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Our Curbstone Observer On Useless Complaining.

WE all have the habit, more or less, of complaining; we cannot help it, the things seem to be in our nature. The reason may be that we have a natural craving for happiness and that we are miserable whenever we find that the attainment of such happiness is not possible in this life. The result is that we complain about every little thing that tends to make life more thorny. It is in the order of things that we should complain about sickness, or pain of any kind. Not to do so is heroic, and we are not all heroes in that sense; nor is it to be expected of us. We are liable to complain of our losses. We naturally feel them keenly, and we are under the false, or rather vague idea that others likewise feel our misfortunes. We complain in the expectation of receiving sympathy—and all natures crave for sympathy. Others may, through politeness, or through interest, pretend to feel our losses; but we may rely that they do not, for they cannot; it is not reasonable to expect that they should. We again complain of our ill-success in life, and we equally suppose that our neighbors should be sorry for us and feel deeply the annoyance that is all our own. He does not; probably our success would mean his failure. At all events he will lose no hour of sleep on account of our hard luck. It is no use complaining to him, because he will just think us a bore, and wish to heavens that we would keep our troubles to ourself. And this habit of complaining grows upon one; it becomes a second nature and while it appears to be a cure, and while it appears to be a less than a source of fresh trouble, for it alienates friends, makes people fear contact with us, and exposes us to rudeness that is sometimes justifiable, but always hard to bear.

USELESS COMPLAINTS.—There is, however, another class of complaints that may not be so irritating for our neighbors, but which are absolutely useless. At this season, when we have just passed through a prolonged, unexpected and mostly unwelcome period of heat, drought and lack of vegetation, every second person had some terrible complaint about the weather. Last year we all complained because it was too cold and too rainy all year. We were praying for a cessation of the down-pour, and many of us looked around, but in vain, for some excuse to cast the blame upon some person. This year it is the reverse; we find it too hot, there is not sufficient rain, the dusty annoys us in the city, the lack of vegetation worries us in the country. And we complain about it all. Now what on earth is the use of complaining. We in Montreal are troubled about heat and dryness, the people out West are bothered about cold and snow. Both complain; and neither can change the situation. It is just as well for us to make up our minds at once that we are in the hands of Providence, that a superior and wiser Power governs the entire world, and that He knows better than we do what is best for the mass of the people, for the entire country. It may sometimes seem that a certain condition is absolutely injurious to every one; but that may be a way that Providence has of punishing the wrong-doings, the crimes, the sins that stain that special people and that particular country. So, in the end, it is needless to complain, and complaint only indicates a certain degree of weakness.

UNGENEROUS COMPLAINTS.—Not only are our complainings of a useless kind, in the majority of cases, but even they indicate a lack of gratefulness on some occasions. I remember once giving five cents to a beggar, on Bleury street; it was the only five cents that I possessed. I needed it very badly at the time, but I thought that probably he required it more than I did, and that it could procure him necessities far more important to him than what I could procure for me. Imagine

my feelings when the fellow launched into a series of complaints because I had not given him ten cents. How could I, were I ever so willing? I did not possess it. And I went home lacking the papers that I wanted badly that night, to look up advertisements, while I had only succeeded in making that man dissatisfied with me, and causing him to set me down as a mean person. I simply tell this incident by way of illustration—for there is not one of the readers who has not on some occasion or other gone through a like experience.

