

Our Curbstone Observer

ON THE PATH OF THE DRUNKARD

HE first shall be last and the last shall be first. "A good beginning often makes a bad end;" "a bad start makes a hard finish." These are axioms that are more or less applicable, and possibly more or less true. But they come to one's mind on many occasions when the start and the finish in life are both before the eyes. There is an illustration, from "The Ram's Horn," over the title "A Questionable Beginning" often makes A Surprising Ending," and it represents a young man, dressed in the height of fashion, and standing with a glass in his hand; the second half of it shows a man in middle age dressed in tatters, with all the freshness of youth gone, and a bottle under his arm to tell the story. This from life, or it may be the result of illustration may have been drawn on artist's imagination; but be it either, it certainly represents in print that which I have seen a thousand times as I have walked the curbstone, especially on Saturday night. It brings back to my mind a painful event of last summer, and it recalls to me some sad experiences in this city, on more than one occasion. I will tell briefly of both.

A SAD EXPERIENCE.—It was in 1891, the year that Sir John A. Macdonald died. It was a hot day in June, and I was in the city of Ottawa. Parliament was in session, but a cloud of suspense hung over the place. At every hour bulletins came up from Ernscliffe to tell of the condition of the dying statesman. At last the fatal news came that Sir John was dead. I remember how, on that sixth day of June, under a broiling sun, hundreds came and went, each with an expression that told clearly a knowledge of the event that had taken place. In the afternoon, with a friend, I walked to Ernscliffe, in the expectation of having a look at the dead statesman. At the door a gentleman met me, and we entered into a lengthy conversation. He was about thirty, or may be a couple of years less in age; he was most elegantly dressed; all about him gave evidence of refinement, education, taste and prosperity—with bright hopes, and a brilliant career ahead. He had been a favorite of the departed statesman. He was a lawyer by profession. But I believe that his personal fortune, and his tastes, prevented him from practising his profession. He sought more the field of letters, of journalism. In a word, he was fine sentiments. I enjoyed that conversation and I felt that Canada would be the richer had she a few more such promising young men.

Twelve years almost went past, and last summer I was again at the Capital on the sixth of June. The day was not hot, as it had been in 1891, nor was there any abnormal excitement. Parliament was in session, but far different thoughts, cares and anxieties occupied the minds of men. About six in the evening, just as the big crowd was coming down from the Hill, I stood at the corner of Rideau and Sussex streets to await a friend. As I stood there, ever on the curbstone, a man brushed past me. He was in a fearful state of dilapidation. His hat was dinged in; his collar was open; his necktie was hanging over his left shoulder; his pants and coat were poor; treadbare and dirty; his glasses were broken, and evidently in the way; he was muttering to himself. I knew his voice—and that was all I did know. He passed on, staggering from side to side, and talking like a maniac to himself. I could not believe my eyes. Just then the one I was waiting for came along. I asked him if it could be possible that the tramp I had just seen was A. P.—of some years ago. He said yes. And when he saw the question in my expression, he answered it thus: "He struck a fearful gate some time ago. Champagne dinners and too much money had ended in a gin flask and beggary." How I felt hurt at the coolness with which one man could talk of another's downfall. One month later I saw in the "Star" an

account of A. P.'s death and of the grand funeral that his highly respectable friends gave him, and of the many regrets expressed. Living, they could do nothing for him; dead, they could at least bury him. Surely this was an illustration of the "Questionable Beginning," making a "Surprising Ending."

ONE SATURDAY NIGHT.—It was a Saturday night, in the fall of 1900, that I found myself, about ten o'clock, going along St. Lawrence street. I know of no place in the world where life, in all its phases and all its terrors, can be better seen than on St. Lawrence street, on Saturday night. Some of these weeks I will ask the readers to come with me for a ramble along that thoroughfare, between the hours of nine and twelve. But this time I only wish to tell of that special night. I came to a restaurant, on the left side of the street going up. I had business with the proprietor and I went in. At the counter stood a poor fellow, still young, even though he looked much more than forty. He had the appearance of shabby gentility. He was evidently educated and possibly had once been well-off. He was in the last stages of illness—of that horrid consumption that comes from drink. He had been having a solitary glass—and may be paid his last five cents for it. As he stood there in strange meditation, three young swells came in. They were full of life, activity, money and wine. They called for drinks and while being served they noticed this lone man. One of them invited him to join to quiz and joke him; to laugh at his hat, to ridicule the cut of his coat; to talk about his shoes, that were down at the heels. He stood it all, like a philosopher. I supposed that he was so far gone that he would have stood much more for the sake of the drink. But the moment the glasses were filled, and each of the others had his in hand, this poor fellow did and said that which I can never forget. He lifted his glass; then placed it back, still full, on the counter, and said: "I do not wish to drink this. I cannot have you pay for it. Keep your money till the day you are as I am, you will need it then, and know the value of it." The three laughed—but not a hearty laugh—and he said, as he turned away: "I, too, have laughed like that, just as I was entering this current—I have gone through the rapids, and I have no laugh left in me now; you are well started on the same current, you will soon be in the rapids, and after that you will not laugh."

