

THE TRAINING OF THE CHILD

THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER

Speaking at the distribution of prizes in connection with the Marist Brothers' School, Pitt street, Auckland, on December 21, the Right Rev. Dr. Cleary said in part: In closing exercises such as these, the spectator has before him merely one small phase of the education imparted in our Catholic primary and secondary schools. And that phase of our school-work is merely the one which appeals to the ear and eye. We devote as much care and thought and skill as any to the training of mind and hand and voice and eye. These things have their proper use and place in any system of education; they are among the useful and convenient things of life. But there is one thing necessary in education—in the education which is a preparation for life—and that is the formation of character. It is the indispensable thing—it is the substance of life as we should live it. This may not be proclaimed at every step in our processes of education, but it runs like a ribbon of gold through our whole Catholic school system. Now character has been well described as 'life dominated by principles'—not dominated by mere impulses from within or by the pressure of mere circumstances from without. And a collection of such principles, covering every department of life, constitutes an ideal. The business of character-training is, then, (1) to lay before the child the best and noblest ideal, (2) to get that ideal stamped into the child's mind in the concrete form of definite principles, and (3) so firmly to establish the habit of acting according to those principles, that it will last the rest of life.

Now, this habit can be formed only by the assiduous training of the moral conscience and of the will. And this can be effectively done in no other way but through the beliefs and practices of religion. With us, then, education is inseparably bound up with religion—it is education in and through religion. And the religion of which I here speak is not something vague and fuzzy and indefinite, not a mere speculative philosophy—to make religion vague is to empty it of life and motive force, to make it a mere speculative philosophy is to destroy its very essence. Religion as it is intended here means right relations between the human mind and God, conformity of the human will to the Will of God; it must be clear, it must be definite, it must mean doing as well as believing, it must mean the application of sacred truths and principles to the facts and acts of daily life. The knowledge of God is the highest knowledge, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, the love of God is its end. We have the one grand message of life that matters most; we know that life-training and character-formation are continuous processes, proceeding upon definite principles, along definite lines; and we know no educational reason why, in the course of such training, the child should be subjected to opposite influences in the home, and in the school, which is merely an extension of the home.

Our schools were driven out of the State-supported system on what was, in effect, a religious test; driven out because we believe in the inseparable union of religion with education; driven out because our consciences cannot accept the new sectarian dogmas that underlie our Education Act: namely, the dogma that religion has no necessary or useful part in education, and the dogma that a political majority has the moral right to banish religion from the place which it has occupied from immemorial ages in the schools.

It is the right and duty of parents to watch over and secure the education of their children in what they conscientiously believe to be the true religion. No political majority can alter or abrogate that dictate of the natural law. No political majority has the moral right to formulate a religious faith or to define a religious doctrine. These things belong to the spiritual domain; they are outside the proper functions of the civil power. Yet here, in this democratic land, we find a group of politicians, unskilled in the principles

and methods of education, forcing French views of religion and of education upon the schools, pressing them upon the consciences and purses of dissidents, and turning them into an established and endowed State-school creed!

It so happens that this new State-school view of religion quite suits the consciences of Secularists, Agnostics, and such. But is not the right to believe to be deemed as sacred as the right not to believe? Have not the consciences that reject the State-school dogmas mentioned before, the same right to free instruction as the consciences that accept these dogmas? Why, in a democratic country, make acquiescence in a particular view of religion the test for State aid to education? Why favor one view of religion at the expense of another view of religion? And why, since 1877, penalise our Catholic schools, just because we Catholics refuse—as we have ever refused—to allow party politicians to impose particular religious opinions upon us or to determine any one of our articles of faith? Our education law is a hardship to the conscientious objector (the Catholic parent, for instance), it is a bad form of sectional legislation, and, in a democratic land, it is the very negation of one of the groundwork principles of true democracy.

Our Catholic school system is a monumental assertion of the everlasting principles of true child-training; it is a monumental protest against a grave wrong which has been inflicted upon us simply and solely because we cannot in conscience accept the new, dogmatic, and sectarian views of religion which underlie our Education Act. Into that protest Catholics have thrown a vast motive force—of brains, of money, of organisation, of self-sacrifice. It is high time that we should now begin, in thorough earnest, to harness some of that energy into a constitutional agitation for the removal of that grievous wrong which we have been far too long enduring without a voice and without a line of action leading towards redress.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN FRANCE

EXPULSION OF THE NUNS

The inconsistency of the French Government has been pointed out from time to time (remarks the Paris correspondent of the *Catholic Times*). With one hand it rewards religious, and with the other brutally strikes them. Last month the Minister of the Interior again decreed medals of honor to nuns attached to hospitals—'for exceptional services rendered.' But the forcible and ignominious expulsion of nursing and other Sisters continues. A Jesuit Father, Pere Cattin, Chancellor of the French Faculty of Medicine at Beyrouth, has just been named Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. The Cross was presented to him in the name of the President of the French Republic by the Consul-General of France, and the captain of a French man-of-war in those waters. Yet his Order is persecuted in France.

In October the police drove out at Nantes an enclosed community, entirely shut out from the world—the Poor Clares. In other houses of Poor Clares the inventory was taken. In November were driven from Compiègne the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, who, when expelled from their school in that town, had remained there to tend the poor and sick. Later a school of household management had been founded for them. They had hoped to be able to remain there. But they were ordered to leave the town at once.

Now has appeared in the *Officiel* a decree of dissolution of the Little Sisters of the Assumption. Some communities have already been expelled, others, chiefly in the larger towns of the north, await their turn. These admirable nuns have devoted themselves for the last thirty years to taking care of the poor in their own cottages, where necessary doing the menial work, and accepting nothing in return. The first expulsion took place at the Croix-Rousse, Lyons, amid

Scenes of Great Brutality

—doors broken down with hatchets, the Sisters so maltreated that some are actually ill from blows received.

Turkey, Plum Pudding, and Cock o' the North Tea! Talk about a Merry Christmas!

"Hi, Jock! Don't forget the 'Hondai Lanka'; the camping out will be a fizzle without it!"