

NEW YORK SCHOOL LAWS.

In the March issue of the "Catholic World," Rev. Thomas McMillan, C.S.P., has a lengthy and very important contribution to the School Laws of New York. He claims that their educational system is in danger if proposed radical changes are made. He consecrates considerable space to pointing out the best remedy. His arguments are in favor of a unification of the whole system under the supervision of the regents of the university. Above all does Father McMillan point out how the great educational work done by Catholics in New York is ignored. By the following extracts from that admirable article, our readers will see that the educational question is one of paramount importance in every land, and that in the neighboring Republic, just as well as here in Canada, the Catholic element has to contend with unjust opposition in all matters affecting the education of youth.

Amongst other things Father McMillan says:—

"It seems obvious that those who are earnestly seeking to improve the school laws of New York State should give more attention to the suggestions that can be elicited from teachers of recognized professional standing. The best text books are produced by the men and women who have had the supreme test of actual experience in the management of children. It may be hoped that our lawmakers will seek to borrow wisdom from the rulers of the classroom. Some of the educational journals have already presented very able statements of the evidence in favor of proposed changes for the codification of school laws."

"Many fairly well educated men and women do not seem to know that our State educational system in New York comprises two distinct departments, the one controlled by the Board of Regents, the other by the State Superintendent."

"The Superintendent of Public Instruction is the victim of his surrounding conditions, as the Regents of the University are protected by the conditions of their life tenure and other incidents of their organization. The case might safely be submitted here without further argument and upon the superintendent's testimony alone. No intelligent jury, mindful of the welfare of our schools, would hesitate to render a verdict in favor of the unification of our State educational system under the supervision of the Regents of the University. But there are other reasons for such a change in our system as will bring the execution of the educational functions now vested in the superintendent under protecting supervision of the Regents—at least to the extent of making them responsible for the choice and retention in office of the official who shall execute such functions. Their importance and the advantage of such change in our educational system, will appear upon a slight review of the superintendent's varied duties, which are too great in aggregate to be safely committed to any one person's unaided judgment or unrestrained discretion. The time is opportune for the change, and all valid reasons and worthy influences make for its accomplishment. Educational unification, under well tested, capable and trustworthy supervision, is the desideratum. The Regents of the University meet all the requirements for the needed supervising body. Their board has become an institution—the ripened fruit of a century's experience. What has been thus evolved and has so conspicuously proved its almost ideal usefulness, may not be lightly set aside. To bring the Superintendent of Public Instruction into harmony with and under supervision of the Regents of the University, little more legislation is needed than to give them the power to elect and remove such officer. His responsibility to them, and their responsibility for him, will be thus simultaneously established. He will then recognize the Regents as his natural and helpful advisers, and will gladly accept their potent protection. Harmony will be established in our educational household, and, all animated by a common purpose, can work together for the common good."

"By an act of legislature Mr. Skinner was authorized, at great expense, to assume the responsibility of taking a biennial school census, chiefly on his own recommendation of competency for such a difficult task. The results of his work will not bear critical inspection or a 'uniform examination' in the words of his own pet phrase: No gain can be shown proportionate to the money expended. The boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx in New York City were commanded, against the decision of the local commissioners, to pay for the honor of this census about thirty-eight thousand dollars. By a pecu-

liar juggling of the figures there was no distinct mention of a large number of volunteer workers in the cause of education, representing hundreds of prominent families, philanthropic and religious organizations. A census that misrepresents the work done by the people of New York State for education, or which presents only in a partial way the evidence of their generous zeal, deserves severe condemnation. This consideration may be taken by those in charge of the figures to be prepared for the Paris Exposition, which should be arranged according to a reliable standard. It is to the glory of the Empire State that so many of its citizens do not need any compulsory law. They take the initiative in educating their children, and cheerfully pay the cost of their religious training. By an unjust discrimination, fostered by the bigotry of the past, they are also obliged to assume the whole burden of providing instruction in the secular branches required for intelligent citizenship.

For all whom it should concern, and to comply with the request of public officials seeking accurate information, the following exhibit of the parish schools of New York State has been prepared from the Catholic Directory for the year 1899. To remove a widespread misconception, it is necessary to state that the children in these schools have homes supported by their parents, who are entitled to all the civic honor that belongs to taxpayers. From their contributions have been paid the salaries of two thousand, six hundred and twenty teachers. The number of pupils is indicated according to the dioceses, representing all the counties of New York State:—

Diocese of New York	47,109
" " Brooklyn	27,785
" " Buffalo	21,324
" " Albany	13,000
" " Rochester	12,777
" " Syracuse	4,840
" " Ogdensburg	3,500
Total	130,335

ST. PATRICK'S DAY GAZETTE.

The beautiful little publication entitled "St. Patrick's Day Gazette," must not be confounded with the Montreal (every day "Gazette.") The new venture is only in commemoration of the national feast, but it is one that deserves the greatest success on the part of its publishers. Two of the publishers—Prof. F. D. Daly and R. J. L. Cuddihy—are well known to our readers, as frequent contributors to the "True Witness," while Prof. W. J. Brennan and Mr. J. J. Fahey, are familiar names in every household in St. Mary's parish. Their St. Patrick's Day number is most creditable and highly instructive. Besides being elaborately illustrated with men and scenes dear to all Irish hearts in Canada, it contains articles upon education, Irish music, and other refining and practical themes. We would draw the attention of our readers to a slight, yet strange error in one of Prof. Daly's own poems, and he will see at once that in pointing out this mistake, we are putting right a host of friends. The line in a poem entitled "James Flanagan," in which the word "Girshas" is made to read "Girls has." We can heartily congratulate the writers, compilers and publishers of that very neat and very appropriate issue. The price is only 10 cents.

Take special care to avoid to-day that sin into which you are more apt to fall; Mary will help you, ask her by saying one "Ave" on your knees.

I will consider myself fortunate, says St. Francis de Sales, if I have succeeded in ridding myself of my faults a short quarter of an hour before my death.

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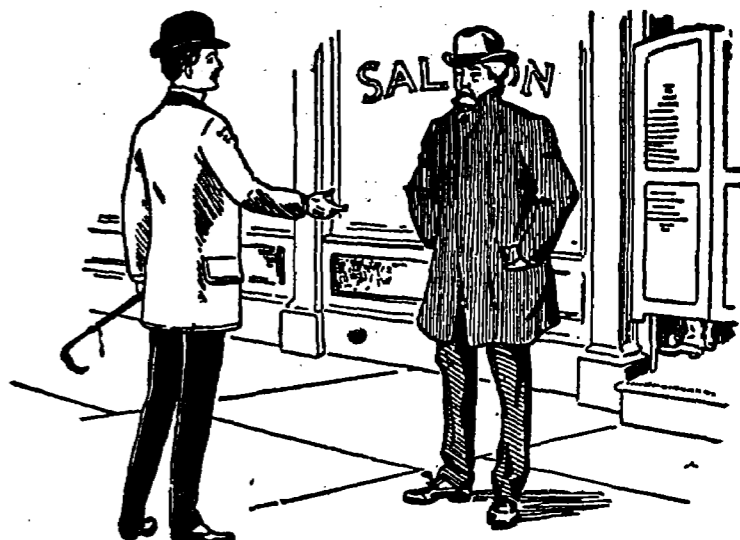
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SPRING 1900.

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