

The Catholic Record

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LONDON, SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1921

THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS OF IRELAND

Before the American Commission on Conditions in Ireland Ruth Russell appeared as a witness December 15th last. Miss Russell was in Ireland for several months in 1919 commissioned by the Chicago Daily News to study social, economic, social, and political conditions and to report on them. The general testimony of this trained journalist, though of remarkable interest and value, we leave aside for the moment to deal with a particular issue on which some of the Commissioners manifested a marked interest. It is rather unfortunate that Miss Russell was pressed closely on a subject so peculiarly liable to misunderstanding in the United States as the subject of schools: when she confessed at the outset "I haven't thought or written about that question lately, but I could look it up, of course."

It had been noted that the school question was "a strong issue" in Ulster; and it was urged that if Miss Russell had gathered material on the question it might be illuminating.

After several questions and answers, during the course of which Miss Russell repeated her disclaimer to accurate knowledge without looking up her notes, the impression made is pretty clearly indicated in the concluding question and answer:

Question—Commissioner Adams. As I understand it, Miss Russell, the Protestants want public schools while the Catholics are holding on to the idea of parish schools: the real difference is between two theories of education. It is not a matter of funds so much. The Catholics are objecting because they would be taxed for a public school system when they want their parish schools. Is that not it?

Answer—I did not hear the matter explained that way when I was there. But it is very possible.

Commissioner Adams—Of course, the financial question is implicit in it.

Now nothing could well be more misleading with regard to the Irish school system. By thinking of Irish schools in the educational terms and conditions of America Miss Adams now has a clear and definite idea that is clearly wrong, one which will mislead her—and many others—whenever the Irish school question is referred to. And it is likely to become a question that will receive much newspaper attention if or when the new "Parliament" for Northeast Ulster comes to deal with it.

Despite the charge that "Irishmen live too much in the past," parroted by the uninformed and unthinking when discussing Ireland, it is quite impossible to understand any phase of the Irish question unless we know how it has reached its present stage of development: that is unless the lamp of history throws its light upon it.

From the time of the Reformation down to Catholic Emancipation, Lecky, though speaking of the eighteenth century, describes the whole dismal period: "The legislation on the subject of Catholic education may be briefly described, for it amounted simply to universal, unqualified, and unlimited conscription." There was no such thing, no conception of such an idea as "public schools" in the American or Canadian sense of the term in those days. Every attempt to found a school system in Ireland was based on the universally accepted principle of her rulers that it should Anglicize and proselytize the children of Irish Catholics.

The history of all these attempts down to the early part of the 19th

century is thus tersely summed up by an Encyclopaedia Britannica writer: "Proselytizing schools, though supported by public funds, entirely failed."

Under the Penal Laws keeping a school or teaching in any capacity was for Catholics a penal offence, and a reward of £10 was offered for the discovery of "a Popish schoolmaster." During this long period the record of heroic Catholic resistance to State-aided and State-inspired proselytism under the guise of education is one of the glories of Irish history. And though, as Lecky acknowledges, one of the objects of the penal legislation was "to reduce Catholics to a condition of the most extreme and brutal ignorance," Catholics did not tamely acquiesce. In 1789 the managers of the Charter Schools, when seeking aid from Parliament, found it necessary to complain of the great number of schools "under the tuition of Popish masters" that were to be found in many parts of the country. It may exemplify the conditions of Irish education of this period to give here a brief history of the Charter Schools:

"Charter Schools were founded in response to an appeal made by the Protestant primate, Boulter, in 1739. Under the Charter granted in 1739, a system of schools was begun which by means of agreements secured by a combination of fraud and terror, took Catholic children from their parents and homes and deported them to most distant parts of the country. These schools became hotbeds of shameful cruelty without a parallel in the history of public, or probably even in that of private, education in any land. Yet they were powerfully supported and received large grants from the Irish Parliament, but their downfall was brought about by the indignant exposure of their callous inhumanity by John Howard, the philanthropist, who took occasion to investigate their condition while he was engaged in an inquiry into the state of the prisons."

Now in the light of what we know of the history of Irish education read this account given under the general article on Education in the Encyclopaedia Britannica by G. B. M. Coore, Assistant Secretary, Board of Education, London:

"The full development of a system of public education in Ireland has been hampered and retarded by the general difficulties inherent in the problem of Irish government. In consequence of the fundamentally different social, religious and political conditions in the two countries, the English and Irish systems have developed down to the present time upon divergent lines. In England, popular education was founded in the first instance upon individual initiative combining in organized voluntary effort, and though the voluntary agencies have been first supplemented and latterly to a large extent supplanted by public action, the tendency has been in the direction of municipalization rather than in that of central State control. In Ireland, on the other hand, education has suffered in the past from the general absence of individual initiative and local interest almost as seriously as from the mistakes of the English Government."

