

OUR CURBSTONE OBSERVER

"PREJUDICES" AND THE "DAILY WITNESS."

I have always observed that, like bad weeds, long standing prejudices are most difficult to eradicate. And of those none are more stupid and at the same time unchangeable than religious prejudices. They usually spring from ignorance—I mean ignorance of the tenets or the persons against whom they are leveled. What is still worse, on account of a general unwillingness, in such cases, to be enlightened, they remain in perpetuity. Most especially is such the case with regard to matters connected with the Catholic Church. I knew one gentleman—a most highly respectable and well-educated clergyman—who seriously informed me that he did not wish to have his prejudices against Rome dispelled. I had asked him if he had ever read the Catholic explanation of Penance, (the subject of our conversation, at that time), and he made reply that he had not, and that moreover he did not want to read it. I asked him why. He said that he had once been foolish enough to study the Catholic explanation of another dogma, and it seemed so reasonable that it nearly shook his faith, and he would never again run the risk of being forced to admit a Catholic teaching. It does not require a philosopher to see the illogical attitude of that clergyman. He might just as well have said, "I would like well to know the truth, provided it did not turn out to be in the Catholic Church."

though he was settled there as a permanent institution, he does not seem to have any definite status." What on earth does "the only religious daily" mean? He (the Apostolic Delegate, I suppose) is not "settled there, or anywhere else, as a permanent" than he as a sinecure, or a temporary office, or a post office, or anything else of the sort; what he really is—if the "Witness" wishes to know—is a Franciscan. "Though apparently a permanent institution," now the Apostolic Delegate is not an institution, nor an establishment, nor a building; he is a man. "He does not seem to have any definite status." Decidedly not—so far as the "Daily Witness" is concerned. No more has the Pope, or the President of the United States, or the Emperor of China, any special status affecting the interests of the Lord Macaulay who penned such a sample of the "Queen's English."

We are then informed that he "has no relations to the Government, to which he is in no way accredited, and which has not, and cannot have, etc." Quite a negative style; "no" and "not" seem to play leapfrog along the uneven surface of the sentence. Whoever pretended that he had any relations with the government? What is so important, as far as the confidence which he does not inspire is concerned, is the fact that he has not even "any relations" in the government, nor employed by the government—which is decidedly more than the "Daily Witness" scribe can brag of as well, go over the other sentences of the delightfully clear and eminently important article.

"If he were at Ottawa in the interests of the Papal Government, that government would surely supply his needs." Would it? And why? The term is very vague. I would like a definition of that institution—I don't mean the "institution" known to the "Daily Witness" as Mgr. Falconio. As I understand it, he is here in the interests of the Catholic Church and the Catholic Church consists of the Pope and the congregations, the hierarchy, the clergy and some two hundred and fifty millions of faithful—of whom the Catholics of Canada form a portion. If so, then any section of the Church, be it the laity in Canada or all over the world, or the entire Church, may assume the duty of providing for the requirements of that Church's humble, yet exalted servant. And again, I repeat, what has the "Daily Witness" to do with the matter?

"He would seem to be in some sense a representative or trustee of the Roman Catholics of Canada, in touch alike with them and with the Papal Court." According to the "Witness" he would "seem" to be a great many things. No longer an "institution" he has become a "tribune." Well, that is, to say the least, a little more likely. Now, he is representative of the Catholics of Canada, if so, he should be over in Rome. As representative of the Pope I can understand his presence here; but if he is a representative of the Catholics of Canada, his office should be in the place where they require a representative. The Governor-General is a representative of the Queen—he resides in Canada; Lord Strachan is a representative of Canada—he resides in London.

