

# The Catholic Journal

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## THE WATERVLIET CASE.

It is many months since what is known as the West Troy or Watervliet school case was submitted to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Charles R. Skinner for decision. It is so long ago that most persons had forgotten all about the matter. With that prudence so characteristic of him, Mr. Skinner waited until after election—until it was assured that the gentleman from Troy would occupy the gubernatorial chair. Then the superintendent handed down his decision on the lines he fancied would please the governor-elect.

Briefly stated, this is the history of the case: Some time ago the school authorities in West Troy, now the city of Watervliet, to relieve an overcrowded school district, leased part of St. Bridget's parochial school building and employed the Sisters of St. Joseph to teach the pupils at that point. The Sisters obtained regular state teachers' certificates and wore the conventional garb.

The village bigots made a great hue and cry over this. They objected to the city leasing a Catholic building, wholly ignoring the fact that Catholics are heavy taxpayers and entitled to a fair share of whatever patronage in the way of rent for needed additional school building. They also ignored or were ignorant of the fact that the Catholics pay as much, if not more, than do the Protestants, for the erection, equipment and maintenance of the public schools, yet are debarred from enjoying any of the supposed benefits from such institutions. In their narrowness these same bigots attacked the legality of the Sisters' certificates as teachers, indirectly showing that they considered a Catholic unfit and incompetent to pursue any calling. The bigots also insisted that in leasing the Catholic building and employing Catholic teachers who wore a distinctive garb, the village was maintaining a sectarian institution in violation of the revised constitution of the state.

Superintendent Skinner straddles the question in his decision. He holds that the school authorities had no legal right to lease St. Bridget's school building except as a case of emergency, and in that case the village or city should have full control of the building at all hours, whether school is in session or not. In connection with this finding Skinner indulges in this clap-trap:

"It is entirely natural to suppose that those parents who now object to its present use, reason that such school with its close proximity to the church building and convent, with the inscription over the doorway, the emblem surmounting the building and the teachers therein employed with their distinctive garb, furnish an object lesson at least, and all the surroundings of the school therein maintained tend to lead the mind of the child toward this particular religious denomination. This result is but natural, and I am convinced is quite in unison with the trend of American public schools, and should perform

no acts in their official capacity tending to subject the schools under their charge to this criticism."

The superintendent decided that the Sisters' certificates are legal in every particular, and that they cannot be revoked except for cause. He then upsets the effect of this clause by deciding that the Sisters must not wear their habit during the time they are engaged in teaching. He admits that there is no statutory law in New York state that prescribes any particular dress or garb for public school teachers. He might have added that there is no law setting forth that a particular dress or garb shall not be worn. He justifies his decision in this way:

"Such dress or garb, taken in connection with the location, surroundings and distinguishing characteristics of the building leased by the school authorities and in which they are employed, is a constant and hourly reminder to the pupils under their charge of the existence of one particular religious denomination or sect, and this public declaration, under all the circumstances is such an object lesson to the susceptible mind of the pupils under their charge that it comes dangerously near the line of prohibition laid down in the constitution as herein quoted:

"If we ask ourselves in what particulars this school differs from the usual parochial school as formerly maintained therein, before the adoption of the constitutional amendment herein quoted, what reply shall we make? By the nature of the lease, by the wearing of a distinctive garb, by the emblem surmounting the building, by the inscription over the doorway, by the practical result that only the children of one particular faith attend this school, the conclusion is irresistible that the state to all external intents and purposes is maintaining a sectarian school therein at public expense."

Superintendent Skinner's decision is of great importance to Catholics. It does not change the status of our parochial schools in the least, but it does show how the bigots would de-Catholicize our schools if only they could obtain control of them. It is to be hoped, however, that if it is possible, the Court of Appeals will be asked to pass opinion on the points involved, especially that relating to the religious habit. We think Skinner's decision will not be sustained.

After all, though, would you expect a different decision from the man who is the power behind the throne in the movement to have the state furnish free text books to public school pupils?

## ADVENT

Last Sunday was the first Sunday in Advent, the season of the ecclesiastical year which the Church sets apart as a preparation for the feast of Christmas, the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who left His heavenly home to become one of us, that mankind should be freed from the penalty of sin. Until Christmas the Church will put on the garb of penance as in Lent. The priests will celebrate mass in violet vestments, and the Gloria in Excelsis will be omitted from the mass. The Gospels and Epistles will teach and urge penance and reformation in our lives.

Said the "Oil City Derrick," a few days ago: "Catholics may and do agree perfectly in matters of faith, but they divide, like all other religious bodies, on political questions, taking sides according to the individual view, and this is as it should be. There is no religion in politics, and Catholics, least of all, so far as our observation extends, mix politics with religion. Catholics invariably decline their support to or religionists who may be the candidates of the opposite party. Similarity of religious faith cuts no figure with them. In this case the political point of view is decidedly the more important one. This will explain why so few Catholics are elected to office. The candidate who is also a Catholic will invariably lose the support of religious bigots of his own party without attracting a compensatory sympathetic support from persons of his own faith in other parties."

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## ABSURD

The claims that the Apatist backers of ex-Congressman Linton are putting forth for his appointment by President-elect McKinley as Commissioner of Indian Affairs are absurd. They urge, by his refusal to accept the A. P. A. nomination for president he turned thousands of votes to McKinley; also that his defeat and the election of a democratic congressman in the Eighth district of Michigan were brought about by the influence of the Catholic church who traded votes for McKinley for votes against Linton.

