

The Catholic Register.

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY

THE CATHOLIC REGISTER PUBLISHING COMPANY

Subscription information and office address: OFFICE, 9 JORDAN ST., TORONTO.

Approved and recommended by the Archbishops, Bishops and Clergy.

ADVERTISING RATES. Transient advertisements to suit the advertiser. A liberal discount on contracts.

Notices to subscribers: City subscribers who do not receive their paper every week will confer a favor if they will notify us at once by Post Card or otherwise.

NOTICE.

Telephone 489. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1900.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

The church celebrates on Saturday the great feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. Since the decree of 1854 it is a dogma of our faith that through the foreseen merits of our Saviour, His holy Mother was from the first instant of her conception preserved free from the stain of original sin.

SUICIDE.

Some unknown friend has sent us the following suggestive array of figures upon the gloomy subject of suicide: Why do people commit suicide? Easy enough to say because they are miserable.

Table showing suicide statistics in modern times for various countries: Saxony, Denmark, Switzerland, Prussia, Belgium, Sweden, France, Norway, Italy, Ireland.

The census of 1890 and 1891 is expected to show a proportionate increase.

Some curious facts are brought out by the table. Suicide is decreasing in Norway and increasing in Sweden, though the two countries are side by side and inhabited by people of the same blood.

In Saxony and Prussia, which are extremely prosperous, suicide is common. In Italy and Ireland, which are very poor, it is rare.

Suicide is more prevalent in town than in country. The age at which suicide is most frequent is between 56 and 65.

Soldiers are of all men most subject to suicide—their life is so monotonous and monotonous in barracks in time of peace. The number is 210 per million in England, in Germany 560 and in Austria 1,200. In the latter case this means a man a year in every battalion.

Religion is the most powerful antidote to the suicidal tendency. Italy and Ireland are intensely religious. In the case of Ireland it is thought also that the habit of emigration prevents suicide.

Suicide, rare among Jews, is almost unknown among Mohammedans, who attribute everything to the will of God, and will not even insure their homes.

Our friend wishes to know our opinion, and suggests that we discuss the matter. We proceed with all respect for others' views to explain and express our own. The extract rightly gives religion credit for being the most powerful safeguard against suicidal tendencies.

The opposite—the want of religion—increases the danger. Loose views upon religion, carelessness in the practice thereof—an utter disregard for what are known as the four eternal truths—death, judgment, heaven and hell—all throw wide open the door. There is no point which has of late been so minimized as the idea of hell. Its eternity has been denied. Its fire has been extinguished. Its nature has been changed. It is made to consist of the loss of God, which, serious as it may be, is merely negative.

The little boat broken from its anchor, driven out to sea, is just such a sport for the wind and waves as the soul loosed from the anchorage of the Church, and drifting with the tide and rapids of theories and fads whose term is destruction. Broadly speaking, philosophy may be divided into materialism and spiritualism. Materialism is of the earth, earthy. It drags the soul down and ties it to this world which is the only one it knows.

and leaves the poor, worse than before. Failure stares the latter in the face. The friends who snatched in prosperity turn away with a sorrowful parting look. The literature which has been the daily poisoned food for his soul—without a word of God, with contempt for religion and truth—has dulled his finer feelings and has made him morbid. Weary of the world in which he finds no friends, no success, no encouragement; having no future life to look forward to; not believing in a God whom he should at least fear, if he cannot hope in Him—the poor unfortunate, "rashly impetuous," goes to his death. The spiritualistic forms of philosophy do admit a higher view of man's nature, life and destiny. A couple, however, contain very false theories which, once admitted, lead to the most dangerous consequences. We refer to scepticism and pessimism. Let a man begin to doubt about everything—and he will have no safeguard against himself. If things do not go right with him he has no refuge for his doubts, no friend for his wants, no rampart against the inflowing tide. But these systems do not directly lead to suicide. This was reserved for Schopenhauer, the apostle of pessimism. Briefly stated, his theory upon this point is: "The world is a battlefield in which the beings contend against, and eventually destroy, one another, through love for existence. To contend and suffer without truce, to will without motive, to agitate oneself in empty form and vain sorrow; such is the life of all things and of man in particular. The good and perfection of man consist in renouncing the will with its desires and aspirations until we attain complete suppression of movement, life activity."

