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LETTERS FROM ROME, BY JOHN FRANCIS MAGUIRE, M.P. FOR DUNGARVAN.

[An interesting series of letters from the Eternal City has appeared in the Cork Examiner from the pen of the hon. member for Dungarvan. We give the following]:—

EDUCATION IN ROME.

The old and long standing calumny against the Catholic Church is, that she hates, because she dreads, the light—that her safety is in the ignorance of those over whom she rules; and, therefore, that it has been, and will ever be, her policy to discourage the progress of education, and thus retain the human mind in a convenient state of intellectual twilight. This venerable calumny is hale, fresh, and in excellent requisition at this very hour, just as if the history of the past and the teeming evidence of the present had not refuted it, and is not refuting it, a thousand times. Now if this accusation be as just as we are assured it is, to no better place could one look for the exemplification of this benighting policy than to Rome; for not only has the Pope to maintain his spiritual supremacy by the force and power of ignorance, but his temporal authority has also to be upheld by the same potent agency. Therefore, schools ought to be a rarity in Rome; or, if they exist at all, they should be such only as are useful for training ecclesiastics, whose mission will be to perpetuate the same state of popular debasement, which, as the calumny goes, is the strength and foundation of their Church's influence and authority. We shall see how far the real state of things in Rome—the seat and centre of "Priestcraft," &c.—justifies the perennial ravings of the platforms and "religious" press of England—England be it remembered, whose monstrous and admitted ignorance is the theme of the constant and just lamentation of the best and wisest of her citizens, and the recognised source of evils with which her most stringent laws appear at this very moment almost unequal to cope. It may be said of Rome that she possesses, even at this day, and notwithstanding the ruin of many of the magnificent aqueducts of the olden time; a greater number of public fountains, from which her population may draw an abundant and unceasing supply of the purest water, than any other city in the world. And yet her schools are more numerous, and quite as accessible to all classes, from the youth of her nobility to the offspring of the porter and the woodcutter, as her fountains; and not more pure and unpolluted is the spring from which the young intellect draws its first nourishment in the seminaries of the "modern Babylon," than are those streams which bring health and daily comfort even to the poorest. Pass through the streets of Rome, and at every turn you hear the splash, splash, of water falling gratefully on the ear; and so may be heard the unmistakable hum and buzz of the regional and the parish schools. But these, immense in number as I shall show they are, form but a portion of the educational institutions of calcinated Rome. Besides the day schools, which I shall make some attempt at enumerating, there exist a number of schools of a most interesting character, such as might be copied from with great advantage in many cities of the United Kingdom.

There are night schools, specially intended for and devoted to the education of young artisans and persons engaged in various laborious pursuits, and who, from their constant employment during the day are deprived of the ordinary means of intellectual and other instruction. In fact, no other class of pupils can obtain admission to them than those so circumstanced as I describe. They are 13 in number, 11 being under one institution, and 2 under separate institutions. Each school consists of 4 classes, the number of pupils attending each school being, at the lowest estimate, about 120; which would give a total attendance of pupils at not less than 1,600. These schools are sustained by various means and resources—by private contributions, by grants through the Commission of Supplies, and by certain ecclesiastical funds temporarily conceded to them by the present Pope. Amongst the benefactors of these valuable institutions, His Holiness is the principal; he gives 120 scudi annually out of his private purse. The example of the Pope is imitated by the Cardinals, the nobility, and other classes of the community. The ordinary teaching comprises reading, writing, arithmetic, a knowledge of the principles of design, and practical geometry, both applied to the ornamental, useful, and mechanical arts. Eight years is the earliest age at which a boy can enter a school, but he can attend it till he may be established in life. In their mere educational character and results, these schools will stand a fair comparison with schools of a somewhat similar but more ambitious character in France and Belgium; but in one respect—the moral and religious training of the young workman, the Roman night school stands by itself. In most of the schools elsewhere religion is not even thought of; but in Rome it is a primary consideration; and the most efficacious

means are adopted especially through societies, or congregations, under the guidance of clergymen, not only to ensure to the night scholar a thorough knowledge of the principles of his religion, but to induce him to the fulfilment of its practices and observances. The cost of each school is about 20 scudi per month, or 240 scudi a year. This sum serves to procure oil for the lamps, paper, ink, and books—all of which were given gratuitously to the scholars—and the material of the school. The principal items of expense are the rent, and the salary of the "guardian."