The first claim on behalf of Linton is absurd, because it has been clearly demonstrated that the American people can no longer be fooled by the Apatist. The real reason that the bigots did not put a national ticket in the field was that they feared to proclaim their weakness and that they had "lost their grip," so to speak. Their weakness and positive disadvantage to the republican ticket is proven by the fact that democratic Catholics were elected to office in Linton's home city and county, despite its being a hitherto impregnable republican stronghold. The honest American voters there rose in their might and smote the apostles of moral assassination hip and thigh.

The Linton claims in the second place are absurd, because if the Catholics in his district did defeat Linton, they have demonstrated that they are a power in the land and the president-elect is too astute a politician to repeat. On the contrary, he will endeavor to retain them.

No, it is absurd to think for a minute that the infamous Linton will be placed where he can destroy the Indian schools and maintain an Apatist propaganda among America's aborigines. Dorchester and Morgan had enough, but Linton? Perish the thought. If Mr. McKinley really thinks Linton worthy of notice, let him send him as consul to Madagascar. The Catholics will never raise any objection.

In an article in "Dorchester's Magazine" for March, 1890 Rev. Morgan M. Shesdy wrote as follows: "It is the mission of the Catholic press to keep alive a knowledge of religion, to correct misstatements, to combat falsehoods, to transmit such news from all parts of the world as will interest its readers, to discuss and defend the burning Catholic questions of the day, in line to enlighten its readers regarding the church, its organizations, doctrines and practices. No wonder that Leo XIII has likened it to a perpetual mission among the people." For that, in truth it is and always should aim to be. The Catholic clergy will find the press one of their best and strongest supporters in the cause of religion. And for that reason they should, from time to time, urge upon their people the necessity of its liberal support. These words are just as much to the point now as when they were first penned.

THE CATHOLIC JOURNAL is profoundly touched at the unwonted interest the San Francisco "Monitor" and other papers are taking in its welfare these days. If we did not attract any attention we would feel that we were going backward, not forward. Then, too, calling names is tip-top controversial style when your opponent trips you up or you wish to evade the question. Of course your clientele does not hear the other side of the case, but that is not one of the cardinal principles of the ethics of the new journalism.

There are very few Catholic families who do not get one or more of the daily papers or secular weeklies. What excuse, then, can these people put forward if they fail to subscribe for a Catholic paper?

It strikes us that the college authorities might eliminate some of the brutally rough features of football if they were to announce that football would be absolutely forbidden so long as it remains the brutal, dangerous game it is to-day.

A Catholic editor who will prostitute his pen to assail a noble and defenseless woman is not worthy the name. And to think it was a clerical editor, too! THE JOURNAL knows of but two clerical editors who have descended so low as this.

## WHY?

A western contemporary calls upon Archbishop Corrigan to end the factional warfare in the American Catholic church. There is no factional warfare that we know of. If there be, Archbishop Corrigan had no part in inaugurating it or continuing it. He has pursued the even tenor of his way, doing his duty according to the light vouchsafed him. He has upheld the dignity of his office and of the church. He has not meddled in other peoples' business. He has not given scandal. Why should he be called upon to end something he does not know exists, or if it does exist, in which he has had no part whatever?

## THE GOSPELS

GOSPEL. St. Matthew, xi, 2-10. At that time "When John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of His disciples, he said to Him: Art thou He that art to come, or do we look for another? And Jesus making answer said to them: Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them, and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me. And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: What went you out into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? A prophet? Yea I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold I send my angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee."

What are we to say to all this? That Christ did not fail to submit the most convincing proofs that He was the messenger of the Eternal Father, and that those who refused to recognize in Him the avour promised from the beginning of the world were blind, impious, and without excuse."

## Weekly Church Calendar

Sunday, December 6. Second Sunday in Advent—Epi: Rom. xv, 4-11. Gosp. Matt. xi, 2-10.  
Monday—St. Ambrose, Bishop, Confessor, and Doctor of the Church. Vigil of the Immaculate Conception.  
Tuesday—Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Mary. Holyday of obligation. Less. Ps. v, 22-33. Luke, i, 26-28.  
Wednesday, 7th of the octave of the Immaculate Conception.  
Thursday, 8th of the octave. St. Melchior, Pope and Martyr.  
Friday, 9th of the octave. Pope and Confessor. Fast.  
Saturday, 10th of the octave.

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Another warning. Days are slipping by. Christmas only three weeks from yesterday.

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## USEFUL PRESENTS.

The house furnishing man is something of a philosopher. He regards this as a season when folks are counting the cost of Christmas rather closely, and that, therefore, they will purchase useful presents; expects his trade will be a great deal larger than usual.

He has provided accordingly. The House Furnishing Section supplies essentially useful gifts. Let us drop a hint or two.

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|---|---|
| Nickle plated tea and coffee: 3 pt. pots, 45c, 75c and 90c. 4 pt. pots, 50c, 85c and \$1. 5 pt. pots, 55c, 95c and \$1.25. Japanned crumb brushes and trays, 18c, 25c and 35c. Nickled crumb trays, with either brush or scraper to match, 75c. | Chafing dishes, including hot water pans; black wrought iron standards, heavily nickled pans, ebonzoid handle and knob: 2 pt. dishes, \$1.75. 3 pt. dishes, \$2.50. Nickled bake dishes with blue and white enameled inside pan: 4 pt. dishes, 90c. 6 pt. dishes, \$1.80. 5 o'clock tea kettles, black wrought iron standards, lamp and kettle of copper, highly nickled plated, 85c. |
| A whole counter devoted to the display of serving trays; prices from 35c to \$2. Bissel's Crown Jewel Carpet Sweeper, \$2. Bissel's Grand Rapids Carpet Sweeper, \$2.50. Bissel's Cycle Bearing Carpet sweepers, \$3.                           |   |

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