The logical conclusion of this theory is that suicide is not only licit but eminently moral, since it is the surest and most practical means for ending the denial of existence. Without proclaiming absolutely the legitimacy of suicide, Schopenhauer teaches that voluntary death by inanition is the most perfect manner of realizing the annihilation of the will—the supreme good, the final destiny for which man aspires. Such teaching is largely accountable for the suicidal mania of which, unfortunately, is on the increase. Our friend's article states that suicide is almost unknown amongst the Mohammedans. The Mohammedans are fatalists, and therefore yield to the will of God in everything. The increase of insanity will account for a portion of the suicides. But we do think that false doctrine, lax practices in religion, and dangerous theories in philosophy, superinduce the dreadful temptation of suicide.

THE CATHOLIC ALMANAC.

Our thanks are due to Mrs. O'Sullivan for a copy of The Catholic Almanac for 1901. Honored with a kind word of encouragement and a special blessing from the Holy Father, the zealous authoress has been inspired to extend her work and presents to her co-religionists a book which bids fair to rival older volumes of a similar character. There is much good reading and valuable information—the articles on the St. Vincent de Paul Society and "The First Great Centre of Devotion to the Sacred Heart," being important additions to Church History in Canada. One admirable point in the way in which the monthly calendar is framed. Each month occupies a full page in special border, headed by some appropriate religious motto and bearing a similar one at its foot. The opposite page contains a brief sketch of one or other of the Saints whose feast occurs during that month. The Church Directory for Ontario is the most complete we have seen. Taking the Churches, Schools, etc., first according to locality, detailed information is given about the hours of service, the societies or sodalities and the names of the priests in attendance. This is supplemented by an alphabetical list of the archbishops, bishops and priests of Ontario. We hope that in future issues a higher tone of paper will be employed. The engravings are not brought out with clearness; and are not in keeping with the literary purport of the book. The literature is of a high character. With only one paragraph do we find any fault. A Catholic Almanac ought to be non-partisan. What induced the insertion of the following it will be hard to say: "In the recent Dominion elections, November 7th, the Liberal Government was sustained by a strong majority. Most of

the Opposition leaders were defeated at the polls. The majority against the Government was shown in the Province of Ontario to be accounted for by the weakness and delinquency of the members of the Cabinet from Ontario. Wherever they took part in the local councils of the party, arguments of style and disunion were aroused."

There is no need of discussing the statement involved therein. We do not agree with it. We do not hesitate to rank the Hon. Mr. Malouk as the ablest and strongest Postmaster General Canada has ever had. His administration will form it a special chapter in the postal history of the country. But even if he and his colleague, the Hon. Mr. Mills, had been as weak as water, the reason assigned for the results of the elections in Ontario may be questioned in other ways. One thing is certain. Members of a government should not be criticized when they cannot answer. And a page of a Catholic Almanac should not be sullied with a single line of political bias. An Almanac: encouraged by the Holy Father, approved by the Apostolic Delegate and the Prelates could with advantage have refrained from this unjustifiable explanation of the results of the Dominion elections in Ontario. Historians are always expected to be without prejudice. But while we regret to see this paragraph we congratulate Mrs. O'Sullivan upon her success, and welcome the Catholic Almanac as deserving of all encouragement.

BOOKS IN THE HOME.

