

experience will prove a better safeguard to its purity than all the dangerous learning which the lectures and pamphlets on sex hygiene undertake to supply. A further objection to the State lecture or State pamphlet method of imparting sexual instruction to the young is that for the most part it does not place the subject on a definitely religious basis. The arguments advanced, and the sanctions invoked, for leading a virtuous life are almost exclusively physiological. It is one of the common-places of human experience that growth in knowledge is not necessarily accompanied by growth in virtue, and that mere mental enlightenment does not, of itself, result in moral uplifting. Unless the subject can be treated, all the way through, from a religious, even more than from a physical stand-point, sexual instruction to the young is in danger of doing more harm than good. There is a tendency, also, on the part of school lecturers to overdo the physiological argument, and to terrorise children to a degree that may be harmful. The following paragraph, from the *N.Z. Times* of a recent date, will illustrate our point. It is headed 'A Strange Incident,' and runs thus: 'An incident of which the Wellington College Governors might take some notice occurred yesterday afternoon. Mr. R. H. W. Bligh, described as a white cross lecturer, was giving a demonstration illustrated with physiological diagrams, when six of the boys were overcome with fainting fits. One, it is said, took upwards of an hour to recover.' The official explanation of the occurrence was that the boys were overcome by the heat, but the explanation is not convincing.

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The general view of Catholic writers and authorities is that the work of instructing the young on such subjects is appropriately left to parents and spiritual advisers. Parents, in particular, have an unmistakable duty in the matter. 'To leave our young men and women absolutely ignorant on this point,' says a recent Catholic work, 'when they stand in need of education in every other domain, or to dismiss them with a few meaningless phrases when the question is broached, is to run the grave danger of leaving them without knowledge and without direction on a most dangerous path. . . . What is the result of your studied secrecy? The imparting of the needed information is left to the apostles of the flesh, who, with a thousand voices, on the street, in many a school, and even in the home, are ever striving to reach the ears of the young.' That the subject is a most difficult and delicate one, must be admitted; but this can hardly be accepted as a justification for a do-nothing attitude. To parents who recognise their obligation, but who are in perplexity as to when and how the requisite information should be imparted, we cordially recommend the volume on *Marriage and Parenthood: the Catholic Ideal*, by Father Thomas J. Gerrard, price 5s. In reviewing the book some time ago we singled out for special praise the chapter on 'Sexual Instruction for the Young'; and on re-reading this portion we are more pleased with it than ever. Another work which has received warm encomiums from competent authorities is the volume quoted from above—*Die Erziehung Zur Keuschheit*—published by two professors of theology at the Catholic University of Innsbruck, Austria. It has not yet appeared in English dress, but is certain to be translated in the near future. If there be a genuine willingness to discharge this admittedly delicate duty, parents will find the necessary instruction easily available.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

DEBATE.

Is the Home Rule Bill a reasonable satisfaction of Irish aspirations and ideals?

Are the financial proposals of Mr. Asquith's scheme adequate and satisfactory?

Should women have the right of voting for members of the Irish Parliament?

ESSAY.

Ireland a Nation.

History of the Home Rule Movement.

Some Home Rule Leaders: Butt, Gladstone, Parnell, Redmond.

Notes

'The All India Education League'

We have received from the *Catholic Herald of India* a pamphlet, prepared by the Editor, giving a full, true, and particular account of the more or less anti-Catholic movement which is making a general appeal throughout the Empire for the creation of a 'Fund for the Improvement of European Schools in India.' Father Neut, S.J., has done his work well; and the pamphlet will be of distinct service should the sponsors of this high-sounding but by no means disinterested movement extend their canvass to New Zealand.

Hibernians to the Fore

We have often pointed out the desirableness of Catholic theatre-goers making definite protest against anti-Catholic or objectionable shows; and we have suggested that, when occasion arose, the Hibernian Society might fittingly act the part of a vigilance committee, and make their influence felt. We are glad to learn that two or three days ago the Wellington Hibernians made a very effective and successful move in this direction. At one of the many picture theatres of that city, as we are informed by our correspondent, a film was being shown bearing the title of 'A Florentine Drama.' The 'plot' was something as follows:—The nephew of a cardinal becomes infatuated with a girl who is not approved of by the cardinal. The latter has some other girl in view for his nephew; and he is determined to prevent the unfavorable marriage. For this purpose he uses his influence with the authorities to issue to him a bogus death warrant, with which he threatens the girl, declaring that, if she persists in receiving the attentions of his nephew, he will forthwith put it into execution. He is defied in the regular true lovers' style. The union is planned secretly, and the couple are in the act of being married when discovery is made, and both are put into prison. The girl repents; and under coercion from the cardinal retires into a convent. Her lover makes a sensational escape from gaol; ascertains where the girl is; disguises himself as a monk, and is thereby permitted—in the picture—to enter the bed-chamber of the girl; and both are left alone. He holds his face averted; and the girl rises from her bed to ascertain the reason of the monk's visit, whereupon he turns his face upon her and she instantly recognises him. An escape is planned; but whilst in the act of escaping, they are both shot dead.

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The whole business is stupid to a degree; but the most objectionable feature of the film was of course the bed-chamber scene, in which the monk was admitted by one of the nuns without the least question as to his identity or mission. The film was on view from Monday until Wednesday, when it was seen by a prominent Hibernian—Mr. J. W. Callaghan—who at once mooted the idea of a Catholic protest. A deputation, consisting of Messrs. T. Dwan, J.P., E. J. Fitzgibbon, LL.B., W. Perry, J. W. Callaghan, J. J. L. Burke, P. D. Hoskins, P. J. McGovern, Leo Leydon, and M. O'Kane, accompanied by a representative of the press, waited on the manager; and Messrs. J. W. Callaghan, T. Dwan, and W. Perry placed before him the objections both from a religious and a moral standpoint to such a picture. The manager expressed his sincere regret for the incident; issued instructions to have the film immediately withdrawn; and gave an assurance that never while he was in charge of a picture theatre would such an offence be repeated. The special value of such a protest is that it not only puts a stop to the particular offence complained of, but acts also as a warning to other managers; and the deputation took care to secure this result by having a suitable paragraph inserted in the Wellington press. Hearty congratulations to Bro. Callaghan and his friends! They have set a splendid example, and have established a precedent which will, we hope, be widely followed.

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