TOPICS OF THE DAY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

A LAYMAN'S PLAIN TALK ON MANY SUBJECTS

Mr. Hugh J. Carroll of Pawtucket., R.I., in the course of a letter to the "National Hibernian thus outlines some of the weaknesses of the hour in Irish Catholic ranks. He says :—

We men have not done our share. How many fathers talk religion to their sons? How many of them have kept Catholic newspapers and magazines in the house for the boys to become interested in? Of course, I know as well as anyone the natural repugnancy of the average Irishman to have anybody think that he is "pious" or that he is a "voteen." The sturdy and sincere man does not want to have folks think that he is parading his religion, and he is even bashful about it in his own family. It is a sentiment which deserves all praise, but have we not carried it too far? When we look into our hearts can we not, most of us, accuse ourselves a little with being somewhat ashamed to show our religious feelings, even before our own families?

The time has long since been upon us when we should overcome this feeling and change our practice. There never has been a time in all history when Irishmen did not dare to proclaim their fidelity to their Church. We have always bowed in humility to the See of Peter, and we have never feared publicly or privately to proclaim our fealty in the face of the enemies of Mother Church. But that is not what I mean. I mean that we are not so prone as we should be to proclaim it among ourselves and to encourage each other. It is among ourselves, in our families and societies, that we are called upon in these days of peace to practice and spread our ideas of the faith that is in us. The rising generation is especially called upon to show what is in them. The tide of infidelity and hard materialism which has been sweeping over the world calls for active and intelligent work among our young Catholics. The world is becoming so full of material with which we can arm the thinking Catholic of to-day, that it will be unpardonable in us if we are not able to do our full duty. The Catholic printing press is at work. All that we have to do is to read and study. There is not a question of the day which is not treated in our Catholic papers and magazines. And the Irish race is so able, as a race, to grasp arguments, and we do so like to read and study contested questions, that it seems to me to be a misfortune that we do not patronize those sources more.

I mention this matter of our religion, Mr. Editor, to explain, in a degree what is meant by the "lay apostolate," and in the hope that our many Divisions will take up the matter of Catholic reading and Catholic practices with even more vigor than in the past. The A. O. H. has been the bulwark of the Irish Catholic in America, in fact, a bulwark of the Church. Let us make it the helper and the educator of the Catholic Irish-American. We shall not be less devoted to the land of our forefathers, but rather, more Irish than ever, because we shall know, and our children shall know with certitude the reasons why the race has remained intact and true to the Faith after persecutions which no other race on earth could withstand.

AN AMERICAN JUDGE REBUKES LAWYERS.

According to a report in an American journal Mr. Justice Gaynor, of the Supreme Court of Brooklyn, took the opportunity at a recent sitting of that court to give expression to his views in regard to the antiquated and grotesquely verbose phraseology in which lawyers are fond of sinking facts and drowning meaning. The report says : Corporation counsel was told by the Judge that his thirty-six-page answer to a complaint could have been better put in thirty-six lines. All the rest, said His Honor to the astonished Counsel, was "mere rigmarole" and "an intolerable bore." And he was scarcely less contemptuous of the long-winded complaint of the plaintiff.

It is necessary, remarks the writer of the incident, that lawyers should be technical and aim sedulously at precision of statement, but the endless repetitions and the sense-obscuring verbal contentions of the ordinary legal paper constitute a dialect which affronts the English tongue, and for which there is no real need whatever. Judge Gaynor spoke hotly, but he had cause to be hot. His words should be taken to heart by all young lawyers with brains. As for the old ones, they can't be cured, of course.

CATHOLIC PUBLIC SPIRIT IN BELFAST

The victory achieved by Dr. N. J. McDonnell in the recent civic election in Falls Road district, Belfast, was celebrated recently when the army of workers in the contest were entertained to a supper in the Catholic Boys' Brigade Hall by the Central Executive of the Catholic Association. From the report published in the "Irish Weekly" of that city we take the speech of Ald. William McCormack, J.P., who presided on the occasion. He said :—

The Catholic Association, as they all knew from the active participation they had taken in its work, has established itself firmly in the minds of the people of Belfast. It had accomplished enormous work for the Catholics of the city since its formation. Under the lead given to it by the venerable president of the association, it had for the first time in the history of the Catholics of the city procured for them an independent standing in the public boards of the city. Through it they had been for the first time in their history able to sit on equal terms with those who had not at any rate looked with much favor on the prospect of their entrance to public boards in Belfast. They were there as independent men, and they could exercise their functions as the representatives of the Catholics of the city as independent men, and they could defend their interests untrammelled by any authority except that exercised by the Catholic electors.

