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CURRENT COMMENT

The success of the St. Boniface street car line is phenomenal. On no other line are the cars so often uncomfortably crowded, and the overcrowding begins as early as two in the afternoon. Between six and seven in the evening standing room is hard to find. The company, we are told, was so pleased with the unexpected patronage that they spoke two or three weeks ago of putting on extra cars with a twelve instead of a twenty-five minute service. But the promise is yet in the air. One shudders, or rather, burns with indignation at the thought of the stifling atmosphere in those small cars during winter, with the stove taking up so much valuable room. The most needed improvement is, first of all, larger cars. Why not give the St. Boniface and Norwood patrons, out of whom the company is coining money, the finest cars in the city? And there is not a moment to lose, for snow will come at any time, and then how will the company be able to put in the extra switches necessary for a more frequent service?

When so much nonsense is being written about the recently deceased author of "Chita," it is refreshing to quote the wholesome view of him taken by a learned Catholic writer. The following appreciation by James R. Randall in the "Catholic Columbian" of Oct. 15 is quite different from the rhapsodies of the secular journals: About the same time that Senator Hoar passed from this world, Lascadio Hearn, a strange genius and picturesque writer, departed from this world. He was half Irish and half Greek. His father, must have been originally a Catholic, for his pious Irish grandmother wanted him to be a priest. He had no vocation and drifted from one belief to another or to none at all religiously, until he landed in Japan, married a woman of that country and ostensibly adopted the Buddhist or atheistic cult there. Possibly, he became a rationalist, indifferent to all religion, a sensuous worshipper of pantheistic beauty. He was a sorcerer of language, a word-enchanter. He was apparently the slave of intellectual romance and mysticism. He was blind in one eye, weak-sighted in the other, and an ungainly creature physically. He gained an earthly reputation, but what of his soul? Of what use was all that gift of language, if he lost the heavenly harmonies?

From this picture we turn with relief to a more pleasing one. Mr. Wilfrid Ward, in his recently published "Memoir" of Aubrey de Vere, relates the Irish poet's first meeting with Herbert, afterwards Cardinal Vaughan. De Vere was looking for a suitable apartment in Rome, when somebody suggested that a young English ecclesiastic had an excellent sitting-room near the Piazza della Minerva, and would perhaps share it with him. De Vere knocked at the door, and hearing the Italian word for "Come in," obeyed the summons, and, as he often recalled to Mr. Ward, he stood transfixed by the beauty of the English boy of twenty-two, saying to himself: "Good Heavens, if you are like that, what must your sister be!" The young ecclesiastic and the young poet immediately became fellow-lodgers and friends. Later on, when Aubrey de Vere visited Courtfield, the home of Colonel Vaughan, he found that not only the sisters, but all the family were not merely paragons of physical beauty, but the simplest, noblest, most generous, devout and humble people he had ever seen. "The beautiful mother of twelve children cannot feel satisfied unless her six sons all become priests, and her six daughters nuns." But De Vere's count is surely less by one at least, if not two, than the real total of those remarkable children; for there were at least six sons who became priests, the Cardinal,

the Archbishop of Sydney, the Benedictine Prior, Father Jerome, all three dead, and three still living, Father Bernard Vaughan, Monsignor John Vaughan, and Father Kenelon Vaughan, and there is a seventh son, the present Colonel Vaughan, Squire of Courtfield like his fathers.

While still in Rome, De Vere writes to his sister at Curragh Chase, in Ireland: "I like my companion better every day. I must have mentioned him to you; he is a Mr. Vaughan, the eldest son of one of the great old Catholic families of England. He renounces prospects as brilliant as almost any man in England can command, to be a priest in some out-of-the-way village in Wales, and seems as happy as the day is long at his studies and devotions. He is very handsome and refined and as innocent as a child. He sits up half the night reading Thomas Aquinas, and tells me the next morning that he has been dreaming that people had been burning him alive and that it had given him no pain."

