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Vol. L., No. 88

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1901.

PRICE FIVE CENTS

THE ECCENTRICITIES OF FRENCH-CANADIAN PROTESTANT WRITERS.

In one of his famous letters in reply to "Junius," Sir William Draper characterizes certain utterances of the great political critic as "assertion without proof, declamation without argument, and violent censure without dignity or moderation." This appeared to us a very sweeping condemnation of the writings thus attacked, and we even wondered if it could be considered as exactly true. However, since a copy of a certain French Protestant publication came into our possession, we have no longer any doubts concerning Sir William Draper's words. Decidedly they apply to every article and every contribution in this peculiar specimen of Canadian journalism. If such be the only or the best weapons at the command of the French Protestant element in Canada we need not be surprised that the anti-Catholic crusade makes so little headway amongst our French-Canadian co-religionists. At first we had intended leaving it aside entirely, for, in reality it contains nothing that deserves serious comment. It will be a long time before the towers of Notre Dame are shaken by such efforts as those made by the writers of that publication. Still we felt inclined to select one of the best written, most apparently rational contributions to its columns, and having given our readers a summary of its contents, leave them the easy task of applying the words of Sir William Draper to what they will read.

One correspondent undertakes to deal with the coronation oath. After excusing the portion that is offensive to Catholics, by claiming that, in the beginning, it was a necessity, on account of the aggressiveness of the Papal Court, the writer informs us that to-day there is no need of any such terms in the oath. He says that if the oath were to be drawn up to-day it would not be worded so rudely, nor so insultingly as far as the Roman Catholic subjects of the Empire are concerned. Then, he says: "These latter"—the Catholic subjects, "are raising protests that are very just, and to my mind, very natural." So far one would conclude that this French Protestant editor, or writer, was a very fair-minded and honest-intentioned person. His opening remarks were intended, as they are calculated, to leave an impression of a very favorable nature upon the reader; he evidently wants the public to make his acquaintance in prepossession; he seeks to create a feeling that he and his co-workers are broad-minded, tolerant, generous and even inclined to do justice to Catholics and Catholicity. But, he continues his article, to describe the "Syllabus" as a menace to their liberties, and the laws of Christian marriage as an insult to their various beliefs. Therefore, he concludes, let the gentlemen of Rome speak more politely about Protestantism, and give an example of Christian charity, "and all the difficulties will be settled." Let us stop right here! We need not after this one quote any of the other articles—for this is the most able and most logical in the paper; this is the master-piece of that is-

dolous error of fact, because a command contrary to the law of God is null, and if we suppose it to occur it would instantly cancel the engagements which the religious has taken. But if this accusation implies that a religious obeys with perfect acquiescence and in will in what is right, then we say that it is precisely this which takes from their submission every mark of shameful and passive subjection. We maintain that there does not exist in any society such impassable barriers against the abuse of power, or such splendid guarantees in favor of the man who obeys.

They are not degraded by the very perpetuity of their engagements. Behold, our enemies say you make a vow, you perform an irrevocable act, the act of a moment which weighs on the whole future, even to the hour of death. The same ridiculous objections might be made against the Divine law with regard to the indissolubility of marriage. The vow of a religious binds him indeed forever, but that law is of man's making. It exists only because he has sought it and consented to it with full knowledge and perfect liberty. That law of his own framing he continues to submit to only because he wishes it. Only his will and his adhesion to his promise which he renews as each day dawns, only his persevering love for God keep him under the self-imposed yoke.

They are not men who are weary of life, and who come to heal their wounds in the recesses of the cloister. Unhappily, not only are our detractors making these assertions, but the clumsy apologists of religious life also sometimes represent convents as the asylums of weary souls discontented with their lot here below, angry at their mistakes, or broken down by sorrow and grief. With a mind that is perfectly sound, with the free control of a spirit that is not sick or discontented, he has taken the magnificent resolution to give himself to God as a recognition of the gift which God has made of Himself to the human race. Self-sacrifice and immolation is the response which his human love gives to the love of a celestial God.

The religious life, far from being a shelter for the sluggish, is, on the contrary, the arena of the strong. Its distinctive characteristic is strength, not that brutal strength which man has in common with the brute, not that material strength whose contemptible triumphs demoralize the world, but a strength that consists in exercising control over self in conquering rebellious nature, and that above all, a strength of self and the weakness which nature gave it—that strength which is a cardinal virtue and which dominates the world by its daring and its power of sacrifice.

