

# ARCH TE. Regular Contributor.) The School Question Of Newfoundland

(By An Occasional Correspondent.)

By a correspondent in the "Daily News" of St. John's, Newfoundland, we learn the strange and distressed news, that the Bond Government has introduced a School Bill, the provisions of which do away with the teaching of religion in the public schools. It is a blow aimed at the liberty of the subject, and calculated to create a generation of infidels and free-thinkers in that young colony. And strangest of all is the fact that the Government has Catholic supporters who will be glad to sacrifice their religious convictions at the shrine of their politics. The letter, from which we draw our information, is signed "Catholicus," and is written by one who is evidently possessed of the courage of his convictions. A few passages from it may serve to show what the situation is and to inculcate some broad principles that it is ever well that our people should keep in mind. After setting forth the subject, and telling that the Bill, as now presented, is likely to carry, and after telling the Catholic supporters of the Government how they should be ashamed to vote for a body of men who so barefacedly strike at their most cherished principles, the writer says:—

"I say, speaking as a Catholic, that there is nothing so dear to a parent as the question of the religious and moral training of their child. No matter what may be said to the contrary, this is but the first step to the taking away of religious teaching from our public schools, and it will not be surprising to see the schools of the near future turning out men and women as infidels and scoffers. People brought up in city life have no idea of the temptations that beset the children of the outports with regard to this matter. The formulas and practices of the Catholic religion are often scoffed at and made a bye-word. The observance of fasts and holidays are held up to ridicule, and the Catholic child, brought up in these surroundings without religious teaching, and therefore unable to 'show reason for the faith that is in them,' soon become tepid and careless, and eventually develop into an unbeliever. Take away religious education from our public schools, and the keystone of Catholicity has slipped from its cable. I wonder what will the Catholics of the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec say when they read of the action of the Catholic supporters of the present Government? These people have for years been fighting the battle for moral and religious teaching in the schools. They have not hesitated to 'allow themselves to be taxed to the utmost for the maintenance of this privilege. They have devoted their private as well as their public means towards this object, and they look upon it as the most vital principle in connection with the Dominion. While others are fighting to the last to have their children brought up as God-fearing and law-abiding citizens (for one is the consequence of the other) our legislators are making every effort to eliminate religion and moral training from our schools."

We need not follow on with that which principally concerns the local politics of the Island. But there is another passage which has a general bearing, and which deserves attention. He says:—

"If any further proof were needed of the reticence of the Catholic members on this matter, we need only point to France, where the godless Combes and his satellites are endeavoring to uproot all form of religion from the soil of France, and to make her a nation of infidels, and I have no hesitation in saying, that if some of our present rulers had their way, they would go and do likewise. Knowing well that the school is the basis of religious education, Combes is leveling every weapon against them in order to drive them from the nation. If the Clergy would agree to eliminate religion from the schools he would have no hesitation in subsidizing every one of them. Speaking as a Catholic, I feel confident that every right-thinking Catholic in the country, and out of it as well, will endorse that paragraph referring to 'religious teaching after

hours or during recess by permission of the parents' as something calculated to throw dust in the eyes of the public, and which, I feel certain, is well understood and appreciated in its proper form by every Catholic parent in the Island."

We would be surprised if the Catholics of Newfoundland did not resent this invasion of their principles. But be their action what it may, the lesson is still potent. We can see that in every country in the world, the grand aim of the enemies of the faith, is to get possession of the young mind and to eradicate therefrom the principles of religion.

