

NORTHWEST REVIEW

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY
TUESDAY
WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL
AUTHORITY.

At St. Boniface, Man.

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Editor-in-Chief.

Subscription, \$2.00 a year.
Six months, \$1.00.

The NORTHWEST REVIEW is on sale at R. Vendome, Stationer, 290 Main St., opposite Manitoba Hotel, and at The Winnipeg Stationery & Book Co., Ltd., 364 Main Street.

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NORTHWEST REVIEW, St. Boniface, Man.

Northwest Review.

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 1898.

CURRENT COMMENT

Dr. Talmage may be a humbug; but even humbugs, like Balaam's ass, sometimes speak the truth, as may be seen from the following words to be found in a sermon preached by the syndicate preacher and printed in the Tribune of the 2nd inst.:

The talk is whether Protestant churches or Roman Catholic churches are coming out ahead. I tell you, Protestants, this truth plainly—that until your churches are as free as are the Roman Catholic cathedrals they will beat you. In their cathedrals the millionaire and the beggar kneel side by side. And until that time comes in our churches we cannot expect the favor of God or permanent spiritual prosperity.

The death of Mr. Dalton McCarthy has elicited from the organs of non-Catholic public opinion a chorus of praise in which we cannot conscientiously join. The dead leader was undoubtedly a great lawyer and apparently a well behaved man in private life; but further than this concession on our part cannot consist with the facts. He was the author of incalculable harm to the Dominion by raising the anti-separate school cry in Manitoba. His persistence in this tyrannical policy can be reconciled with good faith only on the plea of mental obliquity or ignorance the most dense. Although he had lately ceased to be offensively aggressive, his name was still one to be conjured with, and therefore we deem it a blessing that that name has now become a mere shadow. Mr. Dalton McCarthy ought never to have meddled with politics. The bar was his proper sphere. In the House of Commons he was a majestic failure, and the only success he met with in politics is one over which he now mourns in vain.

JOURNALISTIC ENTERPRISE.

Last Friday, May 13th, the Winnipeg Tribune published the following item:

Mr. W. H. Pambrun has severed his connection with the Roche Percee Coal company and leaves for the east shortly.

Mr. W. H. Pambrun, as his friends know, left for the east more than a month ago, is now in Europe and is expected back in a month.

THE NEGATIVE ARGUMENT.

One of the most interesting passages in Father Drummond's recent lecture on Daniel was an illustration he drew from a curious contemporary fact. It will be remembered that a superfi-

cially striking objection to the authenticity of the Book of Daniel is the silence of all Babylonian remains. Their not mentioning the name and office of Daniel constitutes what is called a negative argument. This sort of argument seems to have a great fascination for the contemporary fancy of the unreasoning public. It appeals to the imagination and is therefore very popular.

Father Drummond was at great pains to point out the inconclusiveness of this argument, unless the contemporary authors whose silence is invoked had very strong motives for not keeping silence and had no motive for suppressing the fact in question. He then went on to show that even when there seemed to be every motive for speaking of some historical personage, yet his name might be omitted by accident, and in this case a seemingly unanswerable argument was really no argument at all.

In order to illustrate this possibility, he imagined an antiquarian delving amid the ruins of Winnipeg in the year 3600, more than 1700 years from now, and finding a public school text book entitled "Composition from Models," used in the higher schools of the cultured Manitoba capital at the end of the nineteenth century. The book was evidently meant to be a representative collection of all the best writers. Nor did it limit its scope to the very best, several decidedly second rate authors were quoted at their best. And yet, strange to say, not even the name of John Henry Newman was mentioned in this collection of models. This was all the more strange that, in the thirty-seventh century, when our antiquarian delved in the ruins of Winnipeg, Cardinal Newman had long since taken his place as the very foremost writer of English prose in all the ages of our literature.

How explain this unaccountable silence? Was the nineteenth century neglectful of Newman's fame? Was he then considered so third rate a writer that not even one gem from his many masterpieces could find place in a collection of English literary models? Our antiquarian, who had hitherto held Winnipeg culture in high esteem, was beginning to revise his estimate of that now buried city, when in those same ruins he hit upon a copy of "Canadian Men and Women of the Time," a book of biographies of living persons published in 1898. It contained among others the life sketch of Prof. Goldwin Smith, no doubt carefully revised by that then famous man, and therein our antiquarian was able to read a quotation from a Canadian newspaper to the effect that, since the death of Cardinal Newman, Goldwin Smith had no equal as a master of English style. This assertion doubtless voiced the opinion which Mr. Smith entertained of the relative merits of Newman and himself and Mr. Smith was undoubtedly a competent judge and must moreover have been fairly representative of the highest culture of his epoch. Consequently our antiquarian is confirmed in his original view as to the high position of Newman as a classic.

But this only increases his wonder that so well edited a book as "Composition from Models" should completely ignore one of the two greatest, if not absolutely the very greatest, of English writers at the time this public school text-book was published. Nor did his perplexity disappear till he accidentally discovered a second edition of this book containing an apology for not including Cardinal Newman in the Models, the motive for this omission being the refusal on the part of the English holders of the copyright of Newman's works to allow

extracts to be made for this particular school-book.

The foregoing is the substance of Father Drummond's apologue or parallel instance, so far as we remember it. It certainly affords a remarkable example of the weakness of the negative argument, and the solution of the difficulty is one which no subsequent historian could have hit upon by mere conjecture. The natural explanation to a Catholic would be far more simple than that rather fishy story about copyright. Newman, he would say, was deliberately excluded from the models for composition because he is too Catholic, just as Genung's Rhetoric and book of Models were rejected by the University of Manitoba, after several years of trial, ostensibly because they were not first-class text-books, but really and at bottom because Genung, though a Protestant, has evidently fallen under the spell of Newman's matchless style, and cannot help inspiring his readers with an admiration that would ultimately lead them to read the King of English Prose—a consummation devoutly to be averted at all hazards.