Mr. Wilfrid Ward himself gives a graphic account of the effect of the Cardinal's personal appearance. "My own first meeting with Aubrey de Vere," he writes, "came in the year 1874 or 1875. It is stamped on my memory by an amusing incident which occurred on the same day. Aubrey de Vere was at Farringford, enjoying the daily society of his dear friends the Tennysons, and of Mrs. Cameron, who lived at Freshwater Bay. Cardinal Vaughan, then Bishop of Salford, was staying with my father and mother at Weston Manor, and Aubrey de Vere came to tea with us one afternoon, in company with Tennyson and Mrs. Cameron, to meet his old friend. Mrs. Cameron was at that time photographing various persons to represent the characters in the "Idylls," and I had heard her grumble at not being satisfied with her attempt at a representation of Lancelot—face, figure, age, or expression was wrong in every candidate. As Mrs. Cameron and Tennyson entered the drawing-room together, Bishop Vaughan was standing in the glow of the winter fire, looking, as he ever did, the most knightly of priests, and Mrs. Cameron stood for a moment transfixed, as Aubrey de Vere himself had done twenty years earlier in Rome. Then she cried out, pointing to him: 'Alfred, I have found Sir Lancelot.' Tennyson's bad sight prevented him from seeing at whom she was pointing, and he replied, in loud and deep tones: 'I want a face that is well worn with human passion.' The Bishop smiled and blushed, and the general laughter could not be suppressed. Tennyson and he were made acquainted, and their meeting, after this somewhat unpromising beginning, proved a great success."

In common with several others among our friends and acquaintances we lately received from W. E. Blake, importer and manufacturer of church and mission goods, Toronto, a circular and handbill in French, which bears "English as She is Spoke" to a standstill. That immortal production of a Portuguese pen, which sent the English-speaking world into roars of laughter some twenty years ago, was, though extremely funny, yet generally intelligible. Mr. Blake's French, on the contrary, often defies the most ingenious searcher after hidden meanings. Here are a few specimens of his effort to advertise candles and oils:

Office de W. E. BLAKE
Manufacturier et Importateur
Vetements — de Appareil pour
l'Autel—de Vins pour l'Autel
—Candelles — Huiles—
Livres Catholiques
Etc.

Reverend, L'Abbe :

Nous donnons a vous notre liste de nos prix de haut grade de chandelles at huiles, et nous pensons que nous ne recevions pas une tres grande portion comme nous serions en cetttes marchandises, nous desirons mettre avant vous les suivantes.

FAITS!

PREMIEREMENT—Nos huiles et chandelles sont tous positivement haut grade et entierement garanties.

SECONDEMENT—Nos prix sont tres meme comme ces qui sont cite par tous maisons de America speciallement en United States.

TROISIEMENT—Vous n'avez pas droits de douane, ou incommodites et etc payer quand vous achetez de nous.

QUATRIEMENT—Nos affranchissons les frets pour tous ordres solides de chandelles de \$15.00 ou plus d'orient de Winnipeg.

CINQUIEMENT—Nous sommes une maison Canadienne aiant marche seulement en Canada et parce que des droits de douane de United States nous sommes ferme de leur marche.

Nous desirons aussi recevoir du moins une portion de patronage obligent.

Respectueusement Le Votre
W. E. BLAKE.

Il faut a demander les Chandelles avant le temps fit extremement froid.

N.B.—Nous darignons votre attention a notr' avertissement entoure de nos marchandises pour les Missions.

LES CHANDELLES DE CIRE DES ABEILLES.

(Marque du autel)
(Elles sont garante une Chandelle renferme dans les Rubriques)
La meilleur qualite est fait

avec les mains 40c livre

LES CHANDELLES DE PURE CIRE DES ABEILLES.

(Garantisantes.)
Elles sont fait seulement avec

les mains 55c livre

Touts en haut sont dans plaines ou bouts qui sont prepare a user Elles sont emballe dans caisses de 24, 36, 48 et 96 livre et dans tous tailles.

