

## RELIGION OF THE SCHOOL BOY.

A REVIEW BY "CRUX."

There is an article in a recent issue of the "Contemporary Review," signed "H. V. Weiss," on the very important subject of "The Religion of the School Boy." It is not my intention to analyze, nor to seek to place before the readers the entire article. I have good reason for not doing so, because it does not affect Catholic readers and boys in a direct manner. Take the introductory paragraph:

"A short time ago I remarked to a colleague that I was in great trouble over the manner in which the religion of the schoolboy could be discussed with profit, and without insincerity, and found myself confronted with the unexpected interrogative response, 'Has he any?' I say 'unaffected,' for my colleague is in Holy Orders. This will, I think, suffice me as a justification for not seriously offend, if I try to show that the religion taught to the average boy at the average school is practically a negligible factor in his ordinary life. In so doing, however, I do not for one moment, even with a view to fostering discussion, accept the view that schoolboys are without religion; on the contrary, I hold that every boy, even unconsciously, has one or another binding code, which controls his actions and generally colors his life."

There is a doubt at once cast upon the existence of any real religion in the schoolboy, no matter what his teaching may be. Here is a further explanation:

"All moral teaching, Christian under any Protestant denomination, Jewish or other form of Unitarianism, is excellent. The beauty of holiness, of obedience to Divine rule, of self-abnegation, of moral rectitude and corporal purity, is emphasized. The attainment to a high standard in the practice of these virtues is made an aim of surpassing importance, and the rejection of the opposing vices a duty, the failure to fulfill which is punishable here and now, as well as in the eternal hereafter."

I quote this, because it sets forth the subject and in doing so it includes everything except Catholic religious and moral instruction. We are, therefore, placed face to face, by the author, with Protestantism and Judaism, but there is no mention of or reference to Catholicity. Hence I say that all the strictures upon the religion of the present day schoolboy do not affect us—but they affect those who ignore Catholic teaching and Catholic systems.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES. — The writer lays down a series of general principles, that of themselves are very good. Of course they do not embrace all, nor nearly all that must be taught, if it is desired that the school-boy should be imbued with religion. But they contain all, or the best of all, that can be had in the public or non-Catholic school. These are the principles mentioned:

"There is a God, Who holds us in His hand. Who gave us life and will also take it when and how it pleases Him. He has made all things subject to certain laws, but has given man a certain limit of free will by which to regulate his own conduct. The will of God is that all men should live at peace with each other, and this can only be achieved by each member of the human family observing certain restrictions on his free-will, shall we say a certain religion, to curb his selfish and animal instincts. Man must learn to become unselfish, pure, truthful and forgiving, for truth, purity and self-effacement are in themselves beautiful things, and their observance gives man the power over evil in himself and others. God is the only source of strength, directly or by the intermediation of the Redeemer, which ever be the creed under examination: and to teach the young all we know of God, His mercies and His stern law, is the best gift for life with which we can send them forth to meet even that somewhat discredited trinity of evil, the world, the flesh and the devil. Honor, purity and self-denial: does it not all come to that; whether we take the Mosaic tablet of stone, or the agony of Jesus Christ? If we have those, we have all, and we give all."

A MASS OF DETAIL. — The writer, on this, enters into a vast amount of detail, especially regarding the smaller sins of boys, the temptation to lie in order to escape punishment, and so forth. But we

need not bother with these. I am simply seeking to glean general principles and large results from the writer's exposition of the subject. He has told us that he is dealing with the non-Catholic schools and religion therein. We cannot better form an opinion of the merit of that religious teaching than by taking his own experience. And when we shall have seen that experience it will be painfully evident that something is lacking, in the teacher, in the school, or in the religion—the conception of religion as taught in the school.

