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## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

### GODLESSNESS AND ITS ACCOMPANI- MENTS.

ONE of the chief addresses delivered at the German Catholic Congress recently held at Chicago was that on the school question by the Rev. Father Jessing. The rev. speaker examined the subject from various points of view dealing with it in a very able and convincing manner. The lecture, indeed, would be worth quoting as a whole, with the exception, perhaps, of certain portions which treated of the use of the German language by the children of the nationality in question, and which might be looked upon as scarcely of much interest to the general reader—although the matter involves much that is of importance, and is one besides in which it is difficult to see how any one can withhold his sympathies from the people principally concerned in it. Points of more general importance however abounded and the consideration of them cannot but prove useful.—The manner in which, for instance, the speaker contrasted the action of the Church with that of the modern State in dealing with the rights of parents was especially remarkable. He cited St. Thomas in proof that the interference complained of by Catholics was unjustifiable, taking in illustration the argument of the Angel of the Schools against the lawfulness of forcibly baptising the children of Jews—by which an injustice would be done to the parents who would thus lose the control over their children to which they had a right. The Saint further appealed, said the rev. lecturer, to the custom of the Church, showing how, even when under Constantine and Theodosius she was most powerful in the state, she never practised such a method of baptism.—“Thus St. Thomas,” he concluded, “plainly teaches that parents have an intangible right to bring up their own children according to their own will, and that consequently anyone, encroaching here upon the will of parents, would be guilty of violating natural law.” We know, however, the very different manner in which the modern state claims the right to act—and the grievous oppression, taught us by personal experience, that arises when such an usurped right is called into action. The lecturer went on to show how the results to society generally gained by the oppressive system against which he was protesting were by no means commensurate with the method used or the expectations that had been formed.—The schools, he said, from which religion had been excluded were found by experience to be accompanied by a very deplorable state of society. Crime of every kind was increasing daily and penitentiaries and insane and idiotic asylums were constantly needing enlargement. “The very great majority,” said the lecturer, “of all these people, who by their crimes are bidding defiance to all divine and human laws, are very accomplished people, but it has not been the heart which has received such culture, but only the head. They have not been wanting in matters of knowledge, in shrewdness and smartness, but they are altogether void of piety, virtue and religion, and thus the principle becomes true, that education without religion is most hurtful to human society.”—He then went on to quote figures in support of what he had advanced, but here we shall not follow him. We find the matter more copiously treated in an address lately delivered by the Hon. Zach. Montgomery, a veteran opponent of the godless system, and from him we shall borrow a little. Mr. Montgomery's authority is the States Census reports. Basing his calculations on these, therefore, he tells us that whereas, in 1850 the United States possessed some 3,642,694 school children, educated at an annual expenditure of 16,162,000dols there were only 4326 native whites criminals or 1 to every 4,001 native whites; in 1880 with 9,946,160 school children and a school expenditure of 96,867,534 dollars there were 20,377 native-born white criminals or one to 1,254 native whites. “And whoever,” says Mr. Montgomery, “will investigate the facts officially gathered into our United States Census Reports will find that, as a rule, throughout this country, the increase or diminution of crime, has borne a direct proportion to the increase or diminution of expenditure for State-governed schools.” “This,” he adds, “looks like a startling proposition, but the most startling thing about it is its incontrovertible truth.” And if the States be taken separately the results will be found the same. But more particularly is this to be noticed with regard to New England, where the godless system was first

introduced and which has generally been boasted of as the moral not less than the historical garden of the country. Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine—everywhere the same results are found—and as it is in New England so is it in New York. “Let us,” says Mr. Montgomery, “test the relative merits of the State and parental systems by one more example. We will take Virginia and Massachusetts as fairly demonstrating the comparative results of the two systems. Down to the time of the late war, Virginia never had a State-governed system of education, and in 1860, after more than 200 years' trial of her parental system, she had but 1 native white criminal to every 6,566 people. But ever since the year 1647 down to said date (1860), Massachusetts had trained her youth under her public system. And against Virginia's 1 native white criminal for every 6,566 people, Massachusetts had 1 native white criminal for every 649, a difference of more than 10 criminals to one against the State-governed system. And in the meantime Virginia had given us Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of American Independence: She had given us Patrick Henry and Henry Clay, America's two greatest orators. She had given us a Washington to lead her armies of the Revolution to battle and victory; she had given us both Scott and Taylor, who led our victorious troops into the Mexican capital and added a new empire to our already vast dominions. Out of fifteen presidents Virginia had given us seven, beginning with Washington and ending with Taylor, while Massachusetts had given but two, and those two had been educated under personal control.” If, then, Father Jessing has shown us the injustice inflicted on the parent by withdrawing the child from his control, as the State does wherever the godless system is established—at least, so far as the sincere Christian parent is concerned, Mr. Montgomery shows the fitting results of injustice. He makes it plain that the country where godlessness prevails lies under a curse.

WE really are afraid that the peculiar line taken MISSION WORK in some instances, by the zeal of the dear missionaries, is hardly calculated to spread the gospel light abroad quite as fully as might be expected. The enemy, we find have here and there recently been given occasion to blaspheme. But then, perhaps, they did not rightly understand the nature of the privileges that godly souls enjoy. Here, however, is a case in point, and as we can only bring to its examination the judgement of the benighted Papist, we would gladly hear it explained by some less darkened mind. We take our information from a recent number of the *Néo-Calédonien*. We are told, then, that some few years ago, the chiefs of Tanna sold to the New Hebrides Company their volcano, and recently a party of visitors went to see the wonders of the place. They found their explorations impeded in certain places by the natives and the explanation given was, that although it was admitted that the Company had purchased the volcano, they had not bought one grain of the sulphur produced by it. In proof of this, a document was produced in which the chiefs concerned refused to let any foreigner touch their sulphur, and which was signed, as it had been written, by the missionary of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia, Watts. In this document, moreover, a demand was made for payment for sulphur removed, at the rate of four or five thousand francs a ton. But lest we should give offence to the sensitive, we shall quote the comment made by our contemporary the *Néo-Calédonien* in the original.—Says our contemporary in his Popish way and un-sanctified and foreign lingo—*La bible presbyterienne, dans ses rapports avec les papistes, veut le talmeud à l'égard des Gokim*. Our contemporary again explains how the *révérend* MacDonald, being evidently an apostle of a big and comprehensive nature, and taking it upon him in the largeness of his heart to direct the fencing of the plantations of the natives against the inroads of the Company's cattle managed to include in his enclosure a quantity of land belonging to the Company. The agent, says our contemporary, did not hesitate a moment about breaking down the fence, and MacDonald cries out to the four winds of heaven that French papists have neither faith nor law. And this cry, it was, moreover, which especially reached the ears of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, through the report of the Victorian Government. The Protestant missionaries, writes our contemporary again, have rooted out of the manners of the natives cannibalism, infanticide, suttees, and some other atrocious customs where their influence has been felt in all its strength. But apart from these negative virtues, we hardly see what moral or social