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SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 1900

THE FRENCH WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.

By an Occasional Correspondent.

The February number of the "Contemporary Review" contains an article of considerable length on the subject of "French Women in Industry," from the pen of Ada Cone. This lady has evidently made a study of the economic conditions in France, especially in connection with the social and industrial status of women. With the statistical portion of the contribution—which occupies eleven pages out of sixteen—we cannot at present deal; moreover it does not affect in any way, the questions which it is our purpose to examine. A couple of pages are devoted to a contrast between the industrial position of women in England and women in France. This, again, has little to do with our present brief review, and even were it pertinent we would be at a loss to analyze the writer's arguments—the principal reason being the confusion of ideas and the hodge-podge style of presenting the author's views. The world is too busy, now-a-days—to amuse itself with Chinese puzzles, or literary mazes.

Before expressing any opinion regarding Miss Cone's peculiar, and very dogmatic assertions, we will simply quote the introduction to the article, and a couple of paragraphs from the closing portion. It is thus she opens:—

"Certain of the ideals common to later Christendom have been more completely realized in France than with us. In particular the ideal of woman as a simple sex expression, upheld for seven centuries by revived Judaism and by Romanism, has been in France exalted and shaped by literature and art into a masterpiece of beauty. This aesthetic realization has formed a habit of thought; and even as an artist hates a discordant line in a composition, so French opinion is repugnant to any change in the condition of women. It knows that to a work of art already complete nothing can be added. Therefore seeing its women driven to wage earning it has forced them to work in conditions which seemed to do least violence to the existing ideal. If it is cruel, it is involuntarily so; a race of artists suffers to see its handiwork undone, and reason alone is not enough to alter habit. This prevailing aestheticism explains why there survives with such fervour in France that cult of land boundaries called patriotism, now for so many overtopped by the larger ideal of humanity; this is why France, the sceptical, is the principal stronghold of a creed its own reason declares worn out; this is why it clings to a presumption regarding women which the facts gainsay; and this is why the laborious women of France, moving forward spontaneously, have moved against pressure and in silence towards that development in commerce, in arts, in industry, which to-day is as remarkable in volume as the circumstances have made it special in character."

While it is not generally conducive to a clearer understanding of a subject to repeat quotations, still we must select from the foregoing that which we desire to examine critically. "Certain of the ideals common to later Christendom have been more completely realized in France than with us. In particular the ideal of woman as a simple sex expression, upheld for seven centuries by revived Judaism and by Romanism, has been in France exalted and shaped by literature and art into a masterpiece of beauty." ... "This is why France, the sceptical,

is the principal stronghold of a creed its own reason declares worn out." In all this the writer must necessarily mean Catholicity. By "Romanism" she must refer to the Catholic Church. If so, she is at once from the very start, self-contradicting. She presents France as an unbelieving country, yet the stronghold of Catholicity, despite the fact that her reason declares the Church worn out. It would be somewhat difficult to understand these expressions were it not that the writer is constantly contradicting herself. If France be sceptical, and at the same time the stronghold of Catholicity, while she bows to the goddess of reason rather than to the God of truth, and if literature and art have beautified the ideal of woman, as drawn by the "Romanism" of the thirteenth century, it remains logically that either the writer does not know what she wants to get at, or else the world of logic has gone topsy-turkey.

But let us get down our different quotations before attempting to decipher the writer's meaning. After thus seeking to cast the blame upon the Catholic Church for aught of injury ever suffered by woman in her rights and privileges, and having asserted the strength of Catholicity in France, while declaring "it to be worn out, we find this learned lady saying:—"Up to the end of the thirteenth century (prior, of course, to the Reformation) women, being legally and socially well conditioned, were comparatively free in industries." Nothing could be plainer than this statement. If it means anything it must mean that before the fourteenth century—therefore before Protestantism—women were "legally and socially" free.