"Egotists and useless men!" It is a singular egotism, forsooth, which consists in a constant and complete immolation of oneself. We admit that the service of the neighbor is not the first object formulated in the scheme and purpose of certain religious bodies. The underlying and deciding motive of every religious vocation is the love of God. Before everything else, the religious seeks to glorify and serve God, by the offering of himself, and of his self, but by the very fact of doing so, he is making himself most useful to his fellow-men. It is nothing to show to the world how to triumph through the love of God, over the selfishness and passions of the earth? Is it nothing to show how to despise the deceitful things for which men commit such enormities? Nothing to scorn the pleasures of the senses, for which men give over their souls to slavery? Nothing to be above that dreadful spirit of independence, which is the source of so much disaster? If to the fierce greed for gold, which torments humanity and which threatens at every moment to kindle between the rich and the poor the unextinguishable flame of war, we oppose the voluntary detachment of those sublime "paupers," who have nothing which they can call their own; if to that unbridled sensuality which allies every beauty, entitles every strength and makes life a barren waste, we oppose the virginal purity, which is the sister of youth and strength and fecundity; if to that savage impatience of every yoke and of every rule, whose champions write upon their banner the device of Satan, "non serviam," we oppose the motto of the humble, of the peaceful and the obedient, namely, "to serve God is to reign;" if we do that, do we not render to modern society the greatest and most important of services and the one of which it stands in the most in need at the present time?

And, finally, if we recall the more tangible benefits of religious orders, those namely, which are more in keeping with our utilitarian ideas, the refutation of the charge of their being useless comes out, with still greater force. Self-sacrifice is incomprehensible without devotedness to others. By self-renunciation, the religious is only the more ready to help his fellow-man. He is ready for anything, the labors of the apostolate, of the school-room and the hospital. Do you know that from France alone (though it is true that in this our country outranks all others), ten thousand religious women have gone beyond the seas to bring to the children of savage lands, and to the sick, the most comprehensive and most devoted of mothers? Some are clearing the

wilds of ignorance and of childish stupidity, in the schools of barbarous nations; others are bestowing their untiring devotedness upon infirmities, not unfrequently the most disgusting and the most protracted that poor human nature is afflicted with. The victims of the sick and the dying, the orphans and the old find loving hearts, and sisterly souls in these religious; fathers and mothers in this immense legion, which includes the Brothers of St. John of God, the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Little Servants of Working People, the Sisters of Goodness and the Sisters of Bon Secours, the nurses in the hospitals and the sisters of the prisons and the slums. It has been often attempted, in more than one place, to drive them out and bring others in their stead, but it was soon seen that it was easier to counterfeit true charity, than supply its place; that true devotion could not be bought for gold, and that the supposed egotism of the religious was better for the perfect administration of benevolent works than the interested struggles of selfish mercenary could ever hope to be.—Etudes, December 20, 1900. Rev. H. Prelot, S. J.

A PATRIOTIC ADDRESS. County Court Judge Adams recently delivered a lecture before the members of the Limerick Literary Institute of Limerick, in which he gave expression to the following patriotic sentiments. He said: "To foster a spirit of local patriotism is not alone a pleasure, it is a duty of every citizen. The history of Limerick in its surroundings, most interesting in its history. Teach your children to regard that history as Englishmen regard the history of their country. Every lady in Limerick, whatever her faith or politics, should be taught to be equally proud of them who held Limerick's walls, to hear with equal pride, sounding across two centuries of time, the wild hurrahs with which the bold defenders of the breach cheered the women of Limerick as they rushed to aid the men, the crash like thunder that told the wide valley of the Shannon that our great national hero had blown up the guns at Ballyneety."

THE OLD TONGUE.—The enthusiasm manifested in different districts in this country has been touched upon in these columns from time to time. The most recent evidences come from Magherafelt where a meeting was held to establish a branch of the Gaelic League. The Very Rev. Canon McNeene, P. P., who presided, said that the acquisition of any language was a useful exercise and Irish literature offered a particularly interesting and rich reward to the student, but Irishmen had an especial inducement to study it when they recollected that it was the language of their forefathers, of their saints and heroes. Apart from sentiment this question of a people's language was not the trivial matter some people considered it. Let them look at the Austro-Hungarian states who were struggling so keenly each to make its own speech the acknowledged language of the Empire. There it should succeed in imposing its language upon the other would by the mere fact go far towards securing the dominant position in the affairs of the Monarchy. He must not, however, be taken as suggesting the cultivation of the Irish language to the exclusion of the English. That, for commercial and various other reasons, was both impracticable and undesirable. Still, a bilingual system had been pursued with success in other countries, and he saw no reason why it should not succeed equally well in Ireland.