Of the parish schools, it may be enough to say that one exists in every parish in Rome, and is under the immediate control and direction of the Rector or Parish Priest. These of themselves afford a vast educational provision for the children of the poorer class.

This Society degli asili d'infanzia have two asylums, or educational establishments for boys, one in Trastevere, and the other in Regola.

The Society of Private Benefactors, among whom the principal is Prince Doria, have another educational establishment maintained at their own charge.

The Roman Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul have lately opened a flourishing school for the education of boys, and as in all places where this noble society takes up its ground, will use every exertion to extend the sphere of its beneficent operations.

The Christian Brothers are in Rome, as in the cities and towns of Ireland, amongst the ablest and most successful, as most zealous, of all the teachers of youth. Those enlighteners of the ignorant have four houses in Rome, each containing 500 pupils, or 2,000 in all. They have besides a school for the sons of the French soldiers, and also a boarding house for youths who are destined for commerce, in other words, intended for situations in shops and other places of business. The education of the latter class is well adapted to their intended calling.

Then there are the schools of the Order of Somaschi, at St. Lorenzolo in Borgo, and the Order of Scolopi, at S. Pantaleo, in which, besides other branches, a knowledge of the Latin tongue is taught. About 100 pupils attend each of those schools, the greater number of them being intended for the arts.

There are three colleges or seminaries for artisans; these are San Michele, Tata Giovanni, and the Termini, the former, now a Conservatorio di Belle Arte, is one of the most interesting institutions in Rome, and will amply repay the trouble of a visit. Besides training a number of boys to different branches of the purely mechanical arts, it frequently contributes to the great world of art some of its most distinguished ornaments. For instance, it was a former pupil of San Michele who lately completed the beautiful monument to Gregory XVI., now in its place in St. Peter's, and which no one can regard without a feeling of genuine admiration, for the exquisite grace of the figures which adorn it. In this vast and comprehensive seminary you may observe its pupils engaged in the most varied and opposite pursuits. Here they are learning some simple handicraft—there the highest branches of art. In one hall a number of boys are weaving carpets of the most costly texture and elaborate design; in another department other classes are cutting cameos, engraving on steel and copper, or engaged in modelling a bust or a group, or chiselling it into its enduring form out of the pure marble of Carrara. You leave the hall where some incipient Canova is learning the first principles of his immortal art, and, passing to another part of the building, you hear the quick stroke of the carpenter's hammer, or see drying in the open air a piece of cloth that had lately received its color in the dye-vat. The wise principle of this noble institution is to allow the boy to adopt the pursuit most congenial to his tastes, or suited to his capacity; not compelling the youth who feels within him an instinctive longing for the beautiful in art to toil and drudge at some mere mechanical pursuit, nor training another to the profession of an artist instead of conferring on him a mere mechanical trade. It may be added that the splendid apartments of Cardinal Fosti, the enlightened and generous Protector of the College, which, besides their valuable collection of works by the great masters of various nations, are enriched by many most beautiful specimens of the pupils of San Michele, afford a treat of the highest order to those who are fortunate enough to have an opportunity of visiting them.

In various ways does His Holiness exhibit his desire to promote the education of the children of the humbler classes of his subjects. Here, for instance, is the institution della Vigna Pia—which simply means a school founded by Pius the Ninth, who devoted to its maintenance a vineyard in his own property.

I need not here refer to the system of education pursued in the prisons, whether old or new, having alluded to that carried on at Santa Babina; nor is it necessary to repeat that even in

the Hospitals—witness that of San Galicano—education is not only not neglected, but, where it can be done so, made a matter of very high importance.