## THE WRITER'S EXPERIENCE.

"I recall my religious training at my public school. I was an emotional, luxurious-minded, unprincipled boy. I revelled in a psalm to the quadruple chant, I hugged my emotions in chapel service at the end of the winter term, when the lights in the East-end were on; but I never had one word said to me individually, except that at the time of my confirmation I was told that, 'as I took everything seriously, no doubt I took my religion seriously too'; a statement which filled me with the sense of being as completely misunderstood and overrated as a boy well could be. It was a revelation to me, gradually borne in on me as I lived with some who sat in my pew, that a boy might make an appointment in chapel by a note, which became the subject of twenty filthy jests before the Sunday sun had set. It came to me gradually, too, that the large majority of boys who in obedience to house form knelt down night and morning to say their prayers, were defiant or oblivious of God's presence the instant they were off their knees. But I soon found out that, if one could once bring a boy to realize that that tone was bad, that he was in constant danger, it was also easy to get him into the habit of stepping consciously into the Presence, be the surroundings what they would. If a boy could get so far as to speak, without a sound, by his deliberate wish, the first two words of the Lord's Prayer, he could turn off the sharpest weapon of offensive evil: whereas he might voice the whole prayer eight times a Sunday and never get for his 'common round' one sparl of light to walk by. Until boys are able to pray when they need it, by mental attitude more than words, and are made to utter prayers less often when they cannot avoid doing so, they are 'like the heathen,' only not even 'thinking to be heard for their much speaking.' If, on the other hand, boys are taken at critical moments of their lives, and shown the vast superiority of unspoken efforts to recall themselves into God's presence over the beautiful and most desirable collective acts of worship, I have good reason to know that the religion which involves Divine love, strength and wisdom is very able to hold a soul against all assaults of idolatrous tradition and popular concessions to expediency and dishonor."

## AN UTTER FAILURE.

Why have I quoted all this? Simply to lead up to the following plain confession of the inadequacy of what this very sincere and honest man calls "religious teaching in schools." Mark this:

"I am also so firmly convinced of the power of true religion to create strength against temptation, that I cannot remain silent when I see how little strength is, as a matter of fact, given. The practical failure of religious teaching to produce moral strength in boys seems to me chiefly to result from the fact, that in school services there is so woefully little beyond the sermon,—and that is only too often utterly inadequate,—that it is directly calculated to touch the needs of a boy, totally different as these needs are from those of an adult."

## TRUE RELIGIOUS TEACHING.

We have now seen this writer lay down broad and generally accepted articles of faith; then giving us a programme to be followed in the teaching of religion to the schoolboy; then pointing out the inadequacy of all he has given us, as experienced by himself; and finally admitting the failure of all attempts to teach religion on such a basis and to inculcate it into the boy. What are we to conclude from all this? Simply that outside the Catholic system there is no such a thing as religion, no such a thing as practical morality taught to the rising generation.

ration. There are good men, like Mr. Weiss, who feel that deplorable inadequacy, who seek by all means in their power to find some method whereby they may remedy the situation, and they seek on all sides, and they seek in vain. They see the lack of real religious and moral spirit in the rising generation; they see the Bible ridiculed, criticized and rejected; they see the churches abandoned and every evidence of Christianity going out of the social atmosphere. They seek the cause and they find it in the want of religious and moral training in the school. Then they turn, as does Mr. Weiss, to find some remedy; and all they can do is acknowledge the evil, but cannot find the cure. Yet, at their very doors, is the Catholic Church, with her God-filled schools, her moral code, her religious principles, her immortal system of inculcation, and they are forced to admire it all, but they will not bow down and accept it. Yet the day will come when they will have to accept it, or perish.

## The Late Vicar-General McAuley

(Translated by an Occasional Contributor.)

In a recent issue of the Catholic official organ, the "Nouvelles Sherbrooke," there is a touching tribute to the memory of the late Vicar-General McAuley. After describing his long and painful illness, his saintly death, and the imposing obsequies, the diocesan organ presents some beautiful traits of the good priest's character and life. He was born at Donaghmoyne, in Ulster, Ireland, in September, 1833. At the age of eleven he was cast an orphan and an exile upon our Canadian shore. The Seminary of St. Hyacinthe took him in charge. Rev. Mr. Dufresne, who went to select an orphan, often said that he did not select a pearl, from the physical point of view, but the most bright-looking of the children. He made a course of studies at the Seminary, and between the hours of class he always made himself useful to the house, in one way or another. On the school benches he formed a number of friendships that lasted all the years of his eventful and brilliant career. Among those of his companions who have gone before him were Messrs. St. Georges, Brown and Blanchard, and among the survivors are Mgr. Cameron, Messrs. O'Donnell, Ouellette, Dumesnil and Chartier. In August, 1859, he was ordained priest. He was first sent as curate to Saint Pie, and in 1860 he became parish priest of Granby. In 1868 he was a missionary at Stanstead, and in 1883 he became parish priest of Coaticook. In 1902 he was obliged to resign his functions of active priesthood. In 1874 he was appointed a consulting priest of the diocese. In 1893, on the day of Mgr. La Roche's consecration, Mr. McAuley was raised to the dignity of Vicar-General of the diocese.

