

## RUNNING A CATHOLIC PAPER.

Observations by a Gifted Editor Showing That the Task Is Not Quite so Easy as it is Generally Supposed to be.

The following observations by the gifted Jesuit who edits the Bombay Catholic Examiner are calculated to cause a thinning of the ranks of that great army of persons who are firmly convinced that they are peculiarly qualified for the successful management of a Catholic paper:

We have no intention of attempting the task of answering the query suggested as to the best way of running a Catholic paper. That is just as vague as asking, "What is the best way of conducting a military campaign?" or "What is the best way of succeeding in business?" It is easy to reply in generalities. Let your paper be well written, interesting, varied, up to date, and the like—and there you must stop fill certain other preliminary matters have been settled. For instance, what are your aims in conducting the paper at all? What lines do you intend to specialize in, and what lines do you intend to exclude? To what class or classes of readers do you wish to appeal? The various answers to these leading questions will provide about twenty different types of Catholic paper—the strictly local paper, the county paper, the general paper; politics included or excluded; news the chief object or the secondary object, appealing to the educated few or the uneducated many, and so on. The more the paper specializes, the easier it is to say how it should be run. The wider the circle of interests it tries to include, the more difficult to say how it should be run.

When the general aim has been determined upon, the contents can be fixed—so much of local news, so much of general news, so much religious matter, so much secular matter. Stories and comic cuttings, yes or no. Sermons, yes or no. Articles on current topics, or on standard topics of instruction. Controversial articles, many or few, systematically or incidentally inserted; correspondence columns a prominent feature or not. Reviews of books on a large or on a small scale. General politics only or party politics only, etc., etc.

The general impression seems to be that the religious press is a failure. And if it be asked why, the answer seems to be—not from any special deficiency in the way it is conducted, but from the nature of the case.

Now, our conviction is that out of a thousand men who want and must have their paper, nearly all want a purely secular paper, and very few want a specifically religious paper.

We must not quarrel with the facts of human nature taken as it is; and these are the facts. People, however good, usually take their religion in doses, like medicine, and are easily satisfied with a small quantity. They are not specially interested in parochial affairs; they are not particularly keen on knowing the state of Catholic affairs elsewhere. They are not deeply interested in ecclesiastical questions, just as they are not deeply interested in science or literature or history or other subjects appealing to the cultured mind. They like anything which comes fresh in the way of passing events—news or war, or railway accidents, or earthquakes, or conflagrations, or dynamite outrages, or murders or scandals, or anything that bespeaks sensationalism in this work-a-day world. They like the conflict of political opinions, and the clash of party, or the prospects of a reduction of taxes, or a debate on conscription, or whatever else people talk about and exchange views about without much study or exertion. In other words, the public generally patronizes the press as an amusement and not as a study; they read for entertainment, not for self-improvement, still less for spirituality.

Now, it cannot be denied that the specifically religious press, if true to its professions, must aim at something higher and at the same time less popular than this. It must be lacking in sensationalism, in novelty, in piquancy—unless it disguises its specifically religious character and tries to combine the attractiveness of the secular paper with the solidity of the religious paper.

And then, on turning to the few who are disposed to patronize a religious paper at all, we find that a paper which will suit one section will not suit another. There are two main types of persons to be found, who are variously called the "simple faithful" and the "educated Catholic," or the "pious" and "intellectual"—types which indefinitely shade off into each other, but still do ex-

ist apart. Of these two types, the pious will think the Catholic paper too intellectual, while the intellectual will consider it too pious; and whatever adjustments are made to satisfy the one will produce dissatisfaction in the other.