"These causes, more directly perhaps than the prevailing poverty of the country, made it necessary to throw the burden of supporting the schools to an increasing extent upon the State, while the want of local self-government precluded any devolution of powers and duties upon municipal authorities. "State intervention is actually of earlier date in Ireland than in England. From the reign of Elizabeth onwards, English Protestant schools were founded by the Government in a sporadic and intermittent fashion in pursuance of its Anglicizing policy. To mention briefly one or two historical features, the great religious educational enterprise of Edmund Rice in founding the well-known Irish Catholic order of the Christian Brothers in 1802 forms an exception to the general lack of initiative among the people themselves."

"The development of a system of public education in Ireland has been hampered and retarded by the general difficulties inherent in the problem of Irish government. "Not a word of the systematic and brutal suppression of every effort of the Catholic Irish to provide an education for their children; not a word about the devil inspired alternative of ignorance or the surrender of their spiritual heritage for the proselytizers' mess of pottage."

"Lack of initiative to which the founding of the Irish Christian Brothers seems to be an exception." To those with some knowledge of the history of education in Ireland that sort of stuff must be seen in all its hideous and pharisaic nakedness. So when we find it in a scholarly article written for a reputable publication we can only conclude that author and publishers cater to a reading public whose general ignorance of Irish history can be taken for granted.

As a matter of fact when toward the end of the eighteenth century the rigor with which the infamous Penal Laws had hitherto been enforced was considerably relaxed, the immediate result was an extraordinary growth of Catholic schools all over the country. And at once we have the magnificent example of educational initiative, the founding of the Irish Christian Brothers by Edmund Rice. Their work has been unreservedly and enthusiastically commended by Royal Commission after Royal Commission appointed to inquire into educational conditions in Ireland. And it has been repeated by numerous other teaching communities of men and women.

After Catholic Emancipation (1829) had accorded—ungraciously and illiberally—some measure of political and civil justice to the Irish people it began slowly to penetrate English public opinion that ordinary human rights could no longer be denied them. The failure of the frontal proselytizing attack having been demonstrated, the idea of the National School system was advocated by the Protestant primate, Archbishop Whately.

"The religious difficulty," writes Mr. Coore in the Britannica, "may be said to have been solved in process of time by the conversion of the National system in practice, though not in theory, into a system strongly denominational in character and therefore widely different from the design of its founders, combined Biblical instruction being discarded, and separate schools for the most part taking the place of common schools for the two creeds. In the latter respect the like tendency has been noted in Germany." Thus does the Encyclopaedia Britannica sum up the development of the National School system into its present day form.

The Catholic Encyclopedia agrees but gives details which supply the reason for such development:

"The National schools, as they are called, were introduced in 1831, by a motion of Mr. Stanley, chief secretary for Ireland, to place at the disposal of the Irish Government a grant for the purpose of providing combined literary and moral and separate religious instruction for Irish children of all denominations. The new system was at once attacked by the Presbyterians and very soon by the Episcopalian Protestants, but at first it was in the main supported by the Catholics, though Dr. McHale, Archbishop of Tuam, was a notable exception. The concessions made by the Commissioners of National Education for the purpose of placating the various Protestant sects had the effect at last of uniting Catholics in opposition to the system. Apparently it was not enough that in a Board of seven commissioners only two were Catholics; one rule after another was made of such a character as to leave no doubt of the very serious danger that these new government schools would prove to be simply another proselytizing agency, as was, indeed, the avowed policy of the Protestant Archbishop Whately. As the outcome of prolonged and bitter Catholic opposition the schools were at length made tolerable."

At present the National School system is governed by a body of twenty commissioners appointed by the Crown, of whom ten are Catholics and ten Protestants. All the other higher offices, even the Inspectors, are divided equally between Catholics and Protestants, offices being in some cases duplicated in order to preserve the balance. The immediate management is committed to individuals appointed by the Board of Commissioners, generally these are the local clergy. Of a total of 8,401 National Schools, 4,391 are under Catholic management exclusively, 1,542 Protestant, and in 2,461 schools the attendance is mixed.