I now come to a very characteristic passage, and one, the seriousness of which will immediately impress itself upon every reader of these "observations." The "Witness" says, still speaking of the Apostolic Delegate:—"We do not see, as long as he does not interfere with our government, that Canadians can object to his presence at the Capital." This is very good of Canadians—I mean Canadians of the "Witness" class. Of course, the obvious conclusion is, that the moment the Apostolic Delegate gives an outward sign of his dark intentions regarding our government—he is to bribe, or murder its members, or to blow up the Parliament Buildings—it becomes no longer safe to allow him to reside in Ottawa. Any step, on his part, in that direction, would necessitate his removal to Montreal, possibly to a room on the corner of Craig and St. Peter streets, where he could be carefully watched and his nefarious plots could be prostrated. Just imagine the "scritches" that his able critic must have constructed in his imagination! Leibnitz could never have dreamed of anything so wonderful.

cles, would be called a "corker." not that it stops up the outpourings of the "Witness," but because it is astounding in its wisdom and grammar. If reads:—"The presence of Papal delegates has usually hitherto proved beneficial to Canada (why object then to Mgr. Falconio becoming a permanent institution?) they having generally had as their mission to moderate (he means the result of their mission) the impracticable demands of ecclesiastics who carried the cause of the Church to lengths dangerous to it"—(to what? Canada, or the Church?) I can now see through the whole affair; this last sentence casts a flood of light upon the situation. The meaning of it all is, that the "Daily Witness" believes that the demands of ecclesiastics, as has hitherto a menace, a danger to the Catholic Church in Canada, consequently the Apostolic Delegate has no business to set up his abode at the Capital and to moderate, at close range, anything that might be injurious to the Church. Apart from the immediate danger to the Government and the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa, there is the greater danger of his presence tending to fortify the Catholic Church in this Dominion, where no true lover of Canada should countenance the aforementioned subscription list. If I have failed to seize the exact meaning of the "Daily Witness" I would be pleased to receive any correction deemed necessary to enlighten me upon the subject.

CATHOLIC EDITORS ON MANY THEMES.

KEYHOLE CATHOLICS.—"The same Catholics," says the "S. H. Review," "who fight for front seats at some theatrical show are quite content to just barely enter within the doors of the church to hear Mass. Nay, they are sometimes content with remaining outside. The 'Catholic Universe' calls them 'Keyhole Catholics,' a name for which they have to thank the editor, who says they rarely amount to much. 'Always the last in and the first out,' says he, 'they often regard the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as an ordeal to be avoided. If they would get up nearer to the altar and the priest, the experiment might reveal beauties in our divine faith that they have little dreamed of. Move up, gentlemen, and take your religion at short range.'—New Zealand Tablet.

ABOUT TENORS.—One of the strangest things about our English musical circles is the marked scarcity of real tenor voices. Men there are in abundance who call themselves tenors, but really at best they are nothing else than high baritones. The real tenor quality is utterly wanting to them. Now that Mr. Edgewood Lloyd, after amassing a huge fortune, has retired from the ballad concert platform to the charms of rural life and farming, we seem to possess no English tenor of the first rank.—London Universe.

STRONG CATHOLIC PAPER.—"The way to have a strong Catholic paper," declares the Pittsburg "Observer," in its New Year's greeting to its readers, "is for every family to take a copy of it and to pay for it, and for every parish, society and merchant to advertise in it. There is no danger that it will cost money to receive support. The more it can spend by articles which get news. The way to have a weak Catholic press is for the people not to subscribe for it, or, after taking it, not to pay what they owe for it, and for every one who organizes a union to maintain or an organization, or any project to boom, to ask for free advertising in it and to get mad if this is not granted. The Catholic papers are not endowed or subsidized by the Church. They must get along or sink into failure on the support that is accorded them. The more support they obtain, the better they will be. The less their support, the weaker their force and the sooner their end."