SPAIN AND AMERICA

It is very interesting to watch the display of anti-Catholic animus against Spain put forth week after week in our great London dailies. People will not stop to think. It is enough for them to know that Spain is a Catholic country, that she has the reputation of being cruel. So they at once jump to the conclusion that in the present juncture of affairs the United States must be altogether right and Spain altogether wrong. Again, our dailies have tried to argue us into the belief that America in this dispute is acting purely from the most disinterested motives, such as pity for a down-trodden people, and her eagerness to give to Cuba the benefits of independence.

Thank God there is one organ of public opinion left to us in England which has the courage to put the case as between Spain and America in its proper aspect. We allude to the *Saturday Review*, the leading Tory weekly. In its current number our contemporary has a powerful leader, entitled "American Morality," in the course of which there is much plain downright speaking. We hope the article will be widely read, and that it will help to induce the people of this country to alter their views as to America's generosity and Spain's cruelty. Says our contemporary:

"From the days of JEFFERSON and JOHN QUINCY ADAMS the United States have coveted Cuba. In 1848, and again in 1853, attempts were made to negotiate its purchase, and when the American Commissioners sent to Madrid on that errand were shown the door they issued their famous Ostend Manifesto, in which it was openly stated that, since Spain refused to sell, the United States should annex the island by force. In accordance with that threat America has ever since pursued a policy of aggression and irritation. Insurrection after insurrection has been set on foot, stimulated and paid for from American soil. Spain has been exhausted by an endless struggle, and now that the fruit seems ripe, it is to be plucked. That is the simple story, and it is not a particularly 'moral' one. Spain is, no doubt, a decaying nation, and America is an expanding nation, and therefore, by the laws that govern the practice of land-grabbing, the stronger is entitled to despoil the weaker; but, in the name of common honesty, let us have no cant about it. We are told that America represents the cause of civilization, humanity, progress, while Spain represents mediæval barbarism and cruelty.

The matter, however, is not yet a *fait accompli*, and America may before long have reason to regret her action in forcing the hand of historic Spain to draw the sword. The Spaniards may be poor and weak, but it has never yet been asserted that they were cowardly.

—London Universe.

THE CHURCH IN FRANCE.

At times everything would seem to point to a coming conflict between Christianity and the powers of darkness. Political and social upheavals are the devil's opportunities. In France the condition of things is most serious and pitiable. It is pleasant, therefore, to hear words of hope—one prophecy which has no sound like a funeral knell. A Frenchman of learning and sound judgment, who has lately made a tour of the United States, records his impressions of it in a calm and discriminating way; and, in comparing our country with his own, takes occasion to make this prediction:

"Infidelity is doomed. Before the year 1900 the Lord God will be the fashion in France."

The world takes her fashions from France; so we may pray—we say it with all reverence—that the genial Frenchman's assertion may be verified, and that the eldest daughter of the Church may return to her mother.—AVE MARIA.

LECTURES ON THE BIBLE.

LAST OF FATHER DRUMMOND'S SERIES AT THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH.

At the church of the Immaculate Conception last Sunday evening Rev. Father Drummond, S. J., announced that owing to university and college engagements, he should for the present discontinue his series of lectures on the Bible, with the hope that he might be able to take them up again in September. If they had followed the series they had noticed that he began by giving them some account of the books that were contained in the Bible, that he then spoke of the Old Testament canon as the only one which presented any difficulty; that he dealt with the Catholic teaching regarding the inspirations of the scriptures, which really meant that God was the author of every thought contained in holy writ, although the expression of that thought might vary according as the secondary instrument, the human writer, might have special talents or inclinations.

Then he had given them a specimen of Biblical criticism, and he now intended to sum up the general impressions they had thus gained by showing them the relation that existed between the scriptures and tradition. Father Drummond, in the course of his lecture, set before the congregation three points, viz.; that in Christian doctrine tradition was prior to holy scripture in time, since it was the only guide of Christians for some centuries before the Bible in its present form existed; prior to it in thought, for tradition alone would tell them that the gospels were the word of God, the gospels themselves did not and could not tell them, and that tradition was more necessary than the written scripture, since it was more practical and if by some means every Bible in the world should be destroyed, they would still have tradition, which would be sufficient, whereas the proper use of the Bible depended on tradition.

In proving these points Father Drummond went exhaustively into the matter, quoting copiously from the sacred text and he particularly held the attention of the congregation, which contained citizens of many different creeds, when he examined several points of doctrine held by Protestants as well as Catholics, which not only could not be proved from scripture, but actually appeared to be contrary to its teaching, and which could only be justified in the light of tradition.

This, he explained, was quite logical, from the standpoint of Catholic teaching, but was, to say the least of it, very inconsistent on the part of Protestants, who professed to believe in the Bible and the Bible only as their rule of faith. In conclusion he spoke powerfully and with intense earnestness of the love and reverence of Catholics for the Bible; he pointed out the absolute necessity of an infallible guide to all who attempted to study the scriptures; of the impossibility of reaching a satisfactory result without such a guide and teacher; and in closing he repeated the words of a Methodist minister, once well known and loved in this city: "The Catholic Church is the great expounder of holy scripture," because it is the receptacle of that tradition which is wider than the scriptures themselves.