The local managers have general authority over the schools and teachers but the Commissioners themselves, through their inspectors, control the standards and efficiency of the teachers and enforce their code. It will be seen, therefore, that the National Schools of Ireland, though

largely denominational in practice, are poles apart from the parish schools as these are understood in the United States. It is a system of public schools, controlled by the State through the Commissioners. And the most effective guarantee to the minority are provided in the mode of their appointment and the equality of representation of the two religions on the Board.

With regard to the school buildings they may be vested in the Commissioners, or in trustees, or they may be held by the managers as owners. If a school is vested in the Commissioners, that body provides the entire cost of erection, equipment and maintenance; if in trustees, the Commissioners make a grant of two-thirds of the cost of erection and equipment, leaving the remaining third and the entire cost of subsequent maintenance to the trustees. If unrestricted ownership is retained by the manager no contribution is made, but loans may be obtained in certain circumstances.

This latter method is considered the most desirable by Catholics as securing more effectively local control, especially in parts of Ulster.

In all cases the teachers' salaries are paid out of a parliamentary grant for that purpose.

Now if the quotations from the Inspectors' Reports, which we published two weeks ago, be re-read the whole school question in Belfast will become clear at a glance. The Catholics there out of their poverty have provided fully for the requirements of their children in the matter of school buildings. The boasted wealth of Protestant Belfast has left the school accommodation for Protestant children in a most disgraceful condition. Late newspaper dispatches inform us that 15,000 Belfast children are unprovided for, or, it may be, very inadequately provided for, if we recall the Reports above mentioned.

The issue then is this: Shall the Catholics of Belfast, after their successful efforts, entailing great and sustained self-sacrifice, to provide adequately for their own children, have their enlightened zeal for education penalized by being compelled, under a new arrangement, to contribute dollar for dollar with the Protestant shirkers and glackers to provide the buildings necessary to accommodate their school children?

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The incorporation of Canadian Catholic women in one great national organization is a work of such importance and such promise that we are pleased to give our readers the following short study of the movement by an educated and zealous young Catholic woman of London:

"The Catholic women of London have zealously undertaken the formation of a branch of the Catholic Women's League in this city. Individual Catholic women have always been active in matters pertaining to civic and national importance, and this organization is to crystallize the energies of our public-spirited Catholic women in every movement directed towards the betterment of social and industrial conditions. In short, the principles behind the League and the aims towards which it tends, are the loftiest that human idealism knows."

"The very structure of the League bespeaks breadth of vision and power of comprehension, and most necessarily result in notable achievements. It is not only a nation-wide, but a world-wide organization. Originating in France in 1902, because of the realization by some strong-souled women that a force was needed to stem the country's rapid demoralization, the League spread to other European countries."

"In 1907, Catholic Englishwomen united from political motives, and soon became one of the strongest women's societies of the finest type, meriting highest commendation from the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, and special recognition from the British Government for war service unexcelled. The League was introduced into the United States a few years later, and its activities there rank second only to those of the Knights of Columbus, The Canadian wing of the Catholic Women's League was recruited in Montreal in 1917, and now five other cities of the Dominion are training women to serve in the ranks,—Ottawa, Toronto, Regina, Peterboro, and London. Montreal is the seat of Canadian headquarters, each province has a principal organizing centre, while the diocesan capital is

the organizing base for that diocese,—thus from London will radiate the various branches of the League throughout Western Ontario.

"The Catholic Church does not encourage women striving to share equally with men the burden of legislation or government, and has been slow and even reluctant to approve any movement which would seem to remove women from the home. But under existing world conditions, as the Church has realized, for social, industrial and educational betterment of the sex as a whole, and even for the actual safeguarding of the household sanctuary, woman has an important duty to perform beyond the home. Her influence, when properly directed, is and always has been the sanest influence that can be brought to bear upon man."

"There are one million Catholic women exercising the right of franchise in Canada, and without being actually involved in political strife, each one of these women must be made aware of the dangers that are apt to arise from the ashes of a world-upheaval. Hence, the necessity for unity of thought and unity of action, and in order to accomplish this there must be intelligent instruction in matters of national importance."

"Thus we find the Catholic women of England standing together with other organizations to procure better legislation for women-workers; the Catholic women of the United States as a solid phalanx resisting nationalization of their schools, and there is immediate necessity for the woman of Canada to prepare defence against the invasion of their sacred family rights by a godless act of legislation."

