

creature endeavoured to get out of it when Mr. Sexton brought the matter forward as a matter of privilege is more characteristic of the Liberal Unionist allies of the Tory party than anything that has happened for a long time. The Speaker having decided that the matter could not be raised as a matter of privilege, suggested that the easiest way would be to ask the right hon. gentleman for an explanation, whereupon Sir William rose and stated that "a great deal of what was said was not serious, but was rather chaff." Mr. Sexton's retort was magnificent, and brought a volley of cheers from the Opposition, in which the voice of the Grand Old Man was prominent. "I will leave him," said the member for West Belfast, "to what he has richly earned—the contempt of the House and the contempt of the country."

THE CATHOLIC PERIODICAL PRESS.

A PAPER BY GEORGE DERING WOLFF, L.L.D., AT THE BALTIMORE CONGRESS.

(Continued.)

ANOTHER improvement in Catholic newspapers, we are inclined to think, would be their more commonly republishing editorials and "Church News," or summaries of them, taken from other Catholic newspapers and duly credited.

Still another and a highly important requisite is their taking measures to secure fresher and fuller reports written by loyal, devout Catholics, of what Catholics in other countries are doing, and also of what the enemies of the Church are doing in those countries.

The great need of this will be obvious to every one if he considers that the news agencies of Europe are almost entirely under the management of persons who are not only non-Catholics, but in a large number of instances infidels and bitter enemies of the Catholic Church. We believe that our leading daily newspapers, with a few exceptions, honestly wish to be fair and truthful in the reports which they publish respecting Catholic affairs, but their foreign correspondents being in some cases anti-Catholic, in others non-Catholic, and in only a few instances real, true Catholics, as a matter of course, the reports they send, even of true occurrences, are discoloured, one-sided, and often intentionally falsified. Moreover, their news agents and correspondents are always on the *qui vive* for "news," and consequently seize upon every report and rumour, without delaying sufficiently to enable them to ascertain its authenticity or accuracy. They enlarge upon it, comment upon it, give it the shape and colouring which they think will make it most sensational, and then telegraph or mail it at once to this country. Here it is quickly published. Our Catholic newspapers have no such facilities for promptly receiving authentic news. They may be fully convinced of the falsity of the reports that are published in the non-Catholic newspapers, but they cannot promptly contradict them nor satisfactorily explain and expose the discolourations and prevarications of those that are partly true and partly untrue. After a week or two they obtain definite information, and are able to disprove the false report or to give a true version of what has been misrepresented. But the falsehoods and misrepresentations have already done their bad work in misleading public opinion, and the corrections and refutations made by Catholic newspapers, if made at all, are too late to attract attention.

To relieve the Catholic Press of this enormous disadvantage two things are necessary. The first is to establish and maintain an active, vigilant, and energetic Catholic associate press agency. The second is to establish in one of our large cities a Catholic daily newspaper, subsequently to be followed by the establishment of others in other large cities. The idea of a Catholic associate press has been mooted before and pronounced impracticable by persons of large practical experience and keen business insight. Yet, for all that, we remain unconvinced of its impracticability, and urge it upon the attention of our brethren of the Catholic Press. We do this all the more confidently and earnestly because we are strongly supported by persons whose judgment is entitled to high consideration. Among them are several experienced Catholic journalists who have spoken favourably of the undertaking.

The establishing of a Catholic daily newspaper is necessary, because Catholic weekly journals (owing to the fact that they are published only once a week) cannot quickly expose and refute the falsehoods and calumnies that are constantly invented and spread abroad respecting the Church, and especially respecting the Holy See. In this rapidly moving age of ours what is to be done effectively must be done at once. In our conflict with the enemies of our religion our counter strokes must follow their blows with lightning-like speed.

The Fathers of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore thoroughly understand this. They declare:

"It is greatly to be desired that in each of our large cities a Catholic daily newspaper be maintained, fully equal to the secular daily newspapers in financial strength, and the sagacity, vigour, and power of its writers. Nor is it necessary that the word Catholic be displayed at the head of its pages. It is sufficient that, in addition to recent occurrences, and all those things which in other daily newspapers are eagerly desired, it defend, whenever a proper opportunity present itself, the Catholic Church from the assaults and calumnies of its enemies, and explain its doctrine; and, moreover, that it carefully abstain from placing before its readers anything that is scandalous, indecent, or unbecoming."

