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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11.

CURRENT COMMENT.

Religious Instruction. A telegram from Toronto, dated Nov. 5th, says that "influential gentlemen from the Anglican Synod of Toronto waited on Premier Hardy this afternoon to request certain hours to be set apart in public school for religious instructions. Hon. S. H. Blake, Rev. Dr. Langley, Provost Welsh and Senator Allan were among the principal speakers. The premier promised to give the matter his fullest attention." So far so good. It is better to have fixed times for religious instruction than to have none at all, though the proper way is both to have fixed times for pious exhortation and to be free to speak of religious matters whenever a good opportunity offers. Evidently our Anglican friends are waking up. It is the absence of religious training in schools that is responsible for the loose morality which earnest clergymen of this city are trying to correct. Unfortunately, public meetings and agitation are powerless to repair the damage caused by schools that ignore our duties to God while dilating on "our duties to animals." Such ineffectual remedies remind us of Squeers, the avaricious pedagogue, who, while denying to his boarding pupils wholesome food, dosed them with treacle and brimstone.

The Seats Of The Mighty. We have received from the Copp, Clark Company Mr. Gilbert Parker's historical romance of Quebec before and at the time of the successful siege thereof by General Wolfe. Like everything that Mr. Parker writes, this is a masterly production. There are situations and descriptions in it quite equal to anything in contemporary literature. As a general rule, the style is chaste and vigorous, occasionally smacking of Newman, as when he makes one of his characters say "he is a just man and a generous." Newman being the only contemporary writer that has successfully revived this elliptical use of a second adjective. The epithet "carbolic" is twice used in the sense of "caustic": Doltaire "had said something a little carbolic," p. 129, and Voban "was full of a carbolic humor," p. 140. Now, even if the word were suited to one who is supposed to be writing about a hundred years ago, such a novel adjective should not be used twice in one book, else it would suggest either a careless or a worn-out writer. But the very use of this word is an anachronism in the mouth of Robert Moray, who is giving his own memoirs in "The Seats of the Mighty" for the benefit of Mr. Pitt, Prime Minister from 1783 to 1801 and from 1802 to 1806. The word was coined to fit carbolic acid discovered in 1834, and did not come into common use till the second half of this century was far advanced.

Is it not also an anachronism to make Voban speak of *Monsieur Journal* as accidentally burning his beard (p. 178) by the flame of a candle at a time when no gentlemen wore beards? These slight blemishes are the more noticeable because of the general excellence of Mr. Parker's literary workmanship. One meets at every turn real gems of expression, clear-cut and brilliant, as when a face in anguish is, by an uneducated man (p. 176), said to be "like stone that aches."

Catholics will note with pleasure the almost complete absence of any remarks derogatory to their religion. Mr. Parker seems to have really tried to understand the outward life of Catholics. But he is mistaken in two points. There is no feast "of the naming of Christ" (p. 299) in summer; the Feast of the Name of Jesus occurs in January. There could be no annullment of marriage such as is described at p. 320. A marriage between a Catholic and a Protestant before a Protestant minister in Quebec is, though sinful, perfectly valid and cannot be made void. The author would have saved himself the ridicule which that impossible scene in the cathedral will bring upon him from the Catholics of the Dominion, had he consulted some well-informed Catholic before attempting to write on what must necessarily be an unknown subject to him. He has been more true to history in his portraiture of the infamous Bigot, the vain Marquis de Vaudreuil, the chivalrous Montcalm and the resolute Wolfe. His description of the siege operations and the first battle on the plains of Abraham is very good. Doltaire is a marvellous creation of his, a typical product of the versatile eighteenth century. Moray and Alixe Duvarney knit themselves into the reader's soul. Voban and Gabord are original and interesting specimens of a strong, trustworthy race. However we miss that rare insight into French Canadian life which Monsieur de Gaspe, treating of the same period, gives us in his "Anciens Canadiens." Mr. Gilbert Parker puts himself in the place rather of the victors than the vanquished.

A Blast From The Tribune. The Tribune gets into a white heat over our last week's comment on "School Contamination." We expected as much, but hardly dared to hope that it would give our words the further publicity of reproducing them all, as it has done, in its own columns with scare headlines emphasizing exactly the truths we wished to emphasize. To be sure, its introduction to our article bristles with fundamental errors; but that only clinches our argument for avoiding so error-laden an atmosphere. What the Tribune writer calls "sacerdotal pretensions" is nothing but the teaching of Our Blessed Lord, the great High Priest, and of St. Paul, St. John and all the other inspired writers of the New Testament. They were remarkably exclusive; they believed in but one fold and one shepherd; they told us to avoid heretics (Titus, iii, 10). We don't explain away and juggle with their words. Those who, like the Tribune, wince at the assertion of unadulterated truth have lost the central idea of Christianity. There is but one religion as there is but one God and one Christ. If you can't realize it, don't swear, try to see if it can be attacked by any valid reason. Mere sentiment, the mere presence of many conflicting sects, mere traditional prejudice, all these are not arguments. The Tribune says Catholics are less moral than Protestants. We refuse to accept its alleged statistics. Other and more reliable statistics prove the exact contrary. Most Protestants have not even a dream of the purity of soul which the pious reception of Catholic sacraments produces. But we purposefully refrained from handling this delicate subject. Had we written what we know, the Tribune would have had a fit. As to the reproof administered to us for commending the bravery of a boy