Taking a more philosophical view of the matter, the success of a paper is reducible to the three scientific principles known as the struggle for existence, the survival of the fittest and adaptation to environment. The immediate object of the paper is to be read and paid for by so many of the public as will make it worth while to continue the work. The ideal thing is that the paper should pay its expenses. But this is not essential so long as there is some one willing to subsidize the enterprise. We have often noticed signs of obtuseness on this point. Here we are spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on various forms of missionary and ministerial work—supporting churches, and schools, and priests to teach catechism and to preach, and everybody thinks the money well spent. Yet when it comes to spending money in the printing and circulating of Catholic literature, the idea seems to be that it is money thrown away. A little reflection will show that religion is promoted no less by written than by spoken words, and that for one outsider you can get to hear a Catholic sermon there are a thousand whom you could get to read a Catholic tract. Hence we consider that any money spent in judicious printing and circulating of Catholic literature, gratis or under cost price, is just as apostolically spent as money devoted to preaching or other forms of ministry.

It is not, therefore, so much a question of making a paper pay as getting it read by enough people to make the enterprise worth while. But what is to determine the number of readers the paper will obtain? The only appeal is to the interest, spontaneously felt, in what the paper contains. If this interest is widespread, then the paper will survive because it is fit to survive. And the reason why it is fit to survive is not merely because of its intrinsic excellence, but because being intrinsically excellent, it is also suited to its environment. It touches a chord of interest in the minds of many, and wins its way because it is felt by experience to be a boon—felt by each individual to be worth reading and worth paying for. This is only another way of saying over again that a paper must have a definite aim, and the aim must be such as will draw with it the sympathy and interest of a sufficient section of the public. When the aim is fixed, the only thing is for the staff to throw themselves thoroughly into its realization. The public requirements may have been well or badly gauged, and the result will be failure or success accordingly. But the aim being determined, the only thing is for an editor to row and steer his boat by his own knowledge of the channel. It will do him no good to listen to half a score of divergent advisers shouting from the bank.

And so it is perfectly useless to invite people to give their opinions as to the best way of running a Catholic paper. If a paper is edited by a man with an object and an aim in his work, such advice is superfluous. If it is run by an editor who has no aims except a vague desire for popularity, it will be pernicious. It will only recall the story of the old man and the donkey—the poor editor tossing hither and thither in his desperate endeavors to please each and all, and ending in taking the backbone out of his work and bringing his paper down to the condition of a boiled rag for a paper which is the victim of every suggestion irresponsible people feel moved to make can end in nothing else. The ordinary reader of newspapers can, of course, easily say what his personal tastes would prefer, but he is utterly incompetent to form an opinion worth listening to on the general question as to how a paper should be run.

As a practical instance of the impossibility of following the opinions of newspaper readers taken singly, we may make a few remarks on the subject of local news. It seems pretty obvious that each locality will be interested in long and detailed accounts of the doings of its own district, and that this interest waxes in proportion as the event recorded is more remote. This being the case, an editor has to contemplate each piece of news communicated to him with a vision as wide as his circulation. He must cut down long contributions of merely local interest to a suitable proportion, or even omit them altogether in favor of matters which will appeal to a larger circle. And yet each local contributor feels aggrieved because he is not accorded as much space as he sees fit to fill. He only



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sees the thing from the local standpoint, and fails to see it from the general standpoint. Because the matter is interesting to him, he thinks it ought to be published in a general paper at the same length as it should appear in a local paper. This is why we would wish that every newspaper reader should be compelled to edit the paper himself for a month or two. It would teach him how the editor's point of view must differ from his own. The same remark applies to articles and the rest. Whatever article has been written, there is sure to be some subscriber or other who thinks it ought not to have been written. But if something else had been written instead, some other subscriber would think just the same of that—and so "ad infinitum." No subject can give universal pleasure; and yet every article may please and benefit some or many. The individual reader goes by his own personal taste, or by the opinion of two or three of his acquaintances. The editor, on the other hand, hears opinions from all sides. The same post which brings a letter saying that a certain article is horrid or objectionable brings another letter saying the same article was splendid. The critic who thinks that such and such a view is dangerous or offensive is counterbalanced by another who thinks that the same view meets one of the most urgent needs of our times. The description which one correspondent calls a libel and a slander draws from another the remark, "I admire the justice and accuracy of your observations." So the editor, if he has his eyes open, and is in touch with his readers, is the only man to decide the momentous question—how the paper ought to be run. He may be right or he may be wrong, and he will succeed or fail accordingly. Still he is the man on the mountain, while all his readers are in the plain. His is the wider horizon, and all he needs is to use his eyes.

