



"AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM."

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The Manitoba Catholic Schools.

Letter from Rev. Father Cherrier

Superintendent of Catholic Schools

To the Editor of "Le Manitoba".

Sir,

Under the heading, "The Manitoba Schools," we read in the newspaper, "La Patrie," of Montreal, August 7th, the following:—

"Archbishop Langevin has just declared, in an interview, that the organization of the Manitoba Catholic Schools is pretty well completed.

"We know what that phrase, 'Manitoba Catholic Schools' means. In lieu of professor or teacher, girls of from 15 to 18 years of age are installed, without certificate of competency, without experience—in a word, able to read and write; and that sort of thing is christened a school! The pupils attend these schools a few hours a day and a few days per month. This is the system of instruction which has been and still is, in three fourths of the cases, in force with our compatriots of Manitoba."

Stop! Gentlemen, or rather, you, sir, who inspire "La Patrie"! Had we to deal only with you, we would not even mention any of the mendacious and slanderous assertions heaped up in those few foregoing lines. We know you too well not to see dropping from your pen the venom with which your heart is overflowing against Archbishop Langevin and those Manitoba Catholic schools you did erstwhile so nobly defend. But there are, among the readers of "La Patrie," some honest people who are the dupes and victims of your slanders. It is for the sake of this class of readers that I think I ought to reply to your diatribe.

"You know," say you, "what that phrase 'Manitoba Catholic Schools' means." No, Sir, you do not know, or, if you do, you are deliberately deceiving the readers of your journal. For you are telling an untruth, when you say that "young girls of from 15 to 18 years of age are installed as professors or teachers, without certificate of competency, without experience." And here is the proof. I might, to be sure recall the adage: "What is affirmed without proof can be denied without proof." But that is not my method. We have at present 3323 children whose names are inscribed on the registers of our schools. Of this number 863 are taught by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary; 764 are pupils of the Grey Nuns, and 26 of the Regular Canonesses of the Five Wounds of the Saviour. Since your friends here, not even excepting Mr. John O'Donohue, agree in acknowledging the superiority of the instruction imparted by these nuns, you will not, assuredly, refuse to admit the competence, both as to age and knowledge, of this section of our teachers. Now, observe that these 1653 pupils already represent one half of the children attending the "Manitoba Catholic Schools." Moreover, the Marist Brothers—who have just won a First Prize for a collection of school exhibits at the Manitoba Provincial Exhibition, last July—two B. A.'s of the University of Manitoba, two distinguished professors holding diplomas of great value, two parish priests (Rev. Father Bourret and Rev. Father Noret, whom a certain associate-editor of "La Patrie" has surely not yet forgotten.) Madame Muller, whose school received a diploma of honor at the London Intercolonial Exhibition in 1885, and some ten school-mistresses, all far beyond the age required by the present school law of the Province, having completed with great success their course of studies either at St. Mary's Academy in Winnipeg or at the Tache Academy of St. Boniface, have charge of a further quota of 753 pupils. These figures will force you to admit either that you wish to take advantage of the ignorant good faith of your readers or that you do not understand as well as you say you do what the phrase "Manitoba Catholic Schools" means.

The remainder of the pupils, a little over 900, are taught by masters or mistresses who are not merely able to read and write, but who are in possession

of much other information which they could, on occasion, impart to the editors of "La Patrie" with advantage to the latter.

"And that sort of thing is christened a school!" Yes, Sir, that sort of thing is christened a school, and we leave it to the impartial reader to judge if we are right or wrong in giving it that name.

"The pupils," say you, "attend these schools a few hours a day and a few days per month." Pray, what do you know about it? This is a question of figures. Instead of gratuitous affirmation, why do you not produce statistics? These statistics exist for the past, and you have plenty of friends in Manitoba who can furnish you with statistics about the present.

Your way of handling this subject betrays your bad faith and the bad faith of your masters. When there was question of coming to a settlement of the school difficulty between the Ottawa and Manitoba governments it was considered a great favor to grant us in rural districts one Catholic teacher for an average attendance of 25 children. If this was considered a great favor, it was doubtless because those who offered to grant it knew that an average attendance of 25 must be easy to find. How then does it happen that to-day you have succeeded in discovering that pupils attend our schools only a few hours a day and a few days per month?

