

"ILLITERACY OF CATHOLIC COUNTRIES."

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.

France, where the Catholics number 42 to one, is 3 per cent. ahead of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, where the Protestants are in the proportion of 1853 to one Catholic, 4 per cent. ahead of that "land of the free," the United States, where the Protestants are about six to one, and nearly 5 per cent. ahead of the mighty kingdom upon whose dominions the sun never sets, where the Protestants are nearly six to one.

Belgium, where the Catholics number six hundred to one Protestant, while it is a half of one per cent. behind Norway, Sweden and Denmark, is yet a half of one per cent. ahead of the United States and more than 1 per cent. ahead of Great Britain and Ireland.

Austria, which has fifty Catholics to every Protestant, ranks equal with the United States, and ahead of Great Britain and Ireland.

How do these figures sustain the assertion that Rome has never favored the education of the masses, and that she keeps her people in besotted ignorance. It is true that neither Spain nor Italy rank as high as Great Britain and Ireland, yet Spain is ahead of Canada, and Italy only 1 per cent. behind our fair Dominion.

Neither the United States nor England commenced on the work of popular education until long after Catholic Austria, France and Belgium. By the United States census of 1850, fully one-fifth of the adults over twenty years of age, exclusive of slaves, was reported as illiterate. Free schools existed long before Protestantism arose to break up the educational establishments founded by the Catholic Church. Free schools were in existence in Rome centuries before the Reformation, and they exist there still.

It is not surprising that Mexico and the countries of South America should be behind in educational matters. They are vast in extent and thinly populated, and the people are a half, and in some, four-fifths pure Indian, or of mixed races, who, under Catholic influences, have been preserved and brought to a better civilized condition, and not exterminated like wild beasts, as in the Protestant republic adjoining us.

Talk of the illiteracy of Catholic nations! In what Catholic country can there be found the appalling ignorance and vice that exist in such good Protestant countries as England and the United States?

Let us look at a description which I find of the "Mountain Whites of the South," a class of people inhabiting a vast tract of territory, more than five hundred miles long and two hundred broad, twice the size of New England, stretching down through West Virginia, Western Old Virginia, Eastern Kentucky, Western North Carolina, Eastern Tennessee, and into Northern Alabama and Georgia. These people number between two and three millions, and are all Protestants. My authority is the Rev. Frank E. Jenkins, a Protestant minister of New Decatur, Alabama, and his words are reported in a volume published by the Evangelical Alliance, of which our friend the Rev. Dr. Josiah Strong is the Chief Secretary, as a report of its General Conference in Boston, in December, 1889, so recently as five years ago.

The Rev. Mr. Jenkins tells us these mountainers comprise a class of whites who, in times of slavery were: "too lazy and too proud to work, without sufficient intellect or energy to enable them to acquire property enough to buy a slave. They sank into a condition scarcely above the brutes in intelligence, or in manner of subsistence. The very slaves looked upon them with scorn, and called them the 'poor white trash,' and this well expressed their condition and character."

He describes what a stranger traveling through these districts would find as he came upon the wretched log-cabin belonging to one of these families:

"A sad faced woman, with her snuff stick or tobacco pipe protruding from her mouth, or a quid of tobacco swelling out her cheek, is sitting in her door with her elbows resting on her knees and her face in her hands, and gazing stupidly at you. A dozen or more solemn-looking, ragged and dirty children are standing about and staring at you, and all of them, from the oldest to the youngest, probably chewing tobacco, even down to the creeping babies. You see no smiles on these child faces; and however quietly you stole upon this secluded home, you heard no laughter from these solemn children. What did they ever have to make them laugh or smile?"

Although timber is not wanting all around them, they are apparently too lazy to build a log cabin for each family, and make one consisting of only one room, serve for the living and sleeping purposes of more than one generation. Few things which we reckon as among the necessities of life are to be found in these cabins. Says the rev. orator:

"You see a gun, a rough home-made table, a few old chairs helped out with blocks and boxes, four or five rough beds in the living room, a few plates and other dishes, an iron kettle or two, no stove, but a rude fire place with a chimney of sticks and stones and mud, and you have made an inventory of the furniture for a family of twelve, fifteen, twenty or more. This is not an exceptional, but a characteristic home. Anything better is the exception. Here they live, eat, drink and sleep. Here they are sick and here they die, with the neighbors from far and near packed in the room and staring at them. From this room they

are carried, within a few hours after death as are necessary for the construction of a rough coffin, to be buried without even a prayer, amid the terrific screaming of the remaining members of the family. The funeral will be preached five, ten or twenty years after the death, and will include in its scope all the members of the family who have died since the last funeral was celebrated."