## INVENTOR'S WORK.

The following Canadian patents have been recently secured through the agency of Messrs. Marion & Marion, Patent Attorneys, Montreal, Canada, and Washington, D.C.

Information relating to any of the patents cited will be supplied free of charge by applying to the above-named firm.

- Nos.  
92,708—Joseph Charles Roy, Pt. St. Charles, Que. Spoke extractor.  
93,892—Emile Guillaume, Paris, France. Process and apparatus for distilling and rectifying alcoholic liquids.  
93,916—Louis Cote, St. Hyacinthe, Que. Proportional divider.  
93,965—Patrick J. O'Brien, Mobile, Nfld. Non-refillable bottle.  
93,976—Theophile Taillefer, Montreal, Que. Butter cutting and measuring device.  
93,984—Napoleon Louis N. Beauchemin, Montreal, Que. Nailless horseshoe.  
94,028—James P. McDewing, Drayton, Ont. Traction wheel.  
94,057—Joseph S. N. Guindon, Montreal, Que. Fire alarm apparatus.

We are not always on the bright side of life, but we really need the darkness sometimes for resting purposes.

## AN ORANGEMAN FOR HOME RULE.

Mr. R. Lindsay Crawford, a very prominent leader of the Independent Orange Order, addressed a large meeting on the evening of June 15, at Larne Town Hall, near Belfast, Ire., on "Irish Grievances and Their Remedy."

Mr. Crawford said it might seem a strange thing to some in Larne to hear a Protestant and an Orangeman inveigh against the grievances which afflicted this country, and to some it would sound like political heresy, but he stood there as the representative of his unfortunate country to arraign at the bar of public opinion her rulers and leaders; and to claim an honest and decisive verdict on the issues placed before them (applause). Political war cries and terms had been hackneyed into misrepresentations and misnomers, and Irish Protestants had timorously renounced their birthright of citizenship and permitted themselves to be jockeyed out of their National heritage (applause). He wished to lead Irish Protestants back to the National highway from which they had strayed, and to make them recognize that their true destiny was to mould and influence public thought on Irish questions and lead in the van of their country's emancipation. Irish Protestants could not forever remain indifferent spectators of Ireland's Calvary, where a nation was being sacrificed to placate the insatiable lust of the high priests and elders of a spurious agitation. Ireland was moving with ever increasing velocity along the broad road of destruction, and nothing but the combined Christian and moral effort of all her sons could avert the irremediable ruin and disaster that lay immediately ahead (applause). As intelligent men, whose interests centered in Ireland, they could not afford to treat with indifference the warnings of thinking men, who found that Ireland's troubles arose from two main causes—(1) the inability of English parties to understand the complex Irish problem; and (2) a false conception of the National life amongst Irishmen of all creeds and classes (applause). The Act of Union was carried with bribery and corruption unparalleled in the records of any other nation, and it was no exaggeration to say that by the same despicable methods had the Act of Union been maintained for more than a century. One of the causes of Ireland's decay and the failure of English statesmen to diagnose her disease and apply the remedy was the return to the British Parliament by the votes of Irish Protestants of Government placemen and title-bunters, who subordinated their country and her legitimate needs to their own selfish ends (applause). He appealed to Protestants to do their duty to their country, and if they did so their Catholic fellow-countrymen would rise up and call them blessed. The only policy which the combined intelligence of the Ulster party had evolved was coercion. Government by Coercion Acts in the 20th century was the most damning evidence of the failure of the Act of Union as administered by successive English parties.