Potato Yield in Europe

It will astonish most people to hear that 28,856,637 acres are annually under potato culture in Europe, and that the total yield therefrom is estimated at 2,329,211,560 hundredweight. The "Gardeners' Magazine" states that in the matter of area Russia occupies the highest position with 9,645,869 acres, Germany ranks next with 8,004,225 acres, and France occupies the third place with 3,818,378 acres. The potato areas in the other countries of Europe are as follows: Austria, 2,802,677 acres; Hungary, 1,477,164 acres; United Kingdom, 1,203,184 acres; Italy, 516,000 acres; Holland, 386,049 acres; Sweden, 381,973 acres; Belgium, 348,398 acres; Denmark, 133,387 acres; Norway, 90,661 acres; Roumania, 26,642 acres; Servia, 15,549 acres, and Bulgaria, 4,481 acres. In the matter of yield, Germany is first with 855,277,805 hundredweight and France third with 236,469,441 hundredweight. The yields of other countries are: Austria, 234,100,082 hundredweight; United Kingdom, 118,398,380 hundredweight; Hungary, 95,442,205 hundredweight; Holland, 77,929,500 hundredweight; Sweden, 54,821,800 hundredweight; Belgium, 47,083,147 hundredweight; Norway, 21,906,142 hundredweight; Denmark, 21,177,681 hundredweight; Italy, 13,818,293 hundredweight; Roumania, 2,495,314 hundredweight; Servia, 885,083 hundredweight and Bulgaria, 410,755 hundredweight. These figures illustrate the great difference in the yield per acre in the different countries. The United Kingdom, which is sixth in area, is fifth in yield, heading Hungary by nearly 23,000,000 hundredweight, although having an area of about 273,000 acres less.—Westminster Gazette.

LONDON'S TOWER.

(By An Occasional Contributor.)

Every nation of Europe has its monuments more or less ancient, and of them some date back to the twilight of fable. For example the mystic Round Towers in Ireland are of pre-historic origin. England does not possess relics and monumental piles of such antiquity; but she has many olden structures compared to which her palaces and prisons, as well as those of Europe in general are but of yesterday. Of these the Tower of London is one, and possibly the most noted. It would be very interesting to establish a comparison between it and some of the oldest structures on the continent. This is admirably done by Hepworth Dixon in his history of the Tower. Glancing over his pages we find some interesting data.

The west front of the Burg in Vienna, is the oldest piece of a palace on the continent—it dates from the time of Henry VIII. The Kremlin in Moscow, that was destroyed while Napoleon I. was occupying it, on his famous march into Russia, and the Palace of the Doge, in Venice, both belong to the fourteenth century. The Seraglio in Stamboul was erected by Mohammed II. The oldest part of the Vatican is the Borgia palace, which bears the name of its builder. The old Louvre was commenced in the reign of Henry VIII.; and the Tuileries in that of Queen Elizabeth. In the days of the civil war what is now the gorgeous palace of Versailles was a vast swamp, devoid of all structures. The Escurial dates from the sixteenth century. The Serail of Jerusalem is a Turkish edifice. The palaces of Athens, Cairo, and Teheran are all of more modern date. The same story he tells of the great prisons of Europe. With the sole exception of the Castle of St. Angelo, the great prison of Rome, compared with that one from which Ralph Flambard escaped in the year 1100, the year of the first crusade.

The contents of the Tower of London are as wonderful as its antiquity. Three million pounds worth of jewels are therein stored; and, with the exception of the Koh-i-Nor, all the State regalia is there. A huge crystal represents the Koh-i-Nor, for the present Queen wears the original as one her personal jewels. The jewel house was built there when the Royal Mint was constructed therein. There are no end of anecdotes connected with the Tower of London. One attempt had been made to steal the treasures therefrom. It was the notorious Col. Blood who made that attempt. The story of Blood's daring is thus told:—

"He had ingratiated himself with the deputy keeper of the jewels, had gone so far as to propose a match between his ward and the daughter of the official. All went smoothly. The bogus swain turned up to be inspected; with him three others and the colonel. They beat and gagged the old man, secured the crown, orb, and sceptre, and were just making off, when, by the strangest coincidence, the son of the jewel keeper arrived from Flanders."

