

The young Earl—for he is only 32 years old—has had a varied career, not altogether free from adventure. He has been an officer of volunteers, actor, racing-man, newspaper editor, war correspondent of the *Daily Mail* in South Africa, the author of the book, *Twice Captured*. One of the adventurous nobleman's captures occurred during French's flanking movement before Johannesburg. It was effected by one William Dwyer, a Tipperary 'boy'—a naturalised citizen of the Transvaal Republic. Dwyer, with all his countrymen's love of a fight, had escaped from hospital where he had been 'down' with fever, and contrived to get to the front just in the thick of the 'divarshun.' Commandant Grobler, however, ordered him out of the firing line and sent him to take two mule wagons towards Pretoria. 'Dwyer started,' says the narrative, 'in command of about six Kaffirs, and, coming to Nelsfontein, noticed three horsemen away out on the veldt. He made the Kaffirs lash the mules, and got behind a kopje. In the meantime he placed himself in a position in the road to command the entrance between the hills, and the horsemen came trotting along, unconscious of a "hold-up," and congratulating themselves on being the first to enter Pretoria. When Dwyer yelled "hands up," up they went; "dismount," and down they came; "forward," and they went forward, with Dwyer in possession of the horses. Dwyer then put Lord Rosslyn and his companions on a wagon, and brought them to Pretoria a week before the occupation by the English.'

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'The system with which he proposes to break the bank at Monte Carlo, is,' says the *Otago Daily Times* 'according to his own conviction, infallible. It is of his own invention entirely, and he has been perfecting it for some years. To raise the necessary sinews of war, he had recourse to various private friends, before whom he gave an exhibition of 20,000 coups, with a view to convincing them that his system is infallible. The authorities, however, rather welcome men with systems at Monte Carlo. Hitherto the bank has not suffered, but the merry invaders have broken themselves on the wheel, Ixion-like. The lie has never yet been given to the old punning motto of Monte Carlo: *Le noir perd, le rouge perd, mais le Blanc toujours gagne.*' However, if Earl Rosslyn has really invented a system he may retrieve the fortune that he lost on the turf and—what is alone to the purpose—may close the doors and put up the shutters of the greatest gambling hell on earth.

### Monte Carlo.

Monte Carlo is the tiny capital of a microscopic eight-square-miles principality that is circled round about by the protecting arms of France and bathes its feet in the blue waters of the Mediterranean. Its population consists of some 15,000 souls, and they are protected by a standing army of 75 officers and men all told. The gaming-tables of Monte Carlo have brought to the miniature State fortune—and fame of a sort that is not usually sought after. They are the property of a joint-stock company, who hold from the Prince of Monaco a lease of the notorious Casino and grounds till the year of grace 1947. The gambling rooms have close on half a million visitors every year. The Monaco budget, as published in the *Statesman's Year Book*, gives an idea of the manner in which the ever-hopeful gamblers—despite elaborate and infallible systems—are fleeced for the benefit of the lessees of the Casino. The income from the gaming-tables was, in 1899, £980,000. Out of this the company expended on the Casino, its management, repairs, etc., £214,000; the annual payment of £50,000 to the Prince; £50,000 for free theatre and orchestra; £24,000 for what are euphemistically termed 'press subventions'; and various charges, £40,000; 'The balance available for dividend and interest,' says the *Statesman's Year Book*, 'was thus £660,000. The capital of the company consists of £1,200,000 in 60,000 fully paid-up £20 shares, so that the total amount distributed among the shareholders was at the rate of £11 per share.'

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The 'press subventions' consist (says an authority on Monaco) of 'hush-money to many newspapers (chiefly Parisian) to suppress hostile criticisms, unpleasant facts, suicides, etc.' Thirty-five to forty of the festive visitors put an end to their days each year in Monte Carlo. And yet each year we find an item of £4000 or so paid 'for the prevention of suicide'—a thing of which, for obvious reasons, the Casino proprietors have an extreme dread. The entry is, at first sight, somewhat puzzling, especially as it is quite apart from the sum spent in assisting to their homes broken gamblers, each of whom had gone to the principality in the hope of 'bursting the bank at Monte Carlo.' The explanation may, perhaps, be found in the story—which will bear repeating—told some years ago of a 'broth of a boy' from the Green Isle, who had contrived one night to lose his last shilling within the gilded halls of the Casino. With despair in his eye, he strode into the Casino gardens, drew a revolver, presented it to his face, fired, and fell. There was a patter of hurrying feet. Two dark figures were promptly on the spot. They swiftly thrust their hands into the pockets of the prostrate form, as hastily

dashed out of sight again. They had scarcely gone when the 'dead corpse' of the Hibernian arose, stuffed his hands into his pockets, found them well lined with bank-notes, and went his way rejoicing. The suicide was a mere ruse—the gambler having fired over, not into, his head. The two dark figures were officials of the company who had selected this mode of leading the public to believe that the frequent suicides which disgrace Monte Carlo are not brought about by losses at the gaming tables. So, at least, the story runneth. And we content ourselves with setting it down as we received it.