Rev. Mr. Jenkins describes the schools, which he tells us were almost universal among them ten years ago, and which still prevail to a large extent:

"You are riding along a mountain road and you hear a humming noise in the distance, coming through the trees. You go a little farther and distinguish human voices mingling together in loud discord. What is the matter? Nothing but a school at study, and all studying at the top of their voices. Such a din! This is a 'blab' school, though the modern advocates of this kind of a school—and there are plenty of them—sometimes dignify them with the more elegant term, vocal schools."

"Until within a short time, the only text-book to be found in nine-tenths of these Public schools was a spelling book, and many a school to-day is but little in advance. A word was regarded as correctly spelled when all the letters were named—no matter in what order. It could be spelled forward, backward, or both ways from the middle, and still be correct."

"You can find thousands of people who never saw a dozen books in their lives, and even those who never saw one, and do not know what the word 'book' means, and more than a million who can neither write their own names nor recognize them in print. It is an intellectual condition which can be realized only when one is in the midst of it. When one is away from it he begins to almost doubt his own memory."

Of the moral and spiritual condition of the great mass of these people, Mr. Jenkins says that, although there are good people among them, let what may be said that is favorable, "there still remains a condition of things whose picture can scarcely be overdrawn." There are bloody family feuds and neighborhood wars raging continually, of which state of barbarism we have heard not a little: "but the worst has not been told—it cannot be."

What is their moral condition on another important score, depending almost wholly, as we know, upon what religious influences have been brought to bear upon the people? Mr. Jenkins states that the most horrible and revolting forms of immorality are prevalent among them and he describes conditions which I dare not speak of here.

And yet all these people, almost to a man, if asked, would reply that they were Protestants. Our informant tells us that there are no infidels among them, that "they believe in God and the Bible, though they know little about either." He goes on to say:

"The churches are churches only in name. They are not expected to be institutions for the moral reformation of society. Their meetings places are generally the rough, dirty, log school houses. . . . Ten years ago Sunday-schools were unknown. A little over a year ago a missionary organized the first Sunday-school ever opened in a region of more than two thousand square miles in size. . . .

"There are thousands and thousands of square miles full of people—tens of thousands of children—where instruction in the Bible has never been given, where the voice of family worship has never been heard, and where no child has ever lisped a prayer at a mother's knee, or heard that it is possible for a child to pray."

To return now to Mexico, where Dr. Josiah Strong says 93 per cent. of the people are illiterate. The report of the United States Commissioner of Education for 1890 gives the school enrollment of Mexico as 47 out of every thousand of the population. This is certainly low as compared with other countries, but it does not follow that because only 47 out of every thousand of the population are enrolled in the Mexican primary schools, the remaining 953 are all illiterate.

To quote the Statesman's Year Book, we learn that in 1888 there were 10,726 primary schools, with 543,977 pupils. In 1889 there were 7,334 Government and municipal schools with 412,789 pupils. Higher education is carried on in secondary schools and seminaries, and in colleges for professional instruction, including schools of law, medicine, engineering, mining, fine arts, agriculture, commerce, arts and trades, and music. There are also one military and two naval colleges. The number attending these higher schools is stated at 21,000. The entire sum spent on education in 1889 was \$3,512,000. Besides a number of large libraries, containing all the way from 10,000 to 150,000 volumes, there were in 1892, 19 museums for scientific and educational purposes and three meteorological observatories, and last but not least 325 newspapers.

The people who talk about the ignorance and illiteracy of the Mexicans carefully conceal the fact that out of a population of nearly 12,000,000 there are only about 2,250,000 of whites, while 4,500,000 are pure blooded Indians, and over 5,000,000 are half-breeds, and the same proportions of population are applicable to nearly all of Central and South America. You require to bear this in mind if you wish to form a just judgment of the social status of these countries.

Time will not permit me to refer to

Mexican art and literature. I could give the names of scores of distinguished authors, could I but pronounce them—quite sufficient, at any rate, to disabuse any reasonable mind of the idea that Mexico lacks the expression of literary taste, or suffers in comparison with other lands from want of scholarly interpretation. I could also enumerate a goodly list of distinguished artists, both men and women; and here the question seems not inapplicable, if Mexico be the land of illiteracy and barbarism which it is reported to be, how have the fine arts attained such an extraordinary height of cultivation, producing works worthy to be classed with the great masterpieces of Catholic European genius? Artists do not grow on bushes, neither can they be served to order, even though that order be a Government one with millions to pay the bill.

In his circular letter, Dr. Madison C. Peters says: "Ecuador is the only one of South American republics holding on to the old system of the parochial school. In all Ecuador, there is not a single railroad or stage-coach, only one newspaper, and only forty-seven post offices. About 4 per cent. of the people can read and write, and no person can vote unless he is a Roman Catholic." All this, of course, in disparagement of Ecuador, because it is a Catholic country.