Half the sorrows of women would be averted if they could regress the speech they know to be useless.

## THE POPE AND ITALY.

An Encyclical Letter addressed by the Pope to the Italian Bishops, and dealing with the action of Catholics who are Christian Democrats and of the clergy, has been published. His Holiness encourages the institution of popular associations, around which all other associations of an economic character should rally. Catholics are called upon to take a share in public and political life so as to benefit thereby Christian civilization and promote the material well being of the people. The Pope goes on to say that the Church has always demonstrated its virtue of adaptiveness according to time and to the needs of civil society, while upholding the integrity of moral faith. Catholics belonging to economic associations and public administrations must always be subject to ecclesiastical authority, at the same time, however, enjoying the fullest freedom regarding temporal interests. The Pope, therefore, reproves those who do not follow that doctrine. After urging the clergy to hold aloof from party strife, His Holiness concludes by bestowing his benediction upon the Italian Bishops, clergy and people. The Encyclical (adds Reuter's Agency) is regarded as another step towards conciliation between Church and state. Up to the present Catholics have been forbidden to take part in elections.

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## HER

The room was illuminated by the glow of the open door of the stove. She sat on a low stool, in the cone of ruddy light, her interlocked arms her knees, face grave and meditative, eyes intensified by contrast with the dress of black. At her side, a little further back, he was forward in the rocking chair, planted on its arms, hands at the level of his chin, his within the line of radiance, pressing, like hers, set in the of silent reverie. Both were on the debatable borderland of youth and maturity. Sound outside night crept into the of the room—the inter- wish of gust driven rain against window panes, the continuous hum of trolley cars a block away, the vague murmur of great city borne from the h of traffic into the seclusion of street.

"I can picture the whole said at last, summing up thoughts that had given part their conversation.

"Yes," she responded, her dazed on the embers, "You know three uncles of mine well enough understand my shame and tion. And Aunt Mary, too, kept talking about her husband, about bad debts and the rise in coal oil, while her lay dead in the next room."

Uncle Henry—the only gentlemanly nature among them—only one whose life had no given to sordid grubbing for dollars."

"I used to enjoy a chat when I went along for a book invariably ended by buying a print as well. What a queer interesting shop, too, with the of volumes climbing up the Booklovers' Corner!—it was named."

"He was devotedly attached place—the books among which ed, the people who came to mage through his treasure the daily intercourse with s men and women who sought vice. It was a pathetic li story, Uncle Henry's. Do you it?"

"Only so much as his sur suggested. I often wondered contrast between him and his others."

"My mother told me a good things last year, before she d was younger than her brother—the youngest of all, although first to go." The girl pause breathed a little sigh. "Hen struggling, by teaching and ways, to enter college life for this three elder brothers had comfortably established in t dry goods, hardware, hute that was the bent of their. And Aunt Mary, too, had the most prosperous grocery the district. Only Henry a mother inclined to other thing, mother taught school before married, just as I am doing."

Her voice had dropped, till words came but as an echo and low, of saddened musing. "Not for long now, sweet to be interposed, with a gentle touch of sympathy upon her der."

She started, roused in the from her lapse into dreaminess. "Oh, I was not thinking of me," she replied, brightly and res. "I was thinking of my dear and of my father, whom I ca remember and nothing more. were speaking of Uncle Henry at we?"

"Yes; he wanted to get legs."

"Well, not one of his brothe fered a helping hand, and at h's health broke down. At f he was acutely ill in a hospital ward months. Then he was charged, in better state, of 'incurable' hanging over h. His was a chronic case now—those insidious internal troubl kill a man slowly but surely a year or two of increasing and suffering. One doctor, h declared that there was still will the reasonable chance of ey. But the invalid would leave New York at once—to g hot, dry climate, like that of ne or Egypt, and live there a spell. To have advice wa thing; to act on it was gult other. Henry had no money father and mother were dead alone in the struggles of the

"But his brothers?"