

[From the Truth Teller.]

COMMON SCHOOLS AND CATHOLIC CHILDREN.

[CONCLUDED.]

"Neither the number of Schools, nor of Scholars, nor any degree of intellectual culture is a sufficiently accurate scale, by which to measure the scale of national morality."—*DUBLIN REVIEW*, No. 3, vol. 2.

In this country, the idea of Catholicity and Ireland is so blended in the minds of the American people, as to be in a manner inseparable. Whether that is just or not, is irrelevant to our purpose;—the fact is incontrovertible; and so utterly impossible is it to divest their minds of this identity, that as soon as ever a child's hatred or dislike can be engendered and cherished against Ireland and Irishmen, that moment, his respect for the Catholic Religion and its professors is more or less weakened. Then by another step in the inductive process by an association of ideas, quite as natural to those of more mature as well as those of more tender years, the frailties and errors, perhaps the crimes of the man are attributed to the religion, and both become odious and detestable alike. The effects of this identification are more widely extended, more permanent, and more pernicious in its effects than can well be imagined: and all flowing from the vicious principles of education imbibed in youth and confirmed in age. They pervade all ranks, influence all minds, and pervert all sentiments of

* This identification of Catholics and Irishmen has, however, been recognized and acted upon in every age since the Reformation; by various nations; but especially by all those speaking the English language: by the Puritans, Cromwellians and Cameronians of Great Britain as well as by their descendants in America. "The mob," says the celebrated Garnet in his letter to Parsons, "was furious, looking for Priests and Irishmen!" Oh! yes, "Priests, Papists and Irishmen" in modern times, as Christians and Lions of former times, have invariably constituted the watchwords of mobs, and fanatics on either side of the Atlantic. What an unequivocal testimony to the fidelity of the Irish Catholics! Ever persecuted and ever faithful; ever allied with all that is good and great in religion; ever suffering from all that is vile and worthless in fanaticism! Yet some Catholics are found so ungenerous, so unkind, so utterly forgetful of what the world at large owes to Catholic Ireland, as to utter sentiments at variance with the finest virtues of a people so enthusiastic, so devoted in their fidelity, so Catholic beyond most others in similar circumstances,—by indirectly insinuating what they had not the manliness openly to proclaim,—"that it was inexpedient for Irishmen in future to defend themselves in a Catholic paper, notwithstanding they might be assailed and maligned as Irishmen and Catholics!" as this foregoth, was a thing altogether unseemly and untoward to those who could neither feel for their misfortunes, nor appreciate their merits! Woo worth the day, woo worth the day! and has it then come to this, that a Catholic could be found so lost to every nobler sentiment of humanity as to wish that his fellow-Catholics should be precluded from defending themselves, or their father-land from the over-narrowed shafts of every casting miscreant, privileged to aland: his fellow creatures. And this is to avoid "national excitement!"—Must Irishmen then lie down like dumb dogs to be worried in silence by every mongrel, or puppy, who, like the Ass kicking the dead Lion, may bray over the victory when the noble animal is no longer capable of resistance! "Alas for poor Erin, her pride has gone by!" &c.—Our readers can find the remainder of this beautiful and expressive effusion in Moore's Melodies,

honor, of justice and of charity. Am I still to be told by the ignorant, the vain, the shallow, and the interested that these things are not so?

Whence then, may I ask, the undying hatred ever manifested by the apostate children of Irish Catholics against the creed and country of their fathers?—whence the numerous intermarriages with sectarians—that foul blotch on the virgin purity of Catholicity? Whence the consequent heart-burnings, domestic brawls, divorces, indifferentism, and final apostasy? Whence the virulence, intolerance, the bigotry and savage ferocity so often exhibited in various sections of the Union against Irishmen and Catholics? Whence the many partial verdicts of jurors even under the solemnity of an oath? Whence the iniquitous decrees of judges? Whence the unblushing slanders of legislative orators? Whence the atrocious mendacities of Rev. [?] sermonizers? Whence the tyrannous violation of liberty of conscience in compelling American soldiers and seamen who may be Catholics to attend the service or sermons of sectarian ministers? Whence the evident injustice of giving one clergyman who happens to be of the favored creed, \$1000 a year for attending to the spiritual duties of a moiety of 12 or 1500 persons, while the Catholic clergyman who attends to the spiritual wants of 12 or 1500 Catholics receives—nothing? Whence the Vandalic burning and sack of Convents tenanted by religious communities of unprotected females? Whence the ruthless warfare almost incessantly waged in different guises through various parts of the Union against Irishmen and Catholics by the majority of the American press? All, all those and numberless other evils, injurious alike to social order, sound morality and true religion, can be clearly traced as springing from the erroneous, uncharitable, and anti-Catholic educational systems predominant in city and state.

Have Catholics up to this, been entirely recognizant of, or totally reckless respecting the consequences, whereas for the last ten years, there has not been a single good Catholic School for boys—nor for girls prior to the establishment of "The Sisters?"

* The writer of course cannot mean to insinuate, that this outrageous interference in matters altogether beyond the sphere of any temporal power, had been introduced by the present administration; but he means to assert, that no steps have been taken to abolish it. "Qui facit per alium facit per se," is a maxim as sound in civil as it is in ethical and ecclesiastical jurisprudence.—What can have induced Catholic parents to send their children in so great numbers into the American navy, where they will not only have no opportunity of practising the duties of their religion, but will most assuredly be perverted? How many Catholic boys, at this moment, are on board of the North Carolina at the Navy Yard? Do their parents and friends really believe the Catholic religion the only true one;—for two true religions, each teaching opposite doctrines, involve a manifest absurdity?—or do they regard the loss of it, in comparison to their children becoming American sailors, as no great matter after all?—Such, alas, is the progress of cis-Atlanticized Catholics in the broad highways of Liberalism, Indifferentism, and All-religions-ism. Such are some of the blessings of modern education!