LES CHANDELLES PASCALLES.

De 2 a 30 livres chaque.

Marque du Autel 20c livre

Marque du Autel elles sont artistement decore avec dessins le plus nouveaux 75c livre

LES CHANDELLES POUR PREMIERE COMMUNION.

Elles sont decore nettement avec dessins appropries dans tous tailles.

LES CHANDELLES DE STEARIC ACIDE.

Le meilleur qualite, elles sont presse hydrauliquement, 2s, 3s, 4s, 6s, plaines bouts, qui sont emballe dans couches, 30 et 40 livre.... 18c livre

Si sont emballe dans cartons, 36 livre caisses 19c livre

Les Chandelles qui sont prepare a user dans le chandelier sans coupe, 3c extra, 1s, 2s, 12s, 18s, aussi 2 livres 3 livres et 4 livres chaque 20c livre

LES CHANDELLES VOTIFS QUI SONT PRESSE SOLIDEMENT.

Une ligne special pour votifs pieds ou elles sont use pour la decoration du autel 6s seulement plaines bouts dans 40 livres caisses 12c livre

CHOSSES QUI FLOTTENT POUR L'AUTEL.

Nous avons le Meilleur en Marche.

Le Milton \$1.15 douzaine caisses

MECHES DE HUITES JOURS DURABLES.

Le taille 0, 1, 2, 3 et 4 75c caisse

HUIT JOUR ET HUILE POUR LE SANCTUAIRE.

Il est garante bruler a derniere goutte. Huile pour le Sanctuaire pour les Choses qui flottent seulement dans, 5 gal. caisses \$1.00 gal

Huit jour huile pour mechess de huites jours (le meilleur qualite garantie) \$1.15

Is this the sort of French they teach in Toronto? If Blake's goods are no

better than his lingo, he will soon go out of business.

The "Rassegna Nazionale," a paper published in Italy, thus exposes the absurdity of any codification of free thought: "It would be laughable, if it were not melancholy (says the writer) to see men for the most part bound by terrible and mysterious oaths to a sect which enslaves soul and body, strenuously endeavoring to maintain the right of freedom of thought, and making believe to think with their own heads. But what matters this to the promoters, provided they see their way to leading a fresh onslaught upon religion, and offering a fresh insult to its august Head? For in truth what the self-styled free-thinkers desire is, in the name of freedom of thought, to forbid others to think differently from them, and while themselves bound to a despotically absolutist congregation, to prevent others from believing in their Church and from maintaining their faith." This is interesting, especially when taken in connection with the Rome correspondence of the "Tablet," published in another column.

Few inventions of our modern purists annoy us more than the use, principally among American writers, of "would better" instead of "had better." It is, therefore, with a feeling of intense relief that we have read Professor Lounsbury's history of the correct idiom and his demolition of the absurd puristie would-be correction in Harper's Magazine. As he is one of the greatest living authorities on the history of English words, and as his treatment of this idiom is full of interesting historical proof, we have reason to hope that no writer who respects himself will ever again use "would better." "The use of it," says the great Yale professor, "is so distinctly repugnant to our idiom, not to call it absolutely improper, that, when met with, it is apt to provoke a cry of pain from him who has been nurtured upon the great classics of our literature." He points out that the phrase, "he would better do so and so," does not really mean that it would be better for him to do it, but that he would do it better than something else. Consequently the phrase is not only ungrammatical but meaningless, whereas "he had better do so and so" is excellent English. "Would rather" for "had rather" is not nearly so bad, but it is weak and unidiomatic. Take that well known verse from the Psalms: "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." The man who does not prefer "had" to "would" in this passage has no ear for the harmonies of literature.