PRIESTLY VOCATIONS.—"The matter of the priestly vocation is always an important one," says the Pittsburg "Catholic." "It is one of thought to those appointed to rule over us. There is always a great anxiety when vocations are rare. The living Church always requires that the supply may yet be more adequate and assured. When there is a lack of vocations there is a cause. Parents have a duty in this regard. If generation after generation in families passes away, and none is marked to bear their name with the sacred character of the priesthood, which is above all names, may we not seek the reason, not at the children's hands, but at the hands of those who bore them? If the grace of the call to the sanctuary be a crown of joy to the son, it is surely a mark of God's blessing on his home and his parents. There could be got greater honor for both."

THE STAGE BLACKGUARD.—Under this very appropriate title "The Catholic Universe," of Cleveland, makes the following timely observations:—The blackguard actor is not so common as he was some years ago, but he has not entirely passed away. The Irish people are, as a rule, the least of his buffoonery and insults. Sometimes the thoughtful and prudent of the race have laughed and chided at those self-same actors who were insulting and seeking to debase the

national character. We may all remember the disgusting wake-scene in the play of the Shaughraun. Boucicault was rotten-egged and hissed until he modified that scene. Lately one of these buffoons exhibited in Cleveland. We do not charge Johnny Ray anything for the advertisement. He did not dodge all the rotten eggs thrown at him. While we do not wish to encourage any lawless proceedings, we know that there are a good many people who have no regrets for the fact that the ancient eggs hit the proposer of the insulting comedians. The best way to resent the insults of such blackguards is to leave the house and let the management understand that it will not pay to present such plays. Just here we may remark that there is too much encouragement given to such presentations in our own halls, for instance on St. Patrick's night. Play makers cater to a demand. They are too well stocked with that character of plays. Do not call for them; do not use them, and do not applaud on the stage that which you would condemn off the stage. Some thoughtless young men of a club are entrusted with the preparation of a programme. The whole object appears to be to make people laugh, and with the committee end justifies the insulting and degrading means. Cry a halt on these caricatures.

AGAIN ORANGEMEN.—The gentle Orangemen of Belfast, Ire., says the "Boston Pilot," objected to the Midnight Mass with which the Catholics opened the new century. They paraded, therefore, passing St. Patrick's Cathedral, with a band which played "The Boye Water," the paraders hooting and using vile language. But the Mass was offered, just as it was before Orangemen were thought of; just as it will be when they and a few other survivals of the seventeenth century are forgotten.

CATHOLIC FEDERATION.—The misinformation afloat concerning the proposed Catholic federation is most remarkable, says the "Sacred Heart Review." The Protestant papers, with a few honorable exceptions, have already sounded a note of alarm, and raised the cry that Catholics are getting together for a political purpose. Even among Catholics of a certain type there exists an idea on the matter that is grotesquely erroneous.

The other day in a street car we overheard a few sentences of a discussion on this matter between two men, manifestly Catholic, which showed us how mistaken the notions of some of our co-religionists may be. One sentence, and that which first attracted our attention, was uttered by a man quite youthful in appearance, and ran thus:—"Now the Catholics are trying to get together the Catholic societies together, to form a Catholic political party, and after a while they'll boss the country, and a man can't have a decent coat on his back without asking their leave." This was spoken in an indignant tone quite loud enough for everybody in the car to hear. At first we thought the young man must be one of those "intelligent Catholics" to whom the Boston "Herald" refers occasionally; but looking him all over we saw nothing, in his outward appearance at least, indicating a marked intellectual superiority. We concluded that he was just an ordinary young man—a Catholic—whose reasoning powers had been warped by reading stupid editorials on Catholic affairs, penned by men whose lack of information on any given subject is no bar to their writing about it. Of course, the young man's statement showed that his ignorance was extensive. It proved that he had read very little about the subject, and that what he did read was written either through their own carelessness or their own obtuseness, the first principles of the federation movement.