MALICIOUS COMPLAINTS.—There are also complainings that are of a more or less malicious character, in fact I might call them hypocritical. People there are who complain, when there is no need of so doing, no occasion, simply for the purpose of exciting bad feelings towards a certain other set of people, or towards some individual who has had the misfortune, wittingly or not, of offending them. They use this means of retaliating. They invent stories, as fast as a horse can trot, and they represent themselves as the innocent victims of some other person's wickedness. If they are employed some place they are constantly complaining of their masters or of some of their fellow-employees. They go from corner to corner, but not-holding every unwilling listener, and pouring into his ears the news of their sad condition. Yet, as a rule, they entirely depend for their very bread and butter upon those against whom they so complain. Sometimes these things come to the ears of the persons complained of, and they resent the same, by actually doing that of which they have been heretofore wrongly accused. I might go on for pages telling of the different manners in which this mania for complaint affects people and renders themselves and all who are around them miserable. There is not one of us who has not had, at some time or other, a certain good reason for complaining, but any of us who has allowed it to become a custom or habit cannot fail to recall how miserable it has made the one afflicted with it. Is there any praise greater than that which we sometimes hear of a person when it is said that he, or she, "never complains, bears it all with resignation, has a sweet, a lovable disposition?" I would beg of any one who is in the habit of constantly complaining to just reflect for a while, and to remark his complaining neighbor. See how it affects you to have a person always complaining to you; and then judge what effect your own chronic disease has upon others. I would not have it understood that I condemn the rightful exposition of one's difficulties or rights; to refrain from a complaint, under some circumstances, is equivalent to cowardice and mean submission; but that is only the case on rare occasions. I am here speaking of the general rule, and I am sure that all will agree with me that there is nothing they detest more than a complaining bore.

THE WAY TO BE WELL.

The Blood Must be Kept Rich and Pure and the Nerves Strong.

Good health is the most precious treasure any man or woman can have. But good health can only be had by keeping the blood rich and pure, and the nerves strong. If the blood is allowed to become weak and watery, the whole system is weakened and falls an easy prey to disease. There is no medicine can equal Dr. Williams' Pink Pills in keeping the blood rich and pure, and the nerves vigorous and strong. Every dose helps to create new blood, and by a fair use of the pills, pale, sickly people are made bright, active and strong. Here is proof. Mr. Robert Lee, New Westminster, B. C., says:—"Before I began using Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, my blood was in a very impure state, and as a result pimples that were very itchy, broke out all over my body. My appetite was feeble, and I was easily tired. My wife urged me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and I got half a dozen boxes. By the time I had used them I was completely restored to health, my skin was smooth and clear, and my appetite good."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills do not purge—they simply make pure, rich blood. That is why they cure such troubles as indigestion, neuralgia, rheumatism, anaemia, partial paralysis, St. Vitus dance, scrofula, erysipelas, and the ailments so common to women, young and old. Sold by all dealers or sent post paid, at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2.50, by writing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

Irish Scenery.

BY "CRUX."

WY the way I have come upon another of those delightful essays of Davis; I thought I had reached the last of them—but here is one that seems to me to surpass all the others in style, spirit and general appropriateness. It would be a pity not to include it in this series, as the whole would seem incomplete without it. What is here written belongs to all times, it is as applicable to-day as it was in 1845. Read it carefully, and see how English was then written by Irishmen.

We no more see why Irish people should not visit the continent, than why Germans or Frenchmen ought not to visit Ireland; but there is a difference between them. A German rarely comes here who has not trampled the heath of Tyrol, studied the museums of Dresden and the frescoes of Munich, and shouted defiance on the bank of the Rhine; and what Frenchman who has not seen the vineyards of Provence and the Bocages of Brittany, and the snows of Jura and the Pyrenees, ever drove on an Irish jingle? But our nobles and country gentlemen, our merchants, lawyers, and doctors—and what's worse their wives and daughters—penetrate Britain and the continent without ever trying whether they could not defy in Ireland the "ennui" before which they run over seas and mountains.

The cause of this, as of most of our grievances, was misgovernment, producing poverty, discomfort, and misrepresentation. The people were ignorant and in rags, their houses miserable, the roads and hotels shocking; we had no banks, few coaches, and, to crown all, the English declared the people to be rude and turbulent, which they were not. An Irish landlord, who had ill-treated his own tenants, felt a conscientious dread of all frieze-coats, others adopted his prejudices, and a people, who never were rude or unjust to strangers, were considered unsafe to travel among.