"The scene which followed would do credit to the dramatist. The colonel, disguised as a clergyman, had the crown concealed beneath his cassock, and added his voice to the hue and cry. 'Stop the villain,' he roared. He had reached his horse before the imposture was discovered. When they made for him he turned and fired in the face of the men nearest him. The pistol missed fire, and the crown was saved; but not uninjured. Trampled in the mud, its jewels were all knocked out, and many of them lost. An apprentice found the great pearl, a scavenger the biggest diamond. 'Well, it was a gallant deed; it was to gain a crown,' was all Blood had to say as they carried him a prisoner to the dungeons. But no ill befell him for this and other treason. He had played for high stakes before, had attempted to surprise Dublin Castle and capture the Duke of Ormonde, and, that failing, had coolly laid his plans to seize and hang him when he returned to London. The outcome of all was that, confessing to having plotted to take his sovereign's life, he was granted a pension, and lived and died in the odor of sanctity at court."

Like all olden castles and prisons, there are parts of the Tower of London which are said to be haunted.

There is Martin Tower, for example, where they say the ghost of Harry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland walks. He had spent fourteen years of his life a prisoner in the Tower. He was called the "Wizard Earl." In his imprisonment he had for companions, Sir Walter Raleigh, who there worked on his mystic preparations whereby he hoped to discover and produce the Elixir of Life, and the three Magi, as they were called, Heriot, Allen and Torperley. These men discovered the spots on the sun before the eye of Galileo had detected them; and they were the first to discover the satellites of Jupiter. When the Earl returned home he founded a library from which half the learning of following years had been drawn. Of all that remains now to tell of these men who did so much for science, there is only a sundial, fixed by Heriot's own hands and standing as it stood in his day.

If any person were anxious to study closely the history of England, the terrible fate that befell rulers and princes, the effects of religious persecution, the ravages made by the so-called Reformation, and the ordeals through which Catholicity had to pass in that land for centuries, he could not do better than go to the Tower of London and there read the story in the solid stone.

Propagation of Lobsters

The Canadian Department of Fisheries have adopted a plan, devised by one of the leading packers of Nova Scotia, for the propagation of lobsters by natural causes. For the purposes of experiment a large pound was constructed at Fourchu on the Cape Breton coast, enclosing an area of 65,000 square feet of ocean, which gives a suitable environment. The seed lobsters were bought from the fishermen at a price in advance of what they would bring were they sold for canning purposes. These seed lobsters, with their eggs attached, were placed in the pound and kept there during the months of May, June and July, while the fishing operations were going on. At the close of the season, when the traps were all ashore, the lobsters, whose eggs at this time were within a few days of being hatched into young fry, were liberated along the coast to hatch their eggs in a natural way. At least 500,000,000 eggs were thus saved which under the conditions heretofore prevailing would have been destroyed. If only 2 per cent. of these eggs mature, 10,000,000 lobsters will be added to the lobster grounds of Cape Breton, against a total of 7,000,000 taken during the season. The pounds have been built at a cost of about \$5,000. They are surrounded by strongly built breastworks of logs and spruce. On the eastern or ocean side the breastworks are about three feet above high water mark. The piers are fifteen feet high and 165 feet long on the eastern side. On the western side the breastwork is above the high water level and is surrounded by woven wire. The northern side is about the same. On the southern side is the seashore. The pound is divided into three sections, the partitions consisting of strongly built piers and wire netting of a two-inch mesh. The bottom of the pound consists of sand, gravel, and rock. At spring tide there are from eight to ten feet of water in the pounds at high, and from three to five feet at low water. The apertures at the sides of the pounds are 1 1/2 to 2 inches wide and through these a continuous supply of pure salt water ebbs and flows from the ocean.

The lobsters are fed on herring, which are cut into small pieces about an inch square, and thrown into the pound every third day. Seaweed and kelp are also thrown into the pound at intervals, and are much relished by the lobsters. Perfect cleanliness is absolutely necessary, together with pure salt water for the successful impounding of the lobsters. Every day during the season the dead lobsters are removed. The average of dead for the season was as follows, monthly: May 2 1/2 per cent., June 3 1/2 per cent., July 4 per cent. The lobsters were distributed along the coast of Richmond, Cape Breton, and Victoria Counties. The condition of the lobsters at the time that they were liberated could not be improved on.

