he was a foreigner and unacquainted with the language of the country, is to charge that the prosecuting attorney, the jury and judge, and later the board of pardons are men unfit for public office or American citizenship. We hear much about the inadequacy of our laws, of the frequent escape of guilty men from just punishment, of the contempt of law by communities because of its non-enforcement, and yet when an occasional conviction is secured there are scores of persons

ready and willing to sign petitions for pardons, and urge that the man found guilty should be set free. For what purpose are laws made?

The Tribune keeps up its coarse caricatures of the Delegate Apostolic. Its persistent appeal to the vilest passions will end by disgusting all honest people with the cause it affects to serve with protestations of sincerity. To deplore such base tactics would be a mistake; they recoil upon their author with fatal force, while they cannot damage us in the mind of the reader who has any.

Clerical News

Canon Francisco Figuera, who attended Emperor Maximilian at his execution, died suddenly the other day at his home in Queretaro, Mexico. He had a large fortune, all of which he gave away in charity. He was about to celebrate Mass, when he was attacked with a fit of coughing and died without uttering a word.

Father Raffin, who comes from the Lyons diocese, France, has been elected in Belgium Superior General of the Marists in succession to Father Martin, who died last March. The new Superior General has the reputation of being an able administrator. He was for many years head of the Grand Seminaire of Nevers.

Archbishop Quigley, of Chicago, has given to the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth 58 acres of land at Feshansville, Ill., where a novitiate is to be built. The community is devoted mainly to teaching in Polish parish schools.

Last Tuesday Father Barras, pastor of Argyle, Minn., brought two young men from that town as students to St. Boniface College, where he remained overnight and said the student's Mass next morning. He says that the wheat crop in his parish seems ruined beyond hope by excessive rain. The grain stands so thick that even the sunshine cannot get at it to dry it. It is not yet cut at this late date because the fields are soaked in water. This state of things will make fall ploughing impossible and thus destroy all chance of a good harvest next year. Strange to say, the neighboring districts are not affected in the same way. There cutting and harvesting is going on. The cause of the trouble seems to be that the Argyle farmers are loth to undergo the labor required for the draining of their land. The harvest this year is a most bountiful one, but it cannot be reaped. Farmers have tried using binders with higher wheels, but they all stuck in the mud and the attempt had to be given up.

Rev. J. Beaudry, Rev. J. C. Cormier and Rev. L. E. Cormier, all of the St. Hyacinth diocese, arrived here last Tuesday after visiting California and the Portland (Ore.) exposition, whence they returned from Vancouver by the C.P.R. They were present at the reception tendered by St. Boniface College to His Lordship Bishop Racicot.

The Rev. M. O'Riordan, D.D., Ph.D., D.C.L., of Limerick, has been appointed Rector of the Irish College, Rome, and will repair to the Eternal City next month.

The Right Rev. Dr. Grace, Bishop of Sacramento, U.S.A., is on a visit to Wexford, his native town, where his mother still resides.

The Right Rev. Dr. Keiley, Bishop of Savannah, is on a visit to Ireland, the land of his forefathers.