Most of these causes are removed. The people are sober, and are rapidly advancing to knowledge, their political exertions and dignity have broken away much of the prejudices against them, and a man passing through any part of Ireland expects to find woful poverty and strong discontent, but he does not fear the abduction of his wife, or attempts to assassinate him on every lonely road. The coaches, cars, and roads, too, have become excellent, and the hotels are sufficient for any reasonable traveller. (In the last sixty years, since Davis wrote, the railway systems introduced and the splendid modern hotels, all over the island, have made the situation still more desirable.) One very marked discouragement to travelling was the want of information; the maps were little daubs, and the guide-books were few and inaccurate.

(We will skip all that is said about the maps, Ordnance Index Map, and various guides, which came into existence half a century ago, for, to-day, the travelling public in Ireland is supplied with as good material as on the continent.)

And, now, reader, in this fine soft summer, when the heather is in bloom, and the sky laughing and crying like a hysterical bride, full of love, where will you go—through your own land or a stranger's? If you stay at home you can choose your own scenery, and have something to see in the summer, and talk of in the winter, that will make your friends from the Alps and Apennines respectful to you.

Did you propose to study economics among the metayers of Tuscany or the artisans of Belgium, postpone the trip till the summer of '45 or '46, when you may have the passport of an Irish office to get you a welcome, and seek for the state of linen weavers in the soft hamlets of Ulster—compare the cattle herds of Meath with the safe little holdings of Down, and the well-fought farms of Tipperary, or investigate the statistics of our fisheries along the rivers and lakes and shores of our island.

Had a strong desire come upon you to toll over the glacier, whose centre froze when Adam courted Eve, or walk amid the brigand passes of Italy or Spain—do not fancy that absolute size makes mountain grandeur, or romance, to a mind full of

passion and love of strength (and with such only do the mountain spirits walk) the passes of Glenmalur and Barmesmore are deep as Chamouni, and Carn Tual and Sleive Donard are as near the lightning as Mont Blanc.

To the picture-hunter we can offer little, though Vandyke's finest portrait is in Kilkenny, and there is no county without some collection; but for the lover of living or sculptured forms—for the artist, the antiquarian and the natural philosopher, we have more than five summers could exhaust. Everyone can see the strength of aviline, the vigor of color, and the effective grouping in every fair, and wake, and chapel, and hurling ground, from Donegal to Waterford, though it may take the pen of Griffin or the pencil of Burton to represent them. An Irishman, if he took the pains, would surely find something not inferior in interest to Cologne or the Alhambra in a study of the monumental effigies which mat the floors of Jerpoint and Adare, or the cross in a hundred consecrated grounds, from Kells to Clonmacnoise—of the round towers which spring in every barony—of the architectural perfection of Holycross and Clare-Galway, and the strange fellowship of every order in Athassel, or of the military keeps, and eastern pyramids, and cairns, which tell of the wars of recent, and the piety of distant centuries. The Etymology, Botany, and Geology of Ireland, are not half explored; the structure and distinctions of its race are just attracting the eyes of philosophers from Mr. Wyde's tract, and the country is actually full of airs never noted, history never written, romances never rescued from tradition; and why should Irishmen go wandering in foreign researches when so much remains to be done here, and when to do it would be more easy, more honorable, and more useful?