The Catholic Association had laid the Catholics of Falls and Smithfield and of Belfast under a deep obligation for the great work it had performed. Their regard for it should also be excited because of the great possibilities that there were in it; because while municipal representation and representation on other boards in the city had been of the city. The efforts of the Catholic Association to do these things had not always passed unchallenged. They had to meet opponents from without and opponents from within, but one of the best proofs of the strength of their position was that whether they were struck in the face or whether they were struck from behind they had been able to assert their right to be the authority through which municipal life might be derived for Falls and Smithfield Wards. They had relied upon the fidelity of the people and the people had not been found wanting. They had appealed to the people on principle, and they found they were fully alive to the fact that as the Association had gained the representation and fought for it, they might rely upon the Catholic Association to be their guide in choosing those who were to be their representatives at the public boards.

BISHOP SPALDING ON LAWS OF SUCCESS

His Lordship Bishop Spalding in a recent address pointed out in a practical and telling manner some of the conditions requisite to achieve success in life. He said :—

That success lies in working at the thing in which you wish to succeed. It lies in never tiring of doing, in repeating and in never ceasing to repeat in toiling, in wanting, in bearing, and in observing; in watching and experimenting, in falling back on one's self by reflection, turning the thought over and over, round and about, the mind and vision acting again and again upon it; this is the law of growth. The secret is to do, to do now; not to look away at all. That is the great illusion and delusion; that we look away to what life will be for us in ten years and in twent years; we look to other surroundings. The surrounding is nothing, the environment is nothing. Or, in other words, it is not possible to work except in the actual environment. If you do not work where you are, where will you work? If you do not work now, when will you work? There is nothing for us but here and now.

There is but one real success for any human being born into this world from the beginning until now, or that shall be born until the end, and that is success in making himself a man, in making himself God-like, in making himself honest, sincere, truthful, just, benevolent, kind, polite, human. There are no compensations for whoever fails in this. A man may have millions of money, and if he has failed in making himself a man, he has failed hopelessly. But he who has built up his character is kingly, is akin to his Maker and his Saviour.

What is it that you want to succeed in doing? You all want to make money or get an office; that is the American idea of success. It is to make money or get an office. We will outgrow that some day. Money is good; it is the greatest of material powers in the world to-day. It is a mighty power. How are you going to make money? Just as I told you, that you were to learn language—by working, working. I am talking of the lazy. There may be an exception sometimes; an accident may happen so that a man gets rich without labor, but right here is one of the greatest causes of failure; that each man looks upon himself as an exception. I tell you that this is law; that you have got to labor, if you want to get money; if you want to succeed.

NEWSPAPER REPORTS ON CRIME.

Only the other day we noticed sensational reports in our daily press, of remarks, made by an unfortunate man who is awaiting the day to mount the scaffold to expiate a terrible crime. One of our exchanges reproduces an interview which Rev. Regis Canevin, pastor of the Pittsburgh Cathedral, has given to the "Observer," the Catholic journal of that city, in regard to the course of the American secular press in flooding the homes of that city with long and loathsome accounts of the sensational Biddle case.

The question raises an interesting discussion as to what extent newspapers are justified in reporting the details of crime.

"My opinion on that matter is clear and positive," Father Canevin is quoted as saying, "those reports were detrimental to public morals. For men are as their thought are. And what were the minds of the people—yes, of all, down to the most innocent children who can read—busied with for days and days, while that case was the sensation of the hour, except with thoughts of crime and dishonor, of ruin and bloodshed?

"Christian virtue in society is increased or lessened by the newspapers. The sensational and overdrawn pictures which appeared in the countless extras of the recent tragedy could have only one effect—to confuse the judgment, arouse the emotions and excite the passions of the readers. We recall with regret and shame the violent and lawless declarations which were printed and carried over the entire country by the sensational newspapers when men needed wise guidance and calm, sober counsel."

"But the editors say that it is their business to print the news," objected the reporter.

"Business?" replied the priest. Shall the papers excuse the abuse of their mission by saying that that is their business. It is not their business to pander to evil passions nor to train their readers to demand minute details of crime." The greatest reverence is due to youth," was a pagan maxim. The press places before the boys and girls of this city descriptions of lewdness and obscenity that are sickening, and details of impurity and dishonesty, murder and lawlessness of every degree as though it was the reporter's business to make vice attractive and ruin souls with lessons of iniquity and defilement."

Some Notes

ON TWO EXTREMES.

"BY CRUX."

