

THE JESUITS AND EDUCATION

By Thomas J. McCluskey, S. J., President Fordham University.

On August 7, 1914, the centenary of the restoration of the Society of Jesus was celebrated. These one hundred years of labor for God and for fellow-men show that the same noble spirit and untiring energy still marked the labors of the Jesuits. A continued persecution during these one hundred years by those opposed to the Catholic Church is the best testimony of the recognized efficiency of the work done by the Society of Jesus, because their activities were so straight against what most opposed the Church and the establishment of Christian civilization, and the first attack in this warfare is always directed against the Jesuits.

In 1773, the enemies of the Jesuits, through the Bourbon kings, forced the Pope, by the threat of schism, to suppress the Society of Jesus. Under this coercion Clement XIV signed the Brief of Suppression. The brief mentions the allegations brought against the society. It does not judicially approve them. For the sake of peace the Pope suppressed the Jesuits and dissolved an organization of great teachers and zealous missionaries. The works the Jesuits had accomplished remained the everlasting monument of their ability, devotedness and loyalty. At the word of the Vicar of Christ their organization dissolved. Like their Divine Master, they were "Obedient unto death," they were not annihilated they continued to work individually. As a distinguished writer has put it: "Even after the dissolution of the Society, like the bones of the Prophet Elshah, they wrought miracles of usefulness even in the grave."

The suppression of the Jesuits smoothed the way for the French throughout the world. At the time of the suppression they had six hundred and nine colleges and one

under their direction. Last I might be accused of undue appreciation of the Jesuits, I shall note their success in the words of non-Catholics, who cannot be accused of any special fondness for the Society. Macaulay in his "History of England" (Vol. II, Chap. 6) says: "The liberal education of youth passed almost entirely into the hands of the Jesuits, and was conducted by them with conspicuous ability. Enmity itself was compelled to own that in the art of managing and forming the tender mind they had no equals." Ranke in his "History of the Popes" (Vol. I, Book 5) wrote: "It is found that young people gained more with the Jesuits in six months than with other teachers in two years; even Protestants removed their children from distant schools to place them under the care of the Jesuits." Bancroft in his "History of the United States" (Vol. III, Chap. 20) says: "The cloisters of the Jesuits became the best schools in the world." Lalande, the famous astronomer, thus expressed his grief at the suppression of the Jesuits: "The blindness of those who suppressed the Society of Jesus harrows my soul. Mankind has irretrievably lost, and will never recover, that precious and marvellous union of twenty-two thousand men devoted incessantly and disinterestedly to the functions most serviceable and dearest to humanity. Retirement, frugality and the renunciation of pleasure constituted in that society the most harmonious concert of science and virtue. I had personal knowledge of them; they were an assemblage of heroes for religion and humanity. The mention of a Jesuit will ever awaken feelings of admiration in my heart and soul." Even the infamous V. Itaire, whom the Jesuits educated to great intellectual perfection without having the influence they had hoped on his morality, wrote in his memorable letter of the 7th of February, 1746, while opposition was being aroused against the Jesuits in France: "During the seven years that I lived in the house of the Jesuits, what did I see amongst them? The most laborious, frugal and regular life; all their hours divided between the time they spent on us and the

exercises of their austere profession. I attest the same as thousands of others brought up by them, not one will be found to contradict me. Hence I can never cease wondering how anyone can accuse them of teaching corrupt morality." The best testimony of what they can do is in the intellectual and moral men they have trained. They educated poets like Calderon, Tasso, Corneille, Moliere and Fontenelle; orators like Bossuet and Bourdaloue; scholars like Galileo, Descartes, Buffon, Lippius, Muratori and Montesquieu; statesmen like Richelieu; generals like Wallenstein, Tilly and Condé. They trained saints like St. Francis Xavier, St. Aloysius, St. Francis de Sales and St. Peter Claver. They gave to the church Popes like Benedict XIV and Leo XIII. In our own time they have sent forth from their colleges men who have risen to the highest positions in Church and State, and who have achieved great distinction in the domain of science and literature. At the word of Pope Pius VII the society came forth from its grave. On August 7, 1814, the Jesuits started on a new career of efficiency and service in the cause of education and religion. They had now to work under altered and unfavorable conditions. Their great colleges, their well equipped libraries, laboratories and observatories, were all confiscated or destroyed. The intolerant persecuting spirit of the so-called Liberals—the spawn of the Revolution—is yet dominant in France, Portugal, Spain and Italy, as well as in some of the republics of Latin-America. Though Catherine, the Empress of Russia, and Frederick the Great of Prussia insisted on keeping the Jesuits in their dominions after the Brief of Suppression, the society has since been expelled by the Catholics of the local Centre Party in the Reichstag have many times passed the bill for the recall of the Jesuits, but the Lutherans in the Bundestag still keep out of their fold the Jesuits who so often crushed them by trenchant and unanswerable arguments. In spite of all this opposition they

have made progress and have achieved magnificent results. After this one century, and that a century of relentless persecution, their numbers have reached seventeen thousand. They have universities, colleges, churches and missionary stations all over the world. The plan of studies has been revised to meet the necessities of the time, but the methods and the sound principles of the famous Ratio Studiorum have been retained. Considerable liberty is given to those at the head of the society in the different countries to adapt the plan of studies to the necessities of the time and place. While the classic Latin and Greek remain in the courses of the Jesuit high schools and colleges, history and mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, geology, political economy, logic, ontology, cosmology, psychology and ethics have also their place in the curriculum. In the United States the Jesuits have ten universities, thirty-eight colleges and fifty high schools, with an attendance of nearly twenty thousand students. Dr. Barnard, the first United States Commissioner of Education, wrote in "The American Journal of Education" (vol. V, p. 215): "The past as well as the present organization of the schools of the Jesuits, the course of instruction, the method of teaching and discipline are worthy of profound study by teachers and educators who would profit by the experience of wise and learned men."

