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The Free School Question.

(By a Regular Contributor.)

In view of the prominence that has been recently given, in this province, by a section of the press, to the Free School problem, we cannot refrain from expressing an opinion regarding the merits of the question. We have no desire to enter into any discussion of the many details presented to the public for study; moreover, such would not assist in any way in clearing the atmosphere that surrounds this issue. We are simply desirous of pointing out that this agitation is entirely a Protestant one, and completely from a Protestant point of view of educational matters. It is absolutely unnecessary, in this country above all, to recognize that in all what concerns education, there exist two sets of ideas, very distinct from each other and destined to so remain; the one is Catholic, the other is Protestant. This difference of views must not be forgotten, and each one of these two lines of thought must be weighed, and considered by whosoever has to do with the regulating of educational questions. Both must be respected and neither can be neglected or ignored with impunity. As the Protestant idea of education is grounded upon an entirely different basis from that which supports the Catholic conception, there can be no blending of them, any more than there can be a blending of the different churches. Having established this first premise, we will now proceed to the consideration of the question of Free Schools, from the Catholic standpoint.

To read the press articles of the day one would be led to suppose that free education was something so novel that it had never been heard of until these enthusiastic propagandists discovered its existence and determined to introduce it to the public. As a matter of fact free education has been a practice of the Catholic Church during long centuries; it has been an institution in our own land; it is still, in this very city, not to speak of the entire Christendom, a factor in the church's educational work. We have educational work. We have a vivid recollection of the time when free education—instruction included—was imparted in the old St. Lawrence Christian Brothers' School, and we could point to a number of subsequently prosperous and useful citizens whose elementary training was afforded them gratis in the same institution. We point to this special instance, not because it was an exception, but because we can speak thereof from personal knowledge of the facts. If any person will take the trouble, he can easily find out the number of poor children who are being educated free of all cost in the various Catholic homes of education in this city and throughout the province. The school may not be entirely free in the sense that all are not educated therein for nothing; but while those who are capable of paying the fees—and these are proportionate to the means of the individuals—are expected to contribute to the support of the establishment, all who are unable to pay for their children are equally welcome to send them, and they are certain to receive all the attention needed free of charge.

In the business world to-day, in the professions, in the Church, and in the trades as well, we can find a considerable percentage of men whose early education was given them free of cost. But, while we

claim that the free school idea is far from being a recent discovery, we must not lose sight of the fact that the two systems—the Protestant and the Catholic—are neither identical in their aims nor in their methods. While the Free School as advocated by the secular press would very probably correspond with the aims and methods of the Protestant section of the community, it would antagonize those of the Catholic section. In a word, it could not be accepted by the Catholic element without a grave departure from the principles that we cherish and which the Christ-founded Church has at all times inculcated. The grand and general aim of Protestant education is to prepare the youth to do battle with difficulties of life and to ultimately make a success of whatever business, profession, or undertaking that he may espouse when the school days are over. It also aims, incidentally, at making the young persons a useful citizen, one supplied with a sufficient store of knowledge to enable him to be of use both to society and to the state. All this is admirable, as far as it goes; but it does not go far enough to satisfy the Catholic conception of life, its duties, and its ultimate end. The aim of Catholic education is two-fold; including all that has been set down above in connection with success in this world's struggle, it aspires to something far more important. It aims at preparing the youth for the combat on earth with the world and its snares, the devil and his machinations, the flesh and its weaknesses, and for the final triumph that deserves the reward of perpetual life hereafter. For the Catholic, in other words, religion must form a necessary, and the most necessary element, of education. To disassociate the two would be equivalent to the disassociation of the spiritual and the temporal interests, the neglect of the soul for the body, the ignoring of eternity in the presence of time, the forgetting of God in the fever of excitement over matters purely human. The aims being so different, it necessarily follows that the methods, or means employed must equally differ.

In order to attain the end which Protestant education proposes to itself, there is no absolute need of any religious element in the system adopted. To reach the two-fold end that Catholic education has in view the religious training becomes one of the most essential parts of the system. Granting the existence of the Free School, we know that it will not and cannot admit of the religious element; consequently, while it may perfectly satisfy the Protestant idea, it can never correspond with the Catholic conception. Unless, then, a dual system of Free Schools could be imagined one class of Free Schools for the Protestant section and another one for the Catholic section—we cannot see how the problem can be solved to the universal satisfaction of our mixed population. We can see no more successful method than that which at present obtains in this province; a method that accords entire liberty of instruction to both elements, and does not permit either to infringe upon the rights, privileges, or interests of the other. In a word, the Free School as at present advocated, means simply the Protestant school, and if the Protestant element is satisfied therewith, we have no right and no desire to object.

Apostolic Delegate's Adieu.

Since his appointment to the office of Apostolic Delegate to Canada Mgr. Falconio has made the Capital his home. But he has visited almost every section of the Dominion and has made himself familiar with the conditions of the country, the needs of the people, and above all with the works and requirements of the Church and with the various religious, charitable, and educational institutions of the land. Being a man after our great Pontiff's own heart and having an abundance of sympathies, as well as of executive talents, he has formed judgments of all that has come under his observation, and in his recent address of adieu to the Irish Catholic of Ottawa he has given eloquent and concise expression to his feelings and opinions.

