

Northwest Review.

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REV. A. A. CHERRIER,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

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WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 19, 1900.

CALENDAR FOR NEXT WEEK.

SEPTEMBER.

- 23—Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost.
- 24, Monday—Our Lady of Mercy.
- 25, Tuesday—Votive office of the Apostles.
- 26, Wednesday—Votive office of St. Joseph.
- 27, Thursday—St. Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs.
- 28, Friday—St. Wenceslaus, Martyr.
- 29, Saturday—Michaelmas.

CURRENT COMMENT.

In the Oblate "Missionary Record" for September we read: "America gives us some surprises in the way of names. It is *piquant* to hear Bishop Dontenville or Father Constantineau (Rector of Ottawa University College) talking English (or American) with a decided Yankee accent." And yet we feel pretty safe in saying that both His Lordship and the Rector Magnificent have often occasion to make the same remark anent their brethren south of the U. S. northern boundary line. We Canadians, in whom our American cousins detect too much of a British accent, are quite surprised, when we visit England, to find that we are supposed ourselves to talk English "with a decided Yankee accent." Is it because we follow the golden middle course, neither keeping our vowels in the throat and the soft palate like the typical Englishman, nor letting them slip through the nose like our Yankee friends, but making them resound in the mouth or on the hard palate?

A few years ago vertical writing was made obligatory in the public schools here. We condemned the fad in these columns as unartistic and favoring laziness. Our excellent Catholic teachers, the Brothers of Mary, who are such able penmen, refused to accept the innovation. And now the school superintendents of New York city recommend the abolition of vertical penmanship because it makes slow penmen. This is one item of pedagogical news that will doubtless strike Mr. Daniel McIntyre in his visit to New York. The result will probably be a return to the time-honored slant. Meanwhile the change has had a disastrous effect on the penmanship of the public schools in this city, which, never good, has now become abominable. Here we have one of the many evil consequences of that mania for change which the public school authorities mistake for progress.

A change in methods of teaching, even if it be a useful change, always entails poor results during the period of transition. Teachers, like everyone else, require practice before they become perfect in the use of their tools. Under the prevailing taste for change they generally have to switch on to something new before they have got used to the old, and so their teaching is less efficient.

But how is it that retrograde changes like the resort to vertical penmanship—a method which the laziest of writers have practised for hundreds of years—are made by an intelligent school board? Simply because, as in most public assemblies, the aggressive tail wags the dog; the noisiest members sneer at tried and well tested methods as out of date, though they themselves may know nothing about them; the other members, being slaves to shallow, ignorant public opinion, the great tyrant of our time, are cowed into submission against their better judgment, and so the new measure passes as a triumph of up-to-dateness.

Another explanation is to be found in the shrewd manipulations of booksellers. Wishing to sell their text-books, they ingratiate themselves with the members of the school board; when they have won them over individually, they get a member to make a motion and—presto! the trick is done, they gather in the shekels.

Why did the school board not consult expert penmen? Most of the public school teachers write wretchedly. Hence, the poor penmanship of the public school pupil is general. The contrast between the neat writing of our convent girls and the characterless scrawl of the public school girls is very obvious. The fact of the matter is, there is only one thing the public schools teach well, and that is arithmetic, to which they devote an immense amount of time. If the school board had had a becoming sense of their own limitations they would have consulted professional teachers of penmanship before adopting a style which the latter never approved, and which, after a few years' trial, is found deficient in that one virtue that is supposed to redeem all its manifest vices, viz., speed.

The *Tablet*, of Sept. 1, publishes the following translation of a paragraph that appeared in a Malaga (Spain) newspaper: "A sensational and interesting incident which profoundly impressed the public occurred last night in the theatre of Ataranzas. The play, 'El Mississippi,' was being represented when there passed close to the theatre the Holy Viaticum. At the solemn sound of the little bell the actors suspended their play and devoutly knelt down whilst the orchestra intoned the 'Royal March.' The spectators, greatly moved, also knelt down, and, presently getting up, broke forth into vociferous cheers which lasted a considerable time." This is worthy of the best ages of faith and proves that Spain is still preeminently the Catholic country. The Spariard always speaks of the Blessed Sacrament as "La Divina Majestad," the Divine Majesty.

It was with a distinct shock of painful surprise that we found the usually accurate *Catholic Record*, of London, Ont., reprinting without comment or correction an amusingly inaccurate article, from some American publication, on "Crowfoot's Priest." That article came under our notice in some American Catholic paper, and we had thought of pointing out its errors, but the multitude of them gave us pause.

