

IRELAND AS A MISSIONARY NATION.

In mentioning the fact that at the mid summer term of St. Patrick's college, Thurles, a number of the students on whom ecclesiastical degrees were conferred, were nominated for foreign missions, a journal thus alludes to Ireland as a missionary nation:—But in whatever else Old Ireland has declined, she maintains her pre-eminence as a great missionary nation; the Faith is there quick and fruitful of good works as ever. Churches and religious houses of all kinds are multiplying, and there is no evidence of poverty of any kind in the offerings that are laid on the altar. They are still rich enough to make great sacrifices for their religion, and they present the grand spectacle of a people fast multiplying their Temples as they themselves are rapidly declining in numbers. And not only in that respect, but also in its missionary enterprise, is it distinguished for its Catholicity. Still to the most distant parts of the world it is sending forth its children to preach the Gospel.

EDUCATION V. CRIME.

In this age of false notions, of social quackery, and of superficial thought, one may find so vast a multitude of popular errors to attack, that it would be difficult to select one more especially deserving of reprobation than another. A recent address, however, of Governor Seymour, of New York, before the National Prison Reform Congress of Baltimore, puts us upon the track of one with which we may grapple with entire propriety. In this admirable address occurs the following passage:—

"In the social edifice pauperism and crime are like fire, ever kindling in its different parts, which are to be kept under by watchfulness and care. If neglected, they burst out into the flames of anarchy and revolution and sweep away forms of Government.

"These subjects must be studied directly in their moral aspects. There is a prevailing idea in our country that the spread of knowledge will check crime. No one values learning more than I do, but it is no specific for immorality and vice. Without moral and religious training, it frequently becomes an aid to crime. Science, mechanical skill, a knowledge of business affairs, even the refinements and accomplishments of life are used by offenders against law. Knowledge fights on both sides in the battle between right and wrong in this age. The most dangerous criminal is the educated, intellectual violator of the law, for he has all the resources of art at his command; the forces of mechanics, the subtleties of chemistry, the knowledge of man's ways and passions. Learning of itself only changes the aspect of immorality. Virtue is frequently found with the uneducated. Surrounded by glittering objects within their reach, our servant girls resist more temptations than any class in society."

Whereupon, the Baltimore "Sun," an eminently just, conservative, and independent paper, remarks:—

"Gov. Seymour inculcates an important lesson when he teaches, that without moral and religious training, learning becomes frequently an aid to crime. In this he will find it easy to sustain himself by the statistics of crime in all countries. That excellence of mind has no more to do with moral worth than it has with beauty of physical proportions is a matter which every man's daily observation ought to be sufficient to prove.

"Mr Beecher, in his lecture on compulsory education, when he indicated that the education of the brains, as he called it, was the panacea for all the social ills, with the qualification that morality could be taught in the schools, exhibited very little respect for the education and intelligence of those who heard him. In those European States where education is compulsory, the results as to crime do not sustain his theories; and even if morality were one of the common school branches, it is most effectually taught by practical example and precept, and it cannot be conveyed in 'easy lessons' for young beginners, like spelling and reading."

Against these calm and weighty statements we shall have theorists objecting only with routine statistics of the illiteracy of criminals, or of the majority of them. But those who make up these statistics with the view of upholding that pet theory of the influence of illiteracy in promoting criminality, mistake, as enthusiasts always do, an incidental circumstance of no material bearing in the case for a fact of primary significance. We admit that criminals are in a great measure illiterate, but it was not the want of literary training which made them what they are; for if literary training availed we should have no forgers, no public speculators, no genteel murderers, no invaders, in high stations, of the peace and honor of families; it was evil associations (from which even University men are not free); it was low habits of life, which, while they confined them to the society of other criminals, withheld them from all desire, or perhaps from all opportunity of acquiring knowledge; it was intemperance, against which the highest cultivation is no barrier; it was the absence of all moral restraint at home or elsewhere. It is one of these causes, or a combination of them, or causes of a like character, which operate in recruiting the criminal class. It is not the lack of rudimentary knowledge, as claimed by the theorists (public school men), which poisons the conscience of a man, and makes him who would otherwise have been a good citizen a criminal.

The most cultivated of the ancient nations were given up to sensuality, cruelty and selfishness, and the most cultivated people of modern times, without God and without religion, as the ancients were, will commit the like excesses; witness the atheists of the first French Revolution and of the more recent Paris Commune, whose leaders and many of whose tools were men of culture, and the great mass of whom were at least possessed of an ordinary education.

The illiterate class of any nation, if it be governed by moral ideas does not suffer in virtue from the lack of education. Individuals may be met with, even in this generally educated country (the civilization of which, by the bye, is fast undergoing a dry rot) whose humanity, tenderness and integrity are conspicuous, though they may not know a letter of the alphabet. If ignorance were necessarily allied to crime, this large number of persons should be occupants of the jails and penitentiaries of the land.

