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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1899

CURRENT COMMENT

The obituary article we reproduce elsewhere from the "Irish Catholic" is deserving of careful perusal. Mother Gertrude, of Listowel, County Kerry, Ireland, was, in the words of one who knew her well, "a great missionary in the cloister." She was wont to gather together all the young men of religious promise in and around the town of Listowel into a class, the majority of whom, thanks to her apostolic influence, have become priests or religious. Rev. Bro. Mulvihill, O. M. I., is one of her conquests to the service of the Church. This is the sort of masterful woman we like, she didn't prate about her rights and thereby win the contempt of the masculine half of the human race; she simply used her God-given influence to raise that masculine half to a higher plane.

"L'Echo de Manitoba" very naturally finds it strange that we should have blamed it alone for translating "a black sheep" by "un mouton noir" and advertising an objectionable play, when "Le Manitoba" was betrayed into the self-same error, both journals having accepted the same advertising item. This fact we did not know till our stricture had appeared. There was quite a joke at our expense when the foreman of "Le Manitoba" told us of it. Had we known they were both in the same boat we would certainly have said so. Thus we did not wilfully ignore one journal's fault and condemn that of the other; we were simply ignorant of the former—and this, by the way, is the only meaning of the French word "ignorer" which "L'Echo" uses in the English sense when it says: "Pourquoi ignorer l'un et condamner l'autre?" It should be: "Pourquoi prétendre ignorer?"

A hopeful sign of a growing disposition to be fair to Catholicism is the significant fact that "Richard Carvel," probably the best historical novel of American and English 18th century manners that has appeared since Thackeray's "Virginians," contains not one disparaging word about Catholics. The most dramatic scenes of the book are supposed to occur in the decade of

years between 1770 and 1780, and this latter is the year that witnessed the infamous Gordon No Popery riots during which over 400 persons were killed in London. Mr. Winston Churchill's novel, being a picture of the times, introduces us to all the leading figures of that brilliant epoch, Horace Walpole, Oliver Goldsmith, Garrick, Charles Fox, Lord North in London, George Washington, John Paul Jones, Adams, Chase, etc., in America; and yet not only does not one of his characters ever use the jocularly contemptuous word "Papist" or the stupid "Romish," but the hero, who tells his own story, puts Mr. Carroll at the head of all the Maryland patriots as regularly and constantly as the gospels put Peter at the head of the apostles. Richard Carvel notes with pardonable pride that he was honored upon two occasions with the confidence of the cousin of him who afterwards became the first Archbishop of Baltimore. At page 424 we find this: "For our cause 'The First Citizen' led the van, and the able arguments and moderate language of his letters soon identified him as Mr. Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, one of the greatest men Maryland has ever known." Far from suppressing Mr. Carroll's profession of the Catholic faith, the narrator explicitly mentions it more than once, although he does not mention a circumstance that would have been far more likely to please his readers, we mean the fact that Mr. Carroll was reputed to be the wealthiest man in the American colonies. All which has not prevented "Richard Carvel" from being reprinted twelve or thirteen times since it first appeared early in June last.

The Oblates' "Missionary Record" for October brings the glad tidings that the Oblate Fathers of Belcamp Hall, Raheny, County Dublin, who, for the first time this year, sent up their pupils for the Intermediate, without cramming for this examination, carried off one of the four All Ireland prizes (£2) for English Composition in the Preparatory Grade. The winner passed with Honors in every subject except Euclid and Algebra, and in these he passed very well.

"The Review (Oct. 12), of St. Louis, which, we are pleased to see now reaches us on the second and not, as formerly, on the fourth day after date, gives the gist of an interesting article from the New York "Evening Post" on "The Dead Languages." From statistics carefully gathered by a committee of the American Philological Association it appears that in the space of eight years from 1890 to 1898 the enrolment in the secondary schools of the United States increased 86 per cent, i.e., about five times the increase of population, that marked progress has been made toward the concentration of school work on a few leading studies instead of the former tendency to scattering and smattering, and that Latin is gaining faster than any other study. Latin heads the list of percentages of increase with 174 per cent, a rate more than double the 86 per cent. increase in the enrolment of pupils. Greek also scores a gain of 94 per cent. The

other principal percentages are: History, 152; Geometry, 147; Algebra, 141; German, 131; French, 107. Physics with 79, and chemistry with 65 per cent., alone fall below the 86 per cent. of the total enrolment. All these facts are very encouraging to scholars, especially when they occur in the most keenly commercial of nations.

Encouraging as these figures undoubtedly are, their importance would be greater if we were told why so many take to Latin. Perhaps it is a compulsory subject in most schools, perhaps pupils choose Latin on the principle that the very small amount of it required in these schools is easier to assimilate than almost any other object of study. If Latin is a compulsory subject in most U. S. secondary schools the preponderance of pupils taking it would argue an improvement in the taste of school managers rather than of the students themselves. If only a slight acquaintance with the rudiments of Latin is required, then the preference for this subject would simply be a manifestation of laziness, though certainly one that has a wholesome tendency. A parallel case presents itself in the curriculum of Manitoba University. Many students find that, all things considered, it is easier to get up on examination in Greek alone than in any of the double-barrelled options that take the place of Greek and entail so much non-educative memory work.

Our exquisite friend with the superior air and the blasé manner, yclept "The Lounger," treads upon one of our tenderest corns when he brands us in "Town Topics" as "suburban." We don't in the least object to that other term "rural" which he also applies to us; all aristocrats have a liking for the country. But "suburban" suggests an accretion, an excrescence, a refuge for middle-class mediocrity. Besides, in our case it is just the exact opposite of the fact. Evidently "The Lounger," who plumes himself on having hobnobbed with no end of big-wigs on the other side of the pond, is not well posted on the history of these parts, or he would know that Winnipeg, though the more crowded bailiwick, is really an offshoot, and a rather degenerate offshoot at that, from two parent stems, St. Boniface and Kildonan. They are somebody, they are not parvenus, they can boast of great-grandfathers. Winnipeg is still far from the end of the 33 years that make up a generation of men; it is yet in search of a grandfather.

