

D.D., the scholarly Protestant institution, College, Illinois, ex-very frankly on the

OUR CURBSTONE OBSERVER.

ON SPRING SIDEWALKS.

This week I want to talk about something that is both timely and practical. I read the other day that one of the worthy Recorders of Montreal had dismissed an action taken by the city against a citizen for having rendered his sidewalk dangerous by removing the snow and ice down to the boards. The Recorder said, in giving his judgment, that it was the neighbors, who did not remove their snow and ice, who should have been sued. This may, in theory be the way to look at it, and I am neither a lawyer, nor a judge, nor one versed in the municipal regulations of the city; no more am I a person who would pretend to criticize the judgments of a Court. Consequently, I have nothing to say against the decision of the Recorder. I take it for granted that he is both legally and theoretically right. But my years of observation, on the Curbstone, teach me that the most infernal nuisance in a residential neighborhood is the crank who is ever bent on cutting the snow and ice down to the bare sidewalk, along the tiny strips that extend from his front door to the street. And if I were a betting man I would be willing to wager a dollar against a cent that nine out of ten of our citizens will agree with me in this contention. To properly appreciate the case you must pause and go over your own experiences in a serious manner.

MY OWN EXPERIENCE.—When I had a house of my own,—that means when I used to rent a house—I spent a winter in a flat, in a block of thirty-six flats: twelve houses, so to speak, of three flats each. You can understand that the space, on the sidewalk, in front of each hall door, was not more than six feet wide. All went well until the first great snowstorm came. Up to that point each one had shovelled off his space and the entire frontage was clean. But after the first storm there were three houses in front of which no shovelling was done: one had been unoccupied; another was tenanted by a woman all alone, and who was ill, and the third was inhabited by people who did not, for some reason or another, see fit to shovel the front, or have it shovelled. The result was that of the other thirty-three, twelve dug down to the street level, another dozen had taken off about two inches of the snow, and the balance of them had just swept away the flying snow. When the second snowstorm came matters got worse, for the work was still more irregular. Finally, the month of February came, and of all the tenants, only four had kept up the digging and shovelling, the chopping and cleaning, thus creating four ditches that constituted most beautifully-constructed man-traps. The snow continued to fall; others cleared it off in a reasonable manner, but these four ceased not to dig their drains. One night I was coming home from a meeting; it was exceedingly dark; the lamp light that used to cast a feeble ray along the street front had been extinguished. I saw a lady ahead of me, and in front of her a man. As I was fumbling in my pocket for my latch-key, I noticed the man take a header and dive into the snow-drift; scarcely had he disappeared than the lady stumbled and attempted some kind of a half

somersault in front of me; forgetting all about the intervening hole, that I perfectly knew was there, I dashed forward to lend my aid; I plunged into one of my neighbors' excavations, felt as if I had dropped down an elevator, struck against the opposite ridge, and fell flat beside the prostrate lady. Before I could manage to regain my feet, she had succeeded in getting up, and instead of I aiding her, she was obliged to aid me. I had sprained my right wrist and my left ankle, I had lost my keys in the snow, and I had smashed my hat. Just imagine how I blessed that neighbor, whose pig-headed sense of duty had impelled him to scrape and dig, in spite of the very obvious fact that he was simply destroying the level of the sidewalk and endangering the lives of his fellow-citizens.

MY OWN CONCLUSION.—Now, on this subject of sidewalks, I claim that I am an authority; if experience tells for anything I should have it. I never built a sidewalk, nor was I ever a corporation contractor, nor did I even have aught to do with the civic business of snow-cleaning; but I have, for over twenty years, walked the curbstones of the city, and unless a person were blind, he must surely have some idea of the sidewalk question. I have come to my own conclusions about how sidewalks should be looked after, how snow should be treated, and I could give a few profitable pointers to the Road Department. As far, then, as this question of snow-shovelling goes, I have come to the conclusion that no cast iron rule can be adopted. No such regulation could ever be made universally applicable; for no matter how strictly it is enforced there will always be some exceptions, some few delinquents—and one of these is enough to play havoc with a whole block. The only way in which matters could be satisfactorily arranged would be to have people use their common sense, their ordinary judgment. If those tenants in a row all shovel their snow down to the board-level, and the tenth did not shovel at all, that one should be forced to do it, or else his neighbors should have the charity to do it for him. Equally, and even more so, if the nine leave the snow in front of their respective houses at a certain height, and the tenth persists in digging down to the sidewalk, he should be prevented from so doing, or else the others should fill in this ditch and smooth it to a level of the rest of the frontage. Nobody wants clear sidewalks in mid-winter; it is not natural. The snow is there to be walked upon. Provided the footway is level all along, there is nothing more required. I conclude, then, the one whose act of commission or of omission causes an unevenness in the pathway should be held responsible for whatever accidents might happen—no matter whether that irregularity be a hog'd-back ridge or trough. Next week I intend to have my say about the business of the scavengers; and in this line I am quite an adept. I have seen a lot in my time, and am familiar to a great degree with ash-barrels and sloop-buckets, and I can inform the Health Department of many things not often reported, regarding rag-pickers and coal-cleaners.

he lingered in the neighborhood of his previous exploits, and was captured in an attempt to rob a bank, just as he was captured the first time, when in an attempt to get away he did murder. Why did this man tarry among his former haunts? Why did he attempt again the crime that was before his undoing? It was an all-mustering greed of money. He had seen money piled up behind bank counters, and the sight had upon his soul the fascination of the basilisk. He studied the surroundings and the methods of every bank within the range of his roaming, and having failed in robbing one, he would, at the imminent risk of capture, try another. He was caught, identified, and is now again on his way to his doom.