The colleges or seminaries for the higher studies are the Orfani, the Panfilii—for ecclesiastics from the estates of the house of Doria—the Capranica, for Romans and the natives of some dioceses of the Marche; the Seminario di St. Peter, the Roman Seminary, the Seminario Pio, the secular Colleges of Ghislieri, Clementino, Nazareno, and Boromea, formerly for the sons of the nobility.

Besides these there are the following colleges for foreigners—the Propaganda, and the Colleges of the English, Irish, Scotch, Greek, Belgian, French, German, and Hungarian nations.

The public schools are the Roman College, the Appollinare, and, so far as the rhetoric, the College of S. Maria in Montecelli.

The great university, the Sapienza, can scarcely be said to close the list of institutions for public instruction—instruction freely granted by the state; for, while there are forty-nine "regional schools," at which payment is given, there is a long list of schools for children of tender years, in which education is gratuitously afforded.

For female children there is also the most liberal provision made; in fact, there is no parish without one school conducted by a Religious Order called Maestre Pie, or some other Nuns; and in some there are several. The Maestre Pie entirely depend for the support of their schools on the Almoner of His Holiness, and are liberally assisted in a work so congenial to the benevolent heart of the Holy Father. Rome, as is well known, abounds in conventual establishments; and as each Order and each House have their independent schools, it may be fairly asserted that if a single child grow up without the benefit of a sound and useful education, the fault lies with the parents, and not with the Government of Pius the Ninth, or of those noble educational institutions, which are the pride of Rome and the ornament of the Catholic Church.

THE HOSPITALS AT ROME.

The hospitals are under the care of Religious, and in every respect appear to be perfect in their arrangements. The most important of these magnificent institutions is the Hospital of Santo Spirito, of which Mr. Maguire speaks as follows:—

The magnitude of this vast establishment may be judged of when I state that the number on the register on the occasion when I went through it, was about 780 patients; while it also contained an hospital for foundlings, and a conservatorio for orphans and foundlings, of which latter class many had grown up to womanhood in the institution. The register, which I myself inspected, is kept, and admirably kept, by the Sisters of Charity of the Order of St. Vincent, who also keep an account of every article given out, and, in fact, of every detail connected with the business of the vast establishment. Besides these Sisters, I think twenty in number, twenty Capuchins have been specially appointed to its spiritual management by the present Pope, who had a house built for them in connection with it—so that at all hours, night as well as day, some members of the body might be in attendance on the sick. The halls in this hospital are of enormous size, and afford ample space to two rows of beds on each side, leaving from 15 to 18 feet in the centre. Here, as in the other hospitals I have seen, the beds were clean and comfortable; and such was the effect of good ventilation, that I failed to perceive the least unpleasantness of odor, such as is a matter of very common occurrence even in hospitals of very great pretension. The same remark I can safely make of the other Roman hospitals which I visited; and in a quick perception of offence to the sense of smell, I am but too painfully acute, at least for my own comfort. I did not think the mortality by any means in excess, but rather the contrary; for in an hospital of 800 patients, many of whom, both medical and surgical, had been received in a bad state, the deaths for the last three days were but 11—that is, 4 on the first day, 4 on the second, and three on the day of my visit.—The medical and surgical staff of this noble institution is in proportion to its requirements, care being specially taken that professional aid may be had at a moment's notice, during every hour of the four-and-twenty. It would be quite unnecessary to represent in detail the several features of this hospital, and it will therefore suffice to say that they are all adapted to the great ends proposed—the comfort, the consolation, and the cure of the patient. I must not omit to mention its really fine museum, abounding with the most beautiful preparations, natural as well as in wax, of all parts of the human frame, and exemplifying the effects of various kinds of disease on its principal organs. In another part of the building was a great Military Hospital, the hall or corridor of which seemed of enormous magnitude. It was much occupied, but entirely by Italian soldiers.