## Belfast Guardians And Nuns.

The Belfast Board of Guardians on Tuesday had a field day — which seems to be the delight of their hearts — over a simple issue which any public body unaffected by purblind bigotry would have disposed of in twenty minutes. The desire to make the ratepaying public still further acquainted with the methods of those whom they entrust with the guardianship of the poor must be our apology for reporting at length a discussion which was not edifying, and was only amusing in so far as it manifested the crass ignorance and bigotry that dominate in our local bumbledom. Those unacquainted with its ways might conclude that the primary duty of guardians of the poor was to consider any rational scheme destined for the present or future relief of the sick and suffering, all the more so if it involved but little immediate or prospective expenditure. But this is not the way of the Belfast Guardians. The subject which brought forth Tuesday's ebullition of inane bigotry was in respect of the training of outside nurses in the fever hospital. In all civilized communities where hospitals exist facilities are afforded medical students and nurses to qualify for the treatment of diseases, and the necessity for such training, especially in regard to those that are infectious and may become epidemic, is universally recognized. Some time ago a proposal was made by Mr. O'Hare that the Infirmary Committee should be authorized, in conjunction with Dr. Robb and the infirmary superintendent, to draft a scheme for the training of outside nurses in the fever hospital, and that it be an instruction to the Infirmary Committee that nothing in the said scheme should in any way interfere with present arrangements for the training of the workhouse nurses.

The Infirmary Committee rejected this proposal by a large majority, and when its report was brought forward for confirmation recently Mr. O'Hare took the opportunity to bring the subject before the whole board. In doing so, he recalled an application made a couple of years since on behalf of the Mater Hospital that one or two nurses might, without inconveniencing the regular staff, be admitted for training, which was refused on the ground of the large number of nurses than in the house, an explanation which was cheerfully accepted. But no such conditions at present exist, and Mr. O'Hare pointed out that in a recent conversation the present Superiress of the Mater Hospital told him that in consequence of the rebuilding of the Edinburgh Fever Hospital, to which the Mater nurses had been up till then sent for the time being closed to them, and she thus found herself very awkwardly situated in that regard.

Of course the mention of nuns, like the proverbial red rag, had an immediate irritating effect on the bigots, who jumped to the conclusion that a plot was being hatched to introduce the Sisters of Mercy into the nursing staff. It mattered not to them that the Mater Hospital is staffed by lay nurses, Protestant and Catholic, not by any means tied to the institution, whose special training in fever cases would be a valuable asset in local hospital work. Mr. O'Hare sought to have the finding of the Infirmary Committee referred back for reconsideration, and he was ably supported in his effort by Mr. James McDonnell. But the commonsense and expediency of the scheme did not appeal to the Bumbledoms, on whom the nun bogey seems to have an alarming effect, and only one other guardian, and a Protestant to boot, Colonel M'Canice, to whose credit be it said, was sufficiently proof against the infection to take the rational view.

A Parliamentary return has been issued showing the number of workhouse infirmaries in Ireland in which nuns are employed in any capacity,

showing for each infirmary the number of nuns so employed, and the amount paid to them by way of salaries within the last financial year. The totals are thirty-two matrons, who receive £1,440 a year; forty-eight schoolmistresses, who receive £1,888; and 885 nurses, who receive £10,195.—Irish Weekly and Ulster Examiner, May 16.

## Catholic Young Men.

"Every good Catholic should be a good citizen from the very fact that he is a good Catholic, and the better the Catholic the better the citizen." Thus wrote Charles Janvier in a recent letter to Catholic young men on their duties and responsibilities.

More so perhaps than his brethren of other faiths the young Catholic has a position to maintain in the community. He is regarded by many, if not as a model which they follow, at least as one who would always conduct himself in a manner above reproach. The greater part of his Protestant friends and acquaintances feel that the young man has in a way superior advantages and that he has small excuse for actions which in others they would condone. This very important condition of affairs should be thoroughly appreciated by every Catholic father and mother, and they should strive to kindle in their sons' minds and hearts a pride in their faith that would successfully prevent their being guilty of any action which would cast the slightest reflection on themselves as Catholics. In their daily life and especially in their social and business intercourse with the Protestant members of the community they should be careful to show that they are model citizens, for there are many who are always looking for an opportunity, no matter how trivial, to assail their faith.

