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Northwest Review.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1898.

CURRENT COMMENT.

Little stock though we take in the Prohibition craze, we are anxious to see the question thoroughly threshed out, and so we print this week a temperate and succinct answer to the weightiest objections against the movement.

Mr. Snead Cox, editor of the "Tablet," was in Ottawa last week. We trust he will be able to extend his journey from England as far as Manitoba. He would thus find out many things he does not yet seem to know; that is, if he is really broad-minded enough to look at a question from two different sides.

Our thanks are due to the Department of the Interior for the collection of maps attached to the Report on Irrigation Surveys of 1896. These maps must be extremely valuable to the dwellers in South Alberta and the Foothills Region. There is also an outline plan showing the proposed diversion of water from the South Saskatchewan River to the Regina and Moosijaw districts. Finely executed as all these plans and maps are, the most elaborately beautiful are the topographical map of a portion of the Rocky Mountain foothills and the map of the Swan River Valley, west of Lake Dauphin.

THE PLEBISCITE CAMPAIGN.

The Prohibitionists are pretty safe in predicting that they will poll a majority in this Province when the vote is taken on the 29th of this month; but we doubt very much whether that majority will show the feeling of the country on the question at issue. In fact the circumstances under which the poll is to be conducted in Manitoba are such that no matter how it goes the winning side will not be able to decently claim that they are supported by a majority of the people.

The vote is to be taken on the old and infamous Provincial list of 1895. The whole world knows that that list was a

most unfair one, hundreds of qualified voters in Winnipeg alone having been disfranchised. In the country districts the lists were no better, but on the contrary were, in some constituencies, even worse. It follows, therefore, that those whose names were left off that list—and they probably in the whole Province numbered some thousands—will have no chance to record their votes on the question, and besides these there are the thousands of citizens who have come to Manitoba since 1894 and the large number of young men who have grown up here and come of age since that year who will not be permitted to say whether or not they are in favor of Prohibition. Can anyone claim, therefore, that the vote will be a fair expression of the opinion of the people of the Province? It is so unfair and so partial on the face of it that it is condemned before hand and the whole proceeding of having this Plebiscite is, so far as this Province is concerned, nothing but a delusion and a snare that cannot have practical results.

We venture to predict that of those who are qualified to vote only a very small proportion will take the trouble to go to the poll. There is such a plain air of insincerity in the proceedings that none but the rabid temperance element in the community are now taking any interest whatever, and we are confident that this apathy on the part of the masses of the people both in the town and the rural districts will prevail even on polling day. It may be taken for granted that did the level-headed people of Manitoba think for a moment that this Plebiscite would be followed up by legislation the whole country would be agitated; but, instead of this, what do we see? Simply half a dozen estimable men and women of very little weight in the community addressing temperance meetings and utterly unable to say or do anything to convince the bulk of our citizen that this is really "a crisis in the history of the country."

It is generally admitted, even by the "temperance" people themselves, that a prohibition law would be worse than useless if not backed up by the sentiment of the people, and it certainly seems to us that this lack of interest so far as the masses are concerned is proof positive that there is no demand for such legislation and, therefore, that the needed sentiment is wanting. Such being the case we say that even if a large majority is polled in favor of Prohibition it would be little short of criminal to pass such a law, for no one denies that evils far greater than those that now exist would follow in the train of a Prohibition act which would not prohibit.

We feel that great harm is being done to the real and true temperance cause by this agitation. The best friends of temperance are to be found amongst that large class of moderate drinkers which forms the most influential and numerous section of the community and the extreme speeches which the teetotal element are making cannot but disgust many who would otherwise be only too glad to cooperate with them in securing a wise license law which would really serve the

best interests of the country. It is so plain, first, that Prohibition here would not prohibit, and, secondly, that if it did it would prove absolutely disastrous to the development and progress of the Province and especially of our cities and towns, that clear-headed business men will feel they can no longer support or countenance those who are trying to force this measure through. The consequence will be that the agitation will tend to separate two elements in the community which might otherwise work together to good advantage in promoting legislation which would have a beneficial tendency. This is one of the most regrettable features of the agitation and we fear its effects will be felt many years hence and the true temperance cause thereby receive a lasting set-back.

We think that if the "temperance" people had left unsaid or unwritten some of things which have appeared in the daily press they might have stood higher in the estimation of the general public than they do to-day and they might have polled some votes which now will either not be polled at all or will go into the box against them. For instance, was there ever anything written more calculated to injure the true temperance cause than the letter of a prominent lawyer in which a brutal attack was made on some of the most highly esteemed citizens of Winnipeg on account of the part they took in the Labor Day parade? We notice that attack was, so far as the gentlemen who were attacked was concerned, allowed to pass unnoticed. It received from them the silent contempt it deserved and we only refer to it now as a glaring instance of the extreme lengths to which many teetotal fanatics will go and as an evidence of their absolute inability to fairly consider any question affecting their particular fads.

INCREDIBLE DISORDER.

Things must have come to a pretty pass when the Worcester Recorder—a journal of such enthusiastic patriotism that it reproduces, without a smile, a Chicago article proclaiming the probability of Archbishop Ireland being elected Pope without first passing by the Cardinalial dignity—delivers its soul in the following fashion. Just think of Germany, for instance, invading the United States in the interests of humanity, in order to rescue American soldiers from cruel torture and death at the hands of heartless American officials.