SYSTEMS OF NURSING.—There is a suspicion that the training and the inspection are the drink, of etc., of the nurses in hospitals, says the "Sacred Heart Review," do not always instill into their hearts that spirit of kindness, and that sense of the gravity of human life, without which the best care for the sick and the unfortunate is unprofitable and their positions. We have heard of complaints more than once about the utter callousness of nurses—women as well as men—in some institutions that lay claim to be the very foremost of their kind, and whose graduates look down with a loftiness of self-conceit upon what they are pleased to call the "unscientific methods" of the Sisters in Catholic hospitals. There is too much frivolousness among the flirtatious young women who are nurses in some of our state and city institutions. While the doctors they are liable to let the unfortunate patient slip through their fingers. There are honorable exceptions to this class in all institutions, of course. But anybody who has at all had occasion to visit hospitals more or less frequently must admit the truth of our words.

THE MISSIONARY AND HIS WORK.—Under the caption "The Cleveland Apostolate," the January number of "The Missionary," gives the following account of the experiences of a missionary priest. It may serve to make some of our co-religionists appreciate the advantages and blessings they enjoy as members of parishes in our cities and towns in which their spiritual needs are carefully and zealously attended to by devoted priests. The next mission, says the report, was at new Washington, a Lutheran stronghold, where listeners were plentiful and questions still more so. This was the second mission of the kind given here, but there is still a big lot of prejudice to be overcome before the Church can expect to make converts. A Protestant minister thought the question box a good contrivance for enlivening his own meetings; but he got tangled up in his answers; and, in a moment of disgust, threw the box out of the window. The last mission before Christmas was given in a locality bordering on Lake Erie, known as the wilderness, and here the missionary discovered a sad state of affairs. The surrounding country, which is low and flat, has been acquired by a Toledo syndicate for the cultivation of onions, etc. There are about fifty families in the settlement, mostly French-Indian. The wives and children are employed in the company's fields, while the men hunt, fish, and "drink." They are all poor, owing chiefly to the thriftlessness of the men; though they ought to be well-to-do farmers by this time, since they have been dwelling here for three generations. They are nearly all Catholics, or as near to being Catholics as they know how. The nearest church is ten miles away; they have no conveyances, and are out of the line of steam or electric communications. To enjoy the ministrations of the Church they were told, in years past, it would be necessary for them to contribute to the support of their parish church, and, if one may believe their story, more was asked of them than they could give. The men, perhaps, would not give and the women and children could not afford to contribute. Deploable, they feared to call the priest even when persons were dying, and the children have grown up unbaptized, uneducated, uncared for. The missionary was cordially welcomed. After the lecture on confession old and young crowded around him, begging him to give them an opportunity of making their peace with God. Out of thirty only, two had made their Easter duty; the others had been away, as they sadly admitted, from three to forty years. Arrangements were made for a morning Mass and for the hearing of confessions. About twenty-five grown-up children and adults were placed under instruction, to be baptized later. A regular catechism class was also formed, and the present pastor is making arrangements to give the Wilderness people a regular Mass service hereafter. A Baptist minister lives in this Catholic community. He conducts religious exercises in the district school, and many Catholics have been attending them. Some fifty of them allowed themselves to be immersed during the past year. Ten of these have returned to their first allegiance and others are to follow.

At the present writing it looks as if the minister's occupation were gone. His deacon is a renegade Irishman, named Murphy. This worthy forbade his wife to attend the mission; but she had spirit enough to tell him she would do as she pleased. She went to the sacraments and has promised to have her children baptized and reared in the old faith. The leave-taking between the missionary and people was pathetic in the extreme. They begged him not to leave them, but to remain with them for good. The country districts of the diocese of Cleveland are well supplied with priests, and the discovery of so large a number of families un-cared for came as a surprise. There seems to be another community in similar straits some miles farther east, where a mission is promised for January. The two convents at the Apostolate in Cleveland for the year 1900 is forty-five. The convent class still continues, and is in charge of Father Brennan.