But the next sentence declares that "The idea of equality, which Germanism and Christianity (Catholicity, of course, at that period) tended to develop, showed itself here as in public functions." She has been reading Etienne Boileau's "Livre des Mestiers," and she adds: "But Judaism and Romanism undid the work of pure Christianity, and in their repression of women put an end to their freedom in industries."

Here we have this "Romanism" again. Can it be that something other than Catholicity is meant? If so the name is strangely chosen, and, as far as we can judge, it has no practical meaning at all. Pagan "Romanism" had vanished with the last of the twelve Caesars, and Catholic "Romanism" was the only form of Christianity in existence. Consequently, "pure Christianity" had raised woman to a certain level, while Catholic or Roman Christianity had upset all that. This is, to say the least, drawing the elastic pretty tightly in an effort to cast discredit upon the Church in regard to woman. But later on, the writer says that the condition of French women in industry "is a question of instruction or no instruction." By this she means that "manual training begins in the primary schools. It consists in teaching to boys the use of a variety of tools—and in teaching to girls the use of the one tool—the needle."

She then proceeds to show that the use of a needle is a useless acquirement in France, that half the families in that country have no children and that the laboring-women earn their livelihood at wages. The French schools then mean to teach a wage-earning trade. We are obliged now to differ radically from the lady who has given the world such a sample of her reasoning powers.

It is not a question of instruction—by which is meant a school for technical purposes—but one of education. As the "True Witness" has often pointed out the necessity of something more than mere technical knowledge in the various industries is required to raise woman to the grand level which she had always occupied under the influence of the Church. The position of woman is dependent on the degree of education which she may have obtained. But the Church did not support woman, in her proper sphere, by the amount of knowledge imparted to her. It is vain that Miss Cone should seek in the arts, in science, in literature, the real source of woman's proper emancipation from the degradation to which paganism both ancient and contemporaneous, had reduced her. Every liberty, every proud characteristic, every inspiring virtue which have adorned the personality of women are only the practical results of the Church's teaching. Taking the Mother of God as the unalterable example for all members of the weaker sex; paying to the Blessed Virgin the tribute which Christ ordained should be paid to her, whom all generations shall called blessed; recognizing marriage as a sacrament; uncompromisingly combatting the plague of divorce; these are some of the many means by which Catholicity has made happy—much more than we can ever tell—millions of homes, where domestic quiet reigns it would not be difficult to find the immediate cause. Checkmated at every move, the ene-

mies of truth and of Catholicity must inevitably meet with defeat in all cases, no matter how cleverly they seek to hide their real motives, no matter how bitterly they try to injure the mother of love—the Holy Church of God.

CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS.

Rev. Dr. F. McSweeney, Rector of St. Brigid's Church, New York city, has written a most important letter on the educational question. He proclaims it time for Catholics to wake up and demand their rights. One of the most significant portions of that communication deals with the ignorance that generally prevails concerning Catholic schools, their importance, and the vast amounts of money that have been spent upon them. Even the usually well informed newspaper man seems to know absolutely nothing about the Catholic parochial schools; in fact, some are not aware of the existence of such establishments. Of course, much of the matter contained in that public letter is directly connected with Catholic education in New York city; but other portions of it have their universal applicability, and may affect us in Montreal, as well as our co-religionists in New York.

There is one very striking paragraph on the subject of public men, or politicians, as they are all called in the United States; very much do we regret being obliged to admit the truth of the Rev. Rector's statements, even when they are applied to ourselves. He says:—

"Apropos of Catholic politicians, we may as well say of some of them, that, when they depart from the Church on Sundays they seem to leave their Catholicity behind them, safely laid away till the following Sunday—that is, if they go to Mass at all, and have any real Catholicity in stock. We have had many of these gentlemen in office elected largely by Catholic votes, three of them, even to the high office of Mayor. Yet not one word of recognition—not to talk of praise, did any of them vouchsafe to the Catholic schools. Ex-Mayor Strong, who is not a Catholic, was the first who ever said a word of encouragement, when he publicly stated that 'the Catholics and the Jews were doing more for education than any other class of the population.' And, like St. Peter at the Gate of the Temple, he gave what he had, viz., a brick from Grant's Tomb, to each of their schools. 'Silver and gold I have none, but what I have I give thee.' Before his office had brought him into contact with Catholics, he knew little or nothing about them, and was, perhaps prejudiced against them."