Says the Worcester Record:—

If the conditions of starvation and suffering, to which the reconcentrados were subjected in Cuba, justified intervention on grounds of humanity on the part of the United States, is there not a good case presented for like interference by some beneficent power in behalf of our soldiers in camps and on transport ships?

The American people should assemble in mass meetings in the various cities and towns of the Union and take definite action to compel their government to adopt adequate measures of relief for our suffering and dying soldiers. There

has been from press and people enough of talk and protest which has thus far been barren of result. This great nation should not be content to "unpack itself in words like a very drab" in view of its heroic defenders tortured and slain by governmental supineness or incompetence.

INFIDELITY THE SHADOW OF PROTESTANTISM.

Catholic Transcript (Hartford).

It is an undeniable fact that infidelity and materialism have made vast inroads upon Christianity during the past one hundred years. From Voltaire and Rousseau these evils derived their greatest impetus, and although the influence of these celebrated Frenchmen has begun to wane, nevertheless the virus of anti-Christian ideas is still to no inconsiderable extent actively at work in the world to-day. It finds its way not alone into the minds of those whom a neglected early education has predisposed to its reception, but even many whose youthful years were spent under strong Protestant influences become inoculated with this prevailing error and grow indifferent, if not hostile to Christianity. Infidelity and rationalism are invading even the Christian ministry, and its doctrines, or rather its negation of creed, are voiced in the so-called Christian pulpit. One has but to follow the utterances weekly emanating from Protestant divines to be convinced of their tendency towards rationalism. To so great an extent is this spirit spreading in the modern pulpit, that Ingersoll, the high priest of scoffing infidelity, no longer finds himself master of the field; his lectures have lost their novelty, and as he admits, the ministers are appropriating his theme and crowding him from the platform.

A casual observance convinces that Protestantism is fast drifting to this entire negation of Christian revelation, and it is noteworthy also that those sects which retain the fewest doctrines in common with the Catholic Church, are speeding the most rapidly to destruction. The farther a sect separated from the standard of Catholicity, the less able it was to withstand the assaults of incredulity and infidelity. The most vigorous church organizations are those which have most clearly allied themselves in creed to her of whom it was foretold: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against thee."

The Catholic Church alone gives evidence of an ability to maintain itself against this modern onslaught, and while creed shifts and varies and large defections are noted in Protestant bodies, she alone remains staunch and uncompromising and numbers more adherents now than ever before in her history. Her own children remain firm in their attachment and conversions are numerous among earnest seekers after truth. Far from having their faith shaken, those who study her dogmas become more ardent in their devotion and perceive more clearly the truth of her creed.

The truth alone can satisfy the reflecting able mind. Errors cannot long retain it in thralldom. Catholic theologians—those who desire to follow to its ultimate

conclusion every dogma of her belief can attain no logical conclusion at variance with her teachings. She is the truth, and no false premises found in her creed can lead the human reason beyond her pale.

Those who have the maintenance of Protestantism at heart cannot note without regret that many of the ablest and most logical minded divines are passing without the confines of Christianity and rejecting the early Protestant principles. No inaccuracy can be detected in the method of reasoning employed by these modern theologians. Their principles of logic are sound. Their deductions are logical sequences from the religious platform whence they started. If the Protestant basis be truth, their conclusions are undeniable. And yet without violating what human reason certifies to be a truthful method of advancing in Christian science, they have found themselves in infidelity—in a position antagonistic to early Protestantism. The active, progressive minds of Protestant thinkers, refuse to remain at rest; they carefully advance along admittedly correct lines, and this advancement leads to a negation of formerly admitted principles. Hence it is that the advance guard of Protestant thinkers are little removed from rationalists and agnostics.

Protestants erroneously assert that Catholicity shuns the light of scrutiny, yet facts prove that scrutiny is the death-blow to Protestantism and that the creed of the Catholic Church has withstood unimpaired the investigation of the centuries. To-day Catholicity alone presents itself a bulwark against the surge of infidelity while Protestantism but increases its flood. If Christianity is to remain a civilizing and soul-saving agency and not give place to incredulity and unbelief, the lesson taught by the experience of the present day is that Christians must assume some more unassailable basis than Protestant belief. The weakness of this creed is apparent from undeniable facts. The ten millions of spiritists and the vastly larger number of non-religionists, found in our land at the present time, show the helpless hold which Protestantism has upon the conviction of the people. The increase among unbelievers is the result of defections from Protestant bodies, and is the logical outcome of the Reformation.

It cannot be advanced in rebuttal that Catholicity is equally responsible for this rejection of Christian belief among the people. Infidelity is no outgrowth of Catholic creed. Protestant writers and Protestant preachers can behold in this defection from Christianity the results of their untruthful tirades against the true Church. They vilified and maligned Catholicity, they pictured her as the mother of abomination and for centuries have exerted themselves to blacken and defile her in the eyes of the world. They have hidden the truth of her creed from the eyes of those who sought instruction from their lips, and they have instructed their followers to turn with