

if he quarrel with his text-books. At least, no more can be reasonably expected from a manual, and less is often given.

But I would not have it understood, from aught I have said or shall say, that a student of literature, who wishes to persevere in his extensive study, should confine himself to the scant pages of Jenkins or Murray, or, for that matter, to the larger works of Collier or Gaine. John Morley somewhere says that one might study English literature all one's life, and still know nothing about it; a remark which is indeed more truthful than encouraging. The Hand-book formulates strict Catholic principles, and those canons are just what are required for a primary course in English literature for Catholic colleges and schools.

Then again, the Hand-book is the very best of its kind in our possession. If it be well adapted to its purposes, and the best procurable, I cannot see why Catholic teachers should not begin their literary courses with the book. A short passage from the preface to the Hand-book will best show what place its author intended his book to occupy.

"The work was never intended to be a universal history of English books and authors, but merely a manual for the more advanced classes of our schools and colleges. The study of our literature should begin with the knowledge of the most obvious facts that bear upon its history. . . . To give a knowledge of facts, and, by a selection of the best specimens, to awaken or improve the student's taste for the composition of the great masters, was the principal scope of the work."

I humbly confess I am so obtuse as to find nothing absurd in this plan, much less in the undeniable fact that the object thus clearly expressed was religiously accomplished. And this remark applies with almost equal force to the Catechism of Mr. John O'Kane Murray. The latter book is full of useful information, although I am of the opinion that its author should have imparted it in some more acceptable form than that of question and answer.

I regret to say that the almost entire absence of taste and good sense from the article of Mr. Egan go a long way to nullify the whole critique. It is easy to stamp a man and his work as absurd, but quite another thing to prove the charge. It is very easy, too, to criticize, and still easier to abuse. Fortunately, however, the old trick of calling a dog mad and then hanging him, finds fewer and fewer admirers as time rolls on and civilization advances. Rude and contumacious terms, when not fully called forth by circumstances, and as fully substantiated by sound reasons, are nothing better than the vile Billingsgate of the stable and the fish market, lifted out of its native quagmires and all the more malodorous on account of the change. Mr. Egan must have written in great haste, and under other very adverse circumstances, or he would have hesitated before condemning two distinguished Catholic writers, the one as absurd and the other as ridiculous, without condescending to offer a reason for his action. Granting that the Hand-book is faulty, it is not opposed to manifest truth, inconsistent with reason, or contrary to the plain dictates of common sense. A man or a thing may be imperfect and even useless without being absurd. The majority of New York editors would probably agree with me, were I to assert that the typical ward politician is a very useless man, but none of them, except perhaps Mr. Egan, would call him absurd. All this is doubtless very superficial, but it has been forced upon me by the absurd misuse which Mr. Egan makes of his somewhat formidable powers of abuse. I venture to add, however, that if there be ever a case wherein a conscientious application of the "golden rule" of doing as you would be done by becomes imperative, it is when one honest, well-meaning Catholic writer proceeds to pass judgement on another honest, well-meaning Catholic writer.

It must of course be allowed that neither the work of Jenkins nor of Murray even remotely approaches to perfection. Had Mr. Egan restricted himself to a modified statement of this kind, he would have done our community a real benefit; and if he had added thereto the hope that some scholar of subtle, strong and cultured genius, like himself, would turn his attention to the production of a Catholic standard history of English literature, this article need not have been written.

M. W. CASEY.

Cardinal Taschereau has been called to Rome for the next consistory.

## The Church in Canada.

Under this heading will be collected and preserved all obtainable data bearing upon the history and growth of the Church in Canada. Contributions are invited from those having in their possession any material that might properly come for publication in this department

### THE OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE.

#### THEIR MISSIONS IN CANADA.

On December 21st, 1811, Charles T. E. de Mazenod was ordained priest at Amiens. The state of the Church in France was at that time deplorable. The effects of the revolution still prevailed, religious communities had ceased to exist, and everywhere priests were badly needed. Struck by the condition of the country, the young priest conceived the idea of founding a Congregation which by its missionary activity might supply the most pressing wants. He imparted his plan to the Curé of Arles, and on January 25th, 1816, was joined by this friend, to whom others were soon added. Establishing his community at Aix, the young abbé began to draw up the rules and constitutions of an institute, which was to be specially designed for the giving of missions and for the instruction and conversion of the poor. Provided with the formal approbation of seven bishops, the founder next repaired to Rome, where, on February 17th, 1820, he received the formal approbation of Leo XII. The Congregation now began to extend its labours. In 1830 missions were commenced in Switzerland, and in 1841 invitations to foreign countries were received. These were accepted by Mgr. de Mazenod (now Bishop of Marseilles), and from this period the Oblates of Mary,\* as they were now called, began their labours in Upper and Lower Canada, in the United States, in Texas, in Mexico, in Ceylon and Natal, etc.

Canada became the first trans-ocean scene of the Oblates' foreign missions. In 1841, at the instance of the Bishop of Montreal, a residence was opened in his diocese. From Montreal the Society extended to Ottawa, which soon became the centre of a new diocese, over which Father Guiges, O. M. I., was appointed as Bishop. But the spirit of its founder was ever urging the Society forward. Where the *Chantiers* or lumberers had penetrated into the vast forests round the St. Lawrence and its streams, there the Oblates now began to follow, administering the sacraments to the woodmen in their rough and dangerous life. This was no easy task. The way led through a trackless wilderness, through labyrinths of high brushwood and intercepting branches, which only the axe could sever; across swollen torrents, that had to be waded at peril of life, amid giant forests, from which the branches, laden with snow, shut out almost every gleam of daylight; through a country where day and night was passed in exposure to the rigorous cold of long winter months. But their sufferings and privations were not in vain, for every Oblate missionary returning from the *Chantiers* in the wintry forests could count by the thousand the number of those to whom he had administered the consolations of religion.

The evangelizing of the Indian tribes on the Canadian border also, and of the savages of the ice-bound coast of Labrador, was speedily undertaken by the missionaries. Among the devoted labourers in these parts we find the names of Durocher, Pinet, Arnaud, Babel, Charpency, and others. But still more distant fields of missionary efforts awaited the zeal of the Oblate Fathers. Far away, within the north-western limits of America, lay vast regions, extending from 49° latitude to the Frozen Ocean and Baffin's Bay, from the Hudson's Bay to the Rocky Mountains. Those desert wastes were the abode of the Indian, of the moose-deer, of the wolf, and of the white bear. There winter reigned the greater part of the year, and fettered land, and lake, and river, in its rigid chains of ice, almost as hard as those which ignorance and superstition had cast upon the minds and hearts of the inhabitants. To meet, and often succumb to the former, to encounter and triumph over the latter, the Oblates of Mary now resolved to hasten.

When the news spread in France that the Society had undertaken missions among the Indians of the far North West, applications for admission to its ranks came from all parts of France, and thus when the call for missionaries was unusually great, Providence caused an extraordinary development of