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CURRENT COMMENT

M. Jean Jaures, the leader of the Socialist party in the French Chamber of Deputies, keeps both his elder daughters in one of those very convent schools that he and his followers are persecuting. The explanation given is that his wife is an earnest Catholic with a will of her own. A woman of that kind always minimizes the evils of marriage with a bad Catholic or a Protestant. But God help the children of a mixed marriage or of a vicious father if their mother has no Catholic convictions and no fear of God.

The Vicar General of a neighboring diocese, while paying his own yearly subscription in advance, writes asking us to furnish him with a list of our subscribers in his parish, so that he may extend that list. Reader, go thou and do likewise. There is no better apostolate than that of the truly Catholic press.

Rumor says that representatives of some noble families in Italy recently went to Pius X. to protest against the appointment of a bishop, who, like the Pope himself, was not a nobleman. The Holy Father very properly replied that the origin of the new bishop was none of their business. This recalls the answer once given by a famous priest who was erroneously supposed to be very proud of his aristocratic connections. As he bore a noble name, everybody thought he had no plebeian blood, and one snobbish person suggested that it must be very trying for him to have to deal continually with poor, vulgar, ill-bred people, since he had been brought up among gentlefolk. "Oh," said he, "you are mistaken. Not all my ancestors were gentlefolk. In fact, the two best of them, the two who were better than all the rest put together—my mother and my father's mother—were rank plebeians, the only people in my pedigree who had no coat of arms."

In our editorial page we give a condensed report of a debate on the Public Schools between Mr. Bourke Cockran, the celebrated American orator, and Mr. Schurman, the distinguished Canadian scholar, who is President of Cornell University. Reviewing this debate, our able contemporary, the New York Freeman's Journal, of Dec. 24, thus takes up the only serious objection brought forward by President Schurman.

In the debate on Sunday in New Rochelle on the question, "Should Religious Instruction be given in the Public Schools," President Schurman, of Cornell University, made a very poor showing against the able arguments of Bourke Cockran. To the assertion of the latter that "the State has no right to devote the taxes of those who believe in moral instruction to the support of schools which are agnostic and anti-Christian," it was no answer to say, as President Schurman did, that

"Our educational system must confine itself to imparting the things we believe in common, and it must be left to the parents and the churches to make of religion a vital matter."

Or to tell Catholics that

"If you want the Catechism taught, in the name of heaven why don't you teach it to your children yourself, or have your churches do it."

But this is just what Catholics do. They teach their children the catechism and their Church teaches it, and they don't ask the State to do it. They also teach—that is, the Catholic parochial schools do—"the things we believe in common," viz., the three R's and other secular branches, such as are taught in the public schools. Why should they not be remunerated for doing so out of the taxes they themselves (Catholic citizens) pay for educational purposes? This is a pertinent question, which, apparently, the public school champions either cannot or will not tackle. Catholics pay taxes for education. Catholics

build and maintain schools in which education of the kind for which taxes are levied is given. Why should they not have a share of those taxes in payment for the work of giving such education, the fact of its being given to be determined by State inspection? What is the objection to this? Anti-Catholic bigotry and nothing else.

The Catholic Columbian celebrates the thirtieth anniversary of its existence in a special number, replete with interesting historical sketches and a multitude of fine illustrations. Our Ohio contemporary deserves, what it is getting abundantly, the warmest congratulations of its very many friends and admirers, foremost among whom figures His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons, trusting "that during the coming year the Catholic Columbian will surpass the splendid reputation it has held in the past, and receive on all sides the appreciation it so well deserves." After such praise from so high a quarter our little mite of commendation is hardly necessary. But we distinctly wish to be put on record as rejoicing in the Catholic Columbian's thoroughly Catholic tone, its brave, hopeful and cheerful spirit, its manly advocacy of the soundest views wherever a choice of views is open to the lover of truth, its happy combination of the most practical piety with the most modern literary and scientific culture. In the course of a leading article, full of thankfulness and free from all boasting, the editor thus modestly chronicles his paper's principal achievements and advantages.

But how little is on the debit side of the paper's account and how much is on its credit side, let its very existence for the space of a generation of men stand as proof; let the support of an army of subscribers stand as proof; let the friendship of a host of pastors stand as proof; let its very record of good works accomplished stand as proof; its support of every worthy cause, its defense of Catholic interests, its exposure of the A.P.A., its propaganda for Christian education, its vindication of the Church from the aspersion of apostate calumniators, its labors for safe fraternal insurance, its roll of honor in support of Ireland's struggle for freedom, its critical explanations of Socialism, its stand against the Protestantizing of the Filipinos, its special department for the uplifting of young men, its efforts in the cause of Federation, its encouragement to Catholic literature, its defense of civil and religious liberty, etc., etc.

One of the Catholic Columbian's regular contributors is a host in himself. The weekly letter of Colonel James R. Randall would make the reputation of any paper. When he attacks a subject he is sure to throw fresh light on it, witness, the following comment last week on later and not generally known developments of the Caldwell episode.