The Catholic young man and young woman does not read enough. It is quite true that, as a body, we go through about the same amount of mental gymnastics occasioned by reading as our Protestant neighbors, but that is no great feat. Our Catholic homes do not pay sufficient attention to the wants of the younger members of the family in the line of books and as a result there is but little done for the development of a taste for good reading matter. In times gone by, when as a result of centuries of opposition to Catholic education, the parents were unable to read at all, or at any rate to read so as to appreciate, there was but little wonder that very few books were to be found in the homes. But in these days, when everybody is a reader, there is absolutely no excuse for having our homes without a good library, where books may be had either for entertainment or for study or reference. Our children want something to read, something that will amuse them, and it is our duty to see that they get it; it is our place to cultivate this natural longing of the growing brain, and to cultivate it by supplying it with material that will instruct as well as entertain. Boys and girls must do something to kill the time that they have at their disposal, and if they are not doing it by reading or studying they will do so in some way that may not be productive of good for the future. Apart from the good results that must come to the young from reading, the particularly strong feature of the whole thing is that a habit is formed which will develop with age and will necessarily improve the standard of the intellectuality of our young people. Boys and girls nowadays must have something to read and if the parent do not supply them with it they will get it elsewhere and it is frequently of a doubtful goodness, either as to style or to morality. Books for the family are the best investment a family can make. Many of our parents are not endowed with very much wealth, but the very best works can, in these days of improved printing, be obtained for little or nothing. We should not make it necessary for our children to go outside the home for amusement, but where there is nothing to interest them in the way of reading or other entertainment, they will spend as little time with us as possible. There is nothing to keep them at home and they will go where they will find amusement. It is not so much the danger that children find when away from the home, as it is the habit that is formed and which sticks through life that makes this yearning for outside society so fraught with possible evil consequences. Parents have immense obligations toward their children. Boys and girls; young men and young women need good, wholesome reading, and parents who do not supply them with it at home are not doing their duty. With more reading matter in the house there would be less gadding about the streets and fewer parents with sorrowing hearts.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Wednesdays and Fridays during Advent are Fast days.

It is against the laws of the Church to solemnize marriages during Advent.

A diocesan regulation calls for special Advent services on Wednesday and Friday evenings.

The story that Premier Ross would enter the Dominion Cabinet in the Hon. Mr. Mills place is characterized as preposterous by the entire Ontario Cabinet, who ought to know.

After a long siege of deputations, the Ontario Government has at last fixed upon the second License Inspector for Toronto. The latest and last addition to the staff is Mr. James McConvey, who has for the past year been connected with this paper. The field was practically cleared for Mr. McConvey when Mr. M. J. Boland, who looked sure of the situation, retired from the race. Mr. McConvey is a good man for the position and will fill it with his accustomed ability. He is a young man who has worked faithfully and well for his party and one who has the additional recommendation of having made a success of whatever he turned his hand to. There is no one who knows the gentleman but will commend the Government in this appointment from any and every standpoint. Mr. McConvey's salary will be \$1800 a year. We lose a good man, but we are willing to sacrifice ourselves for the good of our country.

The periodical crop of reports of the "alarming" illness of the Pope is again making its rounds. One day His Holiness is sinking fast and symptoms of his failing strength are gone into with the greatest of care, indicating, we naturally suppose, an intimate knowledge of the state of our Holy Father's health; in the next issue of the same paper is usually published the details of some great ceremony in Rome at which His Holiness officiated and showed but little fatigue. Cable despatches to our great dailies from Rome are not and never were reliable, nor is there any reason to believe that they ever will be so.

The Sisters of the House of Providence are making their annual rounds on behalf of their great charitable institution. It is anything but a pleasant task for these poor nuns and we should do all in our power to lighten the burden of their labors. The House of Providence is the one great institution in Toronto that Catholics cannot do without. It takes a great deal of money every year to carry on the work, which is an absolute necessity. The Sisters have taken all care off our hands, and they are now making the rounds for the payment of our debt to God in the maintenance of His poor. While it should not be necessary for our good Sisters to ask for alms; while Catholics should contribute sufficient money to carry on the work, without being asked for it—yet, since things are as they are, we should contribute to the utmost of our ability. The nuns are but caring for our aged and infirm, and it is our duty to see that their simple wants are supplied.