We beg to inform those of our contemporaries who are reproducing His Lordship Bishop Pascal's sketch of his Indian Missions, and crediting it to the "Illustrated Catholic Missions," that this is a verbatim report, made expressly for the "Northwest Review" and first published in our columns, of an informal talk given by the Right Rev. Vicar Apostolic of the Saskatchewan to the students of St. Boniface College about a year ago.

Nominations for the general election will take place next Thursday. We have no political bias, for we place our trust in neither party, both being about equally mendacious and corrupt. But, as the railway question is to the fore, we may as well remind our friends of the contrast between the abject slavery of the New World in this matter as compared with the glorious liberty of the Old World. We of the New World, when we are ignorant and have never lived in the Old World, waste our stupid pity on people whom we wrongly suppose to be over-policed and overgoverned. But the fact is that in Europe (including the British Isles) the railways are the servants of the people, here the people are the servants of the railways; there railways pay for the privilege of entering into a most lucrative busi-

ness, here we subsidize our railways over and over again till we have made millionaires of each of the directors; there the complaints of the poorest traveller against a negligent or crusty official are listened to with respect and acted upon, here most complaints are answered by contemptuous curses from local clerks and indifference on the part of higher officers; there laws are enforced and consequently accidents are rare, here laws are multiplied but never observed, and accidents are so common that he who enters a railway train must be ready for death; there the people would not stand the overcrowding of steam and electric cars; when every seat in a car is taken no one else is admitted and another car is provided; here we tamely submit to being huddled standing up into overcrowded and horribly stuffy cars. The reason of all this is that public opinion in America is swayed by the plebeian upstart. Now the plebeian upstart, having exhausted all his energy in getting near the top of the ladder, has none left to claim his rights; he is so much afraid of falling off that he keeps mum. In Europe public opinion is still swayed by the gentlemanly, independent element, in season and out of season. From the very nature of things we can never hope to regain the European level; but we might at least choose the lesser evil, i.e., the platform that gives less power to railway corporations.

FRANCISCANS AND JESUITS.

The "Atlantic Monthly," which for many recent years had been tolerably fair to the Catholic Church, has reverted to its old-time bigotry by admitting to its September number an article on Italy, signed De Gubernatis, which betrays lamentable ignorance of facts. The St. Louis "Western Watchman" scores the writer thus: "Of the Church he has a qualified praise; the section represented by the Franciscans he pretends to reverence, while that represented by the Jesuits he abhors. The contrast he draws between the Son of St. Francis and the Son of St. Ignatius is ludicrous in the extreme. The one is a picture of guileless innocence, and the other a portraiture of greed and cruelty that would do duty for a conventional caricature of Torquemada. Every Catholic knows that the difference between the members of different religious orders is one of garb and work mostly. The virtues and the counsels are practically all alike and in like degree. The good Jesuit in the place of a good Franciscan would do what the good Franciscan does; and vice versa. Both have been horribly traduced and ludicrously travestied before the eyes of the world, so that the real Jesuit and the real Franciscan are almost unknown; the vulgar fiction having in the non-Catholic mind usurped the place of the flesh and blood reality. It is a common alumnus to represent the Jesuits as the real governors of the Church; the dictators of her policy; and the sworn avengers of her wrongs. They are this no more so than other orders and not one-hundredth part as much so as the secular clergy. The policy of the Church is the consensus of Catholic opinion on any subject of present importance; so that every Catholic in the world is to the extent of his ability and influence a dictator to the balance. There is no such thing as Jesuit influence; Jesuit policy; Jesuit teaching; and very little of United Jesuit action. There is less solidarity among the Jesuits than among any of the other orders of the Church. This comes from their being controversialists and casuists par excellence. A great deal has been said for four hundred years of the dominant influence of the Jesuits at the Vatican. This is a vulgar conceit that has come down to us from the days of the Reformation. The Jesuits have always played a role at Rome secondary to that of the three other great orders of the Church. But except for rare intervals the interests of the Church and of the Papacy have been in the hands of the secular clergy. Another vulgar mis-