This is, briefly out, the story of his priestly career. The writer then proceeds, with some incidents illustrative of the character and spirit of the departed priest. Among others he tells the following:

"I happened once to be with Vicar-General McAuley at a celebration of the St. Jean Baptiste. We all know how difficult it is to make a speech on such an occasion, and to say something new. When Abbe McAuley arose he began with a phrase that carried the audience with him. He opened by saying: 'My dear friends, when I arrived in Canada I was Irish. . . . The applause was deafening, for all saw in that one simple remark the whole life of the man portrayed. Never did his love for his native land diminish; that green Erin, around which so many centuries of suffering wove an aureole of poetic glory. Equally did he love the land of his adoption. He was true to his own race, and true to the race that took him up, and true to the Alma Mater wherein he obtained his splendid education."

"His popularity was great, and was due not a little to his keen spirit of wit and humor, as well as to all the good works he performed among the people. The writer gives several pages of very amusing stories all indicative of the kindly and pure Irish wit of the good priest. And in closing the tribute he says: 'Thus it is that over certain tones we cannot help blending smiles with tears. And I feel, very naturally, that they do not injure each other. In reflecting upon how amiable and pleasant was the one whose loss we deplore, we are very naturally brought to feel his loss still more. He had made himself a place in the hearts of the people, and by his devotion to his sacred calling of a priest and to his every duty, he prepared for himself a happiness in the bosom of God.'"

## The Indifference Of the Age.

The members of the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom resident in London and the suburbs kept with befitting solemnity on Thursday night their annual special service at the Church of the English Martyrs. The High Altar and the Altar of Our Lady were most tastefully decorated with choice flowers. Father Fletcher officiated at the first part of the service, which consisted of Rosary.

The sermon was preached by the Right Rev. Mgr. Robinson, M.A. Taking for his text, "Master, we have labored all night, and have taken nothing. Yet at Thy word I will let down the net," the right Rev. preacher said that "was the sixth time they had done him the honor of asking him to occupy that pulpit, and he felt in consequence some difficulty in bringing before them that which was fresh, but he would do his best. He would suppose they asked him: 'What is your view of the outlook? What, in your estimation, is the state of this unfortunate country from the point of view of the Catholic Church? Is it one that is bright or the reverse? Let them see what was on the side of what was bright, and he begged to remark that what he said was the real result of what he had individually touched himself. On the side of what was bright and inspiring hope he thought there must be placed this first fact that at the present time a continuously increasing number of individuals were seeking admittance to the Catholic Church. Therefore he did really think that the work of the conversion of England, so far as individual converts went, was flourishing at the time. Here was another point that seemed to escape the observation of those who were not interested—viz., the battle ground was clear. If there was confusion it was difficult to distinguish between friend and foe. It was a great thing to know what and whom they were fighting. They had got the ground clear in this way. The voice of the man of the world—the man of the clubs in St. James' Square and so on and the voice of the workman of England—was this: 'I don't profess Christianity at all, but if I do there is only one form of Christianity which will bear reasoning upon.' With them it is either the Catholic Church or nothing. He (the right rev. preacher) called that clear ground a great advantage. If they chose to call it a small advantage then let them be thankful for small mercies. There was another most extraordinary position at this time. A large section of advanced Anglicans seemed to identify themselves with every single Catholic doctrine, and were even prepared to recognize the privilege of Peter. It was extraordinary how so many Anglicans remained where they were, and it showed that intellectual conviction was not faith. Intellectual conviction was one thing, faith another. There was many a person who was said to have fallen from the faith who never had the faith to fall away from. Now let them look at the other side of things."