## School Exams. and Prayer.

A CORRESPONDENT. 'Clericus,' complains in a recent issue of the *Austral Light*, of an abuse which, he says is, far too common, even in our Convent schools. He refers to a use of prayer which, for want of adequate limitation, is no longer legitimate, and is calculated to weaken the faith of the children, as well as to prejudice the efficiency of the schools. Children are induced to make novenas, and to communicate, prior to an examination, in order to ensure favorable results. The correspondent avers that the children are given to understand, at least by implication, that some infallible efficacy attaches to devotional acts of the kind, and that the every day work of the school during the year contributes only in a very subordinate way to success at the examinations.

'Outis,' who presides over the 'Information Bureau' of our Catholic monthly, in commenting on the complaint of his correspondent says: 'I have myself noticed the abuse. I think it better, however, to point out the legitimate scope of prayer in the circumstances mentioned, before dwelling on the features which may cause it to resemble superstition. That will be best done by stating a few general principles.

I.—It is therefore quite legitimate to pray for temporal favors. The "Our Father," framed by Our Lord renders formal proof of this unnecessary. From some points of view, it indicates a more child-like and trusting faith to pray for temporal than for spiritual goods. The latter are evidently God's free gift: the former, we are tempted to imagine, depend on our own industry.

II.—All prayer for temporal favors should be accompanied by at least the implied condition—"If it be according to the will of God." The necessity of this arises from the fact that we are very apt to pray for things which seem good, though God may see that they would be hurtful. To cull two examples from thousands we might draw upon—failure in a law suit and disablement in battle were the respective occasions of giving to the Church St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Ignatius. In the Alcibiades of Plato, that great man leaves us this remarkable prayer:—"Great God! grant us that which is good, even when we do not ask for it, and refuse us that which is evil, even though we should pray for it."

III.—From the last principle it follows that prayer for temporal favors is not infallible in its efficacy. This does not mean that God does not always hear our prayers. But He often gives a greater spiritual gift, while refusing out of the love he bears us, the seeming temporal good for which we make petition.

IV.—Where God supplies a natural means of attaining a particular end, it is His will that it should be made use of, at least under normal conditions. In this case the function of supernatural help is to assist nature, or to render the circumstances favorable for the most efficacious working of the natural instrument.

Now, if it be asked, in view of these principles, what is the legitimate scope of prayer as a preparation for school examinations, I should reply as follows:—First, the natural preparation for a school examination is diligent application on the part of the pupils coupled with skilful teaching on the part of the staff. To expect prayers on the eve of an examination to supply the want of these conditions would be to expect a miracle. Prayer is always to be commended as a companion and aid to study, that the mind of the pupil may be aided to absorb knowledge more readily, and that the study itself may get, through the Divine assistance, a wise direction. The function of prayer on the eve of an examination is not to secure favorable results out of proportion to the knowledge actually communicated during the year. For, in the interests of true education, this would be undesirable, while it would be contrary to the normal workings of Providence to expect it. The following results, however, might with perfect propriety, be sought from prayers offered for a successful examination:—

(1). That the pupils might not appear at a disadvantage owing to nervousness

(2). That they might not be injudiciously questioned so as that their knowledge should seem less than it really is.

(3). Speaking generally, that their wits should be sharpened so that they might do justice to themselves and their teachers.

From all this it will readily be seen that the abuse complained of by 'Clericus,' lies in the failure to instruct children regarding the fallible character of prayer for a temporal end, and in the creation in the juvenile mind of the idea that prayer can supply the want of hard work and scientific teaching. The neglect of the first weakens the faith of children in prayer, while the second fault favors superstition.

A parting word, lest I be misunderstood. By all means get the children to pray, to communicate, but always subject to the qualifications and limitations assigned above. It is worth remembering that the theologians hold with regard to Extreme Unction that it should be administered at an early stage of a mortal illness, as its health restoring powers are unable to supplement nature in a natural way. To delay its administration until the patient is *in extremis*, and then, expect restoration to health is to expect a miracle. Don't wait till the children are *in extremis*!