A CHURCH CURIOSITY.

A church curiosity is to be seen in the city of Heidelberg, Germany, where there is a building called the Church of the Holy Ghost, which is unique in its way, being the only church in the world in which the Protestant and Catholic services are held at the same time, a partition wall through the centre separating the two congregations.

ELECTIONS IN BELGIUM

There is perhaps no country in the world where parochial, or, as it is officially called, communal life is more intense than in Belgium. Except in the large towns where a number of parishes are grouped together to form a commune, and in the country where some parishes are so small that two are linked together to form a commune, the parish and the commune are convertible terms. The affairs of each commune are entrusted to a communal council presided over by a Burgomaster and a certain number of echevins or aldermen, all members of the Council. This organization undoubtedly works well in Belgium. Controlled and curbed to a limited extent by the central Government and by the Provincial Councils, the power of the communes is nevertheless extensive, and it is a power that can make itself felt in the general politics of the country. No Government can reckon without it. This was plainly seen a quarter of a century ago, when a Liberal Government tried to thrust on Belgium a system of godless education, and did its worst to destroy religion in the country. It was the resistance of the communes in no small degree that prevented the country from being tyrannised over by the Freemasons, and saved Belgium from falling into the present sad condition to which France is now reduced. The communal system of Belgium too satisfies the historical traditions of the people. All through its history the local governments of the country have been of far more moment to the daily life of its people than its central government, which was, until 1830, a government of strangers. The esprit du clocher is very strong in Belgium. A person of foreign birth long resident in some particular locality of the country is not seldom regarded by its people as less an alien than a new comer from some parish or commune only a few miles distant. A man of Ghent is looked upon as quite as much a stranger among the people of Burges as one who comes from across the English Channel or from across the French frontier.

Then again the power exercised by the communal authorities is one that comes home to the life of every inhabitant of the commune, that is seen and felt in each one's life. The Burgomaster who is the mouthpiece and the executive organ of each commune has, in the district over which he presides, it is hardly paradoxical to say, more power than the King. The large numbers of his subjects the King is a sort of personification of power, almost an abstract idea that simple minds cannot grasp. Many have never looked upon him, or if they have, the image stamped upon their minds is that of an individual in brilliant uniform, driven in a State carriage with servants in scarlet coats, and surrounded by a dashing escort of cavalry soldiers. But the Burgomaster is a real man of flesh and bones. In the splendid town hall of the cities or in the humbler communal-house of the villages, the Burgomaster is the chief figure. He is the channel of all favors shown to a commune by the central government. He is the head of the police, Order, cleanliness, paving, lighting, and above all education and the rates, are largely under his control. If flames ravage or floods overwhelm or epidemic decimate a commune, it is to the Burgomaster the people look to help them in their sorrow. And if happily there be occasions for public rejoicings, they expect him to share in their joys.

These considerations will show how great an importance was attached to the communal elections held the Sunday before last throughout Belgium. Half the members of every communal council were then, in accordance with the law, subject to re-election. Vacancies caused by death or retirement among the other half of each council had also to be filled up. In all the large towns and in many of the villages the contest was on strictly party lines. In these the Catholics of the country were opposed to Liberals and Socialists, the two latter parties not seldom allying themselves against the Clericals, as their opponents nickname the Catholics. In a few places the Catholics were likewise opposed by false brethren who have taken to themselves the high-sounding title of Christian Democrats. These we may dismiss by stating that they signally failed at the polls where they secured a

ridiculously small number of votes. In some of the villages where there were neither Liberals nor Socialists, there were contests fought out on matters of purely local interest. One village commune is cited where the contest was fought out between two contending lists of candidates, the sole question in debate being as to where seven street lamps should be placed! The electors for the communal councils are not exactly the same as those in the Parliamentary elections. Every male inhabitant of a commune, a Belgian by birth or naturalization, and thirty years of age, has a vote. He may obtain as many as four votes, if he can show certain educational, professional and property qualifications.