In many kinds of scenery we can challenge comparison. Europe has no lake so dreamily beautiful as Killarney; no bays where the boldness of Norway unites with the coloring of Naples, as in Bantry; and you might coast the world without finding cliffs so vast and so terrible as Achill and Sleive League. Glorious, too, as the Rhine is, we doubt if its warmest admirers would exclude from rivalry the Nare and the Blackwater, if they had seen the tall cliffs, and the twisted slopes, and the ruined aisles, and the glancing mountains, and the feudal castles through which you boat up from Youghal to Mallow, or glide down from Thomastown to Waterford harbor. Hear what Inglis says of the Avondu:—

"We have had descents of the Danube, and descents of the Rhine, and the Rhone, and of many other rivers; but we have not in print, as far as I know, any descent of the Blackwater; and yet, with all these descents of foreign rivers in my recollection, I think the descent of the Blackwater not surpassed by any of them. A detail of all that is seen in gliding down the Blackwater from Cappoquin to Youghal would fill a long chapter. There is every combination that can be produced by the elements that enter into the picturesque and the beautiful—deep shades, bold rocks, verdant slopes, with the triumphs of art superadded, and made visible in magnificent houses, and beautiful villas, with their decorated lawns and pleasure-grounds."

And now, reader, if these Kaleidoscope glimpses we have given you have made you doubt between a summer in Ireland and one abroad, give your own country "the benefit of the doubt," as the lawyers say, and boat on our lakes or drive into our glens, or walk our ruins, or wonder at the basalt coast of Antrim, and soften your heart between the banks of the Blackwater.

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This is a splendid opportunity to obtain a most interesting chronicle of the work of Irish Catholics Priests and laymen in Montreal during the past Fifty years.

Sobriety In Germany.

(By an Occasional Contributor.)

In "The Contemporary Review," a writer signing "J. L. Bashford," has a very exhaustive article, in which he deals with the question of sobriety in Germany. The contribution consists mainly of statistics and comments that have special and direct reference to the alcoholic question in that country. Its reproduction would be of little benefit for us, as conditions here and in Germany differ—both as to the past and the present. But there are remarks in the article, some of them quotations which find general application, and which merit our study and reflection. The immediate cause of the article, or rather foundation for it, was the 12th International Congress against alcoholism, held at Bremen, from the 14th to the 19th of April last. This was the first time that a German town was selected as a meeting place for the congress. The Congress met under the presidency of Count Von Posadowsky, Secretary of State of the Imperial Home office. The programme of papers to be read fills an entire page of the magazine in small characters, and solid.

We will make no attempt to enter into any details; but we wish to commence with an extract from the president's inaugural address. The remarks that fell from His Excellency may well be read carefully, because they apply to the use of strong drink in the British Isles, in the United States and even in Canada—two generations ago—as well as they do to Germany. He said, in closing:—

"At a time when human life afforded little intellectual recreation, when the majority of the people hardly ever left the spot where they were born, and therefore could assimilate no new ideas from the outside world, it is conceivable that people sought their diversion in the pleasures of drink, hoping thereby to snatch a ray of sunshine in the midst of the monotony of their narrow sphere of existence. But with other times have come other customs. The development of modern civilization affords manifold opportunities for mental rest and solace. Men's lives are no longer chiefly passed in the open air, but in closed rooms; whilst the gaily demands on the intellectual and physical elasticity of the individual have increased. Whereas, therefore, the physical power of resistance against the abuse of alcohol diminishes, the dangers accruing from the after effects thereof increase in intensity, not only for the individual, but also for very many of his fellow-men and fellow-workers. The way to combat the alcohol danger will depend upon the special character of each separate nation; general habits of life and climatic conditions are different in every country; but pleasure derived from outdoor amusements, and the amelioration of the dwellings of the poorer classes by which they can obtain a more comfortable home, will always serve as valuable means for supporting the struggle against the common foe. Legislation will only be able to supply a kind of assistance in an external, I might say in a mechanical form. The real and radical cure of the evil must, without interfering with the harmless enjoyment of life, emanate from the establishment of a higher standard of life amongst the people. Herein the better educated classes are confronted with a serious duty—namely that of acting as guides to the masses and of showing the nation the right road by their own example."

Two very strong points in our mind. Conditions have changed and what with generations gone past was tolerated, can find no recognition in our age; then, comes the subject of outdoor sports, athletics, games, and all such physical exercises and enjoyments which tend to efface all inclination for or unusual temptation to use strong liquors.