INTERESTING PARAGRAPHS.—According to Bartholomew, the population of the world at present is about 1,440,650,000. Of this population 281,000,000 are Catholics, 98,000,000 belong to the Greek Church, 3,000,000 to the Church of Abyssinia, 2,000,000 to the Armenian Church, 148,000,000 to the various Protestant sects, and 270,000 to the Nestorian, Coptic, and Jacobite sects of the East. In Europe, whose population is 357,379,000, there are, according to M. Fournier de Flax, the latest competent authority, 160,165,000 Catholics, 89,196,000 Greeks, and 80,812,000 Protestants.

The number of archbishops and bishops now holding office in the British Empire is 168. There are also a few retired, or without episcopal office, of whom three are in England.

The same authority estimates the Catholic population of the United Kingdom at nearly five millions and a half—namely, England, 1,600,000; Scotland, 365,000; Ireland (according to the census of 1891), 3,649,956. Including British America (with a Catholic population of about 2,600,000), Australia, India, and all other possessions, the total Catholic population of the British Empire is probably about ten millions and a half.

During the 19th century there have been six Popes. Pius VII. was Pope from 1800 to 1823; Leo XII. from 1823 to 1829; Pius VIII. from 1829 to 1830; Gregory XVI. from 1831 to 1846; Pius IX. from 1846 to 1878 (the longest Papal reign on record); Leo XIII., still gloriously reigning in the 90th year of his age, was elected Pope—the 257th in succession from St. Peter—on February 20th, 1878.

It costs, says the New York "Herald," \$618,000 a year to maintain the parochial schools of Manhattan, and the hospital and orphanage work, absorb the gifts of Catholic communicants. During the ten years from 1890 to 1900 there were completed 264 edifices devoted to religious uses in the archdiocese of New York, or more than two a month. Parish expenses of Roman Catholic churches are low, apart from construction. The priest salary list of St. Patrick's Cathedral does not reach \$10,000 a year, and other expenses of maintenance are correspondingly small.

Mrs. John W. Mackay has contributed about \$4,000 to prevent the sale of St. Joseph's Church for English and American Catholics in the Avenue Hoche, Paris, which had been seized by the French Government for unpaid taxes. The mechanical device by which the eighteen bells composing the chimes of St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, are rung has been perfected after nearly three years of experimenting, and now an additional device is being put in by which the bells can be made to play certain airs automatically. The new device resembles the perforated disk used in some kinds of music boxes. Each air requires a separate disk. By means of these disks the chimes are to play the "Angelus" and "De Profundis" four times daily.

Rev. James H. O'Donnell, of Watertown, Ct., makes a convincing plea for Catholic journalism in the Catholic "Transcript," of Hartford. He writes: "The necessity of extending generous support to the Catholic press ought to be manifest to every parent who has the spiritual welfare of his children and the good of the community at heart. The immense number of infidel journals and other publications professedly hostile to the Catholic Church that flood this land, the alarming looseness of morals everywhere prevalent, the constant and rapid strides of atheism and the very indifference of Catholics themselves are so many cogent reasons why our people should be united in the support of their journals. In the Catholic paper, well conducted, are always found the efficient means of stemming the tide of immorality, the arguments by which the fabric of infidelity is overthrown and the high and noble duty of impel a man to a strict conformity to his civic and religious obligations. Hence, it cannot fail to be a powerful vehicle of good."

THE BARBER'S REVENGE.—An Irishman arrived one evening in Glasgow and was obliged to put up there for the night. When going to bed he left orders to be called early next morning. He, however, was admitted into a room with a barber who was bald and fat. Noticing it began to chafe him as to the absence of his hair. This the barber endured all the time in silence, and as soon as the Irishman fell asleep the barber arose and shaved him completely. Pat was called at the appointed hour, and without the least suspicion pursued his journey. After advancing a little way he got thirsty, and meeting a spring well on the roadside knelt down and took off his hat, when to his surprise he saw his condition and exclaimed:—"I'm blowed if they didn't call the wrong man!"

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