ST. BUNAN'S CATHEDRAL.—From exchanges we learn that the Most Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, Bishop of Raphoe, who is ably assisted by the priests and people of his diocese, is leaving nothing undone to have St. Bunan's Cathedral, Letterkenny, free of debt on the opening day, the 16th of June next. Let there be a drawing of prizes, at which each of the first tickets drawn will entitle the holder to a front seat during the opening ceremonies. The competition for these coveted seats promises to be very great. There are, of course, several other attractive prizes. Dr. O'Donnell has issued an appeal for the necessary assistance both in Irish and English.

MOUNT ST. JOSEPH.—A meeting was held in Hayes' Hotel, Thurles, on Friday, in response to an appeal on behalf of the Cistercian Monks of Mount St. Joseph, Roscrea. The object was to raise funds to indemnify them for the great loss which they sustained by the destruction of the Abbey mills and property. Mr. James J. Fitzgerald, chairman of the committee, presided. A subscription list was opened, and £80 handed in at the meeting.

CRUELTY TO CHILDREN.—In speaking at the local branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in Carrick-on-Suir, recently, the Rev. Dr. Sheehan said there was not in this country those scenes of violence which had gained an unenviable notoriety for English children, but it was scarcely to be expected that children brought up in the midst of drunkenness and of taunts and blows could become anything except a scourge to society. Numbers of cases were given work for inspectors of the society in endeavoring to prevent cruelty to children.

TEMPORAL POWER OF THE POPE.—The Most Rev. Dr. Gaffney, Bishop of Meath, in the course of a pastoral letter which was read at the different churches of the diocese, says an English pilgrim of a few days ago proclaimed, to the everlasting credit of its members, not in the spiritual, but the temporal sovereignty of the pope and its inalienable rights. We saw the reception given the usurper when he

attended the requiem mass for his father, at the Pantheon, on All Souls' Day; we saw the reception given the Pope by the nationalities of the world three days before. In the first of all, were State officers, soldiers and State ceremony, with little devotion, in the second, it was the acclaim of Faith, and the first thought that struck us, as the swell of the world's enthusiasm ascended, was, he was verily the King of the world. There he was, a great power, beloved by millions, feared and hated too. And yet his voice was uplifted, as in the days of yore, to proclaim the law of eternal justice, and condemn the evil-doer. Why did not Italy blot him out of the map? It was not love of him; it was not fear of him as an armed monarch. What then? It was because he has and holds the allegiance of hundreds of millions of Catholics, who uphold his Sovereign rights and demand their restoration as earnestly as the English pilgrims.

ed, such a "convert" is only a kind of a Protestant." This is the total of their work for the last two or three years. What has been done by Catholics for England, and by what means, within the same space of time? Since the publication of the Pope's Encyclical on Anglican Orders two or three years ago, the Catholic Church in England (servo so largely by Irish Priests), is able to count two dozen Protestant clergymen who have come over to the Catholic Church and have done so at a tremendous sacrifice, having been obliged to resign their livings, being thus reduced with their families, to the most needy circumstances in some cases to abject poverty. From the number of clergymen you may imagine what a massive body of life are being converted to the true faith.

A list of converts has been published by the "Whitehall Review" (a Protestant journal) showing that during the latter half of the 19th century several hundreds of eminent and learned men and women in England have gone over to Rome. The names of the persons, the university, members of the legal profession, medical men, etc., and a numerous body of Protestant clergymen besides those of last year I have just mentioned. In fact the publication of the "Whitehall Review" is not properly described when called a "list," it is a pamphlet of good size, filled with the names and addresses or descriptions of the converts, so that there can be no mistake about them. But many doubt they are fools, as they would be convinced if they could only see a few of these tracts that are being distributed in Limerick. What a pity the energies wasted here are not turned towards them. It is said that the Church Missionary Society spends about £20,000 a year in Ireland and about £1,000 a year in Limerick, and most of this money comes from England. Would it not be better spent at home, where there is such a terrible leakage from the Protestant Church even amongst its own ministers? Is it that innocent subscribers can be better hoodwinked in this country on the principle that "five off cows have long horns"? Or are we behind the times in Ireland? Truly, some of the Protestants here are behind the times. They have not yet opened their eyes to the fact that the attempt to spread religion by bribery is as wicked, if not more wicked, than to spread it by fire and sword, by rapine and robbery.

