

# Queer Ideas of Secular Writers.

(By an Occasional Contributor.)

ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD.—The readers of the "True Witness," generally, are familiar with the beautiful and gem-like poems of Rev. Father Tabb. Like Father Ryan, the "Poet-Priest of the South," Father Tabb has won a distinct place for himself in the domain of literature. It is not an exaggeration to say that he possesses more than any living writer of verse, the unique power of condensation. We have not Father Tabb's poems before us, nor have we an authentic sketch of his life; but we have "Pearson's Magazine," for March, which contains a long extract from William Archer's bulky volume entitled "Poets of the Younger Generation." While we do not pretend to contrast Mr. Archer's sketch of Father Tabb, with the true account of the poet's life, because, as already remarked, we have not all the data regarding his career before us, still we cannot allow a most flagrant evidence of lack of knowledge regarding the Catholic Church to go uncorrected.

Mr. Archer, under the very secular heading, "Mr. John B. Tabb," says: "Mr. John B. Tabb was born at 'The Forest,' Amelia County, Virginia, March 22, 1845. During the civil war he served as a captain's clerk in the Confederate blockade runner, 'Robert E. Lee,' for about two years, was captured and confined for about eight months in Point Lookout Prison, whence, with Sidney Lanier, he was exchanged just before the war ended." As far as this information goes, it may possibly be exact; we have no reason to suppose otherwise, and, besides, Mr. Archer is here writing about something that he understands. But, like a great many other writers, he commits his first blunder the moment he touches the Catholic Church, or any subject, or question even remotely connected with the Church. Continuing, in regard to Father Tabb, he says:—

"He became a Catholic in 1872, and was ordained a priest two years later. Since then, as for some years before, he has occupied a chair in St. Charles College, Ellicott city, Maryland, teaching English grammar." No Catholic requires to know anything about the life of Father Tabb to see that this must be very wrong. In 1872 Father Tabb was twenty-three years of age. He would then be only twenty-five when ordained a priest, after two years in the Catholic Church. Mr. Archer must have very hazy ideas regarding the requirements of the Church and the qualifications of the priest before ordination can take place. He may possibly have had in his mind some Methodist, or Baptist, or other sect, in which a man can get a license to preach after a few months of probation. It might be possible that at the age of twenty-five, after being two years converted, Father Tabb entered a seminary to study for the priesthood. Even then, considering that he could not have made a very complete course of studies during the civil war, in which he was engaged, it would be but reasonable to surmise that he put in two years of philosophy before entering upon his theological studies. Then, it is altogether probable, that he occupied four, or even five years in theology—the course in his case, naturally being more extended. This, at best would make the date of his ordination nine years after his conversion, or in 1881. Then, as to his occupying a chair of professor at St. Charles College, "some years before his conversion," it is not at all probable—unless he had been teaching drawing, or engineering, or something entirely foreign to all religious matters of study. Again he was evidently not a class-teacher when engaged in military life.

We repeat that we have not the details of Father Tabb's life; but we know positively that he could not have been professor at St. Charles for some years before his conversion; that he could not have been ordained priest before he was at least thirty years of age, seeing he was a Protestant until twenty-three; that Mr. Archer must know absolutely nothing about the Church and her rules and discipline, nor about the requirements in the one to become a priest; that he displays a deal of prejudice and of indelicacy in calling Father Tabb (the name by which he is best known in literature), "Mr. John B. Tabb;" and that this small paragraph, taken from out a thousand in his volume, proves conclusively, that he is not competent to either appreciate Catholic sentiment or to criticize Catholic poetry, much less to deal historically with members of the Catholic priesthood.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.—One of your contributors, in a recent number, quoted from an article, or rather a lecture, by the novelist Wells, and gave some extracts to show that the well-known author merely considers man from a material standpoint. In the closing of that same lecture we find a paragraph that is very important, especially in view of the fact that it is the expression of an idea, or a theory that has a very general acceptance to-day—that is to say, general amongst men who disregard the teachings and principles of Christianity. The lecturer said:—