A GREAT BIBLE READER. —We were always aware that certain classes of Protestants prided themselves upon their knowledge of the Bible; of course, not necessarily including any special comprehension of the same. But of all the stories of Bible-readers we think that the following is about as unique as any—it comes from a Baltimore contemporary :—

"Ambrose S. Ottey of Cecil County, Md., who is a veteran blacksmith, thirty-three years ago began a systematic reading of the Bible, and has succeeded in arranging an odd classification of its contents. After reading through the Holy Book 117 times, he knows how many times certain words and letters appear; how many chapters and verses there are; names that spell the same both ways; peculiar passages of Scripture; the middle book, chapter, verse and line and other facts."

Mr. Ottey must have made a very close study of the text of Holy Writ, for, he has been enabled to furnish the following very interesting information :—

"He says if you want to read the Bible through in a year you can do so in an interesting and instructive manner by reading three chapters every week day and five on Sunday. Or read two in the Old and one in the New Testament every week day and six in the Old and four in the New Testament every Sabbath, and you will then have read the Old Testament once and the New twice in the year. He has computed the number of verses commencing with the various letters of the alphabet as follows : a, 12,638; b, 2,207; c, 183; d, 177, e, 207; f, 1,797; g, 209; h, 1,164; i, 1,449; j, 158; k, 65; l, 411; m, 437; n, 961; o, 592; p, 149; q, 4; r, 127; s, 1,088; t, 5,286; u, 83; v, 37; w, 1,396; x, none; y, 356; z, 17. He has ascertained that the Bible contains 1,189 chapters, 31,198 verses, 773,697 words and 3,566,480 letters."

Of course, to make such a study as this, it is not absolutely necessary to go to the Bible; the same method of pastime and amusement might be employed in regard to Shakespeare, Homer, the Encyclopaedia Britannica, or any other work of a given magnitude. It needs considerable patience, and some degree of mathematical inclination to make all these calculations. Decidedly, if that way of spending his time was more pleasing than another one, it was not has harmful as other ways might be for Mr. Ottey.

But, after all, we would be more interested to know what spiritual, or religious benefits Mr. Ottey derived from his hundred and seventeen readings of the Bible. We are not told that he has perfected himself in Christian virtues to any given extent; nor does he say how much of the Truth contained in the Sacred Word he has distilled from that most wonderful of all hearts. He certainly knows more about the number of letters and verses and chapters in the Bible, than he ever did before; but has he learned any of the great dogmas that are mentioned in the Gospel, or foreshadowed in the Old Testament? What religious impressions has his soul received? Does he see aught more clearly than before he began his study of the Scriptures? How many of all these passages—each letter of which he has counted—does he fully understand and is capable of interpreting in a rational, not to say infallible manner? These certainly are questions of great moment, and, it seems to us, that they are of far greater importance—at least, as far as the Bible is concerned— than all the minute calculations of the arithmetician.

We would even go a step further, and say that after his hundred and seventeen readings, and all his calculations, Mr. Ottey is far more at sea regarding the Bible, as a basis of religion, than he was before ever he perused a line of that sacred volume. What is most remarkable, in the private judgment theory of Protestants, and in their principle of the Bible as sole basis of faith, is that they cling to the wordings of the passages without any regard as to their purport. A man may know the whole Bible from end to end, and be able to repeat it backwards, and yet not understand the meaning of the one-quarter of it. Just like a child who learns a piece of poetry by heart without knowing the meaning of the words. This is really the abuse of the Bible; the Catholic alone knows the use of that Holy Book.

BIGOTRY OR A BAD SYSTEM.—The New York "Herald" reports a most peculiar case, and one that either indicates a dangerous amount of religious bigotry in certain sections of the American Republic, or else a very faulty system of judiciary. We will simply quote the report, as it is given, and then base our brief comments upon what appear to be facts :—

"Because the judges of the Court of Sessions, in Queens Borough, are all said to be Catholics, Judge Marean, of the Supreme Court, recently, took a case from them and sent it to the Grand Jury. Adelbert Oiszewaki, a Pole, residing at Bayside, was arrested about a week ago, charged with obtaining money under false pretences. He obtained a contribution of $5 from another Pole, living in Flushing, for the building of a new church, to be erected at Bayside. The complaint was that he represented that he was collecting money to build a new Catholic Church, while he told others that he was interested in the erection of a building for an Independent Catholic Church. He was arraigned before Magistrate Smith, in Flushing, and held for trial at the Court of Sessions, which meets at Jamaica every Tuesday. The application to Judge Marean was made by Peter A. Gatens, counsel for the accused man, and in the papers he set forth that all the judges of the Court of Sessions being Catholics, he did not believe his client would receive fair treatment at their hands."