Having heard some particulars with respect to the Foundling Hospital, which also forms a branch of the same institution, I was resolved to visit it for the purpose of seeing for myself as to its condition, and also of making some enquiries as to its working. I must confess it was about the most unpleasant portion of my visit; not from any fault of the management, but from the very nature of this peculiar institution. It is right to explain that of the 900 children lodged annually in the "rota" of the asylum, not more than 600, or two-thirds, are illegitimate. The remaining 200 are the offspring of poor and needy parents, who have taken this mode of providing for, or getting rid of, them for various reasons. If it happen, as it often does with people in the humblest condition of life, that their family exceeds their means of supporting them, one of the juvenile superabundant population is committed to the wheel of the Foundling Hospital of Santo Spirito, it might be with some mark on its dress by which it could be registered in the hospital, and its identity afterwards proved, in case, for instance, of its being claimed by the parents, which is by no means of uncommon occurrence. Another frequent cause of having recourse to this institution for the maintenance of legitimate offspring is either the delicacy of the mother, or the delicacy of the child. The mother has no nourishment to give the infant, and she is too poor to provide a nurse for it; therefore she sends it, or bears it, to an asylum where that aliment which nature has refused to her will be provided for it. Or if it is a rickety, miserable little thing from its birth, stunted or malformed, or so delicate as that in the rude hut of its parents it has no chance of ever doing well; then, too, in its case, the wheel of the hospital is a safe resource, and with parents of hard hearts takes the place of many an evil suggestion, such as are too often present in the homes and the breasts of the destitute. Frequently the parent is known to argue that the infirm or malformed child, thus got rid of, has the best chance of recovery, and certainly of being provided for, where eminent medical attendance is always to be had, and where the greatest care is taken of the training and future interests of the foundling. It may be said that this facility of getting rid of legitimate offspring leads to a disregard for the manifest obligations of a parent's duty; but to this fair objection I can only offer a preponderating advantage—that it does away with the awful proneness to infanticide which distinguishes other countries, but pre-eminently England. In England, a mother—by lawful wedlock, too—is starving, or her poverty has assumed a form that renders her desperate; and she makes away with her children secretly, or slays them more openly, and consummates her frantic guilt by destroying her own life. No cases of this nature occur in the Papal States, not because there is not intense poverty experienced there by classes as well as individuals; but that the State has afforded a means of provision which leaves no room for fierce suggestion and terrible temptation. It may also happen that a man's wife dies in giving birth to a child, or from some other cause, and that the poor bewildered father, not knowing what to do with the helpless little creature, consigns it to the shelter of the Foundling Hospital, which he well knows is under the protection of the State, and managed by a body of religious women whose lives are devoted to its duties.—These are some of the causes which induce the parents of legitimate offspring to adopt this mode of providing for them.

The number of 900 may seem very great, as representing the annual average sent in; but it should be stated that the hospital of Santo Spirito affords an asylum not only to the foundlings of Rome, but to the Provinces of Sabina, Frosinone, Velletri, and the Maree. Not more than fifty of the children recently sent in were in the house when I went through it, the remainder having been sent off to the country, for the benefit of a better nursing and a more healthful atmosphere than the city could furnish. I had heard a great deal of the mortality in this institution, and was quite prepared to have such statements confirmed; but taking all circumstances into consideration, especially the condition in which the children were sent in, the actual per centage of deaths in the year is less than I anticipated, and was told it was. I had the best proof that it did not of late years exceed 10 per cent. One nurse is allowed to every two children; and the women appeared to be strong and healthful, as the ordinary average of nurses. The presence of a Nun is a guarantee for as much care as can be expected from such a class to such a class—from the mercenary hiring to the miserable foundling, the offspring of shame, or at best the child of poverty. I should not report honestly if I did not admit that the nurseries were in good order, the beds clean, and the other requisites ample and comfortable. Still I defy any one who had not a heart of iron to pass unmoved through the rows of cots in which many a little pale face gave but too certain token that in a short time the feeble breath would sigh

out its last faint sigh; and, for my part, I passed more rapidly through these infant dormitories than I did through wards in which strong men writhed in agony, or a sharp shriek gave fearful evidence of torture too great for human nature to endure in silence.