"They are all vagrants," said Inspector Ashbald in open Court, in speaking upon the question of old soldiers and pensioners. While the Inspector's little speech in the presence of a deputation of old soldiers was uncalculated, yet the fact that he dared make it, and could produce evidence in the shape of convictions to show that his statement was at least true in part, argues but ill for the military spirit in Canada. We do not think, however, that the veterans are as bad as the Inspector would have us believe. War made them what they are, and if they are vagrants the greater shame to England for her want of care of those who fought for her. The best part of their lives was spent in the service of their country, where it was impossible to put by for a rainy day, and where, thanks to a beneficent system of army discipline, a taste for liquor was acquired that but too often brings the old soldier to the Police station. Even laboring under such disadvantages, it seems to

us that the veteran is quite as good as our peace-bred man of the same class.

The problem of how the working-man may be rounded up for attendance at church services on Sunday is one that Protestants have been striving in vain to solve. In place of gaining a tighter hold upon this large class of men they seem to be losing ground year after year, so much so that a very large percentage of these men never attended church at all. The following means to secure the attendance of workmen has been tried in London, Eng.: "A brass instrument called the 'raconte phone,' which plays music, not necessarily sacred, and also delivers addresses and sermons, has been placed under the pulpit. A great white sheet has been drawn across the back of the church, and a stereopticon operated thereon. An official explains the pictures by means of a speaking-trumpet. The preacher, Rev. Mr. Carlisle, has increased the attractions by installing a string band to perform pieces known to every household." The preacher has increased his congregation from 12 to 600 within a few weeks. There is something radically wrong when Christianity is obliged to resort to such means to draw an audience—it can scarcely be called a congregation.

The arraignment made last week of Toronto University by Mr. S. H. Blake in his address before the Political Science Club is creating quite a stir in academic circles. In 1905 the students all went out on strike for the correction of certain abuses imagined or otherwise within the University, and never since then has anything approaching the feeling of dissatisfaction now existing been so widespread. "Variety," the organ of the students, speaking editorially on the subject, says:

The importance of Hon. S. H. Blake's address before the Political Science Club last Thursday, as marking a turning point in the history of our University, would be hard to calculate. To many it came like a thunderbolt. To others, somewhat more conversant with the inner workings of University affairs, it came as a startling, though not altogether unexpected, revelation of what had for some time been going on beneath the surface, of which the only indication to the general public was rumor. When a man of Mr. Blake's weight of character, that the University is now in an almost complete isolation with the University for so many years is well known, a man who is at the very centre, in fact is the prime mover of the organization movement—when such an effect were so carefully weighed and considered, that there was something behind the address more than the mere opinions and sentiments of the speaker—in short, that the time was now ripe for action, that the University is now in a position to face her present financial stringency was at hand, and that the time had come to sound the trumpet call to undergraduates and graduates alike to stand by their alma mater in the coming crisis.

"Popery and Patriotism are Incompatible," says the Methodist Times, and then it goes on to prove its assertion by means of arguments that are not only so flimsy that the brightest breath of air would be flat to them, but are also so threadbare that one must look upon it as an cruelty to expose anything live in them in this cold weather. The Methodist Times must be shy on ideas when it falls back upon such a statement as the above. Probably this century fund idea has absorbed all the thinking powers of the editorial writer, who was at such a loss as to perpetrate for the thousandth time a set of arguments that were never, not even on their first appearance about a hundred years ago, a credit to the brain that evolved them. Were there a more patriotic race than the Irish who are so intensely Catholic? In spite of hundreds of years of persecution that rendered them homeless and destitute; in spite of all that was done to render the land a barren waste of desolation; in spite of all that Protestantism wreaked upon them to make their country hateful and desolate—in spite of all this there is not upon the face of God's green earth to day a people who are so patriotic, a people who are so devoted to the old land as the Irish. So much so that even their descendants for generations have their hearts still aglow for the grand old land where Oath-breakers have reigned, and please God, over will reign, despite persecution, and attempts at destruction. Can any one deny that the Italians are patriotic? Is any one so idiotic as to say that the French do not love their country? Are the Belgians regarded to their right little land? Go through the list of Catholic countries and in patriotism they stand head and should-