Anybody might suppose from the extraordinary efforts made, in the highest quarters, to reconvert the Marquise de Monstiers that the matter was or is of supreme importance. Even the Holy Father has been made an intermediary, under unwise counsel I think. A French Marquis, in Combes' so called Republic, is a kind of opera bouffe individual, especially an old hypocrite of loose morals who boasts of descent from the Crusaders. Like a number of such men, titled and untitled, it may be said that the best of his race have been long underground, while the branch of the family tree is rotten. That the Marquise, as the latest cablegram tells us, turned Protestant to humiliate him, argues that she values this kind of revenge more than her own soul and that she, as the proverbial statement goes, "cut off her nose to spite her face." Had she been a genuine Catholic, her misfortunes, physical and mental, would have instinctively, by the grace of God, been made stepping stones for heaven. But she preserved, even in old age, deafness, disease and loss of wealth, that vanity which led her, in her young womanhood, to marry such a caricature of the Crusaders. She is a spoiled child, when

youth has vanished and petulance becomes a dreadful mocking. The whole course of action toward her since her apostasy has been mistaken and undiplomatic. It is evident that the more spectacular she is made, by our good prelates, the more perverse she becomes, and the more they are discomfited. The way to treat her is just the reverse of what has been done. She should have been admonished that the Church has lost nothing by her departure and that the only loss is her own; that the only celebrity she had, in the world, was the accidental possession of wealth, a moiety of which she bestowed in founding, in part, the Catholic University; that a noted and exemplary Bishop gave her personally all the fame she had; and that, while good people would pray for her restoration to sanity, no Chadwick notoriety would attach to the petitions. Had this been done, in my humble opinion, she would have been in a better frame of mind for cure spiritually. As it is, the spoiled child act is only stimulated to obstinacy and feeds her vanity as an intercontinental sensation. The Marquise never was solidly converted and never will be until she acquire "the queen of virtues," humility. Then again, some people will wonder if such unusual efforts would have been made to bring her back had she not been a Marquise, a presumed great lady, who turns her back on all that constituted her real fame. Had these incidental adjuncts been wanting, would they who dwell "in the seats of the mighty" have gone, as it were, out of their way to placate her and mortify themselves? We think not. So, let her alone. Stop meddling about her. Let her understand that, in the eyes of God, her soul is not one whit more precious than that of the humblest Catholic or person of any creed or none. Once a holy Jesuit priest, in trying to convert a worldly minded and disedifying old man, went to such humiliating extremes that he was told by his superior that, though a Jesuit, there were lawful limits to excessive humiliation. He did contrive to give extreme unction to the senile sinner, of a very dubious quality; but Archbishop Bayley, who was most reluctantly persuaded by wealthy relatives, to make some remarks at the funeral, uttered these terrible words: "I did not know the man personally, whose corpse is here present. If he ever did anything good, I never heard it. If he was converted at all, it was when he was dead to the knees." The family wished no doubt that they had not importuned the prelate to make utterance at the funeral. If a Catholic turns apostate all reasonable means for repentance should, of course, be employed; but if the wanderer prove a spoiled child, resenting petition and grace, out of petulant vanity, he or she should be let severely alone, until the party return to sanity and understands that the supreme loss is individual, and that the Church is often well rid of unwilling members, in the 400 class or on the suburbs of gentility.

Saints are the great need of the present day. The Church was never so well organized as she is now. She over-veils the world with her sodalities and confraternities which do so much to stimulate piety and which ought to result in vigorous Catholic action. But there is perhaps less real holiness than there was in past centuries. And, after all, holiness is what ensures the spiritual life of Catholics. The example of one truly holy man is a tower of strength for an entire nation. Think of what the Cure d'Ars did fifty years ago for the religious life of the French people. Think of the blessed influence in later years of Don Bosco in Italy and throughout the Catholic world. The older generation of Canadian Catholics still cherish the memory of the saintly Bishop Bourget of Montreal, whose ardent love of God radiated in countless blessings over the whole of Canada. Thank God, though saints seem to have become fewer of late years, still we hear of some occasionally who really walk with God. One of these was the late

Father Edward H. Welch, S.J., who died in Washington on the 3rd of December. Among the many tributes to his beloved memory we, who knew him well, are especially pleased with the following from the Ave Maria. "Although a convert to the Church at a time when converts were few and far between, and a member of a wealthy and prominent family, besides being a gifted speaker, a favorite confessor, and a successful teacher, Father Welch's life was so hidden and his bearing so meek that his name rarely appeared in print. But it was on the lips of all who knew him, and ever in benediction and praise. The lives of such men are seldom written and yet perhaps no priest or prelate in this country has done more to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls than Father Welch."

