

A brilliant and intimate friend of ours—a French university professor, M. Leblanc—once sent to M. Louis Veuillot an article for publication in the latter's well-known Catholic newspaper, the 'Univers', of Paris. Veuillot, who was himself an execrable writer, perused the article, and then penned to Leblanc the following communication: 'My dear M. Leblanc,—You have destroyed the dream of my life. For years I have been happy in the thought of being the worst writer in France. Your letter and article have shattered my darling illusion.—Yours in sorrow, Louis Veuillot'. But university professors and journalists do not monopolise the 'sign of genius'. Many authors share the gift—or the defect, as the case may be. Cardinal Newman (some of whose letters we have seen) wrote in a small, neat hand that looked almost like Greek. Miss Bradton, the novelist, supplied the printers with beautifully written 'copy' judging by a specimen that once met our eye. But the handwriting of many others was, from the printer's point of view, the abomination of desolation—something to give a lurid significance to the office which used to be known as that of 'the printer's devil'. The great writer, Paley, was a sore tribulation to the printers who set up his 'Evidences' and his other works; for his a's, e's, o's, n's, u's, and w's were identical in form (or formlessness)—and his k's were like his n's. Some of his manuscript, still extant, is, we understand, quite illegible.

Horace Greely, the king of American journalists in his day, could not read his own manuscript. Dean Stanley's handwriting was fearfully and wonderfully made. Charles Dudley Warner, the noted American author, was likewise, both as journalist and 'book-maker', a great trial to compositors. In his interesting volume of 'Reminiscences', he tells a story in point, the scene of which is laid in the American Civil War of the sixties. Warner was at the time editing a daily paper at Hartford. It was in the early days of his career, and in issue after issue he was trying hard to pump patriotism, at high pressure, into the souls of his readers. One day a type-setter came into his office from the composing-room and planted himself squarely in front of the editorial chair.

'Well, Mr. Warner', said he, 'I have determined to enlist'.

Warner's heart was raised. A feeling of pride surged through him as he declared that he was glad to see that the man had felt, and responded to, the call of patriotic duty.

'Oh, it isn't that', replied the compositor, 'but I'd rather be shot than try to set any more of your copy!'

A 'Work' that Failed

Hope told a flattering tale to sundry simple and well-meaning souls in England when, a few years ago, an English Nonconformist leader discovered, out of the 50,000 or more Catholic clergy in France, two or three who (as the 'Ave Maria' puts it) 'had lost their standing and their breviaries'. The reverend preacher's discovery was hailed as a 'movement' among the Catholic clergy in France 'away from Rome'; the captured ex-clerics (real or alleged) were paraded before an admiring crowd in a London lecture-hall; and a society was formed, under the title 'Work for Priests', to gather in the rich harvest of clerical secessionists that (it was confidently stated) were ready to fall into the arms of the Reformed denominations. The action of the Separation Law, and the bitter poverty into which it plunged great numbers of the French clergy, should (one would have thought) have brought to the 'Work for Priests' a great accession of brands saved from the burning. 'But', says the 'Ave Maria', 'instead of bringing a boom to the "Work for Priests"', Separation seems to have brought its deathblow. For the 'Temoignage', the organ of the Church of the Augsburg Confession, has just announced that the so-

ciety has ceased to exist. It has died of inanition—'the sympathy of the Churches' was wanting, and the necessary 'sacrifices' would seem to have been too heavy to be borne. In this the committee has seen an indication of the will of Providence'.

Corporal Punishment

Artaxerxes had offending nobles unrobed and their clothes whipped in his presence. The offenders themselves escaped with a whole skin. Acting on a somewhat similar principle of vicarious punishment, Charles I., of England, had his 'whipping-boy'—a page who was soundly thrashed whenever the young princes of the royal household committed a fault or folly that was adjudged deserving of corporal punishment. The old schoolmaster, however, was no believer in the principle of Charles and Artaxerxes. With him, each back had to bear its own burden—and the motto with a dual meaning ran: 'Palmam qui meruit ferat—Let him that has earned the "palm" bear it'.

The whole question of corporal punishment in the schools (both primary, public, and reformatory) has lately been much agitated in New Zealand—both in and out of the courts. In New York, educationists are also wrestling with the problem. In 1874 the rod was 'spared'—put quite aside, indeed—in the schools of Manhattan and the Bronx. In 1904 their example was followed in the schools of Brooklyn, and if 'the whining schoolboy' crept 'unwillingly to school' in Greater New York for some years past, it was not from terror of strap or tawse of cane. But now his future comfort hangs in the balance. For, after their experience of the gentler ways of moral suasion alone, a special committee of the Board of Education has (says the 'S.H. Review') recommended 'that opinion that corporal punishment should be permitted in the public schools in extreme cases only, under strict regulations, and that it should be administered by the principal with the written consent of the parents; or else by a parent in the presence of the principal. Where parents refuse to give their consent or refuse to punish a child themselves in the presence of the principal, the committee believes that the principal should at once report such child to the City Superintendent for suspension, and when suspended the child should be sent to a truant school or a school for incorrigibles. The report holds that the knowledge on the part of the child that there is punishment provided for persistent disorderly conduct will to a great degree prevent the necessity for its use.'

All this curiously reminds one of the experience of some of the cantons of Switzerland, which, after some years' experience of the abolition of capital punishment, restored the hangman to his place and made the gallows once more the last argument of the law. We rather think, however, that the well-regulated families, with parents of the right sort, the need of a resort to corporal persuasion should rarely arise. And in Catholic schools, with their religious atmosphere, there exists a great working force in favor of industry and good order and gentle manners. Some people's goslings are all swans and their broomsticks Apollo Belvederes. But alack, not all parents are of the right sort, and not all children are of the cherubine sort that, in the good stories, die young. 'Indiscriminate cuffing and pounding of children', says the 'S.H. Review', 'is to be at all times deprecated, and we are glad that the day is gone by when a box on the ear was considered the most effective way to make a boy mind his p's and q's, but there is, as this committee's report shows, a decided reversion of public opinion in the matter of corporal punishment. It is beginning to be suspected that the complete abolition of the rod was the result rather of sentimentalism than of sound sense. It is undeniable that there are numbers of boys—and girls, too—in the public schools who can not be appealed to

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