

"Religious exercises in the public schools shall be conducted according to the regulations of the advisory board. The time for such religious exercises shall be just before the closing hour in the afternoon. In case the parent or guardian of any pupil notifies the teacher that he does not wish such pupil to attend such religious exercises, then such pupil shall be dismissed before such religious exercises take place. Religious exercises shall be held in a public school entirely at the option of the school trustees for the district; and upon receiving written authority from the trustees, it shall be the duty of the teachers to hold such religious exercises. The public schools shall be entirely non-sectarian, and no religious exercises shall be allowed therein except as above provided."

These clauses are due entirely to the power and influence of the Protestant clergy. Mr. Martin's avowed intention had been to make the schools entirely secular. When this was announced the Protestant sects preached, protested, resolved, declaimed and threatened so vigorously, voluminously and vengefully, that the government had to draw back, and was compelled to make the schools to suit the Protestants. The Catholics were numerically too weak to affect the government's course, so the Protestants had their way.

Protestant influence went further, and in the very teeth of the act, which provided that "The public schools shall be entirely non-sectarian," succeeded in having inserted among the regulations the following provision:

"To establish the habit of right doing, instruction in moral principles must be accompanied by training in moral practices. The teacher's influence and example, current incidents, stories, memory gems, sentiments in the school lessons, examination of motives that prompt to action, didactic talks, teaching the Ten Commandments, etc., are means to be employed."

If the teachers were all to be Catholic, this regulation would, of course, be, from our standpoint, unobjectionable. Protestants, however, in that case would, if the provision was acted upon, take to the bayonet. As the teachers in the vast majority of cases are Protestant, it ought not to be (but is) wondered at that Catholics decline to send their children to what would be, in respect to the teaching of religion and morality, mere Protestant Sunday-schools. Among the subjects for study, too, is "History—(a) English—Religious Movements—(Henry VIII. and Mary)"—a subject which, in the hands of Protestant teachers, would inevitably be the basis of some very pretty instruction for Catholic children.

Of the practical working of the act, one wants no stronger or other testimony than that of its author, Mr. Joseph Martin, who, in a letter to the *Press* (26th of June, 1895), said as follows:

"When I introduced the school bill of 1890, I pointed out that, in so far as it provided for religious exercises in the schools, it was in my opinion defective. I am one of those who deny the right of the state to interfere in any respect in matters of religion. I said then, and I still think, that the clause of the 1890 Act, which provides