

of tactics, wiser in its generation than the Grevy Administration. When they made up their minds to garrote and plunder the religious Orders, they represented them as possessing wealth beyond the dreams of avarice—a milliard of francs (£40,000,000) in houses and lands. This was offered as a bribe—in the shape of old-age pensions—to the proletariat. Such an appeal has not been known to fail since the days of Henry VIII. and Thomas Cromwell. It was a short-cut to the heart of the worker who had shuffled off religion, and to the atheism and anticlericalism of the Paris boulevards. But (as the London 'Spectator' pointed out at the time) even if the fabled milliard of the religious Congregations were a tangible asset down to the last centime, it would not by any means, in view of their work, be a vast sum. A Rothschild, a Jay Gould, a Carnegie hold separately and singly more than did all the 160,000 members of the French Congregations collectively. Honest figures are not party-men. But the Waldeck-Rousseau figures were (as the 'Journal des Debats' said) 'mensongrement exagères pour les besoins de la cause'—exaggerated in a lying way to meet the exigencies of a political purpose. We knew that then; we know it better now. We know that at the time when the story of the fabled milliard was set afloat, that the total real estate held by the religious Orders (or Associations or Congregations as they are also called) was officially valued for revenue purposes at a capital sum which, at the French current rate of interest of the time (2.8 per cent), would give each religious an income of about £3 per annum, or less than 2d a day. What a munificent revenue in return for such magnificent services to the State and to society! We know, too, that the convents, monasteries, colleges, and other property of the suppressed Congregations have thus far failed to realise sufficient to meet the expenses of the horde of 'graffers' who are acting as liquidators. The fable of the milliard, however, probably achieved its immediate purpose. There was not so much trouble on the squares and boulevards as when Grevy stormed the convents and stole the monastic pots and pans. But the 'milliard' is like the rainbow or the bird in the story that flitted from tree unto tree. The 'grafter' has his innings, and the French worker is still waiting for his old-age pension. If it is to come out of the Associations' 'milliard', he will still be waiting at the crack o' doom.

By the Law of Associations, the schools conducted by religious Orders were forced out of existence. In 1897-98, French religious of both sexes were giving a Christian education to 1,983,562 children in infant and primary schools, and to 67,463 in secondary schools. And these schools, says the American 'Church Review' (Protestant), at the time of the Bill, were 'able to give free education and to hold their own against their rivals, and generally to beat them in discipline and examinations and to carry off the scholarships'. These dangerous rivals to the godless or atheistic public schools were closed. The same fate befell most of the institutions of charity in which 'heaven's great army of charity' (as that great Protestant, Leibnitz, called some of our religious Orders) maintained some 110,000 aged and infirm poor, 60,000 orphans, 12,000 penitent women, and 68,000 lunatics, blind, and deaf and dumb. The devoted men and women who carried on this noble work 'for sweete Sanct Charitie' were driven like malefactors or outlaws from the roofs that sheltered them and their charges, and left to penury in their own land or to exile among strangers. Side by side with these operations of the new atheistic chivalry, a great and searching system of espionage was organised under Ministerial auspices to 'break' or penalise every officer in the army or navy who practised his religion, or aided a Catholic charity, or permitted any member of his

family to do so, or whose relatives or friends were known or suspected to be well-disposed towards the Ancient Faith. This grand organisation of spying was worked through the Freemason fraternity. Its 'documented' exposure in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Parisian secular press was, perhaps, the crowning sensation of the political life of the past few years. Before the storm of public shame and execration, the gold-braided Chief of the Spies, General Andre (Minister of War) had to leave his pedestal, and the Combes Administration to give up the reins of power. There was a change of masters, but not of methods. Espionage is still as active a weapon of proscription and persecution as it was when Combes was dressed in a little brief authority.

For the rest, under the Combes regime nearly all the religious Orders were suppressed, disbanded, and plundered, in spite of the official pledge that the new law was meant only for the religious Associations that were 'political' or 'plotters against the State.' No explicit charge, no evidence, no judicial formality preceded this great act of spoliation and expulsion. The applications made (on the faith of official pledges) by the Orders for 'authorisation' in terms of the law, were not dealt with separately and on their merits. 'Twenty-five teaching Congregations', says Mr. Wilfrid Ward in the 'Nineteenth Century' for January, 'were refused authorisation en bloc at one sitting of the Lower Chamber, twenty-eight at another. The rest followed quickly. M. Combes had practically made one head for the whole monastic organism, and he proceeded to cut it off'. The manner of abrogating the Concordat deserves an article all to itself.

Notes

In School

William von Humboldt once said: 'Whatever we wish to see introduced into the life of a nation must first be introduced into its schools.' In our over-eager haste to cram the youthful brain in the public schools with snippets of a hundred 'ologies, we neglect heart-training and the formation of character. Result: So far as the mere system is concerned, it can turn out nothing better than bundles of superficial and irreverent smartness, animated reading, writing, and cyphering machines, with no more true cultivation of heart than is possessed by a Babbage calculator. But even this partial training—the mere wit-sharpening—may be carried on at too great a cost of nerve and brain tissue. That it has been in many cases, seems to be the opinion of some of the inspectors of the Wellington Education Board. In their latest annual report the following recommendations occur:—

'We would strongly recommend the practice of taking a few minutes every day for free-arm and breathing exercises in lieu of the old method of a weekly hour or half-hour lesson. Teachers should also recognise the fact that physical training should embrace such matters as general carriage, posture at work, personal cleanliness, ventilation, and the general tidiness of the schoolroom, offices, and playground, all of which have a most vital bearing on the child's life. We are quite in accord with the proposal for the medical examination of children, and we hope the department will be able to publish such general directions as may best guide teachers in assisting the expert in this part of his work.'

We commend this thoughtful utterance to all Catholic educators whom it may concern.

State-made Mendicants

There are many obvious analogies between the plunder and proscription of the Catholic faith in the England of Henry VIII. and in the France of Clemenceau

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