The young men of the present generation growing up in an atmosphere of religious freedom and tolerance should be always alert to encourage this condition by their nobleness of purpose and action. Years ago it made very little difference what a man did. If he was a Catholic, as a general thing he was avoided. To-day the spirit of the times is broader and more disposed to accept a man for what he is himself. Catholics therefore should further this spirit all they can and strive to make their type of citizenship the highest.

"By a good citizen," says Mr. Janvier, "we mean a man who, inspired by no other motive than a conscientious desire to do his duty, assumes earnestly and discharges faithfully those duties of citizenship upon whose honest discharge the integrity and efficiency of government depend."

"A good Catholic cannot do his full duty to his neighbor or to his church unless he actively and zealously exerts himself to secure the administration of good civil government, such a government as will guarantee and maintain safety to life and property and absolute freedom to the exercise of religion, a government which will insure security to the development of industry and the consequent accumulation of wealth, justice in the adjustment of those differences which must arise and exist between men in the perennial pursuit of fortune or of fame, protection to the poor and weak against the oppressions and encroachments of the rich and the strong."

"The temporal welfare and progress of the church largely depend upon the honest administration of that system of civil government whose foundations rest upon the cardinal twin principles of liberty and of truth and whose powers are so organized as to procure, without tyranny to any, but with justice to all, the greatest good to the greatest number."

"If the people prosper, the church must and will prosper. Just as a mother of human mold and with human impulses glories in the happiness of her children and is happy because they are happy, so does the church glory in the prosperity of the people and glory with them. But when the people are torn by civil strife or dissension or when the blight of bad government is steadily sapping the energies of their industry, paralyzing the impulses of their enterprise and despoiling the accumulations of their thrift the church cannot be indifferent, for the distresses of her people necessarily distress her, and in a measure as their happiness and prosperity are arrested and impaired so will her temporal welfare be retarded and suffer."—Exchange.

## Max O'Rell On Marriage.

By a Regular Contributor.)

Mention is made of the death of Paul Blouet, the Max O'Rell of literature, which event took place last week in Paris, in the press this week. While glancing over his works for one often feels inclined to turn to the writings of the departed, as it were in the hope that they may still appear to live on, we came upon a curious passage regarding marriage. It must be noted, however, that Max O'Rell wrote as a Parisian and saw some things from the peculiar standpoint of his fellow-countrymen of the boulevards. It is thus that he refers to marriage:

"Like all human institutions, marriage has its advantages and its disillusions. A cynic once said that love was the invention of God and marriage that of the devil. Whether the Wicked One had anything to do with the invention of marriage I do not know for certain, but sometimes I cannot help thinking that he had."

Were the author to have stopped here we would be inclined to form a very poor estimate of his Christian principles. In the above short passage there are not less than three striking errors, three evidences of a false conception of the subject, and three misrepresentations of the great bond that has held society together and that Divinity has raised to the dignity of a sacrament. Of course, we take into consideration that he speaks of marriage as it is understood by the unbelieving men of his time and the non-Catholic crowd that has no reverence for what is sacred. To them marriage is simply a contract whereby two individuals of opposite sexes agree to live together, to the exclusion of others, as long as it suits their mutual convenience or inclination.

But Max O'Rell must have had another conception of the great sacrament of matrimony, even if he does not take the trouble to give expression thereto.