In the system of the Jesuits, the object of education is the full and harmonious development of the intellectual, moral and physical powers of the student. It is not, therefore, mere instruction or the acquisition of varied information, although instruction and the acquisition of knowledge necessarily accompany any right system of education. But the gaining of knowledge or varied information is a secondary or concomitant result of education. The Jesuit system aims at developing the moral and intellectual faculties of the student and sending forth to the world men of sound judgment, of acute and formed intellect and upright and manly conscience. Since men are not made better citizens by the mere accumulation of knowledge

he reads, illuminate all that is noble, expose what is base and give to the true and the false their proper light and shade. The purpose of the Jesuit teaching is to lay a solid foundation in the mind and character for any special or professional superstructure, as well as for the upbuilding of moral, civil and religious life.

PRACTICAL MIND-BUILDING

Training in the manual arts develops the creative tendencies of the human brain. It stimulates the mental organism to exertion along inventive and constructive lines. It takes educational form when applied visibly and physically, under the influence of tuition, rule and example. Manual training, as taught in the schools, means the illustration of principles, its psychological effect is to coordinate the hand with the eye. Manual training cultivates the motor activities of the child, but manual training of itself must not be expected to reach a specific point in the mental equipment of the child. It is intended only as a general means of stimulating the growth of certain faculties which are present in the child in latent or embryonic condition. When such faculties have become awakened and responsive, the next step in the process of their development lies in the opportunity to exercise the function of suggestion and of imitation.

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In this process there is also involved the negative sense of discrimination. The child is thus led carefully up to the point where it begins to think and to reason independently. The things that it desires mentally are expressed by its preferences; the things that it wishes to perform in a motor sense are shown by its proclivities, and finally by its physical actions. At this point stimulation and education join hands, and development

along specific lines with an ultimate object or goal in view commences. The child has discovered its powers and has asserted itself along lines of natural bent. The normal child will, after having reached this point in its development, generally become successful in that particular line of life or vocation to which it has attached itself. Philosophers have ever recognized the theories and principles of mental development hereinbefore depicted, but it has taken centuries and more for educators to evolve practical processes whereby such theories and principles might be made operative and utilitarian. Of late years it has slowly dawned upon the people that their children should be given assistance or guidance to enter upon and to perform those things which they are best fitted to perform, and in which proficiency will lead to efficiency, and efficiency to a successful livelihood.

Educators are now making haste to plan practical processes whereby the younger generation may receive the benefit of this old knowledge and truth which has so long been permitted to lie dormant and unapplied. Not until the economic conditions of nations demanded the cultivation of such processes of mental development was this obvious requirement met by the leaders in education. A great wave has spread over the length and breadth of this land. The vocational idea has become the principal item of thought and consideration, where only a few years ago, comparatively speaking, it was looked upon as one of the so-called "fads" of education and was regarded as impractical and superfluous. To-day the public school systems throughout the country are competing with each other to see as to which one

will make the best showing. Millions of dollars of public money are annually being expended by inexperienced though enthusiastic people in an effort to surpass their neighbors in the establishment of vocational training in the various systems. In the mad rush for fame and public approbation extravagant school plants have been acquired by public school systems, huge quantities of machinery have been purchased and the whirring of expensive motors and engines, the revolving of wheels and the noise of rapidly moving machinery that is fast becoming obsolete have been taken and mistaken as the exemplification of vocational training.

Attempts have been made to run schools as factories. Credit is claimed for making such schools contribute to their own support. A few lines of simple objects of a shabby character are made, and are continued to be made, in order to provide for a "factory output." Sometimes—in fact, often—these are produced with little regard for the educational value to the child of their production.

Children are obliged to engage in pursuits chosen for them without study and observation of their proclivities. Conditions of manufacturing are maintained which almost always be regarded as in conflict with the child labor laws. School buildings are loaded to the danger point with weighty machinery. Sometimes this is done far beyond the legal limit set for safety. Building rules and regulations are disregarded, and all of this is done in the name of "vocational training."

Society people and others who have acquired the "vocational fever" go to the schools to buy orders and bids for their children, all in the name of education. This is not real vocational training. It is only misguided and irresponsible educational enthusiasm and effescence.

It will probably remain for private enterprise as represented by the private schools to enter upon the field of "vocational training," and to properly exemplify its beneficial principles and scientific processes. It will probably be the private school that will be most successful in cultivating the child mind along vocational lines, in accordance with the true principles involved in this form of education.

INSTRUCTION. INSTRUCTION. INSTRUCTION. INSTRUCTION. INSTRUCTION. INSTRUCTION. INSTRUCTION. INSTRUCTION. INSTRUCTION.

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