

The Catholic Record

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THE WINNIPEG EDUCATIONAL CONGRESS

Though the newspapers have given more or less space to the Educational Congress now in session in Winnipeg it has strangely enough received nothing like the attention the importance and scope of its far-reaching object deserve.

Long before the date of the meeting a large sum of money was collected to enable committees of experts to compile a series of graduated textbooks of morality; and a National Council of Education working at first outside of the Government was decided upon.

Those who might have been disposed to think that futile discussion and empty resolutions would be the outcome of the Congress have failed to grasp its importance and significance.

It is impossible not to sympathize with the object and effort of the earnest men who are behind the movement. It is a distinct and definite approval of the position the Catholic Church has consistently maintained in the matter of education;

though many advocates of "independent morality" may repudiate "theology" in any form. As there is no possibility of frankly denominational schools for all the Protestant sects they are driven into devising some scheme of "Christian Ethics" where they may hope to have common standing ground.

The transcendent importance of the movement is at once evident; its dangers are not lessened by the fact that its moving spirits are sincere Christians and patriotic Canadians impressed with the vital importance of the moral side of education.

We defer the discussion of the subject to make room for a paper read at the Congress by Mr. Michael O'Brien, Secretary of the Catholic Educational Council of Ontario. In this paper Mr. O'Brien, in courteous, expository terms gives the Catholic position; showing clearly why we regard as worthless any system of morality or ethics which is not rooted in religion.

Mr. O'Brien's paper follows:

THE BASIS OF MORAL TRAINING

This paper is an attempt to state briefly the attitude of a Catholic in the matter of moral teaching.

the fact that social institutions may have a moralizing influence, apart from formal teaching. Shakespeare uses a true scale of moral values when he says:

"Who steals my purse steals trash. . . . But he that filches from me my good name . . . Robs me of that which not enriches him, And makes me poor indeed."

But this is not the popular idea of relative guilt. The inducements to theft of money are usually greater than the inducements to scandalous talk about others; but men generally find it easier to avoid the former than to avoid the latter. They feel disgraced forever when detected in theft, but only that they have done wrong when they injure the reputation of a neighbor.

The civil union, then, and positive laws, create a certain amount of practical morality. Certain principles of moral philosophy, through this organization, cease to be speculative and become powerfully operative. But it is not this organization only which has such an effect.

Almost every organization which has an object calling for the exercise of any moral virtue creates in some degree the virtue it wants. The effect of an army in creating moral virtue is most striking and manifest.

It develops the virtues of many courage and subordination, not in a few favorable cases merely, but with an almost irresistible power through its whole body. To face death, to obey one who has a right to command, two of the most difficult lessons, lessons which assuredly philosophers have seldom been found able effectually to inculcate, are taught by this organization with success almost uniform and absolute.

It is not by exhortation or any other kind of formal teaching that an army inculcates courage and discipline. It is the environment, the atmosphere, the ever present purpose of military exercises, and the use and practice of authority—these are the things that influence men in an army.

A corresponding influence of the Church, as an organized body, is to a Catholic an essential part of moral formation. Hence he strives to bring that influence into the home and school. The separation of morality from religion is to him practically unthinkable, and the separation of either from the Church is to him un-Christian, not merely because he regards these three as mutually helpful, but because he thinks of them as a trinity forever united by Christ.

The sense of right and wrong is so delicate, so fitful, so easily puzzled, obscured, perverted, so subtle in its argumentative methods, so impressionable by education, so biased by pride and passion, so unsteady in its course, that in the struggle for existence, amid the various exercises and temptations of the human intellect, it is at once the highest of all teachers and the least luminous.

The redemption of conscience from this state of feebleness is a very long process for masses of men, extending through many generations. Two thousand years of Christian influence may be regarded as a beginning. A mistake of many moral reformers is to expect quick and permanent results. The great War revealed us to ourselves as morally in a primitive stage of progress. The fitful light of conscience needs illumination from above, the light of revelations, and this light can be brought to bear practically upon the sense of right and wrong by an educative process strong enough to withstand the powerful forces of passion, self-interest, unregulated self-esteem, the one-sided or false views of duty elaborated into systems, the undue importance attached to wide interests of temporary character, and the many organizations which obscure or disturb the true scale of moral values.