He begins very badly, when he uses the words "like all human institutions," forgetting, or purposely ignoring that true marriage is not a human institution, consequently is not subject to the standard whereby such institutions are gauged. This is the first grave error, and it is so important that it becomes the source of all the others that naturally follow in its wake. Then he tells us, or makes the cynic tell us, that "love was the invention of God." That totally depends upon what is meant by "love." That which the men for whom he wrote—and the women also—call love is simply passion let loose and with full swing. That was certainly not the invention of God. Nor was God the inventor of pure love—He is Love itself, and it is coeval with His own existence. He is not the inventor of anything, but the Creator of all things. Invention presupposes former ignorance of that which has been discovered. And God's omniscience extends back and forward throughout all eternity, and can have had no commencement. Therefore there could have been no period when God did not know of that which He is said to have invented. Then he tells us that "marriage" was the invention "of the devil." Possibly the Evil one did originate that species of voluntary and breakable contract which some people dignify with the name of marriage. Decidedly God, who made marriage a sacrament, and a source of grace, never gave, nor sanctioned the civil agreement whereby people live in unsanctified union, but under the protection of a human law that has naught divine about it. Thus we see the false principle from which he sets out, and we can easily imagine whether it is going to lead, if followed to its logical consequences.

Then comes a passage still more dangerous, for it chimes in still more with the false ideas of marriage as they are accepted to-day.

He says:—

"At first sight the advantages of marriage are many, the most important and obvious one being that it enables a man to love a woman openly before her parents, before the whole world; on the other hand, it is the very correct legal position which destroys the pignancy of the life they live together."

There is a species of witty piquancy about this, which, like the strong mustard we put on meat, helps to give it a flavor attractive to a degenerate palate, but adds nothing to its nutritive qualities. The idea of marriage being a shield that in-

sures the one using it against public criticism is too much for any taste; but it is still worse when we are told that the "correct legal position destroys the pignancy of the life they live together." This means simply that a premium is placed upon illicit love, and that the fancied charms of illegal living are contrasted with the monotony or dullness of legalized cohabitation. Bad as the civil idea of marriage may be, it is still worse to present pictures that tempt the irreflexion into the byways of open sinfulness.

And again all this is done to please the taste that prevails amongst a certain class of readers. It is a stooping to the ignoble flattery of perverted senses. It is not worthy of a serious, a great, or even a thinking mind.

Now the author tells us that he will give us the key, the latch-key to happiness in matrimony, and it is this:—

"Forget that you are married; try to imagine that if you live together, it is because you enjoy each other's company, because you could not live apart, and not because you are bound by the law to breathe at close quarters under the same roof."

Worse still. Imagine that you are not married, and try to make yourself feel that you are living illegally when you are legally authorized to live together. In other words: be virtuous in reality, but try to make yourself believe that you are immoral. Do so, and you are immoral. Do so, and you have no claim to virtue. The action may be justified, but the intention perverts it, and you sin in thought as well as in deed. This is a sample of the loose code of morals that the present-day tendencies have generated. This is an example of the depths to which humanity can sink, imagining that the glitter of social form and the tinsel covering of legalized violation of divine law, are potent to save it from shame, remorse and final punishment.

If Max O'Rell were to have paused, as he often did under other circumstances, he would have been the first to notice the grave errors to which he exposed himself, in thus commenting upon marriage, and the still graver risk he was running of leading his readers astray in regard to a matter of such vital importance.

We freely acquit him of any intention to injure the morals of those for whom he wrote—in fact, it would not be easy to spoil that which has not a real existence. But we can take this as a fair sample of the decadent style that prevails in France to-day. It is a pandering to the irregularities that have come into existence with the anti-religious principles scattered broadcast by the promoters of an unholy cause. It is felt in the political, the social, the literary and the very national domains. But it must bring its own reaction with it, and that is inevitably at hand. License has had its course, and has come to the end; the cul-de-sac is reached when a retracing to olden principles is inevitable.

## THE VALUE OF MONEY.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. McVickar, Protestant Bishop of Rhode Island, speaking at the annual convention of the Episcopalians of that state, the other day, said:—

"I believe that the prevailing sin of this age and of this land is its exorbitant estimate of the value of money. The character of our boasted civilization, with its exaltation of material things, its material discoveries and inventions, the development of its manufactures, the widening of its commerce, the care and comforts which it has provided for our bodies, coupled as it is in our own case, with the traditions and inheritance of an age when living was hard and had to be wrung out of a poor soil or made, little by little, with great thrift, have worked the result — this overestimate of money and its power."