On Sunday afternoon last, Mgr. Falconio proceeded to the new St. Patrick's Hall, and there received a beautiful address presented to him by the members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. His reply, though brief, contains a volume of most encouraging matter, and it will long be cherished by the Irish Catholics of Canada, as an evidence of the sympathetic sentiments which the Holy See and its direct representative entertain towards them. The Apostolic Delegate spoke thus:—

"Gentlemen, your address, coming from the Ancient Order of Hibernians, could not but be accepted with pleasure.

"It recalls to my mind an heroic Christian nation, distinguished for her faith and for her attachment to the Holy See. Her history is the history of true patriotism and true Christian heroism. From the earliest days, when St. Patrick brought to her the light of faith, up to our present time, her children have given such an example of love for their native land and of fidelity to their holy religion as to deserve the admiration of the whole Catholic world. Truly, a profound sentiment of religion and patriotism has always been characteristic of the Irish nation.

"It was this sentiment which gave courage and strength to your glorious ancestors, who, during a long period of trials and sorrows, resisted valiantly the seduction to apostasy. It was this sentiment which led them, like the first martyrs of the Church, to sacrifice their lives rather than rebel against their holy religion. And it is this sentiment that you have inherited from your fathers, which, even in our days, renders the Irish people distinguished for their honesty, their integrity and their loyalty to their church and country. Hence, if the history of Ireland is, as we may say, an unbroken series of perpetual trials and sorrows, it is also a beautiful panorama of religious and civil heroism. The distinguished men and exemplary Christians, who from the days of old have adorned Ireland with noble deeds, are well known to the readers of history. Ireland, therefore, has a right to our love and esteem.

"Gentlemen, God has been pleased to prepare for you and your ancestors, in place of your home in Ireland, a new home in this country, where you enjoy true liberty and a comparative life of comfort. Perhaps no other country in the world could have offered you better occasions to ameliorate your condition, both in a spiritual and material sense. Indeed, though Canada as yet is not sufficiently known, she can compare advantageously with the most advanced nations of the world. I must confess, that before coming here I had no very clear idea of this continent. I knew it was a vast country with large rivers, abundant lakes and beautiful scenery; but now, after having visited the most important points in the Dominion, I have really become alive to its vast proportions and great resources. However, I must say that the mere extent of territory, its beauty and richness, would not have impressed my mind so strongly had there not been a corresponding equivalent in the moral and civil virtues of the people. A glance at your numerous institutions of charity, at your colleges and schools, at your magnificent churches, and at the constitution by which you are governed, will suffice to let a foreigner understand in an instant the superiority of your moral and religious character. Indeed, I must say that in the physical features of your country, and in the character of its people there is something which elevates the mind and makes us feel that a great future is reserved to a country blessed by God in so many and different ways.

"Gentlemen, endeavor to preserve and even to increase these blessings by means of your religious and civic virtues. Let your own powerful association always be a source of strength to your church and community, and thus the glorious spirit of your ancestors will be perpetuated in it for the greater glory of God and the welfare of the land.

"I thank you sincerely for your sentiments of attachment and devotedness to our Holy Father, and for your appreciation of my humble labors."

Father Teeling's Appeal for Ireland.

The Rev. Father Teeling, of St. Mary's, Lynn, Mass., who was a delegate of the local branch of the United Irish League to the recent Boston Convention, delivered a stirring address recently regarding the proceedings of that great gathering. He said:—

I suppose you are all familiar with the doings of the convention, because they have been fully reported in the public press. I have attended many conventions in my life, but never one where there was such a representative body of men from all sections of the country.

You read the report of the committee on ways and means, which pledged \$100,000 in six months to the cause, and to put out dollar for dollar with the landlords of Ireland. All in that convention seemed to be of one mind, and now it becomes us as a branch of the Irish League to do our share of the work.

We must be about our business. A certain amount of work is allotted to us, as it is to every branch in the country. We are engaged in a worthy cause, one that calls for sympathy and labor from every liberty-loving individual. We are engaged in a warfare with a country that has robbed the people of Ireland, where lived our fathers and our forefathers.

The cause calls for the sympathy and the action of every liberty-loving individual, and more especially for each and every one of us members of the United Irish League.

It is said that some few years ago there was a split in the Irish Parliamentary party. That is true. A misunderstanding arose, and consequently a division. Well, that is human. We have our parties in this country, the Democrats and the Republicans. Is everything smooth in their councils and conventions? No. They have troubles.

The misunderstanding in the Irish party no longer exists. The trouble is settled and they are united, and Dillon and Redmond sit together as in one family. But we are told that the people are not united, and that this United Irish League exists in only certain countries and districts in Ireland. That is not true.

