

Current Topics

Give Him His Due

'Give the devil his due', says Billings; 'but be very kerful that there ain't much due to him'. 'If you owe the devil ennything', says the same phonetic philosopher, 'pay him off at once, and then discharge him, and don't hire him over agin at enny price'.

Three 'Posers'

Father Rickaby, S.J., has (says the Milwaukee 'Catholic Citizen') 'a short examination paper' ready to serve on any one who will assert that Catholic teaching clashes with physical science—these three questions:—

"1. With what particular branch of physical science does Catholic teaching clash?

"2. What particular knowledge have you of that particular branch?

"3. What knowledge have you of Catholic teaching?"

'Usually', adds the 'Citizen', 'these questions will demonstrate that the critic of the Catholic Church has a very vague knowledge of what he thinks he is talking about intelligently.'

Dairying

From time to time the Education Board reports contain reference to the manner in which children are said to be over-wrought and under-schooled in the dairying districts of New Zealand. Similar complaints come at intervals from the cow-districts of Victoria and New South Wales. 'It is a depressing fact', reports one school official in the Mother State, 'that from twenty-eight to thirty-two pupils out of every hundred enrolled are absent from school every day, and this while ample means of education are available without cost, and compulsory education is nominally in force. The machinery in operation is apparently ineffective to cope with this serious obstacle to success.' To the Swiss, the cow is everything. The good Switzer grooms her, rugs her, and makes her Majesty the Cow a sort of head of the family. To the Irish cottier the pig was long 'the gentleman that paid the rint'—and he looked as if he knew it; to the Swiss in the dizzy uplands the cow is the lady that keeps up the long projecting roof. But too much can be made of a rent-payer and a roof-tree prop. 'In the dairying districts', wrote a zealous priest to us some time ago, 'the cow too often stands between the children and education, and between the family and salvation'. A cow is a very good thing in a field', said Samuel Johnson, 'but we turn her out of a garden'. She is, no doubt, a very good thing for money-raising; but she should not be permitted to interfere with the higher and the better things of life.

Fearing Death

A medical writer in a North Island contemporary gives expression to a belief which, we think, grows upon observant priests that have had much experience at the bedsides of the dying. 'In serious illnesses', writes he, 'the careful medical man notes the desire to live, the struggle against dissolution, the fear of death. He takes heart from these symptoms, for they are the signs of life. When death draws near the struggle ceases, even the desire of life ceases, the stimulus is gone, and the fear of death vanishes before his wings appear'. Somewhere in one of his writings the late Cardinal Manning makes remarks in a somewhat similar strain. 'Mr. Dooley' has, by the way, lately been philosophising on the same theme, and has contrived to give a new point and new expression to the familiar but ill-realised platitude regarding the certainty of death, the uncertainty of its manner, and the unexpect-

tedness with which it commonly overtakes even those who have been awaiting its coming. 'Th' most per'lous iv human occypations are usually th' lowest paid. An' why is this so? Is it because we're not afraid iv death? Faith, no, but because we don't know annything about it. We don't appreciate it. If our simple minds cud grasp th' subbick th' bravest man in th' wurruld wud be found under th' bed sobbing. It's there, but it isn't there. It happens to iv'rybody, but ye can't see it happens to ye'ersilf. Ye walk briskly up to it, or maybe ye even run. Ye niver see it till it's too late, an' thin 'tis too late to recognise it. 'Tis no good runnin' away fr'm it. Manny a man dodgin' a trolley car has been run over be an autymobil. Ye hide fr'm th' lightning an' a muckrake lands ye. Ye avoid railroad trains an' boats an' scratch ye'er thumb with a carpet tack, an' 'tis all over. Ye expect it fr'm wan side iv th' sthreet an' it comes fr'm th' other. Ye think that must be it in th' block ahead, an' ye make up ye'er mind to walk slow whin it steps up behind ye, slaps ye on th' back, an' says: "Ye're wanted at headquarters. Ye'd better come along peaceable". To which, havin' no further inthrest, ye make no reply. 'Tis thin f'r th' first time ye'd have an understandin' an' a fear iv death if ye were alive. But ye are dead.'

And there's an end on't.

Religious Education

'Religious education', says Professor Garvie (of New College, London), 'must mean more than instruction, even the best instruction. It means, supremely, influence—the whole personality of the teacher filled with the presence and the power of Jesus Christ, brought into such contact with the child as to become a channel of grace. That means very much closer and more frequent contact between the teacher and the child than the ordinary Sunday School meeting allows. We cannot accomplish very much by an hour's contact between the teacher and the child. Do you suppose that an hour of a better spiritual and moral environment on Sunday can counteract all the evil influences of the environment of the child during the rest of the week?' Catholics don't suppose it. Hence the schools with which they dot all the land, in order to counteract the evil influences that, left unchecked, would play the devil's tattoo upon the child-mind; hence the daily effort to fill the little ones' souls, as far as may be, with an enduring sense of the presence and the power of Christ.

Reaping the Whirlwind

The atheistic ring of rulers that at present Tammanies France sowed the wind when it banished religion from the schools, penalised the practice of it in civil and military employments under the State, and (as Minister Viviani put it) set themselves by every means to drive God out of the heavens. The country is reaping the whirlwind, and the harvest promises to be a bountiful one. The doings of the 'apaches' or 'hooligans' of Paris have more than once been referred to in our columns. Apart from these, there has of late years been a serious increase of crime, and especially of juvenile crime. Thus, in the May number of the 'National Review', the distinguished writer, Canon Barry, tells of an official report addressed by the Public Prosecutor of Le Mans to the Prefect of the Department of La Sarthe, in which 'he asks that a larger sum be assigned for magistrates so that the number may be increased with a view to the repression of crime. According to this official document, crime is increasing with alarming rapidity. In 1900 the examining magistrate at Le Mans had to deal with 70 criminal cases; in 1901, with 96; 1902, 107; 1903, 122; 1904, 139; 1905, an astounding leap, 239; 1906, 247; in 1907, with 258. In Paris, the Board of Magistrates of the Department of the Seine, has doubled its

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