Permit me, however, Mr. Editor, to print here anew, by way of information for the benefit of "La Patrie," certain statistics he found to in a letter which I addressed to "Le Manitoba" on the 22nd of last April. Public schools according to the meaning of the Greenway law have been opened in 815 districts. And with what result? Here it is: 1st. Average attendance of more than 5 and less than 10: 207 schools. 2nd. Average attendance of more than 10 and less than 15: 252 schools. 3rd. Average attendance of more than 15 and less than 20: 179 schools. 4th. Average attendance of more than 20 and less than 25: 77 schools. Conclusion: average attendance of less than 25 in 715 schools out of 815 schools, that is to say, in seven eighths of the total number of schools.

Kindly observe that these 715 schools are public schools. The buildings are splendid, the masters and mistresses, for the most part, are provided with certificates of competency, etc. If, then, under such favorable circumstances, the average attendance has been so dispirited, the necessary inference is that in Manitoba it is not so easy to obtain a large attendance as is apparently supposed in the office of "La Patrie." Catholics are no exception to the general rule here. Why blame them for it?

However I make a point of adding that the attendance at our schools is not only satisfactory in view of the difficulties of time and place, but it is even in many cases far superior to the attendance in the public schools of the Province. And I challenge the editors of "La Patrie" to prove the contrary.

"And that sort of thing is christened a school!" Yes, and why not?

I conclude, Mr. Editor, by apologizing for having broken the silence which the Apostolic Delegate, when leaving Canada, requested us to observe. In more than one instance, since His Excellency's departure, I might have written interesting things on the school question. I held my peace through a feeling of duty and respect. But every one will understand that my position as Superintendent of the Manitoba Catholic Schools did not allow of my leaving unrefuted such assertions as "La Patrie" makes.

Yours truly,

A. A. CHERRIER, P. P.
Superintendent of the Manitoba
Catholic Schools.

Jubilee of an Oblate Bishop in South Africa.

Among the rejoicings at the Jubilee of the Irish Oblate, Bishop Gaughran, in distant Kimberley, many of His Lordship's old friends did not forget him. His many associates in Inchicore, where he officiated for some time, were foremost in their activity, sending congratulatory letters, and the Very Rev. Father Shinnors, O.M.I., London, also added his voice to the general note of jubilation.—University.

THE IRISH BISHOPS SPEAK.

The Casket.

In an other column will be found the recent pronouncement of the Irish Bishops on the question of the authority of the Church in political matters. As already remarked, it fits our case in Canada as aptly as if it had been written with special reference thereto; for the "dangerous errors, utterly subversive of Catholic truth," have been put forward by "certain prominent politicians" in Canada much more persistently than in Ireland; and, sad to say, here, as there, "most of them have emanated from persons who call themselves Catholics."

The document is a clear, succinct, and forcible presentation of the Catholic teaching on the subject with which it deals. It comes with the authority of the ablest and most learned body of Bishops in the whole world; for such the Bishops of Ireland are admitted to be. But—what is of much greater consequence—it comes with the authority of the Catholic Church, whose doctrine it faithfully and accurately sets forth. It therefore merits the closest and most attentive study by all Catholics, both those who need instruction upon the subject and those who wish to be prepared to refute such pernicious errors when they are advanced.

Making all allowances, however, for the prevalence of mental confusion, which is so common, we are bound to say that, in our opinion, speaking for this portion of Canada, the need for instruction upon this subject is less general than would appear. Where the right of the Church to be heard in matters of a political nature is denied by—to use the phrase of the Irish Bishops—"persons who call themselves Catholics," it is impossible to escape the conclusion that, in the great majority of cases, it is good faith rather than knowledge that is lacking. One is quite prepared to find Protestants, who reject the authority of the Church altogether, denying her right to a voice in questions relating to politics; but to hear those who profess to be Catholics doing so is simply astounding. The matter is one of such elementary simplicity that it is next to impossible to believe that any fairly-well instructed Catholic could err in it in good faith. That the Church and her lawful pastors have authority in all questions of morals, every Catholic believes from the very fact that he is a Catholic. His mere calling himself a Catholic is an open profession of that belief, which if he does not hold, his religious profession is a lie and he is no more a Catholic than is the Sheik-ul-Islam. What is it, then, that he says when he declares the authority of the Church does not extend to questions of a political nature? Why, simply this—that questions of a political nature are entirely outside the sphere of morals,—that, in one word, no political act can be either morally right or morally wrong. Now is there any man on the face of this earth who recognizes morality at all, who will assent to this proposition? Yet it is PRECISELY what the professing Catholic says when he denies the authority of the Church in such matters.