It has been said by calumniators, by men even of Irish birth, that the people of Ireland are not united. At that convention Mr. Davitt read the number of leagues in the different counties of Ireland, showing that there were more than 1,000 branches representing all parts, and the membership over 125,000. The people are united, and as long as they are united we should put our shoulders to the wheel and do everything in our power to assist them, for union can accomplish everything.

industrious in Ireland, because if he were the rent on his holdings was increased and the more they increased the higher went the rent, until the poor man was starved out. That was the load that Ireland had been struggling under, and that was the load that was to be lifted.

We want through this movement to drive the landlords out of Ireland altogether so far as the control of the land is concerned, he said. That is the object of the League. There is union in Ireland; let there be no far distant when that victory will be achieved.

The world sees these people trampled under foot, and not allowed the privileges of the rest of the world; oppressed by a Government unwilling to give them any right whatsoever. When public opinion sees things as they are, then the cry will resound through the world that England must give freedom to Ireland.

An Irish Anti-Treating League.

St. Patrick's Anti-Treating League, which was only formed in Ireland quite recently, is making great progress already. At the Congress of the Gaelic League in Dublin the following resolution approving of the principles of the anti-Treating League was unanimously adopted:—

"As the custom of public-house treating (which is not one of our old Irish customs, but a comparatively modern drinking abuse), is now one of the most prolific sources of intemperance in this country, and, therefore, a national evil, this Congress desires to express its approval of the principles of St. Patrick's Anti-Treating League, and commends the anti-treating movement to the active support of members of the Gaelic League as being well calculated to put an effective check on intemperance, to curtail our extravagant expenditure on drink, and to reduce our self-imposed yearly tribute to the English exchequer."

St. Patrick's Anti-Treating League originated in the County Wexford, Ireland, and the organizing secretary is the Rev. John J. Rossiter, M. S.S., House of Missions, Ennisorthy; but the movement has passed to other parts of the country, and now all Ireland is its field of operations. It is not a total abstinence society. Its members may not drink to excess at any time, but they need not pledge themselves to abstain totally from intoxicants. Many members of the League are total abstainers, and the League does not exclude, but indeed welcomes, them; yet its primary object is to combat one special and very grave drinking abuse—the custom so common in Ireland of "treating" in public houses.

Years ago Archbishop Croke, recognizing the evil of this custom, urged all his countrymen to stop it at once and forever. He said truly that if this custom were abolished, it would check an immense amount of that unhappy drunkenness which arises, not from an Irishman's love of drink, but from his love of hospitality and good-fellowship. St. Patrick's Anti-Treating League is an attempt to follow out the advice of the great Archbishop of Cashel. It is placed under the patronage of the national apostle because it rests on the double foundation of religion and patriotism. A member promises.

"First,—Not to take a treat from another, nor to give one himself, in any place where drink is sold.

"Secondly,—He promises not to be guilty of the sin of intemperance himself, but to observe the law of God faithfully on all occasions in this matter."

All members wear the badge of the League everywhere, especially when they go from home, whether for business or pleasure. The badge is a shamrock in green enamel, with the three Celtic initials of the League, C. N. P., printed on shields in the centre of the three small leaves. These letters stand for the Irish words "Comrad Naomh Padraic," or League of St. Patrick. Women may join the League, and are untreated to do so; in order that they may add to it the weight of their influence and example. The pledge against treating is publicly renewed on All Saints' Day and St. Patrick's Day, every year.

Many branches of the League are attached to parishes, and hence take on a religious character, but some branches are purely secular, being started in connection with literary, athletic or other clubs.

HELP FOR THE HOLY SOULS

The religious order called "Helpers of the Holy Souls" was founded in Paris in 1856 by Eugenie Marie Joseph Truet. As a child she had a special love for the holy souls, and as she grew up the desire to help them became strong within her. After advising with the saintly Cure d'Ars her hopes finally culminated in 1856 when she founded the order called "Helpers of the Holy Souls in Purgatory." There was no money to build houses, not even enough to furnish the necessary food, furniture and clothing, but the good work went on because it was God's work. He enlightened their minds, and touched their hearts, and guided them over the rough ways,

and to-day they have houses in many parts of the world. There is a community of these nuns in New York, going about among the sick and suffering, and offering all their labors and prayers for the holy souls. In 1891, on the 7th of February, Mother Mary, as she was called in religion, died. The work she left for her children to do has progressed in a wonderful manner.

A READY ANSWER.

Father Mathew used to tell the following story:—  
"A very fat old duck went out early one morning in pursuit of worms, and after being out all day and succeeding in filling her crop with worms, was captured by a fox. She

said to the fox: "You can not be so wicked and hard-hearted as to take the life of a harmless duck merely to satisfy the cravings of hunger!" She exhorted him against the commission of so great a sin, and begged him not to stain his soul with innocent blood. When the fox could stand her cant no longer, he said: "Out upon you, madam, with all your fine feathers; you're a pretty thing to lecture me for taking life to satisfy my hunger. Is not your own crop full of worms? You destroy more lives in one day than I do in a month."

This was Father Mathew's reply to the makers and venders of liquors, when they charged him with spoiling their trade, and taking the bread from the lips of their children.

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