It is argued that a Catholic daily newspaper cannot be successfully maintained. Why? Is it because of want of sufficient capital, of sufficient journalistic talent, of sufficient administrative ability among the Catholics of the United States? Emphatically, it is *not*. There is to-day more than enough capital invested by Catholics in non-Catholic newspapers all over the land to amply provide for a dozen or score of Catholic dailies. There are, on the great non-

Catholic dailies of our large cities, Catholics, who, in sagacity, quickness, fullness of knowledge, and all that goes to make a successful journalist, are peers to any of their non-Catholic fellow-workers. As for administrative, executive, directing ability, we have Catholics managing successfully and with distinguished ability railroads, mills, mines, factories, banks and insurance companies. Passing strange would it be if Catholic talent could not be found competent to cope with the difficult task of managing a great daily newspaper. What is really wanting is the *will*. As soon as the Catholics in the United States will to establish such a newspaper, the men and the money to maintain and conduct it will quickly be found. And until such a newspaper (or a number of them) shall have been established, the Catholics of this country will not be doing what they might do and ought to do to defend the Church, and to promote the welfare, social, moral, and religious, of the great people, of which Catholics are an integral component part; and consequently they will not be doing what they might do, and ought to do, to preserve and perpetuate our civil institutions, of which it is needless to say that morality and religion, combined with intelligence, are the firmest supports.

And now to prevent any possible misunderstanding we add that we have passed over, as not needing to be suggested, that as a matter of course, Catholic newspapers designed for a general circulation should not confine themselves to subjects of a strictly religious character. They should discuss intelligently the events and occurrences of the day, questions of civil polity, questions that refer to the industrial, commercial, and other interests of our country, but not in a narrow or partisan sense. Along with this they should furnish their readers, according to the condition, circumstances, tastes and social status of those whose support they respectively aim at securing, what will best amuse and interest them. In short, they should aim to present in their columns all that characterises a pure, fresh, entertaining, vigorous newspaper.

The importance of this seems to us self-evident, but it is not sufficiently attended to by the editors of some of our Catholic newspapers. Their pages lack variety. In some instances they are too heavy. The range of topics covered both by their editorials and their selections is too narrow. The "scissors and the paste-pot" are employed too hurriedly, and without sufficient thought or good judgment. In other words, too little care and discrimination are exercised in making selections of matter taken from other newspapers and periodicals. There is too much "padding." Too little attention is given to the process of "boiling down"; the art and power of summarising and condensing into smaller compass, yet preserving the pith and substance of what is thus summarised, are too seldom employed. There is room for improvement in these respects in many of our Catholic newspapers. We are sure, too, that such improvement will be followed by increased circulation.

But that Catholic newspapers may even approach the realisation of what we have been urging, it is necessary that a support far greater than that which any of them now receive be accorded them. Until this is done, and it is not done now, much that we have written will be entirely impracticable, purely visionary. Editors of Catholic newspapers and their assistants are notoriously overworked and underpaid. There are, among editors and writers for Catholic newspapers, men of eminent ability, sincerely desirous to do their full duty in their respective positions; men who, in other pursuits, or on non-Catholic journals, might win their way to fortune and fame, yet who receive a meagre compensation. They are *overworked*, for no one or two or three men can properly and thoroughly do the work that is comprehended in an *ideal* Catholic newspaper as we have sketched it. Yet the ideal is not, emphatically *not*, a visionary or impracticable one.

Were it necessary to give sharper point to what we have written, we might easily do it. We could name at least ten or twelve Protestant journals, which, as respects numerical strength of editorial staff, number of regular contributors and correspondents, scholarly work, careful thought, and painstaking, discriminating labour employed on them, contrast most forcibly and favourably with even the best of our Catholic newspapers. In the respects mentioned they are incomparably superior to almost every, if not to every Catholic newspaper in our country. It is unpleasant to say this; it is unpleasant to you to hear it; but, unhappily, it is true.

Whose fault is all this? Is it that of the owners or business managers of Catholic newspapers? To the latter question we answer no. There are exceptions, but, as a rule, we believe that the current supposition is entirely false. The fault lies at the door of the *Catholic public*, and we believe that our intelligent, educated Catholics are *most to blame* as regards this. They expend for themselves and their families ten, twenty, fifty dollars on non-Catholic publications for every two or five dollars that they expend on Catholic periodicals and newspapers. Converse with one of these intelligent, educated Catholics. He tells you he is deeply interested in some special subject which directly concerns the interests of the Church or some movement in favour of or against the Church. Hand to him a Catholic newspaper, or monthly, or quarterly, which contains an interesting article from a Catholic writer of distinguished ability on that very subject—say from Cardinal Manning or Cardinal Newman. He thanks you warmly, he will read it with great pleasure; not now; he has not time; but soon. The article could be read in five minutes. It is placed on his table, perhaps it speedily finds its way, unread, into his waste basket; or it is labelled carefully, placed where it may be easily found, and then it is forgotten. Meanwhile he and his family consume hours every day in reading non-Catholic newspapers and periodicals, some of which contain things which every Catholic should conscientiously abstain from reading. This is no fancy sketch. Every observing Catholic writer knows that it is true.

As regards Catholic young men and young women, and Catholics of the less educated class, it is notorious that they spend dollars for sensational, trashy "story papers" and novels, where they spend five cents for a Catholic newspaper.

There is still another class: Catholics who attend to their religious duties, and take a daily or weekly non-Catholic paper for the sake of reading the "news," but who take no Catholic news-