Politics is not the only sphere from which ignorant and evil-disposed persons would exclude the

Church's authority. Discussing this question some months ago we had occasion to say:

In point of fact the right of the Church to interfere in any secular matter is—perhaps not with equal frequency, but with equal vehemency, and certainly with equal justice—questioned. The Church peremptorily tells the Catholic surgeon that he shall not take the life of the unborn child to save that of the mother. If he is an ill-instructed and ill-disposed man he is very apt to say to the Church: "You mind your own business: I will take my religion from you but not my surgery." She forbids the lawyer to bring or prosecute on behalf of the plaintiff a suit for a claim which he knows to be unfounded and unjust, and is told by the legal gentleman, if he has the qualities above referred to, to confine herself to religion, and not to meddle with law. She instructs the business man that though his debt be "out of date" he is still bound to pay it, and she is liable to be met with the information that he wants only religion from her, not business.

It will be noted that Irish Bishops carefully distinguish between politics and "mixed questions." In the former, as they say, "the pastors of the Church, as such, have no desire to intervene, nor to restrain freedom of thought and action except when the means and methods employed are such as cannot be deemed conformable to the principles of Christian morality." As examples of these they mention "questions about the best form of local or national government, the extension of the franchise, the operation of commercial and industrial laws." Good and holy men, themselves occupying exalted places in the Episcopacy, have strongly deprecated, as has this paper, the unnecessary interference of pastors in such matters; and the teachers of these "dangerous errors" dishonestly suppressing all reference to this distinction, are wont to cite those utterances as expressions of unreserved condemnation of "clerical interference in politics." Let such deceivers note that among mixed questions, the denial of the Church's jurisdiction in which is, according to the Bishops, "a great and pernicious error, involving a manifest denial of the teaching authority of the Church," their Lordships give a prominent place to "the Education question." This is the question for presuming to intervene in which the Bishops of Canada have been abused through all the moods and tenses by men who secured their election to Parliament by false promises of the most unqualified submission to the Episcopal demands. And we would say with all modesty that we esteem it a high honor to have had a liberal share of that abuse.

The Teaching of Morality in the Public Schools.

The report of the committee of twelve on rural schools in the United States, appointed at the convention of the National Educational Association in July, 1895, has been completed and will be submitted at the next annual gathering. According to the RECORD, "it is one of the most important documents on school education that has appeared since the promulgation of the report of the committee of ten on secondary education in this country a couple of years ago."

The report discusses the rural school problem in the different aspects of school maintenance,

supervision, supply of teachers and instruction and discipline. Each of these subjects was in charge of a subcommittee of three, their work being reviewed by the entire committee.

One of the recommendations is as follows:

"Good morals and good manners constitute an essential part of an educational equipment. The inculcation of patriotism, of respect for law and order, of whatever tendsto make a good citizen is of as much importance in a small as in a large school. Regularity, punctuality, obedience, industry, self-control, are as necessary in the country as in the city school."

Here the question arises, What is good morals? What is morality? How is the teacher to know what it is that he or she is required to teach in order to comply with this recommendation, which, in some States, is also a requirement of the statute?

A few pages from Zach. Montgomery, the defender of family rights, are pertinent here:

"The immortal Washington has said: 'Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion.' But if morality can not be maintained without religion, then how is it possible, we would enquire, for the teacher to inculcate the principles of religion? But the principles of religion are understood by the Jews differently from what they are by the Christians, and by the Catholics differently from what they are by the Protestants, by the Episcopalians differently from what they are by the Presbyterians, by the Unitarians, and by those who reject the authority both of the Old and New Testament differently from what they are by either Jews or Christians of any denomination whatever.

"Then how is it possible for the State to require the teaching of morals in the public schools without requiring as the basis of such teaching the inculcation of religious principles, such as are necessarily antagonistic to the conscientious convictions of the parents of at least a portion of the children attending these schools? It is true we hear a great deal about the 'broad principles of common morality' and of common religion, but we have never yet had the good fortune to find anybody who was able to give a definition of this common morality or common religion to the perfect satisfaction of any one, except perhaps it was the self-concoited author of such definition.

"But is it true that people of all religious denominations, as well as non-religionists, understand either the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount in the same sense, or as coming with the same authority, or as having the same binding force? We say no! Most emphatically no. Waiving the differences in the various translations of these important parts of the Bible, we shall proceed at once to consider some of the various and conflicting beliefs which have been made to rest for their foundation either upon those Ten Commandments or upon the Sermon on the Mount. Take, for example, the commandment, 'Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day,' and we find even Christians differing widely as to whether under the Christian dispensation the keeping holy

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