Chamber's Encyclopedia in its article on Ecuador says: "In no country in the world have the Jesuits had such a paramount influence as in Ecuador, or employed it, on the whole, so well. There are numerous convents, monasteries and seminaries, and in 1887 the Pope sanctioned the organization of a central theological university. Education is compulsory, but still at a low ebb. Since the restoration of the church party to power, public instruction, considering the difficulties the Government have had to grapple with, has made creditable headway, hundreds of primary schools, in particular, having been established throughout the country. Technical schools and literary societies have been founded. Commerce is sadly handicapped by the want of roads. In 1889 only about 125 miles of railway were open, although the lines were in progress. A few steamers are in use."

Here we see that in 1889 at least 125 miles of railway were open, while others were in progress. Dr. Peters, one month ago to day, stated that in all Ecuador there is not a single railroad. So much for Dr. Peters' veracity! The Statesman's Year Book for 1894 says: "Primary education is gratuitous and obligatory. There is a university in Quito with 32 professors and 216 students, and university bodies in Cuenca and Guayaquil. There are 9 schools for higher education, 35 secondary and 1088 primary schools; the total number of teachers is 1498, and of pupils, 68,380. There are commercial and technical schools in Quito and Guayaquil." And this is a country which, according to Chamber's Encyclopedia, has only 100,000 whites, and 300,000 half-breeds, the remainder being pure Indians and negroes; and of the half-breeds it says that they are the true savages of the country.

A better test of the standard of general intelligence among a people than the percentage of their illiteracy as measured by their inability to read and write, is to be found in the number, character and flourishing condition of the schools of higher learning, such as colleges and universities, which they have erected. An ignorant populace does not establish seats of advanced science, nor does it fill them with thoughtful students gathered from all nations and also attracted from distant parts of the world by the fame of their teachers. So we may say that where universities abound, there general intelligence abounds in all classes of the people. What is more, institutions of this sort, not to speak of the various kinds of schools of a lower order, with few exceptions of a late date, owed their foundation, encouragement and prosperity to the inspiration, sanction and fostering care of religion. All past history attests this.

A very just comparative estimate may be made therefore of the beneficent influence of Catholicism and of Protestantism in promoting the general intelligence of a people under their respective control, by examining the faithful exhibit of what each has done in the way of founding and raising to a high standard of excellence these seats of superior learning. Europe offers us the best means of making the fairest comparison possible, and certainly it presents the most favorable field for Protestantism to show what fruits of this kind it has been able to produce.

Before the Reformation, Catholic nations, with the approval and encouragement of the Popes, founded 72 universities in Europe. Among these are to be found most of those which have attained the greatest renown, several of which are now in the hands of Protestants, as are also many hundreds of the great architectural monuments of religion, the fruits of the wonderful genius of Catholic architects, and of the sacrifices of the Catholic people. In Catholic times, these now Protestantized universities had their thousands of students—now a-days more than a thousand is a number to boast of. Since the Reformation Catholic Europe has founded 46 universities—bringing the total up to 118; while the total number founded by the Protestants is only 31.

Here is a singular fact. When England became Protestant she possessed Oxford and Cambridge, both famous universities founded by Catholics. One would think that the English having

their intellects emancipated from the darkness of Romanism, there would presently be a perfect blaze of light shining from a rapidly increasing number of these halls of advanced learning. What is the truth? Under their Protestantism these two Catholic universities have more than sufficed for England's intellectual wants, for the number of their students has decreased, and has never since come up to what it was in Catholic times—a good proof of general intelligence and popular desire for advanced literary culture prevailing in England ever since the Reformation.

TO BE CONTINUED.

POPE LEO ON RELIGION vs. SCIENCE.

Catholic Review.

On the 27th of November, 1894, M. Ferdinand Brunetiere had a private audience with the Pope at the Vatican. As a result of this audience he wrote an article, with the above caption, for the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Paris, of which he is the editor. While no one expected that M. Brunetiere would show himself so ill-bred as to relate what took place at the audience, many persons, doubtless, would be glad to have one of the greatest living masters of French prose describe, in his own vivid way, the impression made on him by Pope Leo. The writer, however, has done something far better for his readers than satisfying vulgar curiosity by elaborating for them the reflections which passed through his mind as he stood before the earthly head of the Roman Catholic Church, whom millions of human beings all over the globe reverence and look to for spiritual guidance. These reflections related to a question of deep interest and importance to persons of all grades of intellect and culture, that of religion being how far the advance of science has crowded out religious faith. From the acute and lucid observations of a shrewd observer, so competent to deal with the question discussed, we translate the following extracts:

"The time is not very distant from us when learned incredulity passed generally for a mark or a proof of superiority of intelligence and force of mind. People did not despise the importance of 'religions' in history, and of the 'religious sentiment' in the evolution of humanity, what promises were thought to be an advance on the Eighteenth Century, for people, while protesting infidelity, still reproached the Voltaires, the Diderots, the Antididots, for the violence of their anti-Christian polemics, for the unfairness of their arguments and the narrowness of their philosophy. Equal fault is found with the 'theological state of mind,' which is called the embryonic phase of the human intellect. 'Religions,' says a recent book, 'are the residue of superstitions. . . . The value of a civilization is in inverse ratio to its religious fervor. . . . All intellectual progress is followed by a diminution of the supernatural in the world. . . . The future belongs to science.' These words are found in a book dated 1892, but the spirit which dictated them is twenty or thirty years older than they."