Surrounded as we are, here, by influences that in past years have educated nations and peoples, living in a country where education is a requisite in the political and social order, and to a great degree, in the moral order, also, let us never be drawn by a zeal for the cause we love, into fantastic and dangerous theories. Education has its proper place, and morals have theirs. But the former can never substitute the latter. Let us never be so base as to associate the ignorance of the virtuous poor with criminality, in any degree. If education and not morals were to make a man virtuous, the Divine Founder of our religion would never have selected ignorant fishermen as the world's Apostles.—'Georgetown College Journal.'

AN OLD THEORY DEMOLISHED.—It has always been supposed that illiteracy and crime went together, but statistics gathered from the official report upon the condition of the Blackwell's Island Penitentiary show a different result. The great majority of those confined in that institution during the past year were not illiterate persons. The total number of committals during the year was 2100. Out of this aggregate, no less than 1523 could read and write well; 119 were able to read and write imperfectly; and only 467 were entirely uneducated. That is to say, fifteen out of twenty criminals who were sent to the penitentiary from New York for offences against property or persons had received an educational training sufficient to lift them, if they had been inclined to be so lifted, into the ranks of the honest and intelligent workers.

AMERICA AND NEW ZEALAND CONTRASTED.

(Auckland News.)

It is a frequent practice with some colonists to disparage New Zealand, and loudly sound the praises of the "Great Republic." Those failing to succeed here imagine that, were they to reach the United States, they would find everything to their satisfaction. The land would be far superior to that of this colony; the climate would be all they could desire; and, in short, that there they would find everything which would be conducive to their material prosperity. A few years ago several settlers left this colony for America, in the hope of bettering their condition; and others, amongst them the late Mr Young, of the Grange, visited the agricultural districts of the States for the purpose of selecting a suitable place, should they find the prospects of success in America so much better than in New Zealand. Mr Young returned more satisfied with Auckland than he had formerly been. The best portions of California he found inferior to many districts of this province, and others who hastily left Auckland for America have since lived to regret their choice. The following extracts are portions of a private letter received by a gentleman in town from a relative who left this district and went to America a few years ago. They show plainly that the best land in America is inferior to the land here, either for farming or grazing purposes, and that the much vaunted prairie lands do not deserve the high character they have received. It will also be seen that Auckland has climatic advantages far superior to anything the writer has met with in America. The letter was written in April last from Olympia in Washington Territory, on the west coast of the United States. The writer says:—"Having spent some time this winter in looking for land, I am now able to give you a better description of the country than I was able to do before. The greater part of the land in Washington territory is very heavily timbered. You can find more heavy timber growing here upon one acre than you can on the same area of land in any other part of the world. The soil is very poor in general. There is very little good land; but you can find patches of good land along the creek and river bottoms. The prairie land has a gravelly soil. It is of no use for farming, and of very little use for grazing. There is good grass growing on the prairies before they are stocked, but when they are stocked with cattle or sheep the grass dies out. There were a few good prairies with pretty good land, but they were of small extent, and have been taken up some time ago. They were covered with fern before they were taken up. Where I was looking for land this winter is the best land in the territory west of the Cascade Range. The Cascade Range is a continuation of the Sierra Nevada that runs through California. The best land here is on the creek and river bottoms, and is covered with timber, not pine timber, but maple, alder, and ash. The pine land is of no value for farming purposes. There are places to take up with very fine timber upon them, but they are being fast taken up. In a few years all the good farming land will be taken up. Where I was looking for land this winter is called the best grazing land west of Cascade Range. There is very little timber upon it, but it is situated too far from market to grow grain profitably. The climate is not very cold. There is not much frost and snow, but the winters are very wet. The stock live here throughout the winter without being housed. The summers are very fine, but there is often frost late in the spring that does a great deal of harm to the crops. The climate of British Columbia is about the same as it is here. There is a railroad being built through Washington Territory. It is a continental railroad, and the terminus is not far from here. This line will be about 2,000 miles long. The Government gave the Company every other section of land for 20 miles back on each side of the road, to help to have it built. The Government land on each side of the line of the railroad is open for settlement. You can take up, under the Homestead Act, 80 acres or pre-empt 160 acres. Anyone taking up a homestead has to live on it for five years before getting the title, which will cost him about £3 for fees, the Government giving the land. You can pre-empt 160 acres by paying 2½ dollars (10s) per acre, and living on it six months, after which you can get the title to it. The railroad company sell their land at from 2 to 10 dollars per acre. Outside the railroad limits you can homestead 160 acres by living on it for five years, and paying 15 dollars (£3) for fees; or you can pre-empt 160 acres by paying 1½ dollars (5s) per acre. The Government of the United States do not allow the monopolist to buy up all the Government land as they do in New Zealand. The largest quantity one can buy here is 160 acres. The Northern Pacific Railroad goes through the Territories of Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Dakota, and the State of Minnesota.