The author makes a comparative statement of alcoholism in various countries, which might be summarized, leaving out his array of figures in these words:—

"Compared with France, Russia, England and the United States, the consumption of spirits in Germany is just below that of France, and considerably more than in the other three countries mentioned. Up to comparatively recent years water was drunk by most persons in quite well-situated families in Germany, at table, and servants in general did not receive beer in service. This habit has been almost entirely abandoned."

Even children are now allowed beer, and servants everywhere ask for it."

And he adds this example:—

"The following accurate account of the consumption of beer on an autumn day at a garden restaurant outside the Academy Exhibition of Pictures, at Berlin—it was on Sedan Day, some fifteen years ago—will give an idea of what a thirsty Teuton can imbibe. Eighteen thousand visitors passed through the turnstiles that day, and 70,000 litres of beer—i.e., 123,200 pints—nearly seven pints a head were served out!"

The trend of the article is that Germany is awakening to the fact that the strength and manhood of the country are being sapped by liquor-drinking, and that there are efforts being made on all sides to destroy the evil, which Bismark called the "Diabolus Germanicus"—the German Devil. We cannot attempt in our limited space to touch upon the array of citations, opinions, statistics, and projected measures of a legislative character that the author sets before us. But there are a couple of passages which may serve to show to what a degree drink has wrought destruction in Germany, and how deep-rooted is the desire to efface it. We will take the following:

On March 18th last there was a discussion in the Prussian Diet in connection with the debate on the estimates as to what measures could be taken by the State against the abuse of alcohol. The Minister of Education, after informing the House that the Government had approved of the twelve propositions set forth last summer by Count Douglas and had taken administrative measures to put them into force, made the following remarkable and noteworthy statement:—

"But herewith only the first step has been taken for realizing the intentions of the proposer of these propositions. What must next be done, if effective and permanent assistance is to be rendered, must be left to the legislature to do. I should be glad if the coming legislative period would introduce such a Bill which I should characterize as a monumentum aere perennius. For, gentlemen, it cannot be denied that if the hand of reform be not soon brought to bear on this canker that is consuming the marrow of the German nation, we shall be confronted with conditions that will in sooth be lamentable. I have of late had an opportunity of speaking on the subject with doctors who are specialists on insanity. I have been assured that the increase of the percentage of those persons who have become insane from the immoderate consumption of alcohol has become quite terrifying in recent years."

In this connection we might say that Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, once said: "We should be able to empty nine-tenths of our prisons if we could make England sober." Quoting this sentence, in 1901, the Chief Public Prosecutor said at Gottingen:—"Though these words cannot be applied to the same extent in Germany, we are justified in saying them in regard to half our prisons." Here is a fine and clear summarizing of the entire situation, as far as Germany is concerned:

Although it be true that the consumption of spirits (Schnaps) is or the decrease in Germany, and that on the whole the better situated classes in the Empire drink less alcohol than formerly, it is to be feared that the customs of the universities in regard to beer have not appreciably changed, and that the middle and working classes have not as a body grasped to the full the significance of the excessive consumption of alcohol. It is thus well put by Dr. Wilhelm Bode: "People quite overlook the fact that modern drinking has nothing in common with the carousals of the Germans of olden times. The Germans of olden times never sat in a tavern, never smoked a cigar, and never turned night into day or knew anything about the drinks that people like to imbibe nowadays. The beer they learnt to brew from their Celtic neighbors in the West was not beer in our sense of the term, but more compared with the Russian Kwass. Beer made from hops has only been known of for about a thousand years; brandy (Brantwein) was only introduced in the 16th century. "It is quite true that in the days of the ancient Germans many of them were inclined towards intemperance, and in this way brought misery upon themselves, but the Germans ought not to be set up as a pattern for us. We should listen to the best of our nation; and we shall find that the noblest spirits, the best friends of our race, those who could best judge as to the wants of the people always stood up against this German drinking."