

The Catholic Register

PUBLISHED BY THE CATHOLIC REGISTER PUBLISHING CO. PATRICK J. CROWNE

ADVERTISING RATES... Telephone, Main 143

Religion-Education-Crime

A few weeks ago the editor of Saturday Night, taking cover behind the title of a crime in Canada, delivered what he, no doubt, considered an eminently clever shaft at Catholics and Anglicans.

There it was, you see, Case and effect. Show religious instruction in the schools and you will reap the crop of the penitentiaries. Q. E. D. Here!

For ourselves, we must say that we read the article with contemptuous indifference and, consequently, the editors threw it aside. Nor have we noticed that any of our Anglican contemporaries, or any Anglicans writing to the editor, have taken notice of it.

One or two gentlemen say that non-Catholic friends have spoken to them about it. And they do not relish the idea in the least that the Catholic Church is the church of the criminal classes in public reputation.

It is with these distressed friends, not with the editor of Saturday Night that we would discuss the question. It will not be necessary for us, accordingly, to expound away the statistics at all. There will be no need to argue that it is not the religious persons, among the Catholics and Anglicans who find themselves in the penitentiaries as the local conclusion of their habits of life.

And so it is, on as far as you like to go. A hundred comparative cases might be cited. A young married woman stole five cent's worth of trash from Timothy Eaton and was "sent down" for two months.

But we must return to our subject: the criminal statistics as they are presented to us. We have before us the report for the years 1895-99, 1900-01. The Register cannot discern in these statistics any reproach to the Catholic Church.

The Roman Catholic record in Year 1900... per cent of criminals 38.8. As the Roman Catholic population numbered 41.2 per cent of the population in 1891, there has been a retrocession from criminality of a very gratifying character.

What Mr. George Johnson means is this, that the percentage of professed Roman Catholics in the penitentiaries has steadily declined year by year since the Government undertook to compile statistics by religious denominations.

Our object is not to repudiate the statistics at all. The alleged reproach which the irreproachable editor of Saturday Night rubs into us, and which has made some of our friends so very indignant, is that the Catholic record in the statistics is higher than the other religious denominations with the exception of the Anglicans.

It is all very true, and pity 'tis 'tis true. But we must not be too self-righteous towards them. None of us can have forgotten the parable of the Good Shepherd. There were possibly in the flock from which this unfortunate lamb strayed not a few clean, fat, fleecy sheep, who had always stayed where the pasture was soft and nutritious.

Nevertheless, the Good Shepherd left the ninety and nine careful ones, and sought the lost sheep among the brambles and rocks, and having found it, took it into His arms and brought it home. Following the divine example, the Catholic Church, as she must do if she would not be false to her mission, and that she cannot be—seeks with solicitation and love lost sheep among the prisons and penitentiaries and brings them home.

The Register would not go out of its way to attack any other religious denomination, but this may be said without any thought of hostility towards Methodists, Baptists and others, that from the moment any of their members are convicted of crime by legal or religious tribunals, they are no longer counted or acknowledged.

The Catholic Church on the contrary, is the church of the poor, of the immigrant from every submerged class of the European populations. All are claimed, all are counted, wherever found; and it is found in the penitentiaries as claimed with all the more joy.

church of God, year after year upon the criminal statistics of the country. But the mockery they would make of her rebounds only to her fidelity to the divine mission.

And now a word upon the educational theme. No credit can be gained for the irreligious education which the irreproachable editor of Saturday Night proclaims as the foster-mother of crimelessness.

The 17 years record indicates that while ignorance is the close friend and confidant of criminality, yet education is not as great a corrective of crime as it formerly was. The educated or partially educated class in the community supplied 84 per cent of the convicted criminals of 1884-91.

The latest report of the Minister of Justice brings the proportion of those who can read or write up to 83 per cent of the convicts of the year 1901. The fair and reasonable conclusion from these figures is really too obvious to call for more specific contradiction.

The record of the Catholic Church shows even more than Mr. Johnson claims for it, viz. a retrocession from criminality of a gratifying character. The work of our Anglican friends is likewise gratifying to them. Their percentage is declining and they are content to know that the labor they perform for the sake of religion is blessed.

We would like to be able to place our finger upon the official statistics the Catholic record considered in relation to grave or abominable crimes. Such figures are not available, but we may well be content with the testimony of various non-Catholic clergymen who are preaching the vehement crusade for social purity.