Moral progress on a wide scale is like that of a sail-boat beating against wind and tide. The teaching of moral duty as a class

subject in school has little effect without an environment and atmosphere of religion, and without a background of authority which the pupil has learned to respect and reverence. The teacher as an individual has not the required authority. The child readily accepts the judgment of the teacher in grammar or arithmetic, in which he is a recognized expert; but not in the matter of moral duty.

In a recent essay on moral progress the Principal of Manchester New College, Oxford, remarks that civil government is not an end in itself; that it is a device which man has set up to help him in attaining the true end of his life; and that, therefore, it is impossible to say how we ought to be governed unless we have previously made up our minds how we ought to live.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong in the restless, clamorous life there depicted. It is the absorbing tendency to materialistic views of life in all that concerns the moral teacher, and the teacher of morals is alone well-nigh powerless in presence of it. To remedy it, God entered into the world visibly in Jesus Christ and placed Himself among human things and interests, so that, as they attract and tend to absorb our attention, He might at least enter into competition with them on their own ground.

Such is the plan, as a Catholic conceives it, of moralizing mankind.

TWO FORMS OF IMPERIALISM

The following Associated Press Despatch was published in Canadian newspapers on October 25:

Will be repatriated. Associated Press Despatch. Dublin, Oct. 22.—Father O'Donnell, the chaplain of the Australian forces, who was arrested Oct. 18, will, it is reported, be repatriated to Australia.

To the initiated it tells a tale. The Irish censor may not have wished the tale to be told; or the Associated Press agent may not have found the "story." To the kindness of a former Canadian army chaplain we are able to give to our readers the story of an Imperialist's experience of Empire-wrecking Imperialism.

The difference between stating principles of morality and putting men in condition to practice them—between introducing new truths to the lecture room of the philosopher and introducing them to the markets, the councils, and the homes of men—this difference seems to the writer vast and all-important. He knew something of what is in Seneca and Epictetus, and he duly respects the moralities taught there; but he yields all blessing to the name of Him that made them current coin.

The teaching of the moral principles taught by Christ is but the beginning of what the Catholic Church seeks to do in education. She seeks to enlighten and train the conscience, to make God's will in our regard the basis of all conduct, and to surround the pupil with an atmosphere and an authority which are capable of influencing the heart and the will. She does not always succeed in this work, even when conditions are favorable. Of course not. The task is so difficult, the obstacles to be overcome are so many and so persistent, that the

result is often disappointing. The most difficult part of it is, perhaps, the keeping of the thought of God steadily before the minds of the people. Multitudes of men live without any aim beyond this visible scene. They may go to church on Sunday as a matter of expedience or of duty, but if there was any depth of sincerity in their profession of faith, the course of the world's history would not run as it does.

The death of Dr. Daniel, Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, severs a link with the great Victorian and Catholic poet, Coventry Patmore. Dr. Daniel was the founder of the Oxford press which bore his name, and which produced many books which, from the beauty of their typography, are cherished by the collector.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE BAPTIST CONVENTION has given its cordial approval to Sir William Hearst. That ought to settle the matter to the late Premier's satisfaction. But, some may ask, was not Sir William's load heavy enough already?

WHILE, in the judgment of Lord Fisher, Britain's famous sea-king, Mr. Schwab should be made a Duke in recognition of his services to the Allied cause in the War, his name is now being put forward prominently as a Presidential possibility in his own country. The Steel King is before all things an apostle of work.

OUR NOTES of last week on early editions of our Catholic Bible, naturally suggest a few further thoughts on the subject. That so early as 1790, when the Catholics of the United States were a mere handful in themselves or as compared with the total population, they should have projected and carried through successfully so great an undertaking as the printing of the Bible certainly furnishes food for thought.

IN REGARD to this first Catholic Bible in the United States, the late Dr. John Gilmary Shea in his "Bibliographical account of Catholic Bibles, Testaments, etc., published in the United States," (a very rare pamphlet) says: "The first Catholic Bible printed in the United States is due to the zeal and energy of one whose name will ever be remembered among American publishers; that is Matthew Carey, of Philadelphia."

that, as Dr. Shea remarks, "the house which he founded and which for a time furnished Catholics with many useful works is no longer even neutral."