that knocks down an insulter of his religion, and the Tribune's reminder to us of "the meek and lowly Nazarene who enjoined his followers, when smitten on one cheek to turn the other," we beg to observe that this is a typical sample of Protestant one-sidedness in quoting Scripture. A more thorough knowledge of the Written Word shows that the quoted text is an advice under certain circumstances, not a command to be observed always. Christ's own conduct when he scourged the money-changers out of the temple and St. Paul's action when he smote Elymas blind and called him "son of the devil" prove that there are occasions when meekness is not commended by Our Lord. Were it a universal command, all punishment by law would be unchristian; which is a "reductio ad absurdum." No doubt the Tribune, which, with its accomplices, has been smiting us on both cheeks for the last seven years (for it paved the way for the infamous 1890 School Act) would very much like to see us meekly bear its cowardly abuse; and, had we no sacred cause to defend, we should prefer this easier and more attractive course; but we represent a slandered and duped minority and we therefore deem it our duty to warn our persecutors that we will never submit to the indignity of sending our children into the heretical atmosphere of a Protestant class-room.

The Archbishop At St. Mary's. His Grace of St. Boniface surpassed himself at the reopening of St. Mary's Church last Sunday evening. Every word he uttered was instinct with truth, appositeness and eloquence. He said: "It is time to know what they (the Federal and Local Governments) are doing for us, to ask if we are mere children who leave others to answer and decide for us without consulting us.... If our rights have been sacrificed, to whom in this country of ours has it been given so to dispose of our rights, and in what name and under what principle of the constitution do they do it?... There are the rights of Christian parents, and I would like to know who is the man with authority to dispose of them and barter them away. Your children must not only have a mere smattering of religious teaching; there must be no question of bringing Christ into the school at a certain hour; but He must reign in that school as He should reign over the whole earth; when you have satisfied the state by giving a proper secular education the state has nothing to do with the rest—that is our business." These are truly golden words. It is, on the part of the state, an intolerable impertinence to meddle with religious teaching and say whether or when it should be given. The Archbishop went on to express an opinion which is perfectly in accord with facts. Were it not for the paid agitators who delude the public with plausible lies, the vast majority of Manitoba Protestants would vote for the restoration of our rights. "I feel quite satisfied," said His Grace, "that the honest people of Manitoba, if properly consulted," i.e. if all voters were honestly registered and slanderers properly silenced, "would be quite willing to give us what we ask. I declare that if we were not in the hands of politicians who act for their own interests, and if we could leave it to the honest common people of the country who would look only to what is right and just, the question would immediately be settled according to equity, justice and the constitution." This frank and fearless declaration is particularly opportune at a time when, as happened a few days since, one of the ministers of the local cabinet was overheard chuckling to a distinguished friend that "we've got Laurier to agree to precisely what we offered the Commissioners last winter." He chuckles right who chuckles last. As that Protestant teacher, whose letter we reproduced

last week, said: "If the reported settlement is signed to-morrow and the church is not a party to it, then the [present] state of affairs will remain unaltered."

An Excellent Argument. In an able article on "Reading the Bible," the Free Press of the 9th inst. says: "If we can do without it as children we can do without it as men and women, and why should it be read at all? That is a natural question, following the spectacle of a Gospel minister opposing the use of the Bible in schools. If it can be dispensed with there, why not dispense with it everywhere and all the time?" Precisely. If religion can be dispensed with in the schools, when plastic minds and hearts are most in need of its elevating, restraining influence, why not dispense with it everywhere and all the time? If surveillance can be dispensed with in high schools and colleges, at an age when mind and will are struggling with surging passions, why not dispense with it in the case of grown up people, why not not abolish the police? This kind of a fortiori reasoning could be applied to almost every sphere of life, and everywhere the conclusion would vindicate Catholic practice.

PREMIER LAURIER ON THE SCHOOL SETTLEMENT.

"It is all bosh." Ottawa, Nov. 10.—The premier is sanguine as to the outcome of negotiations regarding the school compromise. On being asked to-night about reports from Winnipeg of a hitch in the negotiations, Mr. Laurier characterized it as "all bosh." The school question is now practically settled. At a meeting of the cabinet council held during Mr. Tarte's late visit a final decision was arrived at and nothing now remains, but to make the terms of the settlement public, and this will be done, it is expected within the next two days by the government here. The terms of settlement are materially those announced in the Free Press some weeks ago. Hon. Attorney-General Sifton leaves to-day for Brandon. His business there is partially of a private and partially of a political nature. No announcement regarding the settlement of the school question will be made until after his return.—Free Press, Nov. 11th.

We quote the above for the information of our readers and to show them how the matter now stands according to the daily papers. For ourselves we have only to repeat that the terms of settlement as announced in the Free Press some weeks ago, (which simply mean nothing) would prove to be no settlement of the school question.—N.W. REVIEW.