Let the record stand as it is then. Religion has no cause to blush for it. Those who would mock religion in comparison with education are silenced by the record itself. From the report of the Dominion statistician we offer two sentences for their reflection.

"Education is not as great a corrective of crime as it formerly was." "The larger denominations (of religions) are steadily and successfully bringing their spiritual forces to bear upon society to reduce crime."

Where, we ask again, is the justice of the reproach to religion?

IRELAND AND THE WAR.

The pastoral letters which with which the bishops of Ireland inaugurate the penitential season invariably reflect the condition of the country. Indeed, they may be called its voice in a most solemn form.

What the significance of it all may be we cannot guess. Some assume that the game is being played against Russia and France, others that it is a competition between Germany and Britain alone for friendly relationship with the Americans in the next onslaught upon China.

Mr. Clement Scott, the celebrated Catholic dramatic critic, edits a newspaper called The Free Lance. It has recently been added to the list of publications prohibited for sale in South Africa by order of the military authorities.

Mr. Scott communicated his grievances to the War Office, and received a reply that "the matter has been referred to Lord Kitchener." Mr. Scott protests that he is a "loyal subject," but it is probable that the title of his publication had more to do with its censorship than a perusal of its contents.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Baron de Michels, a French diplomatist of note, has published a volume of interesting "Souvenirs," which runs from 1886 to 1896. Some of his most remarkable chapters are devoted to his experiences in Rome before the French troops who were protecting Pope Pius IX. who were drawn in order to be sent against the Prussians in 1870.

KOWTOWING TO UNCLE SAM.

Prince Henry, of Prussia, brother-in-law of the German Emperor, is being received by President Roosevelt and the American people with joy so commensurate that some of the more timid Democrats can hardly avoid the suggestion in the danger of forgetting

cell. In spite of oncoming troubles, Pio Nono was in good spirits, and chatted in a lively manner with the French diplomatist. The question of the Pope's photograph arose, and His Holiness, desiring to give a good likeness of himself to the Baron, took the latter's camera and went with him to the library.

The spread of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has been one of the most remarkable events of the past century, he observes. It was founded by a group of zealous young Catholic students in reply to the taunt, "Show us the works of the Catholic Church." Four facts stand out, the founders were laymen, they were young, they were men of education, they chose works of charity as the evidence of the divine origin and mission of the Church.

Followers of St. Vincent de Paul

In the January issue of The American Catholic Quarterly Review Dr. Thomas Dwight, of the Harvard Medical School, has an article deserving world-wide attention.

That the society has flourished and is flourishing in this country is a fact concerning which, happily, there is no dispute, but this is not to say that its condition is as good as it might be, nor that it gives assurance of its fitness to meet new requirements.

Even so short a time as forty years ago (the first conference in New England, that of St. James', Boston, was aggregated April 18, 1862) the condition of our Catholic laymen was very different from what it is now.

What we need is a more practical and useful to the priest in the various odds and ends of non-spiritual parochial work. Among them, provisionally, were most admirable characters, zealous, self-forgetful and actuated truly by the love of God and their neighbor.

A great change has come over social conditions since that time. Municipal help to the poor has spread and increased wonderfully. It is generally distributed with no sectarian discrimination.

That would there be no loss? On the contrary, the loss would be frightful; first of all to the members. Their loss in opportunity to do good works, to help save souls, as well as bodies, to win graces, to gain indulgences, can be reckoned by no human bookkeeper.

It is inevitable that the members should come into contact with those of other creeds and most desirable that they should meet them with respect. For this purpose they must meet them as equals.

It's An Easy Matter

For you to send us a post card which will bring you our booklet entitled "An Investment of Safety and Profit" which tells you the facts about a desirable investment in our

5 per cent. Debentures Write now before you forget.

THE STANDARD LOAN CO. 24 Adelaide Street East TORONTO W. A. DINNICK - MANAGER.

large numbers of young Catholics in distinction in the professions and in business. Those in our ranks are relatively few. We have tried to get them and some have accepted the invitation. Why not more? It is an axiom that no one, by his fortuitous advantage of wealth, learning or position what they may, can give anything to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul that shall in the least equal what he will gain from it if he be a faithful member.