For instance, the writer says that the Blackfoot chief Crowfoot, "was more than eighty years old, the priest (Father Lacombe) a dozen years younger." Now, when Crowfoot died, in 1886, Father Lacombe was 59 years old; thus, according to the romancer, the years between the two must have been, not twelve, but at least twenty-two. But we saw Crowfoot, as many people did, here in the autumn of 1885, and he certainly was not anything like eighty years old; he seemed to be less than fifty. Again, we are told that "in the chief's boyhood the red man held undisputed sway from the Lakes to the Rockies." Let us see if this is true. The chief's boyhood began about 1840; the Red River settlement had then existed 25 years 450 miles east of the Lakes, the red man held no undisputed sway here, but had to keep very quiet or the Hudson Bay people and the halfbreeds would want to know why he didn't. Finally—for it would be too long to enumerate all the fanciful inventions of this article—comes the astonishing assertion that Father Lacombe is dead: "Crowfoot is dead" (as if he had died the other day, whereas his death occurred 14 years ago) "and Father Lacombe has followed the chief." No, thank God, he is very much alive, as the Pope and many other prominent people in Europe can testify at this moment.

Wonderful indeed is the enterprise of a subsidized daily like the *Free Press*, which lately informed its readers, in its favorite indirect way, i. e., by a quotation from an admiring contemporary, that it would soon be in a position to appear occasionally as a 24-page paper. Last Monday it printed an item (about a telescope revealing a theft) which we had published in a condensed form just thirty-two days before.

In view of certain rumors to the effect that the *NORTHWEST REVIEW* owes a considerable sum of money to its late manager, we deem it our duty to state most emphatically that we owe him nothing except the damage inflicted upon us by his mismanagement and by his sudden refusal to continue. The suddenness of his refusal, in spite of a previous understanding that he would warn us in time to make other arrangements, was the cause of our two months' suspension.

THE RACE AND CREED CRY.

All thoughtful and patriotic citizens of our great Dominion must view with regret and alarm the vicious efforts which certain politicians and party organs are making to inject race and creed issues into the election contest which is now in progress and which must be fought to a finish within the next few months. We all know what violent passions may be aroused amongst our people by appeals to national prejudice and religious fanaticism; we have seen it over and over again and the outbreak of bigotry and intolerance which swept over the land and was at its height a few years ago in connection with the Manitoba school question is a striking instance which will readily occur to all, especially as the results of that outbreak are yet visible in the monstrous injustice under which the Catholic minority here are still suffering. With such an illustration before our eyes and with full knowledge that the development and progress of Canada must be seriously retarded and even its existence as a confederated Dominion endangered each time such issues are raised, we say it would be, in the most serious sense of the word, deplorable if race and creed animosities were to be made the

chief feature of the present election as they undoubtedly were of the 1896 campaign.

From this point of view we take the liberty of saying that we think the course adopted by the *Morning Telegram* in its issue of Saturday last in reference to Hon. Mr. Tarte was in many respects an injudicious one. We do not mean to say that the paper did Mr. Tarte personally the slightest injustice, for we are ready to admit that that honorable gentleman can truthfully be described as a most dangerous element in the public life of the Dominion. We admit, too, that the outrageous caricature of the Hon. Hugh John Macdonald, which appeared in *La Patrie*, deserved all that the *Telegram* said about it, inasmuch as the publication of such an offensive cartoon of a highly respected and immensely popular statesman in a Canadian paper was a disgrace to Canadian journalism, and we readily believe there is hardly another journal in the Dominion which would be guilty of such an outrage against good taste and public decency. But the *Telegram*, in our opinion, should have contented itself with saying this, and there was no need for its long screed in the course of which it said things which might far better have been left unsaid and which could not fail to hurt the sensibilities of many of our French Canadian citizens the majority of whom, we are convinced, have no use for Mr. Tarte and his methods and certainly would be amongst the first of our people to resent the publication of such a beastly misrepresentation of Manitoba's favorite son.

We do not wish to pursue this matter any further; it is an unpleasant subject for us to deal with, but we feel it to be our duty to say what we have said and we hope it will be taken in the spirit in which it is written. The election contest will in all conscience be bitter enough even if confined to legitimate political and partisan issues, and any journal which will be the cause of raising race or creed questions will be doing neither the country nor its party good service.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

The *Free Press* of late has been paying a great deal of attention to the City Council and has had no difficulty in pointing out a number of what it considers sins both of omission and commission for which the aldermen will have no answer when the next election comes on. The latest complaint the paper has to make is that no printed record of the proceedings of the Council is kept and it says that the reason the votes and proceedings are not printed is the fear that the press and the electors would be able to follow more intelligently the votes and actions of our representatives. To a certain extent we agree with the great moral daily but at the same time we must confess that we cannot understand the position it takes in this matter. We firmly believe it to be of the gravest importance that every citizen should know exactly what each alderman has said and how he has voted on every matter that has come before him either in committee or in open council meeting. The generally acknowledged partial failure of our municipal system of Government in this city is undoubtedly traceable to the fact that under present conditions the public know little or nothing about how things are actually done—all they get is the general result—and they are not able to follow the methods or course of any alderman individually or of the Council as a body because, as the *Free Press* says, there is no reliable or detailed record of the proceedings. It is universally admitted on the other

hand that municipal Government in England is as conspicuously successful as practically the same system here is the reverse, and the difference in results is no doubt largely attributable to the fact that a printed record of not only the votes and proceedings but substantially a verbatim report of every word spoken by each alderman in debate is invariably put before the public in all the important towns and cities of the old country. And how do

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