

Current Topics

Aid for Catholic Schools

'I know,' said Mayor Rose, of Milwaukee, recently (quoted by the *Ave Maria*), 'that what I am going to say will lay me open to the charge of political horesy. But I believe that with 36,000 children in the public schools, and over 20,000 in the parochial institutions, it is short-sighted public policy that demands that parents who send their children to the schools of their choice shall place upon themselves a double burden of taxation. The day will dawn, and speedily, when either they will be exempt from aiding in maintaining the public schools, or the parochial schools will be aided from the public funds.'

The Accession Oath

Nos amis l'ennemi—in other words, the extremist sections of our No-Popery friends in Great Britain and Ireland—are beginning to sit up and 'take notice' of the movement for the reform of that 'relic of barbarism,' the accession oath. They (or, rather, some of them) have begun to issue rather sultry fulminations against the proposed excision of the outrageous formula which describes Catholic worship as 'superstitious and idolatrous.' 'Make the accession oath as Protestant as you like,' says Father Bernard Vaughan, 'but not insulting.'

'And one by one in turn, some grand mistake
Casts off its bright skin yearly like the snake.'

It is high time that the accession oath cast off its outrageous references to the faith of 250,000,000 Catholics.

A London Fog

Winter sometimes lingers in the lap of the northern May, and the thick London fogs of the clammy November-time linger oft into the keen and biting cold of the young new year. Oscar Wilde sang of London's November speciality:

'The yellow fog came creeping down
The bridges, till the houses' walls
Seemed changed to shadows, and St. Paul's
Loomed like a bubble o'er the town.'

But that was not the prize-taker, that was not the father and mother of the fogs that descend at times upon the great Babylon and leave nothing but a few near walls and an atmosphere of thick, rolling grey, punctured here and there with the muffled yellow glare of lamps trying hard to shine. One of these fogs was briefly described as follows in a cable message in Monday morning's daily papers: 'There has been a heavy fog in London for over two days. All traffic was dislocated, and all trains were seriously delayed. There have been many highway robberies and burglaries. The lamps were alight continuously from Tuesday afternoon till Friday morning.'

In his droll 'Nocturnal Sketch'—a piece of 'Blank Verse in Rhyme'—Hood tells of some of the events that happen in London when

'Anon night comes, and with her wings brings things
Such as, with his poetic tongue, Young sung.
Now thieves, to enter for your cash, smash, crash,
Past drowsy Charley, in a deep sleep, creep,
But, frightened by Policeman B3, flee,
And, while they're going, whisper low, "No go!"'

But the gas that

'Up-blazes with its bright white light,'

and the electric film were no match for the protective fog that clothed the London footpad with a cloak somewhat like that of Jack the Giant-killer or Siegfried's mantle in the Nibelungenlied. And so, under its safe cover of murky grey they perpetrated 'many highway robberies and burglaries'—and, no doubt, were shocked at their own moderation in stopping short at these milder operations of their craft. Some years ago we cast up as follows some of the further cost which London pays for the luxury of its fog: A simple eight hours' day of it may involve an extra positive expenditure of from £50,000 to £100,000 in chinking coins of the realm. A goodly proportion of this finds its way into the hands of the gas and electric light companies. A fog also brings much danger, tribulation, and expense to the railway companies. 'Fog signalling,' says an English railway paper before us, 'is expensive. At Clapham Junction alone £50 has been spent by a single railway company during a day's fog in extra pay to the platelayers. When the red light cannot be seen at a distance

of a hundred yards the platelayers become fog signallers. For this they are paid a shilling a day in addition to their regular wages and fourpence per hour overtime, provided the overtime does not run into a second shilling.'

According to Senator Parkins, of California, 'there is no fog on land or sea which can resist our new dispelling device.' What the aforesaid device may be, this deponent saith not. We are merely told that 'the only noise connected with the device is a muffled blast at intervals.' 'Muffled blow' might possibly be a better description. But blast, or 'blow,' or 'bluff,' or whatever it may be, the new 'dispelling device' would do well to try its 'proutice hand at the able-bodied fogs of California, Oregon, and Nova Scotia before it joins issue with the gold-medallist of all the fogs that hangs at intervals over 'famous London town.'

A Catholic Census, U.S.A.

A cable message in last Saturday's papers deponeth as follows: 'Including those persons who are affiliated by family ties to members, whether they belong to the organisation or not, the census gives the Roman Catholic Church of the United States a total of 22,474,420. This total, which includes the Philippines and other islands under the American flag, gives 14,235,451 as the number in the United States proper. Mr. Smalley, the New York correspondent of *The Times*, says that these statistics are useless for purposes of comparison, inasmuch as all other churches enumerate the actual members of the churches.'

Our readers would do well to reserve judgment on the statement that persons are entered upon the new census as Catholics, 'whether they belong to the organisation or not.' We may add that Archbishop Glennon, of St. Louis, was placed in charge of this census by the United States Government. Here are some facts in connection therewith which do not seem to square with the cable message quoted above: In an audience with Pope Pius X. on December 12, 1908, the learned Archbishop spoke as follows (we take the report from the Milwaukee *Catholic Citizen* of December 19—the italics are ours): 'He [the Pope] was especially interested in a summary or statement I made to him concerning the results of the first real attempt at a census of Catholics in the United States. I explained how I had been appointed by the United States Government in an official capacity to take this census, and how I had received every assistance in my work from the civil authorities. His Holiness was much impressed on hearing that the figures positively ascertained by us greatly increase the former estimate of the number of Catholics. Our results show about 14,000,000, from which 15 per cent. is to be deducted in the printed reports to allow for children under a certain age, who are not counted. But I had to explain to the Pope that while these are the figures recorded in the official count, a great deal of supplementary information convinces me that the actual number of Catholics in the United States is not short of 18,000,000.'

It will be noted that the figures contained in the cable message quoted above relate to the 'printed reports' and the 'official count' only, and not to the 'supplementary information' received by Archbishop Glennon.

At it Again?

Professor Haeckel is once more passing through the waters of tribulation. Years ago scientific men hosed him with scorn for the manner in which he 'faked' the illustrations of the human and the canine foetus in order to support a theory of his that has long since been placed in the lumber-room of 'scrapped' and useless fancies. Since then the Professor has 'committed' *The Riddle of the Universe*, an extraordinary mixture of science, of unscientific or unproven theories, and of metaphysical argumentation for which the author is wholly unequipped. This book has, however, done much mischief among untrained minds; but one of its happiest results has been the publication of Dr. Gerard's *The Old Riddle and its Newest Answer*—a cheap edition of which has been published by the Catholic Truth Society. We cordially commend that admirable book to all and sundry of our readers. The further course of Haeckel's tribulations is recorded as follows by the Berlin correspondent of the *Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times*. We quote from our gifted contemporary's issue of December 5: 'Since the appearance of the popular edition of his *Riddle of the Universe*, he has been attacked more fiercely than ever. Lodge, Reinke, Paulsen, and others who stand in the forefront of the scientific world pulled many of his hypotheses into shreds. Two zoologists many years ago had already convicted Haeckel of falsifying illustrations: the same accusation is brought against him by Dr. Brass, the zoologist, in regard to his latest

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