"What has come to pass since then? What silent work has been accomplished in the depths of contemporaneous thought? Whatever has come to pass, describe it as you may, it warrants our pointing out the 'bankruptcy of science.' The men who are devoted to science are indignant at this phrase and laugh it to scorn in their laboratories. For, say they, what promises made by physics and chemistry have not been kept, and even more not born yesterday, and in less than a century, they have transformed the aspect of life. Give our sciences time to grow! Moreover, who are those who talk about bankruptcy, or even failure? What do they know about science? What discovery, what progress in mechanics or natural history has made their name famous? Have they even accomplished so much as to invent the telephone or discover some vaccination against the croup? When some scientist, of a more chimerical or ventriloquist spirit than his comrades, makes in the name of science, promises he cannot fulfill, should science be accused? Good sense, which Descartes thought 'the most widely disseminated thing in the world,' is, on the contrary, the rarest thing—more rare than talent, as rare perhaps, as genius; and we admit, without hesitation, that some great men of science have lacked that quality of common sense. Thus talk those who claim that 'the bankruptcy of science is a laughable and a resounding metaphor;—and I cannot say that they are altogether wrong."

"Nevertheless, what is thus urged is not altogether sound; and whatever disposition is attempted to be drawn from the good sense of some 'true' scientific men and the sorry rashness of others, what is certain is that science has more than once promised to renew the 'face of the world.' Condorcet wrote just a hundred years ago: 'I think I have proved the possibility of making good judgment a quality nearly universal; of causing the habitual condition of man, in an entire people, to be governed by truth, to submit to its conduct to the laws of morality, to be nourished by sweet and pure sentiments.' And he added: 'Such is the point to which the labors of genius and the progress of intelligence must inevitably lead.' Almost the same promise was made by Renan, who died only the other day. He said: 'Science will always furnish man with

the only means he has for ameliorating his lot.' Were Condorcet and Renan not 'true' men of science? Are not these promises of theirs to be considered the promises of science? Well may one pretend that these promises have been fulfilled, or that in this respect science has not shown itself a bankrupt!"

"Let us regard the question as a trifle nearer. No one can deny that the physical or natural sciences have promised to suppress 'mystery.' Not only have they not suppressed it, but we see clearly to-day that they never will throw light on it. They are powerless—I will not say to resolve, but even to give a hint of a solution of questions of the utmost importance to us; these are the questions relating to the origin of man, the law of his conduct, and his future destiny. The unknown surrounds us, envelops us, constrains us; and we cannot get from the laws of physics or the results of physiology any means of knowing anything about this unknowable. I admire as much as anybody the immortal labors of Darwin; and when the influence of his doctrine is compared to that of the discoveries of Newton, I willingly admit the truth of the comparison. Yet, whether we are descended from the monkey, or the monkey and ourselves have a common ancestor, we have not advanced a step toward knowing anything about the origin of man. Neither anthropology, or ethnology, nor linguistics, has ever been able to tell us what we are. What is the origin of language? What is the origin of society? What is the origin of morality? Whoever, in this century, has tried to answer these questions has failed miserably. And every one who hereafter shall try to answer these questions will fail as miserably, because you cannot conceive of man without morality, without language, or outside of society; and thus the very elements of the solution are beyond the reach of science."

"Yet those who put their whole faith in science keep saying: 'Give us more time. The day will come when science will throw more light on the questions you suggest.' Supposing that to be so, in the meanwhile we have got to live, to live a life which is not purely animal; and no science to-day furnishes us with any means of living such a life. Life is not contemplation, or speculation, but action. The sick man laughs at rules, provided you cure him. While the house is burning, the sole question for those who dwell in it is to extinguish the fire. Or, to use a comparison at once nobler, perhaps it is neither the time nor place to oppose the rights of a community with the caprice of an individual when we are on the field of battle."

"It is clear that the fact that science, after long trying, has been unable to aid us in any way in living properly, has been recognized by a great multitude of persons. This is proved unmistakably by the literature of the last few years. There has been an undeniable change in the sentiments of both writers and readers. The present situation may be summed up in a very few words: Science has lost its prestige, and Religion has reconquered a part of its own."—The Literary Digest.

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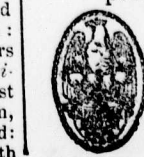
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