The communal elections last Sunday were carried out with great calmness and much earnestness. There were no disorders worth recording except at Quaregnon, near Mons, where a broil occurred between Liberals and Socialists in which a man was stabbed to death. The general results of these elections have been most satisfactory for the Catholic cause. If the Catholics have been beaten in some places, they have won largely in others, and in nearly all the contests they have held their ground, and not seldom improved their positions. To name only some of the towns of Belgium, we may note at Namur, Enghien, Tongres, Rochefort, Blankenberge, Hayst, the Liberals and Socialists have had to give place to Catholic majorities. At Bruges, Mechlin, Courtray, Grammont, Boom, and in some half dozen small towns, the Catholics have held and improved their positions. At Bruges, for instance, the Catholic vote was seven hundred heavier on this than on previous occasions. Not a single Liberal was returned, yet the Liberals made desperate efforts to reinforce the small party of four which represents them in the Town Council of the old Flemish city. The Catholic candidates all polled over six thousand one hundred and fifty votes each; the Liberal candidates only a little over half that number. This overwhelming vote is only one of confidence in the Town Council of the city and in the Comte Visart, the able Burgomaster, who has worked so long and actively for the Catholic cause in Flanders, and has been one of the greatest promoters of one of the most remarkable engineering works of our times, the sea-port and ship-canal of Bruges now rapidly nearing completion.

Elsewhere, at Antwerp, Tournay, and Ostend, the Catholics, in a minority in their respective councils, have won seats. At Liege and Ghent they have held their own against great odds, but at Brussels they have lost a seat. The Catholic press expresses its entire satisfaction with the result of elections which, apart from local interests, are of primary importance to the cause of religion in Belgium. We must not fail to remember that under the present educational legislation of Belgium the maintenance to the full of Christian education depends almost entirely on the character of the communal councils. The Liberals know this, and hence the tone of their newspaper about the elections resembles a wall of sorrow. Well may they sing a dirge over their blighted hope, the hope of which they openly boasted, that of introducing into Belgium the policy of M. Combes and his colleagues.—London Tablet.

Patent Report.

Below will be found a list of patents granted by the Canadian Government during last week secured through the agency of Messrs. Marion & Marion, patent attorneys, Montreal, Canada, and Washington, D. C.

Nos. 82,965—Joseph Ls. Kieffer, Montreal, Que. Shoe sewing machine.

83,756—Messrs. Harmer & Michaud, Montreal, Que. Sleigh.

83,760—Arthur Lafreniere, Montreal, Que. Spring motor.

83,777—Ferdinand N. Volkert, Montreal, Que. Paper binder.

83,821—William Maloney, Smith's Falls, Ont. Shocking attachment for binder.

83,868—Malcolm McKellar, Nesbitt, Man. Cloth measuring machine.

Information relating to the patents cited will be supplied free of charge of charge by applying to the above-named firm.

Old Letters

(By a Regular Contributor.)

The first letter in my very precious bundle one that has many as still more intimately connected with it. It

"Paris, 3 Rue 26th

"Dear Mr. L.— The weather here has ever since your departure that your visit should have just in the would have acknowledged of the 1st instant soon absent for ten days, a turn I found an immense arrears that demanded "The Viscount O'Donnell introduced you to the Count of O'Donnell, last representative of branch of that family. dent of art and promise profession. Meantime his good office in the service Department—and that to continue his studies ite line.

I do not think that the way nearly related to you shal O'Donnell, Count representative of the S of the O'Donnells. If connection it is remote "I fear I will not be your kind invitation to Clonmel. I would very see the old town under more pleasant and favorable that accompanied 1848. But I am tied o a long time to come, a ting old, as you know quiet and rest. "Any time you come that any of your friends pay capital, I will be gosal and at theirs. I last week from Bagwell M. P., and he told me reorganized the "Mechanute" and were going to courses of lectures there will not be again call make maps for lecturers for good Dr. Cahill. "Best wishes to all m the old town, and to yo friends from your very

"C. R. O'D

This letter may mean any of the present day the names in it—save t are historical—cannot hial significance. Howev tell who they all are—e xtleman who was the re letter and from whose p I got it in 1881, when p

The writer of this let Charles O'Donnell. He v mander of the forces from the autumn of 13 Christmas of 1848. He specimen of a soldier an Irishman. No duty ever on him so heavily as t rying the barracks of C ing the famine year and insurrection of 1848. He mand during the State Smith O'Brien (a close own). Thomas Francis M rence Bellew McManus, a leaders were tried and e death. However, if the of Sir Charles O'Donnell Ireland, at that time, y known as I know it—an it first hand from origi he would have long sin ranked amongst the ver patriots. In the first pl very largely due to his representations that the tences were committed in the State prisoners of th the second place, had it his intentional blindne O'Mahony could never h arrested the night that down the Suir to Water through the influence and of Sir Charles with O'Mahony succeeded in g Waterford to Boulogne—a Paris, and freedom. In place, had any other Br been in command of a thousand more peasant ary would have starved terrible winter of 1847—that was guarded by so that was carried off to the shipped to England,