The first thing that would tend to discourage them was the growing indifference of this country to Christianity. A well known member of Parliament, recently advised the Nonconformists to withdraw their opposition to the Education Bill, "Because, we must avoid what we all dread," said he,—"the growing indifference to Christianity." It seemed to him (the rev. preacher) there were many features in ordinary life which contributed to that indifference. He did not speak of sin and vice, but of things, desirable in themselves, but which put together were contributing to this growing indifference to Christianity. First there were the bicycle and the motor car. It was to be feared that hundreds of thousands of Catholics neglected their Sunday duties in order to enjoy their bicycle ride. Over 3000 bicycles crossed Hammersmith Bridge every fine Sunday morning in the summer. They said it was a blessed thing, and so it was as far as it went. They said the bicycle was a most desirable thing, but unless it was carefully guarded it led to distress, regarded from the point of view of religion. Again, there was the opening of music halls on Sundays. He was not talking politics or entering into social things. In itself it seemed desirable, and yet it was a well-known fact that those entertainments were emptying the Churches on Sundays. He had seen some two or three thousand people coming from a sacred concert in a theatre. He had heard a minister of the Established Church say that his church was empty because his congregation were at the theatre. When a Catholic was in the

habit of going away for week-ends he often neglected to worship his God. Those four things, desirable in themselves, were having a somewhat disastrous effect, and they must not shut their eyes to the fact that there was a low wave of spirituality passing over the Catholic body. It might be merely the hollow of a wave, a reaction which could not be avoided in human affairs, and which would soon recover itself, but there was the fact and it was one of the sad facts in the outlook. There was another cause for anxiety. Who could say what the new Education Act would do? He (the rev. preacher) had travelled up and down the country, and it had been said to him that this new Education Act had wrenched the priest from the school in its first stages. Were they able at the present moment to give adequate religious instruction to their children? He answered Yes, in certain sections of society they were doing so, in certain circles of society, where there were certain oases in the desert where the children were under instruction from the religious. For the most part the nuns—God bless them!—were giving adequate religious instruction to the girls under their care, and the same thing happened to the boys under the care of the male religious. But could they answer the question satisfactorily for the vast majority of their children? No, they could not. He was not blaming anyone, and there were few who could be blamed. It simply could not be helped, for the Act of 1870 had made it extremely difficult to give adequate religious instruction, to educate them so as to draw them out in conscience, soul and heart. Again, were they keeping in touch with their children after they left the elementary schools? Once more the religious came to the front, and in many cases they did keep in touch with them. But numbers of children left school at 12 or 13 years of age, and then the priest saw no more of them. They grew up, and although they might neglect they did not forget their religion, and when they came to die they sent for a priest. That was a distinct source of anxiety. He did not mention these things to discourage them for let them remember that when darkness was most complete, when hope seemed most distant, then was the time when our Divine Redeemer works. In conclusion, the right rev. preacher his hearers not to relax their efforts for the return of England to the Catholic Faith.—London Universe.

## AN IRISH ATHLETE.

T. F. Kiely, Ireland's premier athlete, arrived in New York by the steamer Teutonic this week. He is to be the representative of the Old Land in the all-round championship of the world at the St. Louis Exposition on the 4th July.

Mr. Kiely was born at Ballyneal, Carrick-on-Suir, County Tipperary, in the early seventies, and from his boyhood was fired with a desire to be worthy of his neighbors, the famous Davin brothers, who were then making athletic history.

He first attracted attention in 1889 at the Gaelic championship held in Kilkenny. Although he did not succeed in winning any championship, yet he showed up very creditably in at least half a dozen events.

He won his first all-round championship in 1890 by such a margin that he has since been reckoned as one of the world's greatest athletes. The year following saw him a factor in the Gaelic Athletic and Irish Amateur championships, while his face was familiar at all the meetings large and small throughout Ireland. He won the all-round championship in 1893 and 1894. He won the English hammer championship five times and the Irish championship seventeen times. At the international meeting Ireland vs. Scotland, in 1897, he won the hammer by a throw of 137 feet. He won this event in those international contests for seven years. He now holds Irish record for 16 pound hammer from 9 feet circle, 151 feet 11 inches, and the world's record for 56 pounds, unlimited run, and follows 38 feet 11 inches at Cork, Sept. 14, 1898. In 120 yards' hurdle his best performance was at Limerick in 1892, 16 seconds. He won nine hurdle championships, the time being always close to 16 seconds and nearly always on slow grass tracks. He was broad jump champion six years. He holds the Scotch record, 22 feet 2 inches, off grass. For this event his best effort was at Aherlow 1900, 23 feet 2 inches.