"The conditions under which men live are changing with an ever-increasing rapidity, and so far as our knowledge goes, no sort of creatures have ever lived under changing conditions without undergoing the profoundest changes themselves. In the past century there was more change in the conditions of human life than there had been in the previous thousand years. A hundred years ago inventors and investigators were rare, scattered men, and now invention and inquiry is the work of an organized army. This century will see changes that will dwarf those of the nineteenth century, as those of the nineteenth dwarf those of the eighteenth. One can see no sign anywhere that this rush of change will be over presently, that the positivist dream of a social reconstruction and of a new static culture phase will ever be realized. Human society never has been quite static, and it will presently cease to attempt to be static. Everything seems pointing to the belief that we are entering upon a progress that will go on, with an ever-widening and ever more confident stride, for ever. The reorganization of society that is going on now beneath the traditional appearance of things is a kinetic reorganization. We are getting into marching order. We have struck our camp for ever and we are out upon the roads."

This may be all very true in as far as concerns modern invention and the scientific progress of the age; it may equally be exact in regard to social organisms, for society is decidedly changing with the changing conditions of affairs. But whether for the better or for the worse is a problem that we are not now called upon to solve. It must, however, be remarked that this is simply a study, by Mr. Wells, of the material conditions under which man exists. We take the one word "Kinetic," defined it means, according to "Clifton-Grimaux," "that part of mechanics which treats of movement, without any regard for the forces that produce it," which simply means that Mr. Wells deals with man, his development, and onward, or upward movements, "without any regard for the force" or the Power that sustains and that enables man to accomplish such changes. In fact, it is a study of humanity irrespective and regardless of God; therefore, without any consideration of man's origin, his final end, the aim of his existence, or the original cause of his being, or the ultimate end for which that supreme Power brought him into existence. In other words it is an illustration of reasoning in a vicious circle.

## Humor of the Celt.

Celtic Wittyisms on the witness stand are without number. Here are a few gleaned from a scrap pile on my desk, says R. C. Gleaner, in the "Catholic Columbian."

The lawyer was trying to confuse the witness and so discredit his testimony. "What did you say your name was?" asked the attorney. "Michael Doherty, sir." "Michael Doherty, eh? Now, Michael be careful and answer this question carefully. Are you a married man?" "I think so. I was married." "So you think because you got married that you are a married man, do you? Now tell me whom you married?" "Why, sir, I married a woman." "Now, now, don't you know better than to trifle with this court? Of course you married a woman. Did you ever hear of anybody marrying a man?" "Yes, sir, my sister married a man."

In a suit brought by an installment house to obtain payment for a set of furniture, an Irish witness was asked if he knew what "quart-

ered oak" meant. His reply was: "Well, sir, it means nowadays that it's three-quarters pine."

Another witness was asked if the officer struck the prisoner with impunity. His reply was, "Not while I was there; he struck him with his club."

During a trial, quite recently, in an Eastern court in a murder case, a witness was asked to describe to the jury the exact location of a flight of stairs, the scene of the murder. "Explain to the jury," said the attorney, who had tried without success to confuse the Irishman, "explain to the jury and be very careful what you say, for remember you are on your oath, exactly how the stair steps run."

"Sure, sir," was the quick-witted answer, "if ye stand at the bottom they run up, and if ye stand at the top they run down."

"Guilty or not guilty?" asked the court clerk of a prisoner charged with some trivial offense. "What are ye here for but to find out?" was the quick rejoinder.

An Irishman in an Ohio city was witness to some difficulty between a friend of his and an officious policeman. Called into court to testify, he evaded all pointed questions in order not to give any testimony that might be against his friend's side of the case. He did this so effectively that the attorney was nettled and cried out: "Look here, sir; you swear you were present during this trouble and yet you can give no account of what took place. How is this? What do you mean?"

"Yes, sir," was the answer, "I was there all the time, but I was in a kind of a daze."

## Catholic Women In Education.

The Old Testament loves to dwell upon the names of women prominent in the instruction of the people. Anna, the mother of Samuel, and Miriam, the sister of Moses; Judith at Bethulia, Esther at the Court of Assuerus; Ruth in the fields, and the mother of the Maccabees are a few of the great characters which influenced the Jewish people. The deeds of three of them were of sufficient glory to merit a record in special books of the Testament.