MR. LAURIER ON THE SCHOOL SETTLEMENT. From the Catholic Register. We have had several versions of Mr. Laurier's announcement at Quebec concerning the Manitoba school settlement. That which we take to be the revised, official report of the Premier's speech appeared in The Globe of Tuesday. He said: "It is not yet four months since we assumed power, and before six months have rolled by we shall have settled this school question. (Hear, hear.) We shall have settled it in what manner? We shall have settled it by giving to conscience the rights of conscience; we shall have settled it in such a manner that those who believe in religious instruction in the school shall have satisfaction on this point. We have obtained from our fellow-countrymen of the Province of Manitoba, represented by the Government of Manitoba, all the concessions which a man of honor and a man of conscience, whatever may be his religion, whatever may be his race or nationality, has the right to demand. (Applause.) And I know well one thing, that is that we shall not settle this school question to the satisfaction of the extremists in either camp. There are extremists in the Province of Quebec, and there are extremists in the Province of Manitoba. The extremists in the Province of Manitoba today say in advance to the Government of Manitoba: 'Take good care not to make the least concession. You have the power in your hands; you are not going to hesitate to preserve the school act as it is.' On the other hand, we have the extremists in the Province of Quebec, who say: 'Nothing will satisfy us but the pound of flesh which we have the right to cut from the breast of the Province of Manitoba; nothing will satisfy us but what we have demanded; nothing will satisfy

us but the humiliation of the Province of Manitoba.'"

Was Mr. Laurier talking for effect when he made this theatrical reference to the "pound of flesh which we have a right to cut from the breast of Manitoba?" Such language is, in our opinion, both unfortunate and uncalled for. The cause of Catholic education can hardly be compared by a public man who weighs the value of his words to the suit of Shylock of Venice. We are simply amazed that the Premier of a British country should make himself responsible for such a gross misrepresentation of a cause, the justice of which is known and admitted by public opinion in every part of the empire, as well as by the highest judicial tribunal of the realm. The mere recklessness of native eloquence should be bridled when he who is afflicted by it occupies the high and honorable position to which Mr. Laurier has attained.

But let us see what plan of foiling Shylock it is that has recommended itself to the Liberal Premier. His personal organ in Arthabaskville, The Union des Cantons, de l'Est, professes to give us the particulars. Here they are: "What we can state with certainty is that the two Governments have reached an understanding, and that this understanding will not destroy the National schools, to which the majority in Manitoba are attached, and that this settlement secures for the Catholics religious instruction and the teaching of French in the localities where the majority is French, as well as the employment of Roman Catholic teachers of both sexes in the districts where the majority are Catholics, and several other equally important concessions. It is also certain that both Mr. Laurier and Mr. Greenway reached this settlement with the expressed wish of securing for the minority schools as efficient as those of the majority. There is no doubt but that on this point both Premiers agreed perfectly. Both are also in favor of religious instruction in the schools, as are the majority of the Canadian people. A remedial bill will therefore not be needed.

It does not require the keenest sort of insight to discern in the foregoing statement that Mr. Laurier intends to offer to the Catholics of Manitoba the very least that they as Catholics could accept. They are to have a time set apart for religious instruction and they are to have Catholic teachers. This is about what the Catholics of Ireland accepted in the National school system; but there the important consideration must not be overlooked that Ireland is a Catholic country, and that all the Catholic National schools are officially visited by the priests in the capacity of managers. The settlement considered safe, under all the circumstances, in Ireland would not be accepted in England, where the Catholics are in the minority; and we gravely doubt that it will be found acceptable in Manitoba where also the minority is Catholic. So far we have no assurance that the terms proposed include a provision for new school districts, and, in this respect, as well as in the abandonment of the principle of federal protection of minorities, our people in Manitoba are left to the future mercy of politicians of the Joe Martin stripe in the local legislature. But, under the spell of Mr. Laurier's "conciliation," which seems to be comprised in telling a helpless minority, trampled upon and outraged for six long years, that it has been playing the part of Shylock, the Catholics of Manitoba may adopt with gratitude the sortie of our modern Portia. We say deliberately that they could accept it; but if they do so, they will be accepting less than Catholics have ever accepted before in any part of the British dominions.

SCHOOL GRIEVANCES IN THE NORTHWEST. From the Catholic Record. We have received from the Rev. Father Leduc, of the Order of Mary Immaculate, in charge of the parish of Alberta in the Northwest Territory, a pamphlet showing that in our Northwest the Manitoba school trouble is not the only educational question which calls for the intervention of the Dominion Government and Parliament, in order to do justice to the Catholic and French settlers in that territory. The pamphlet is prefaced by a letter from His Grace, the Most Rev. Archbishop Langevin of St. Boniface, Man., in which the principal points established by Father Leduc are enumerated, showing: 1st, That Catholics have been deprived by the Northwestern Government and Legislature of all control of their schools, in spite of the Constitution. 2ndly, That in asking for redress, and in all the negotiations on schools, Father Leduc himself, the Catholic members of the Legislature, Messrs. Prince and Boucher, and Mr. Forget, one of the two