The all-round championship was revived in 1898. Kiely repeated his former victories by easily securing the coveted championship. The event has not been held since, but in 1902 he won the all-round championship at Munster. In fact he has never been beaten in an athletic contest.

## Catholic Summer School

The Catholic Summer School of America has completed arrangements for a session of nine weeks from July 5 to September 2, at Cliff Haven, N. Y., on Lake Champlain near Plattsburgh. The following is a summary of the notice of lecture syllabus:

Mrs. M. S. Mooney, head of the department of English in State Normal College, Albany; subject, "The Mediaeval Drama," July 5-8.

The Rev. W. S. Kress, of Cleveland O.; subject, "The Claims of Socialists," July 11-15.

The Right Rev. Monsignor James P. Laughlin, D.D., of Philadelphia; subject, "The Council of Trent," July 18-22.

Dr. James J. Walsh, New York; subject, "Experimental Psychology," and special lectures on recent biology July 25-29.

The Rev. Joseph M. Woods, S.J., of Maryland; subject, "The Great Western Schism," August 1-5.

The Rev. John T. Driscoll, S.T.L., of the diocese of Albany; subject, "Philosophy in America During the Nineteenth Century," August 8-12.

Prof. J. D. M. Ford, of Harvard University; subject, "Spanish Literature," August 15-19.

Prof. J. G. Monaghan, of the Department of Commerce and Labor, Washington, D.C.; subject, "The American Consular Service and Trade Relations with Foreign Countries," August 22-26.

The Rev. Dr. James J. Fox, of the Catholic University Washington; subject, "Recent Phases of Discussion Relating to Morality and Religion," August 29-September 2.

Evening lectures will be delivered on the following subjects:

"American Humorists," by W. P. Oliver, Brooklyn; July 5-8.

"Detroit as a Catholic Centre," by Miss Mary Catharine Crowley, and the "Evolution of a Novelist," Boston, Mass.; July 11-12.

"Studies from an Old-Fashioned Library, Some Books, a Few Readers and a Tradition," by Miss Helena T. Goessmann, Amherst, Mass.; July 14-15.

Lecture recitals by Camille W. Zeckwer, of Philadelphia Musical Academy; July 25-August 4.

Two lectures by M. H. Glynn, Albany; July 28-29.

"Anglican Orders According to the Decision of Pope Leo XIII.," by the Rev. Bertrand L. Conway, C.S.P., of New York; August 1-2.

"The Neo-Celtic Movement, its Purposes, Ideals and a Study of its Development," by the Rev. Henry S. O'Keefe, C.S.P., of New York; August 8-9.

"Irish Wit and Humor," by James Jeffrey Roche, editor of the Pilot, Boston, Mass.; July 11-12.

"Glimpses of Catholic Missionary Life in a Trip Around the World," "The Friars in the Philippines," "Cities of Japan, Customs and Manners," "Japanese Temples of Art and Religion," "Account of the Present Crisis in the History of Japan," by the Rev. John P. Chidwick, New York; August 15-19.

"The Architectural Monuments of Venice, Florence, Rome and Paris" (illustrated), by Barr Ferree, president of the Department of Architecture of the Brooklyn Institute; August 22-26.

"Reading Circles in Relation to the Summer School," the Rev. Morgan M. Sheedy, Altoona, Pa.; August 29-30.

Readings by Miss Mary Canney, New York; September 1-2.

Round table talks will be arranged for members of reading circles and Sunday school teachers. Classes in elocution and physical culture will also be conducted. The athletic programme, under the direction of Jas. E. Sullivan, secretary of the Amateur Athletic Union, will be as in past years, a special feature.

The State of New York, through the Department of Public Instruction has established a summer institute for teachers, at Cliff Haven. The session will open on July 6 and continue for four weeks.

## CHEERFULNESS.

One of the most valuable lessons in the spiritual life is, that cheerfulness depends in a great measure upon keeping a spirit of real sorrow in the heart. Every fresh act of contrition brings a fresh ray of light and sunshine into our souls.

## EXAMPLE.

Men become followers of Jesus not because they see great Cathedrals erected in His honor and hear majestic organs and splendid choirs sound His praises, but because they know some plain men and women whom devotion to Him has made just and kind and humble.