"Money has become the great thing in the world, and the man who makes it deserves above all others our regard, and is absolved from the responsibility which ought to come with it."

"With such a standard and such a root all evils become possible."

## THE STAGE IRISHMAN.

The agitation for purifying the stage of the utterly insipid and often indecent burlesques of the Irish race is beginning to bear fruit, says "Church Progress" of St. Louis. The Officers' Association of the Knights of Father Mathew has undertaken to eliminate the stage Irishman of the vulgar "sketch team" type of caricature. Repeated insults have been offered the Irish race by certain theatrical companies, which portray a character alleged to be an Irish type, but which is not Irish and which is an insult to that race.

## Clergy And Laity In Ireland.

(From the Freeman's Journal.)

In "A Protest Against Pessimism" a writer (Mr. Thomas McCall) in the "Irish Ecclesiastical Record" for the current month discusses the possibility or probability of any such condition ever arising in Ireland as that which now exists in France in relation to the Catholic Church. From the title of the article one might fairly infer that there are Irishmen who hold the pessimistic view on the subject—else why any protest? But the writer abundantly proves that there is not the shadow of ground for any such view. Ireland was never more Catholic than she is to-day; that is, the Ireland which has been Catholic since the days of St. Patrick; that is, the mass of the native population. When she was "the island of saints and scholars," centuries before Protestantism was heard of, she was no more devoted to the Faith that Patrick taught than the vast majority of her people still are. And what sign is there of a change? Not the smallest. France politically is, as we see, at war against the Church; that is, the French Government, and supported apparently by a large proportion, if not the majority, of the French people. Is there any approach to any such condition in Ireland? Is there in Irish national politics any element of "anti-clericalism?" Mr. McCall answers the question, and the answer gives no encouragement whatever to pessimism. He says:

"Is there evidence to prove that any section of Irishmen hopes for or is working for legislation inimical to the interests of the Church? The whole political programme of the Nationalist party, if granted tomorrow, contains nothing that could be turned into an anti-religious weapon without grave perversion of its nature. There is no organ published in Ireland by Catholics which displays the slightest anti-clerical bias. There is no representative, or, for that matter, unrepresentative, public man who dares to introduce the anti-clerical or anti-religious note into platform utterances, nor is there the least indication of even the desire to do so. There is no known part of Catholic Ireland where such an utterance could be safely delivered. At public meetings priests are received with genuine enthusiasm and their adhesion considered a valuable distinction. The representative and responsible press chronicles with eagerness news bearing upon ecclesiastical matters, and nowhere are the claims of Catholic institutions — schools, hospitals, orphanages, societies — more eloquently advocated than in the columns of our most popular newspapers."

This is a true description of the situation in Ireland as between national politics and the Catholic Church, and when the writer asks: "Is there any possible parallel here between France and Ireland?" the answer is obvious and instant. No parallel whatever, but a difference wide as the poles — a contrast as strong and striking as contrast could be made or conceived, for as Mr. McCall further observes, "It is inconceivable that Irish electors should return either to a native or a foreign Parliament men to represent them of the type which receives the suffrages of the French peasantry."

Truly it is inconceivable. Such a thing has never been, never could be. Avowed enemies of religion have never dared to appeal for the suffrages of Irishmen, and so none such have ever been elected in any representative capacity in Ireland. Why has it been so much otherwise in France? That is a question which opens a wide field of discussion, and to which many answers might be given. Doubtless under circumstances similar to those that prevailed in Ireland the situation might be the same in France. Priests and people in Ireland have ever been together. Whether in adversity or prosperity, in sunshine or storm, through good report or evil report, the Irish priest and his flock have ever been on the same side. With them every question had but one side—the Catholic and the Irish side—and on that side, through weal or woe, they stood inseparable. Well would it have been for France had it been the same with her.