The same can be said of more than one politician in Canada. We have men who are evidently Catholic to the extent of the votes they hope to secure through their religion. Of these we have nothing to say, our business is not with New York schools, but with the social, economic and educational phases of the letter. These find an application all the world over. But listen to the Rev. Father McSweeney:—

"All this shows that we Catholics, as a body, as a church, are too chary about letting the world know what we are doing. The modesty and humility, which of course is so laudible in the individual, is out of place when there is question of making the Church and her work known to all men."

"Let not the left hand know what the right hand doeth" (Math. vi. 3), is a precept for you and me individually, but, when there is question of the Church, we read (Math. v. 16): "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven"; that is, hesitate not to send for all the reporters when your big and costly school-house is finished; give them a warm welcome and let them bring the work of 'the children of light' before all New York. These clever gentlemen are indefatigable in their search for a sensation, with which to interest their readers; well! here is a sensation indeed, something to be astonished at."

Speaking of the natural rights of the parents, he said:—"Surely the natural right of the father and of the mother has only to be proclaimed in order to be admitted by all the citizens, or at least by all parents, whether Catholic or not. Who loves the child as his parent does? The Creator made him the secondary author of his child's very existence, and then the arbiter of his life or death; since the continuation of his temporal life depends upon his free, loving care, of which if it be wanting, neither Church nor State may supply the place."

Another subject equally interesting to all Catholics is that of their influence:—"We flatter ourselves that, when the truth is known, it will be admitted that religion is of the highest importance to the State, if it would have citizens fitted for liberty by the development of their consciences. 'If the Son of God shall make you free, you shall be free indeed,' (John viii., 36). For it is peculiarly called for in such a country as ours. The more each citizen is able to restrain himself and respect his neighbor's rights, the less will there be need for standing armies or other such appendages of despotism or State secularism. Religion should not be ignored. We want no help from the State in doing our spiritual work, but only such a plan of secular schooling as will not ignore religion."

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PROVINCE OF QUEBEC,

District of Montreal.

SUPERIOR COURT—No. 2481.

An action in separation as to property has this day been instituted by Dame Marie Adeline Victoria Bouthillier, of the Parish of St. Antoine de Longueuil, District of Montreal, against her husband, George Vincent, of the same place. Montreal, 12th February, 1900. GEOFFRION & MORET, Attorneys for Plaintiff

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, DISTRICT OF MONTREAL, No. 1797.

SUPERIOR COURT.

DAME EDITH COLLIER, Plaintiff, vs. CASSELL RAPHAELOVITCH, Defendant, and REBEKKA RAPHAELOVITCH, Mx en cause. An action in separation as to property and as to bed and board has been taken to-day in this cause. Montreal, January 16th, 1900. JOS. BARNARD, Attorney for Plaintiff.

J. A. KARCH, Architect.

MEMBER P.Q.A.A. No. 3, Place d'Armes Hill.

PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, DISTRICT OF MONTREAL, SUPERIOR COURT, No. 395. Dame Marie Rose Delina Trudeau, of the Parish of Longueuil, District of Montreal, wife of Pierre Vincent, farmer of the same place, has, this day, instituted an action in separation as to property against him. Montreal, 6th February, 1900. GLOBENSKY & LAMARRE, Attorneys for Plaintiff.

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St. Patrick's Society. The regular monthly meeting of St. Patrick's Society will be held in the St. Patrick's Hall, 92 St. Alexander Street, on Monday evening, March 5, 1900, at Eight o'clock. By Order, S. CROSS, Rec. Sec.

W. G. KENNEDY, Dentist, 756 PALACE Street, Corner Beaver Hall Hill. Telephone, Main, 830.

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