You will observe that I have said "some of the Protestants," because I know that there are Protestants in Limerick who do not support the system I allude to. These Protestants are men of fair play and common sense, who have a right sentiment of honor, and whose desire it is not to widen but to close up as far as possible the breach that divides Catholics and Protestants. But yet, though I know that such Protestants exist in Limerick, I am not satisfied that they are either as numerous or as active or as outspoken as we should wish them to be. I have reason to fear it is not so. The events of the last few years are not quite satisfactory in this respect. A stranger came down here amongst the Protestant body. He soon provoked the indignation of the Catholics. What has been the feeling of the Limerick Protestants towards him? Well, we cannot know the inner workings of their mind; but externally they seem to have received him with open arms. On the occasion of recent promotions amongst Protestant ecclesiastics a step up was given to a certain dignitary whom the Catholics had suspected of proselytizing tendencies. But that is not all. When there was a question of congratulating this dignitary on his promotion, whom did the Protestants here select to read the congratulatory address? No less a personage than the proselytizing stranger. Other proofs are not wanting that the stranger and his methods have sympathizers amongst the Protestants of Limerick. What is being done by those Protestants who do not sympathize with such methods? They have expressed their disapprobation in private. But the time has come when we must tell them plainly that this is not enough. If they are in earnest they must speak out. Otherwise they will force us to conclude that they want to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. If there is any Protestant in Limerick who condemns the system which attempts to purchase creed and conscience by bribery, or any of the good things of this world, whatever they may be or under what shape offered, now is the time to raise his voice. And those that are most directly concerned in this matter are the Protestant doctors. We should like to know what do the Protestant doctors think of this stranger? Do they look on him for us what is their attitude towards him. Because we do not want to have our patients, rich or poor, contaminated by the touch of him, or of his friends, who have endeavored to prostitute the noble medical profession by trying to wed it to the debauched and discredited, worn-out decrepit representative of Protestant missionary failure, commonly called "Souspirant."

CONTINUED ON PAGE EIGHT.

WAR ON THE RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS IN FRANCE

A few extracts from a very important article upon this burning question cannot fail to prove both interesting and instructive. The entire article is a masterly treatise. Amongst other false accusations against the religious bodies, the writer refutes the following:

Religious, say their enemies, are individuals whose natural faculties are deteriorated, who are dishonored by the abdication of their inherent rights, who are degraded by a blind submission of their will to the will of another, and who are enslaved by the perpetuity of their obligations. Let us take these reproaches one by one. They are individuals whose natural faculties have deteriorated. In the same fashion, the reproach is made of Faith, of the reason, and of orthodoxy science. Both charges have the same foundation. But how is it possible, we ask, that a struggle which is renewed with each returning day, against what degrades and enervates, that the constant effort of a will aiming at the attainment of virtue, that a perpetual aspiration towards everything that is above the mean interests of the earth, that a noble flight of the soul into the higher regions of human activity where it finds its true and immortal grandeur, how is it possible, we repeat that all these things (and they are the conditions and duties of a religious life) result only in causing man to deteriorate and in making his best faculties wither and decay? We might enumerate all the literary, scientific and oratorical glories which it has been the source; the statements which it has produced, the

heroes and saints who have been formed by its teachings. The ordinary religious may not be called to ascend to these heights, but the ambitious among them, far from being arrested in his normal development by his religious profession, is on the contrary, constantly urged by it to make the level of his moral worth higher, to force the natural gifts which he received at his birth to fructify. In a word to become more of a man, a Vir in the true sense of the word, a man of heart, a man of soul, a man of reason and of character.

He has not abdicated the rights which are inherent in his human personality. The rights which are inherent in a human personality are manifold, and on account of their variety, they conflict sometimes with each other, both in cases where the renunciations are imposed upon us, and in the renunciations which we impose upon ourselves. Everywhere a man ought to enjoy the freedom to use or not to use a right which he possesses. But, the first and the most fundamental of the rights of man is to choose, and especially to choose what is better, to relinquish what is less honorable for what is more so.

A religious is not a being degraded by a blind obedience to the will of another. When the accusation of blind obedience is hung at religious, it is clear that there is a misunderstanding. If they mean to say that a religious promises to obey everything that comes into the head of his Superior, even what is wrong, it is a most ridiculous error of fact, because a command contrary to the law of God is null, and if we suppose it to occur it would instantly cancel the engagements which the religious has taken. But if this accusation implies that a religious obeys with perfect acquiescence and in will in what is right, then we say that it is precisely this which takes from their submission every mark of shameful and passive subjection. We maintain that there does not exist in any society such impassable barriers against the abuse of power, or such splendid guarantees in favor of the man who obeys.