The difference between such men and the ordinary run of good Catholics is that the former pray and rely chiefly on prayer, while the latter talk and rely chiefly on natural means. In the things of the soul to lead a life of constant union with God in an atmosphere of His divine presence is to do; all other manifestations of human activity belong to the realm of theory. This we take to be the drift of the following extract from a remarkable sermon preached by Bishop Spalding at the recent consecration of the new Coadjutor-Bishop Davis, of Davenport, Ia. "When men turn from knowing to doing they attain the only real understanding, for, in fact, we understand nothing except by doing—by ceaseless doing and striving. It is only by constant practice, by repeated efforts alone, that the workman, the artist, acquires that thorough grasp and mastery of his vocation that constitutes his knowledge of it. And where there is question of religious, vital truth, we do not understand except by making it part of our being,—not by critical inquiry, not by historic research, not by theorizing or dissecting, but by doing! Not every man who professes but he who does the will of the Father, he shall enter the Kingdom; his faith shall never be destroyed."

An announcement was made last Sunday in St. Mary's church which was most welcome to the French speaking members of the parish. A new church in which the sermons will be in French, and to which all French and French Canadians will be referred for parochial ministrations, is to be begun early in the spring, with Rev. Father Portance, O.M.I., as its pastor. Meanwhile there will be in St. Mary's church beginning Sunday after next, a special High Mass for the French congregation at ten o'clock, and an afternoon service at 4 o'clock, with Vespers, sermon and benediction, beginning Sunday next. The announcements that have hitherto been made in French at the 11 o'clock High Mass will henceforth be made exclusively at the ten o'clock Mass. At a large gathering of the clergy on Monday last His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface declared that the obligation of parochial membership in the new French parish did not concern those families in which one of the parents is not French.

It is perhaps well to remind our readers, at the beginning of the year, that the earlier they pay their subscription, the better for them and for us. We also take the opportunity to say that no one has a right to complain if all marriages or deaths of Catholics are not noticed in our columns. Few people would expect the daily papers to find out when their friends get married or die; those who expect such notices to appear send them themselves to the papers; this is what they should do for us, if they expect us to publish anything in that line, and we shall always be happy to publish anything sent by our readers. Let them kindly remember that, although this journal gives a great deal of general Catholic news, it has no facilities for collecting local news and can have no such facilities till the Catholic public become more keenly alive to its merits and support it better.

God is just now reading a terrible lesson to the up-to-date apostles of

sanitary methods, which many of them set up as their household gods. On Thursday of this week the most fashionable street in the city, one, too, that is neither long nor crowded at all, was found to have 56 cases of typhoid fever, while this awful scourge—for such it really is this year, with its malignant developments—seems to be comparatively rare in the north end, the poor man's quarter, where sanitary precautions are often of the most primitive type. So great is the panic in Assiniboine avenue that whole families are running away to avoid the disease. Of course doctors and learned microscopists are doing their best to circumvent the typhoid bacillus, but their efforts have as yet proved futile.

Clerical News

Cardinal Richard, Archbishop of Paris, is reported to be gradually sinking under the weight of his years and the trouble that now afflicts the Church in France. He is not the first Archbishop of Paris who has suffered for the faith and who has been punished for fidelity to the principles of liberty, fraternity and equality, which are but empty words on the lips of the men who now hold the power in France.

Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia is ill. Although his condition is not regarded as serious, he is suffering from an attack of rheumatism and is confined most of the time to his room in the archiepiscopal residence on Logan Square. Only visitors whose business with the Archbishop is urgent are allowed to have audience with him.

The B. A. degree was conferred on the 15th of December, at Cambridge, on Pere Y. M. Le Jehne, O. M. I., D. D., of St. Edmund's House. Early next year he goes to Colombo, Ceylon, to take up the work of teaching at St. Joseph's College.

Rev. Father Garaix, S. J., returned Tuesday last from Port Arthur.

Rev. Father Lee, the zealous pastor of Oakwood, N. D., recently announced to his congregation that a new church would be built there this year. This is an urgent necessity, for the present building is altogether unworthy of so truly Catholic a parish and so devoted a pastor.

Rev. Fathers Fillion and Bourret were in town on Wednesday.

Rev. W. Reynolds, S. J., of St. Boniface College, left last Sunday to attend his father's funeral at Flushing, Long Island, N. Y. The sad news of his father's death came that morning by telegram.

An Apostolate Band has been formed in England, on about the same lines as the now well known Diocesan Band in the United States. Five of the English community (which is known under the title of Our Lady of Compassion) are converts, Fathers Matrin, Chase, Filmer, Grimes and Sharpe. The other two are Fathers Arendtjzen and Vaughan.

Rev. Father Lecocq, O. M. I., of St. Rose du Lac, was in town early this week.

On Monday last some thirty or forty priests sat down to table with His Grace the Archbishop in honor of his name-day, the feast of St. Adelard.

The Very Rev. Father Filas, having lately been appointed Superior General of the Order of St. Basil the Great, leaves Edmonton for Galicia and is expected here this week on his way to Europe.

Rev. Father Maynard, S. J., arrived at St. Boniface College from Montreal on Thursday morning, the chaplain of the college farm.