In the Christian dispensation Anna taught Mary the law, and Mary unfolded to the youthful Saviour the lessons of religion. Anna, the prophetess, foretold His greatness, and Elizabeth prepared the Baptist for His work. St. Paul constantly refers to the women associated with him in apostolic work. He reminds us that Timothy, his disciple, learned the Scriptures from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. Priscilla, with her husband, Aquila, accompanied St. Paul to Ephesus, and "there found Apollo, an eloquent and fervent man, and expounded to him the way of the Lord most diligently. St. John wrote his second epistle to Electa, a lady eminent for piety and charity."

The first centuries of the Church are full of examples of noble women recognized as a force in instruction. St. Methodius, in his Banquet of the Ten Virgins, records an old tradition that the famous St. Thecla, a disciple of St. Paul, was skilled in secular philosophy and polite literature. One of the famous paintings in the Munich gallery commemorates the preaching of the faith in Alexandria by St. Apollonia.

A woman, St. Catherine of Alexandria, has long been revered as the patroness of Christian philosophers, and many significant legends have grown up about her name. Another ancient legend says that St. Barbara was instructed by Origen. As a matter of fact two of the most illustrious Greek fathers, St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nyssa, were instructed by their sister, St. Maximia. In the legends of the Christian physicians, Cosmo and Demian are said to have been educated by a woman, Theodora. St. Fulgentius, an African father, tells us that he was educated by his mother, who made him learn Homer and Menander by heart before he studied his Latin rudiments. St. Paula inspired St. Jerome to write his most important works. She was as well acquainted, he said, with Hebrew as with Latin and Greek. In letters written by him on the education of St. Paula's daughter, we may see the estimate placed by St. Jerome on the higher theological education of women. "When old enough let her read the works of St. Cyprian, and the epistles of St. Athanasius, and the writings of St. Hilary." One can readily imagine what study this demanded. He said he would be more

honored by teaching the spouse of Christ than the philosopher Aristotle in being perceptor to the Macedonian king. St. Marcella, whom St. Jerome calls the greatest glory of the city of Rome, was often consulted by bishop and priests on biblical questions after St. Jerome, who had taught her, had left Rome.

Paula, Laeta, Fabiola, Marcella, all Roman ladies, were students of Scripture in St. Jerome's school. St. Melania was of great assistance to St. Augustine in his struggles with the Pelagians and Nestorians, entering often into open controversy with them.

St. Eustachium, according to St. Jerome, wrote and spoke Hebrew without any adulteration of Latin. Much might be said of the women who were in constant correspondence with St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Fulgentius, both with regard to the programme of studies, as also to the system of studies. Valeria, Proba, Eudoxia and Paula are names of Christian women associated with the establishment of educational systems for the training of young women. These are a few of the many facts which have come down to us from the Graeco-Roman period of Christianity.

Volumes have been written upon the work of female monasteries in the history of medieval education. The monasteries and convents which sprung up throughout Europe following the development of Christianity were usually nurseries of learning. Intellectual activity was often the test of a convent. St. Brigid, at Kildare, in Ireland; Hildegard, at Disibodenberg, in Germany; Gertrude, at Nivelles, in Brabant, were the originators of great centres of knowledge which aided in keeping alive portions of the ancient learning and culture which otherwise would have surely perished. Mabillon recognizes that one of the glories of the Benedictine Order was the learning of its nuns and he recalls the names of learned religious women in the monasteries, which then took on, in a way, the functions of normal schools. He adds that there was often emulation for study between the monks and the nuns. St. Hildegard of Bingen, known as the Sybil of the Rhine, wrote curious, miscellaneous treatises, anticipating, it is said, some truths of modern science.

St. Gertrude in the time of Dagobert learned the Holy Scriptures by heart and translated them from the Greek. She sent to Ireland for masters to teach music, poetry and Greek to the cloistered nuns at Nivelles. Montalembert tells us that literally studies were cultivated in the monasteries for women in England during the seventh and eighth centuries, perhaps with more enthusiasm than in the communities of men. The Fathers of the Church, Latin, Greek, poetry and grammar were in the schedule of studies, while many were devoted to the study of the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the New Testament.