"The Catholic Women's League is the melting-pot of Catholic thought, parochial and diocesan limits, though respected, will no longer divide. From this infusion of ideas, sentiments and opinions, the single factor of Catholic leadership will be made, thus crystallizing the thought of one million women, and solidifying their activities into a powerful instrument for the promotion of national welfare in matters political, educational and pertaining to social service in its highest sense."

THE WORK TO BE DONE ALL OVER AGAIN

By THE OBSERVER
The history of the human race from the beginning has been one long and continuous story of the blunders and follies of human pride. The tremendous miracles of grace which God wrought for His chosen people, the Jews, did not prevent large defections from their ranks, heresies and even idolatries on a large scale.

The miracles of Christ did not prevent the descendants of those who had received so much grace from His Father, from putting Him to death with every circumstance of cruelty and ignominy. The blood of the martyrs did not prevent, even in the ages when they lived and died, a steady procession of grotesque heresies, which swept millions out of the Church of God.

The Roman Empire went down; and on its ruins the Church created a new social and political order, preserving all that was good in the old. Superficial chatters say, "The Church was in politics." Fools! The Church created politics. She made over the barbarians who overran the Roman Empire, from wandering, warring, hordes, into settled and civilized populations. She gave them a social system, and a political system and a legal system. She taught them to read, and also to plough. She substituted, in their scheme of things, lawful trade for indiscriminate spoliation of their neighbors. She drew them away from the nomadic life and settled them in residential communities. She kept the peace amongst them by the only means available; a means more effective than any that men have since known; that is, by her own arbitration on moral principles.

All of which did not prevent the pupils she thus taught, the States she thus founded, from asserting their entire freedom from her political arbitrations; and not only that, but they began to appropriate to the State the spiritual authority. Thus the Emperor Henry; thus, later, a lesser, though similar Henry. Thus a long series of monarchs; whose plots and schemes finally found an opportunity in the senseless and reckless spiritual rebellion of Luther, and thus succeeded at last in detaching whole nations from the unity of the Faith.

Since then, only the fragments of the Catholic religion, which the rebels carried with them when they left the Church, have saved the nation from the fate of all those peoples who, in the past, threw off the true religion; from the fate of the Jewish heretics and of the Arian heretics, and of all other heretics of the scores of sects before the 16th century.

All these have sunk hopelessly into religious nothingness and into social degradation. The later generations of the Jews long kept alive a strong belief in God; and that has sufficed to save them from the fate of the Arian millions; but they too are now in religious shipwreck. They no longer have any general expectation of the Messiah. Leading Jews in France have come to the conclusion that the French Revolution was the coming of the Messiah; and others have settled on other events as the fulfilment of the promise of God to send a Saviour.

The non-Catholic world, including the Jews, has lost nearly the whole of what faith, or of that which served some of the purpose of faith, they long possessed. The social and moral ideas of the day, outside the Church, are frankly materialistic; are almost exclusive of faith in God; openly contemptuous of all settled and positive rules of moral conduct; and are far-brushed with that laxity which has inevitably affected all heresies; laxity in respect of sexual conduct; laxity of principle concerning the family and the moral instruction of the young.

Thus stands the world. The Church will have to do for the descendants of the "reformed" just what she had to do for the victims of all the other religious smash-ups since the days of Christ; she will have to re-educate them. Re-educate them from what point? That is the question; a question which no man can answer. How much farther will the heresies go in their disintegration before the Church's chance comes to command that re-instruction? Will the world come back to her, still holding fast to some fragments of religious and moral truth; or will the disintegration and deterioration go to the extreme length before the tide turns?

NOTES AND COMMENTS

"NO DIFFERENCE in theological doctrine is so important as the promotion of cleanliness and rectitude," says the Literary Digest in commenting upon the recent flare-up over Pope Benedict's reference to the operations of the Y. M. C. A. in Italy. The aphorism is specious but unsound, and in entire accordance with the shallow thinking of these latter days. It ignores the fact that doctrine is the basis of conduct, and that if the foundation be faulty, the whole fabric is insecure. "Cleanliness" and "rectitude" are of the highest importance, but they can be built only upon right principles. In other words right thinking and believing go before and pave the way for right doing.

