

Current Topics

Cardinal Logue

Sir Thomas More once said that in the 'reformer' Tyndale's writings 'the lies come in by lumps.' Language of equal emphasis might legitimately be used in regard to the methods by which the American 'yellow' journalist evolves 'interviews' with notabilities out of his own inner consciousness. Cardinal Logue, however, let down with gentler speech the imaginative varlet who fathered upon him the bogus 'interview' that raised some of our daily papers to sufficiently high temperatures to make their fire insurance policies perilously near being due. 'One thing,' says the Cardinal, with the gentlest sarcasm, 'that particularly impresses me is the manner in which the newspapers handle the news. The method observed by big metropolitan journals is wonderful! They seem to get the news in some mysterious manner without bothering the principals! Why, the second day of my visit to this country I picked up a newspaper and found a long interview which I had given to a reporter. I could not remember giving the interview, but I suppose the reporter knew what he was writing about.'

Press and Pulpit

'La pluma,' says the author of 'Don Quixote,' 'es lengua del alma'—the pen is the tongue of the soul.' And Longfellow told how, even in his time, that soul-tongue had become a clarion. In our day of linotypes and fast rotary presses the voice of the clarion has been intensified as by a great megaphone, and its sound, like that of the Gospel, is gone out unto the ends of the earth. It has, in fact, almost become a truism to state that, to an extent, the press has usurped the functions that long pertained to the platform and the pulpit. Nowadays there is no cause, however sacred or however strong, that can afford to dispense with the clarion-note of the press. And Bishop Ketteler of Mayence had his finger fair upon the pulse of the time when he once said that if St. Paul were alive to-day he would be a newspaper editor. The earnest preacher does a world of good. Like Goldsmith's pastor of Sweet Auburn,

'He tries each art, reproves each dull delay,
Allures to brighter worlds, and leads the way.'

But (says the Bishop of Salford, England), 'no matter how learned and eloquent a preacher might be, no matter what multiplication we have of platforms and pulpits, the spoken word can never reach the same distance as the written word, which penetrates into all classes, to all distances, which remains when the spoken word has long since passed away and been forgotten.' Which moves the 'Catholic Times' to remark: 'When the truth of this remark has been realised perhaps we shall begin to cultivate our Catholic press more largely, and make an effort to create amongst our people the habit of reading Catholic journals. The latter is the most important point of all. The creation of that habit is an object worthy of our most eloquent and learned preachers and speakers, and the absence of it is a decided weakness in our position, a flaw in our armor.'

Zola

Some time ago we recorded how the remains of Zola—the literary apostle of a very accentuated form of the vileness of the monkey-house and the sty—were transferred by a vote of the French Parliament to a place in the national valhalla, the crypt of the desecrated Church of St. Genevieve. This official crowning of pornography was, however, strenuously opposed by a sane and respectable minority of the Deputies. And the 'Pilot' (Boston) takes occasion therefrom to opine that the 'honor' thus bestowed upon Zola is not necessarily of a permanent character. 'The body of Rousseau,' says our able Boston contemporary, 'was conveyed there in triumph in the days of the Revolution, but his tomb was presently pillaged, as was also the tomb of Voltaire. The remains of Mirabeau were laid there in great pomp—but not to rest. The public changed their minds about him and flung his body out to make room for that of Marat. Then, a little later, people changed their minds about Marat, and his dust, in turn, was thrown into a sewer.'

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Kings and peoples sometimes dance and sing to-day around their golden calves, and crunch them beneath their iron heels to-morrow. There is a good deal of human nature in kings,

whether it be King John or King Demos. In his 'Arabian Society in the Middle Ages,' Lane quotes as follows from an entry in the register of Hâroon Er-Rasheed: 'Four hundred thousand pieces of gold, the price of a dress of honor for Jaafar, the son of Yahyâ, the Wezeer.' A few days later the same register bore the following entry: 'Ten keerals, the price of naphtha and reeds, for burning the body of Jaafar, the son of Yahyâ.' A fate like unto that of Jaafar, the son of Yahyâ, may yet befall the corpse of Zola, as it befell the bone-dust of Marat and Mirabeau. 'Hudibras' has it that

A turnstile is more certain
Than, in events of war, Dame Fortune . . .
For though Dame Fortune seem to smile,
And leer upon him for a while,
She'll after shew him, in the nick
Of all his glories, a dog-trick.'

The favor shown by the atheistic Radical-Socialism of the New Revolution in France to the unmentionable vileness of Zolaism may yet prove as fickle as the turnstile Dame Fortune, and may play him the dog-trick that the atheism of the Old Revolution paid to two of its demi-gods. History has a trick of repeating itself.

Our Race-Suicide

'In the sweetest bud,
The eating canker dwells.'

Race-suicide is the 'eating canker' which is gnawing at the sweet bud of promise in 'God's own country,' and bringing to our nation, in the days of its youth, the decrepitude which overtakes the land.

'Where wealth accumulates and men decay.'

Viewed even from the purely economic standpoint, the position is sufficiently serious. Thus, the annual report of the Department of Labor refers to the manner in which business enterprise is being cramped through the paucity of hands to do the work. The report speaks of 'a real dearth of manual labor. But,' it adds, 'what is far more important, the Dominion itself will supply less and less for some considerable time. This is owing to the low birth-rate and to the absence of any labor reserve that can reinforce the depleted ranks of the workers as time removes them one by one through sickness, age, death, or (in the case of women) by marriage. The birth-rate fell from 41.32 per thousand in 1876-80 to only 27.08 per thousand in 1906. If we take the case of girls of suitable age to work in factories, we find that in New Zealand between the years 1891-96 there was an increase of 21.62 per cent. in the number of girls between fifteen and twenty-one years of age. In the next five years the increase had fallen to 6.77 per cent., and in the five years ended 1906 the rate of increase further fell to 1.26 per cent. In regard to still younger girls, those between five and ten years of age, the further want of reserve power for our labor supply is apparent. In 1881-86 there was an increase of girls of the ages mentioned of 24.34 per cent.; in 1886-91 the increase fell to 1.90 per cent.; in 1891-96 there was a decrease of 0.29 per cent.; in 1895-1901 a decrease of 0.10 per cent.; and in 1901-06 an increase of 4.81 per cent. Even if this latter increase is maintained or added to, it will take a long time to make up for the "lean years" of the previous decade.'

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As a concrete example, the Department's report cites the fact that 'the average daily attendance at Dunedin schools fell from 4148 pupils in 1887 to 2882 in 1907. These returns are taken from the report of the Education Board of Otago, and, in spite of the large increase of population, show generally a remarkable absence of that class of increase of those from five years of age to fifteen years, useful for training to industrial and commercial life. The figures regarding the boys are very much on the same lines as those of their sisters. Such figures as the result of twenty years' national growth are absolutely startling to those who have to make provision for the welfare of the people generally. The difficulty may not be evaded or shirked. Either our industries, instead of expanding, must shrink and disappear, or workers to carry on their industries must be found. That there are few and fewer recruits available from among the children of the Dominion will appear certain as time goes on, and even if there could be a remarkable filling up of cradles from this moment onwards, it would still take years to close the present vacant spaces in the thin ranks of our children who are now between five and fifteen years of age.' In connec-

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