The odious word occurs in the following passage from "The Lounger" of last Saturday.

It is curious to find a journal of such high literary standard [as the "Spectator"], making the mistake of using the phrase "in petto" as the equivalent of "on a small scale." "In petto" no more means "on a small scale" than does "un mouton noir" mean "a black sheep," as was very properly pointed out by a suburban newspaper the other day. The phrase is Italian, and not French, and is literary construed "in the breast," generally "held in reserve." It has, of course, a further technical meaning (in reference to appointments made by the Head of the

Roman Catholic Church), but the precise definition of this will make a good exercise for our rural contemporary.

We positively refuse to stand up and recite for the benefit even of so exalted a personage as he who thus correctly corrects the great "Spectator." He knows he is right, the wretch, or he would not appeal triumphantly to us. Only he might have driven home the correction more forcibly had he pointed out that the Italian "petto" is merely a softening of the Latin "pectus," as the Italian "retto, fattore" are softening of the Latin "rector, factor."

It is deliciously funny, when it is not exasperating, to hear Mr. Peter H. Bryce, Deputy Registrar General of Ontario, call French names "foreign names." French foreign in La Nouvelle France! Why, five or six generations of cultured men and women had energized and mostly gone to heaven before English was spoken in Canada by adventurers mostly heading the other way. Mr. Tardivel, in the last "Vérité," very properly demolishes this Bryce.

Russell & Co., of Winnipeg, call our attention to the fact that they have a supply of the new Canadian Catholic readers in five grades, published by the Copp, Clark Co., of Toronto. These readers have been most carefully prepared under the express and diligent supervision of the Catholic Bishops of Ontario. We have looked into them and find them quite good. Being the cheapest readers in the market they are having a sale that astonishes even the publishers. On looking over them there came to us a feeling of pity for non-Catholics who, because of anti-Catholic prejudice, wilfully cut themselves off from such gems of literature as Catholic classics alone give us. Who but a Catholic can understand the martyrdom of the dear boy Tarcisius in "Fabiola," or the "Dream of Gerontius" by Newman?

The same misfortune deprives Protestant students of some of the most valuable masterpieces of French literature. Monsieur de Labriolle, on resuming his series of lectures on this subject in Montreal last Wednesday, recommended the study of De Sévigné, Bourdaloue, De la Bruyère and Saint-Simon. Of these four three are pretty well known to Protestant students, but the fourth, Bourdaloue, is carefully kept from them. Those letters of Madame de Sévigné, which describe Bourdaloue as by far the greatest orator and character-painter of his time, Bossuet not excepted, are expunged from the collections used in some Protestant schools. So effectual has been this ostracism of the Demosthenic Jesuit that even many Catholic students are ignorant of his incomparable sermons and would need to peruse what Sainte-Beuve, who cannot be called a Catholic, says of Bourdaloue's all-conquering power. He has left us discourses which, in resistless logic, unanswerable cogency and psychological analysis, have never been equalled, not even by the author of the Philippics. It would not be safe to let modern Protestants read these masterpieces of Catholic doctrine, though many of the

older generation of Protestant ministers gleaned largely from Bourdaloue without acknowledgment.

Those who have any conscientious scruples about engaging in an unjust war—and well they may have, since an unjust war is legalized murder—had better not read Father McDermott's article on "The South African Republic" in the October "Catholic World." He thinks that "a sense of fair play, that a spirit of justice should have guided the counsels of the great Empire, which is dragged into this quarrel by the greed of men already rich and the greed of men hastening to be rich." To be sure, being in the United States, Father McDermott does not realize the clever web of plausible excuses with which "Pushful Joe" Chamberlain has worked up public opinion. Most Americans at bottom side with their Yankee poet saying: Of all the sarses that I kin call to mind, England does make the most on-pleasant kind. It's you're the sinner allus, she's the saint; All's right thet's hers, and all thet isn't ain't.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

One of the notable events of the past week was the visit to the city of Mr. Eugene V. Debs, the labor leader, and, as many would say, the "agitator," who has taken such a prominent part in the ceaseless and, often, bitter war between employers and employed that is being waged in the republic to the south. If Mr. Debs is an "agitator," and we gathered from what he said the other evening that he makes no objection to being called one, then all we have to say is that in our opinion the more of such agitators the better, and undoubtedly the world would be a much finer place to live in, at any rate for the masses, if the ruling classes instead of sneering at them and affecting to despise them would lend an indulgent ear to what they have to say and take into serious consideration the arguments they advance and the theories they propound. We venture to say that no one will deny the truth of the worst picture Mr. Debs drew of the deplorable condition into which workingmen have drifted in the large centres of population to the south—it is a species of slavery in many respects more intolerable than that which prevailed in the Southern States forty years ago; and no one can dispute his argument that this state of affairs is a danger to society at large and a menace to the safety of the social fabric. Then if this is so, why not give trial to the plans such men as Mr. Debs advocate as a means to set things right; it would surely be the part of wisdom if those who have something at stake instead of letting things drift would recognize the need of at once adopting some means to avert the threatening catastrophe. We say nothing here about the Christian aspect of the question. Our opinions from this point of view are well known to our readers—we merely wish to say now that Mr. Debs and others of his class who have given careful thought to the social problems, who are thoroughly