IN REGARD TO Rev. Dr. O'Gorman's pamphlet on Divorce, with its appeal to non-Catholics to join hands with their Catholic fellow-countrymen in the battle for the Home in Canada, discerning readers of the daily papers will not have failed to note the contrast between the utterances of many Protestant ministers on the subject, and that of the leading Jewish rabbi of Toronto. While the prevailing tone of Protestant comment was petulant and insinuating, with an evident disposition to read into Dr. O'Gorman's appeal a spirit of Catholic propaganda, Rabbi Brickner took the higher note of appreciative understanding, and while warning his own people against the danger of marrying outside their faith, took occasion to pay this pleasing tribute to the Church's stand on the subject: "The Catholic Church refuses to recognize the principle of mixed marriages. I do not question the wisdom or justice of her attitude, and I call your attention to the loyalty and pride that Catholics have in their Church. They will not barter away their principles for a pot of lentils."

SINCE NAVIGATION of the air by heavier-than-air machines became an accomplished fact, there has been much delving by the curious into the literature of the past in search of references to the possibility of such a development. Shakespeare, as was pointed out in these columns some months ago, is responsible for one such marked allusion, and he is

not a solitary in that respect. We stumbled recently upon a stanza of our own D'Arcy McGee's, which, while having no reference to ships of the air, might very aptly be applied to the modern aeroplane, no less than to the unhappy conditions prevailing in the Ireland of today:

"Where are the swift ships flying Far to the West away? Why are the women crying, Far to the West away? Is our dear land infested, That thus o'er her bays neglected, The stiff stials fly along dejected, While the ships fly far away."

COULD THE materialism of the present age be more tellingly described than in the following passage from one of Newman's Oxford sermons, preached though it was nearly a century ago, and while he was still a minister of the English Establishment! If it were true of the England of that time, it is doubly so of England and the world today. The preacher is contrasting Abraham and Lot, the one "without spot or blemish," in his trust in God, the other who, "saved as by fire," for a time showed a disposition to "make the most of both worlds."

"Now," Newman proceeds, "as to the temper of this country, consider fairly, is there any place, any persons, any work, which our countrymen will not connect themselves with, in the way of trade or business? For the sake of gain do we not put aside all considerations of principle as unseasonable and almost absurd? . . . Is there any speculation or commerce which religion is allowed to interfere with? Do we care what side of a quarrel, civil, political, or international, we take, so that we gain by it?"

"DO WE NOT serve in war, do we not become debaters and advocates, do we not form associations and parties with the supreme object of preserving property, or making it? Do we not support religion for the sake of peace and good order? Do we not measure its importance by its efficacy in securing these objects? Do we not support it only so far as it secures them. . . . Nay, further still, could we not easily persuade ourselves to support Anti-Christ. I will not say at home, but at least abroad, rather than we should lose one portion of the freight which 'the ships of Tarshish' bring us?—If this be the case in any good measure, how vain it is to shelter ourselves, as the manner of some is, under the notion that we are a moral, thoughtful, sober-minded, or religious people!"

CATHOLIC LAWYERS AND DIVORCE

The safeguarding of the moral life of the nation is the most important duty that devolves upon its citizens. And upon no class is this duty more binding than upon the men and women of the legal profession. Not only have they the common obligations of citizenship, but they are bound, by the sacred responsibilities of their calling, to fulfill this duty in a special manner which will be in harmony, not only with the letter, but with the spirit of the law.

It was the consciousness of this obligation that prompted M. Guillonard, an eminent French barrister, to propose that there be established a Federation of Catholic Lawyers, who would bind themselves never to plead any divorce case.

There is no doubt that the most pernicious evil that threatens America—and, indeed, many other nations of the world today—is the divorce evil. There is equally little doubt that a very large number of divorce cases are due to the manipulations, the intrigues and the mendacity of unprincipled members of the legal profession.

In their capacity for fees these degraded practitioners have no scruples about destroying families, violating the sacredness of the home, and robbing children of the love and care of parents. They do not hesitate to flaunt their shameful intentions publicly. In almost any daily newspaper you will read advertisements which declare, "Attorney—Uncontested family matters; low fee, no publicity. Attorney—Family matters, low fee, no charge unless successful." In many instances the fee is as low as \$15 or \$20 is advertised. Against these practices the Catholic lawyer should stand in the breach. He has at stake not only the responsibilities of his profession, but his more sacred honor as a child of the Church. Unfortunately, many Catholic lawyers show little hesitancy in engaging in divorce proceedings. Many of them defend themselves on the grounds that if they refuse such cases, their professional rivals will take them, and that no real good will be served by their own refusal to accept them. Naturally, these are questions that must be left to the individual conscience. But that great good could be done by the formation of a body