The Catholic nun as an educational force is not a result of modern civilization; nor of modern educational demands; she is rather one of the forces which have made modern civilization possible, as she is also one of the sources of strength and grace working for the salvation of modern society. She has what Fenelon calls "that divinest characteristic of love, the forgetfulness of self, which spends itself without measure, and gives itself without reserve."

If we cast a glance at the history of universities, we will find Catholic women associated with them not merely as students but as teachers. The Chronicles of Richard of Poitiers, speaking of Managoldus, remarks that his wife and daughters were highly educated and taught Sacred Scripture at the school of Lelano.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have some remarkable illustrations of position held by women in university life in Bologna, Padua and Pavia, world-famed universities of the Church. Among the teachers of Bologna we find the names of Prospera de Rossi, who taught Scripture; Marietta Tintoretto, daughter of the first Tintoretto, who taught painting; Novello d'Andrea, who took her father's place in class and taught canon law for ten years; Anna Manzolina was professor of anatomy; a woman succeeded Mezzoranti at Bologna, as teacher of Greek. Statues are erected to two women who taught botany in Bologna and Genoa. Maria Arronetti taught at Pavia. One of the famous teachers of the University of Padua was Helen Cornelia Bisopria, who proved herself worthy of the title of doctor of philosophy, which she received publicly in the Cathedral of Padua in 1678.

Maria Agnesi of Milan, who has given her name to the mathematical curve known as the witch of Agnesi, was elected to the Bologna Academy of Sciences; Pope Benedict XIV. de-

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clared that she was without question among the very first professors of analytics. The Pope in 1750, named her professor of mathematics at the University of Bologna, and when she demurred he assured her that Bologna had often heard, in its chairs, persons of her sex.

Mlle. Legardiere wrote a work which Guizot says is the most instructive now extant in ancient French law. Plantilla Brizio, a woman architect, built the chapel of St. Benedict in Rome. In the eighteenth century women took degrees in jurisprudence and philosophy in the Papal universities. Laura Bossi received the doctors degree at Bologna and was appointed professor in the Philosophical College, where for twenty-eight years she delivered public lectures on experimental philosophy, until her death in 1778. Vittoria Dolphina, Christina Roccati, Veronica Cambera and Tarquinia Molza are a few of the many women honored by university degrees.

These are but a few names selected at random from the long list of noted women whose learning was equalled by their sanctity of life and whose inspiration was in their Catholic faith. The story is interesting when we reconsider some of the deeds of women in the encouragement given to education by their interest and generosity. St. Elizabeth of Portugal induced her husband to found a university at Coimbra. The first regular professorship at Cambridge, the chair of divinity, was founded in 1502 by Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond, mother of Henry VII, and of the Tudor line. She founded St. John's College and also Christ College. Pembroke College was endowed in the fourteenth century by the widow of the Earl of Pembroke. Clare College was endowed and named by

the Countess of Clare in 1338. Queens College was founded in 1448 by Margaret of Anjou, Queen of Henry VI., who had founded King's College in 1441. Elizabeth Woodville, Queen of Edward IV., and a friend of Margaret, completed her work.

Under the patronage and inspiration of the German Princess Matilda, daughter of Crown Prince Palatine Louis III., the University of Freiburg, in Breslau, was founded by her husband, Albert of Austria, and that of Tubingen by her son, Eberhard von Wurtemberg.

Apocryph of those deeds of generosity, it may not be amiss to recall that the first founder of the Catholic University of America and the donor of Caldwell Hall was Mary Gwendolin Caldwell, whose magnificent gift made the University possible.

Trinity College is a monument to the generous deeds of the noble-hearted Catholic women of America. Fifteen centuries, therefore, find a glorious record of Catholic women in education. It is true that most of it has gone unrecorded. The world will never know how beneficial has been the simple, self-forgetful service of consecrated lives to God and the salvation of souls. Yet their works speak louder than words. We must not forget, moreover, the social and economic conditions which often precluded the possibility of a more general education of women in the last few centuries. When the times demanded a more widespread education of the people, the Catholic Church gave inspiration and encouragement to Catholic women to aid in its revival and general diffusion.—Rt. Rev. T. J. Conaty, in the Catholic Mirror.