The department for grown female foundlings was most admirably arranged, the greatest care and attention being lavished upon its inmates by the Sisters between whom and the young girls the strongest affection exists. The ultimate fate of these poor girls is by no means so pitiable as one might at first be led to imagine; for after having been carefully watched over from infancy by the best of all guardians, and instructed soundly, usefully, and of course religiously, they are provided with a sufficient dowry, married humbly but virtuously, and thus established with a fair chance of getting through life with honor and credit.

I might fill a letter, aye ten letters, with even brief descriptions of the Orphan Asylums of Rome, many of which have been founded, enlarged, or enriched by Pius IX.

REV. DR. CAHILL.

ON STREET-PREACHING IN ENGLAND.

Dec. 22, 1856.

Several well-meaning religious persons having witnessed what is called street-preaching in England, cannot be made to understand why this harmless English practice has produced such contention and ill-will in Ireland. Men occupying the very highest official position in the gift and confidence of the Crown have, on a recent occasion, expressed (I will own) honest indignation at the failure of the late Scripture readers in Ireland. This case furnishes one of the many instances where a custom harmless, or perhaps even meritorious in one country, may, from the change in circumstances, be very injurious and wicked in a different nation. Any one acquainted with London, and with the manufacturing towns and cities in England, must have learned from the most casual observation that the working classes seldom, or perhaps never, attend any place of worship on Sundays: the statistical report on this point is, that only one-third of the Protestant population frequent church on the Sabbath. From an accurate public statement made on this subject, in reference to London, fifty persons of all ranks, is the ordinary attendance, or audience seen at each service on Sundays, at the parish churches of the city. So shameful has been the total absence of the Londoners from prayer: and indeed so alarming has been the abandonment of all worship in this Western Babylon, that the sum of half a million of money has been subscribed by the nobility of England in order to build five hundred churches (at the cost of one thousand pounds each) in the environs of the city: and thus as it were, to entrap into worship the citizens who on Sundays go for health or pleasure to the various places of public amusement in the outlets of the metropolis. The Queen has given, in last May twelve months, fifty thousand pounds towards this Christian undertaking.

When one adds to this lamentable fact, the public statement taken from Government reports—namely, that the entire population of the English collieries are reared, and grow up, and live without even the knowledge of the Trinity, or the creed, or in some recorded instances (before the Commissioners), of the very name of God or Christ, it becomes abundantly clear that either the neglect of the clergy or the wickedness of the people has placed England in a position of most deplorable ignorance of Christian faith. Of course, it is a clear result, requiring no argument, that the children of such parents must be sunk in a state of vice and infidelity, nowhere else to be found in any Christian country on the entire earth. Hence, see the shuddering accounts of English crime in the assizes calendars, in the daily journals, in the hourly police reports: and read in the higher classes the constant new creeds—the wild incongruous mental religious derangement which are to be met with throughout the population. The nation, in fact, presents the terrific spectacle of a whole people having strayed away from the true faith: the fold left without a shepherd: the flock exposed to the ravages of the wolf. And when one makes a calculation of English infidelity and crime, it is hard not to feel that Pagan England, before her conversion to Christianity, stood higher in the scale of virtue before God and man than she does in this year of grace 1856. What advantage is her civilization in arts and sciences if she has retrograded in the Gospel, and returned to her former Paganism in faith and morals?—What service are her commerce and her wealth if these have the effect of removing her farther from salvation? And wherefore all her learning, her philosophy, her national prestige, if in her pride she follows the decision of Parliament in faith, substitutes the opinions of man for the law of Christ, and adopts in religion every variety of human passion, while rejecting the only true, infallible guide, the voice of God.

This state of things in religion being the published public official record in reference to Eng-