CAREY'S BIBLE of 1790 was a quarto of 494 pages. It is, so far as regards the text, a reprint of Bishop Challoner's revision of the Rheims and Douay version issued in 1763. That Carey's enterprise was rewarded by a considerable sale of his book is evident from the fact that he issued a second edition in 1805, and that thereafter at intervals, other editions by other publishers appeared.

AT BALTIMORE also, Fielding Lucas issued a quarto Bible in 1832, and an octavo in 1837, while in 1833, at New York, John Doyle also published an octavo edition. Of New Testaments and other portions of Scripture published in the United States before 1850 there is quite an array. So that it is evident on the face of things that so far from the Church discouraging the circulation of the Sacred Books, as her enemies never tire of asserting, she has ever fostered them and blessed their devout reading and study.

THE DEATH of Dr. Daniel, Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, severs a link with the great Victorian and Catholic poet, Coventry Patmore. Dr. Daniel was the founder of the Oxford press which bore his name, and which produced many books which, from the beauty of their typography, are cherished by the collector.

W. H. K. in the London Tablet recalls the fact that Dr. Daniel was one of the rediscoverers of the Fall type brought from Holland in 1669 by Bishop Fell, and which has a rather romantic history. Dr. Fell was sent abroad to buy type for Oxford, but was persuaded by the Dutch to take a font which he thought to be of the latest mode, but which was in reality of some twenty or thirty years standing.

POPE EXPRESSSES LOVE FOR LOUVAIN. A Papal letter has been addressed to the rector magnificus and the professors of the University of Louvain, in which the Pope expresses his warmest sympathy, and his hopes that the university will arise once more in its former glory and with all its rights restored.

ULSTER DIFFICULTY. THE CROWN, THE COMMONS, AND THE CATHOLICS. II. BY PROFESSOR EDDIE MACNEILL, National University of Ireland.

The political condition of Ireland in the latter part of the eighteenth century is not generally well understood. We need three outstanding factors: (i) an independent parliament, linked apparently to Great Britain by the acknowledgment of the same Crown and by that alone, supported by the Established Church interest, and led by Protestant patriots; (ii) a revolutionary and republican party, containing numerous Catholics and Established Church Protestants, but drawing its main strength from the North-eastern Nonconformists; and (iii) a violently oppressive, reactionary and pro-English government and official party; the bulk of the Catholic population being politically non-existent.

When Brougham wrote in 1860, the powers of the Crown—i.e., of the Prime Minister and Cabinet—were much greater than they are now. Sixty or eighty years earlier, they were much greater still. In 1788 the year in which the Renunciation Act, the British Parliament recognized and guaranteed for ever the independence of the Irish Parliament, Pitt, at the age of twenty-five, was selected by George III. to be Prime Minister of England. At this time, Pitt presented only a small group of the Whigs, and he was selected by the King in opposition to a Whig and Tory Coalition. When Pitt took up office, he was defeated again and again by large majorities in the Commons.

much less to defend the nation, and decided to adopt the cause of an independent Irish republic. But why, it may be asked, did they seek separation from England, if the Crown was the sole link that bound the two countries together? The answer is, of course, that the Crown was not merely a link, but a power. The army, the militia, the yeomanry, and the navy; it meant also the whole executive civil power, including the power of state rewards and appointments. The parliament could do much for the material welfare of the country, and no country in history, not even modern Japan, ever made so rapid progress in material prosperity as Ireland made in the fifteen years between the establishment of her parliamentary independence and the forced insurrection which was to provide the pretext for the parliament's destruction. But the whole power of executive government, down to the smallest detail, belonged as completely to the Crown in Ireland before the Union as it belonged in Russia to the Czarism. And this power was all the greater, because the Protestant Ascendancy had reduced the mass of the population to the condition of defenceless helots, and continued to oppress them in a manner that can be partly understood from such writings as the "Tear in Ireland" by the English agriculturist, Arthur Young.