We called this a peculiar case, but it may not be very exceptional for aught we know. At all events it presents a very clear dilemma. Either the anti-Catholic prejudices of the legal officials in New York State are beyond all reason or hue of justice, or else the system whereby the judges are selected—that is by popular election— is a most dangerous one for the Commonwealth. Or again, both of these contentions may be correct. We have no means of justly estimating such a proceedings in Canada. Our judges, no matter by whom appointed, and no matter in what courts they sit, are completely and entirely above suspicion. No member of the Bar, in any one of our Canadian provinces, no citizen of any part of this Dominion, would ever dream, no matter what the case, or who the contesting parties, to question the impartiality of the judge, much less to dream of the possibility of any political, national, religious or other prejudice, or predilection having the shadow of an influence upon his judgment. We could understand the challenging of jurymen; but not of judges. We know that it is customary, in this country, whenever a judge is either interested in a financial way or otherwise in a case, for him to "recuse" himself, that is to say to decline to sit, and to hand the case over to another judge. But it is a matter of delicacy and of honor with him, and no person would even suggest that he should "recuse" himself. It is well known that such will be his course, if sufficient reason exists. On the other hand, in the United States, the judge is a political creature at the mercy of the popular vote, and even as a member of a legislative body, a member of Parliament, or a city alderman, he is obliged for self-preservation to trim his sails according to the mind that blows. We, therefore, see in this one instance an illustration of the striking difference between our two systems. Bigotry, anti-Catholic prejudices, distrust of fellow-countrymen of another faith may obtain in ouw own community; but never could these sentiments be translated into such a course, or such a reflection upon the integrity of the Bench. The action seems to us to be more an insult to the judiciary of the state and a condemnation of the prevailing system, than it is a reflection upon the conscientiousness of the Catholic judges. We do not envy these gentlemen their system nor do we regret that our country is unstained in its legal arena by the application of religious bigotry in so formidable a manner.

A Glance at Europe

ABOLISH DUELLING.—At last the people of France appear to be fallinginto line with the rest of the civilized world in regard to the unfortunate and unchristian practice of duelling. According to a recent despatch, we learn that :

"A league has been formed in France with the object of abolishing duelling. The organization will be extended throughout the country. A tribunal of honor will be formed in each district to settle disputes. The Paris tribunal includes Prince Louis de Broglie, M. Paul de Cassagnac, Vice-Admiral de Cuverville, Professor Emile Faguet, the academecian; General La Veuve and other prominent men."

If this league, which is evidently the outcome of a really Catholic principle, should prosper, and eventually sway for good, the minds of those who, basing themselves on a false sense of honor, outrage all the laws of God and of justice, as well as the laws of humanity, by perpetuating and encouraging such a brutal practice, the result cannot be but for the greater good of mankind and the glory of God. We trust to see the day dawn when no more duelling will be heard of on earth; for it is a relic of barbarism, and is a blot upon the fair name of any land in which it is encouraged.

CABINET RESIGNED. — In our last issue we made mention of the Holy Father's great satisfaction on learning that the Minister of Public Works had resigned from the Zanardelli Cabinet, on account of the proposed divorce laws to be brought in and with which he could not agree. We now learn that the entire Cabinet has resigned, on a very vital issue. The Roman despatch announcing this event, says :—

"Signor Villa, the Cabinet's candidate for the Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies, failed to secure his re-election to-day. The Opposition cast blank ballots. Signor Zanardelli, the Premier, said with some warmth that in view of the Cabinet's defeat, the Ministers would confer as to their future course of action, and after the conference it was announced that the Cabinet had resigned. The incident has caused intense excitement. The Cabinet, which has just resigned, succeeded the Saracco Ministry, which resigned February 7, 1901, owing to its having been defeated in the Chamber of Deputies, February 6, by a vote of 318 to 102, at the close of the debate on the dissolution of the Labor Exchange at Genoa, which had lasted several days."

It is certainly very suggestive of the situatian in Italy, and of the lack of unanimity even amongst the anti-Clericals and the infidel section of the political world, that no measures that are positively disapproved of by the Vicar of Christ, succeed in being carried out permanent effect. Governments come and go, ministry succeeds ministry, but as soon as any one Cabinet, or set of politicians, makes an attempt to legislate in direct antagonism to the Church, the "Prisoner of the Vatican," in his passive opposition, and his silent protests always comes out triumphant. It would seem as if the Hand of Providence constantly guided the Vicar of Christ, even in affairs, outside the domain of the Church, and with which the Venerable Pontiff appears to have no active concern. When is Italy going to learn the lesson that her history has so long been teaching her! Surely her enemies have had sufficient evidence, if they are not entirely blinded by passion and prejudice, that their efforts to undermine the Rock of Ages are as vain and as puny as the attacks made by tropical auts on the mountains that tower into the heavens.

He listened to that most ethereal of all sounds, the song of crickets, coming in full choir upon the wind, and fancied that, if moonlight could be heard, it would sound just like that. What is the voice of song when the world lacks the ear of taste?