"Plus longe nocet falsus Catholicus, quam si verus appareat hæreticus," says St Bernard.

† Exempli gratia—Bellvue.

—in the city of New York: that is, exclusively Catholic: where Catholic children could be educated not only intellectually but religiously! In no city in the world containing 70 or 80,000 Catholics could so disgraceful an instance be recorded. On a topic so cheerless and disheartening to every sincere Catholic, and lover of literature, I cannot bear to dwell: for like the degenerate Romans in the decline of their glory, too many Catholic parents seem to regard the acquisition of wealth as the one thing needful.

Est animus tibi, aut moras, est lingua fidosque; Sed quadringentis sex septem millia desunt, P'obs oris.

Let not the writer be misunderstood, as if intending to prove, that Catholics should not, in the common and general intercourse of mankind associate with those of other denominations:—This would be at once impossible, absurd, and unchristian.—What he means to assert is this, that Catholic children should be kept aloof from all possibility of contamination either from school-mates, or play-fellows, or others, such as apprentices, until by a regular course of sound education, moral, intellectual and religious, they will, under Heaven, be rendered impervious to any thing harmful of their religion or morals; whether in jest or in earnest, in season or out of season; at school; in company, &c.;—until they will have been rendered capable by an accurate knowledge of their religious principles to be at all times ready to account for their faith; and still more, until they will have been confirmed in these principles, by a practical compliance with all their essential duties by frequently and piously participating of the sacramental graces only to be found in the Catholic Church, then may they be considered as fitted for the warfare: then will they on all occasions, instead of blushing at the scandal of the Cross, glory in the name and profession of Catholic. When their minds are thus formed to virtue, matured in knowledge, and well trained in the principles and practice of our holy religion, then indeed thus strengthened, thus fortified, thus "protected with armor of celestial kind," they can be entrusted to meet and associate with their equals in age, rank, and breeding, without any fear of the result: but under no other circumstances are parents, Catholic parents, warranted in exposing their children unformed, uneducated, and unpracticed in the performance of their religious duties to the pestiferous atmosphere, not only of the Common Schools, but of all those conducted by sectarians.

Ere we propose our remedial plan, let us see what number of Catholic children we have of an age fit to go to school.—According to the most moderate calculation, the Catholics of N. Y. may be fairly estimated at 80,000 souls: some accounts swell the number to 100,000: others again diminish it to 70,000. Indeed *Le Courier des Etats Unis*, a very well informed paper, estimates the French population alone at 20,000. In this case, the entire Catholic population of the city—from all nations—must be fully 120,000. Taking the lowest average, we give 80,000.—Now the celebrated Cousin in his elabo-

rate "Report of Education in Prussia," says that out of a population of 12,726,613 there were 4,767,072 of an age to go to school, and allowing 7 years as the initiative term, about 336 to every 1000 or nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the whole: then again out of every 100 from 1 day to 14 years old, he allows 3-7, i. e. 43 are of age to go to school. Assuming these data with 80,000 as our population, we have 28,225 as the entire juvenile portion; then by taking $\frac{1}{3}$ of the entire, we have nearly 10,000 children which should actually be at school. For the better elucidation of this important subject, we shall for educational purposes class the gross population into six departments; by which means it can at once be seen how many of each department are sent to school, to what schools, and how many are not sent at all. First, those who send their children to the Common or Public schools—average 2000: * Those who send their children to Catholic Free Schools or those in connection therewith—average 2,500 children 3rdly., those who send their children to the cheaper pay schools conducted by Sectarians, may average 1000 pupils; 4thly., those who send their children to pay schools taught by Catholics may possibly average 300!!! 5thly those who send their children to the more respectable Sectarian pay schools, Academies and colleges cannot average fewer than 500:—amounting to about 6,600—while 6thly., those who either do not send their children to any school, or do actually send them to Sectarian schools number from 3 to 4000!!!—or nearly 10,000 in all. It cannot fail to strike the most careless, how few out of the whole are sent to schools exclusively Catholic,—2500; and still more must it have been a cause of astonishment to find how small a fraction of the whole is found at Catholic pay schools [for boys].—the paltry number of 300!!! From this synopsis prepared with no little care, it is evident that the state of learning and I fear of religion among the rising Catholic generation must be truly deplorable. Even if all were frequenting schools conducted by sectarians, the case would not be much, if at all the better; as then their religion, by far the more important part, would be in danger of shipwreck: moreover it has been often shown, that a people may be at once highly educated and intellectual, and sunk in the depths of depravity, wickedness and immorality. In one of the early numbers of *The Dublin Review* [No. 3, vol. 21.] is a most interesting and instructive article on this subject: where it is demonstrated, by the statistical labours of Balbi and Guery, that in the department of Marne, the proportion of scholars to population was 1 to every 10, while that of criminals was 1 to 6296. In the department of Haute Loire, there was but 1 pupil to every 268 while the criminals were only 1 to every 26,000. In the department of Haut Rhin, the number of children at school was 1 out of every 13, and yet with other criminals, there was one assassin for every 94,000. See also *Dublin Review*, No. 1, 3, 11, &c. &c. on this all engrossing topic.

* This is something higher than a former calculation, but nearer the truth.