This only shows how wise the Church is in teaching her children from early youth self-control. The Confessional is a moral gymnasium in self-discipline. The child is taught the nature and character of temptation, and the surest way to resist it. He is taught the difference between lawful impulse and the passion that impels to wrong-doing. He is made to acquire a perfect mastery over his senses, and to bridle his desires, lest they carry him into transgressions. This discipline and self-mastery distinguishes the civilized man from the pagan, and the moral man from the libertine. The man who cannot rise above the instincts of the brute is not fit for association with human beings. All laws presume this mastery, but what are they doing to encourage and develop it? The secular state takes no cognizance of the soul, and the play of the emotions is beyond the sphere of influence. The Church must supply this want, and without her beneficent ministry all civil law is a mockery.

Speaking in general, these violent outbursts of unbridled passion are confined to men. But women are often carried away in a most shocking manner. What men will do and dare for gain women will do for love, or that strange infatuation that generally goes by that name. And it seems all the discipline that the Church can impose cannot cope with this sentiment in the hearts of her children of the weaker sex. Every day we are grieved by tales of concubinage and adulterous marriages in which a Catholic figure as the woman in the case. It seems the current literature they read and the plays they witness on the stage succeed in neutralizing their early Catholic training, and they come to think with the rest of the world that love may always find its own perfect defense. Infatuation of love in young women and intoxication in young men make sad havoc of the Church's work among youths. These novels and plays are written by men, and their purpose and aim is to corrupt womanhood. There is some truth, and a vast deal of nasty sentiment in their productions. It is hard for a young girl to resist and control her love. But why was she not prudent? Why did she not study the structure and strength of the bridge before she attempted to cross it? If the young man was not free to marry a Catholic, having been divorced from a lawful wife, or unwilling to live up to the Church's requirements as regards the bringing up of offspring, the fact should be developed before admiration passes into love. Love is blind, but before it becomes blind it could see very well. Girls must be prudent; parents must be watchful, and the priests of the Church must, from time to time, raise their warning voice if this growing infamy would be checked.

and looked charming in a tailor-made suit of blue, and white hat. The groom was attended by his father. The nuptial benediction was given by the Rev. Father Cantin, the bride's uncle. Prof. Briere presided at the organ, and solos were sung by Miss H. Briere and Miss M. L. Biron.

About thirty invited guests assisted at the ceremony; there were out of town people. Amongst others were noticed Mr. and Mrs. Labelle and Miss R. A. Gagnon, of L'Avenir. After the ceremony the bridal party repaired to the residence of the bride's father, where a bountiful repast was prepared. A reception was held at the home of the groom.

Lenten exercises are held in St. Patrick's Church every Tuesday and Friday afternoon.

Mr. L. N. Levesque, Inspector of Schools for this section, visited the Catholic school last week.

Mixed Marriages

How much the Church abhors mixed marriages may be inferred from the fact that she withholds her blessing, does not permit the priest to assist in sacerdotal robes, and forbids their celebration in the house of God.

Christ, knowing the weakness of human nature, and the heavy burdens of the married state under the new dispensation, raised matrimony to the dignity of a sacrament. Baptism being the first Sacrament, an unbaptized person cannot receive any of the other Sacraments. Hence when an unbaptized person marries he does not receive the grace of the Sacrament of matrimony. A baptized non-Catholic, when marrying, receives the Sacrament, but whether he receives it worthily depends on the state of his soul. In order to receive this sacrament worthily Catholics prepare themselves carefully; ordinarily they make a general confession some weeks before the marriage, because sins committed after the Sacrament of penance or by perfect contrition. A baptized non-Catholic receives it worthily only, if he was never guilty of a mortal sin, or obtained forgiveness through the Sacrament of penance, or by perfect contrition. As he does not receive the Sacrament of penance for him the only means of obtaining forgiveness is perfect contrition. But do they even think of eliciting an act of perfect contrition? Moreover is the Catholic contracting a mixed marriage duly prepared to receive the Sacrament worthily? Those who are married by a justice of the peace commit a sacrilege in the very act; those who are married by a Protestant minister, besides committing a sacrilege, are excommunicated; that is, cut off from the Church. Those who obtain a dispensation, and marry a non-Catholic before a priest, do a thing which the Church detests; permits unwillingly, and under compulsion, to avoid the greater evil. Is this disposition such as to draw down upon the groom and bride that abundance of graces, which matrimony confers on those who are well prepared, and which Christ intended for the married couple to enable them to live in peace and happiness until the Angel of Death calls one of them to a more blessed life?

Peace and harmony depend on similar views, especially in important matters. But what is more important than religion? Catholics believe their religion to be the only true one instituted by Christ to lead men to heaven. How, then, can a Catholic help being anxious and uneasy about the future of the non-Catholic husband or wife? Again, what happiness and peace can there be when the one despises as folly, or even detests as idolatry, that which is dearest and most sacred to the other? What wonder, then, if peace and happiness be rare in families in which this difference of religion exists, are wretched, and end in civil divorce? More than once have we heard persons abandoned by non-Catholic husbands or wives, or, who, in their unhappy condition, have come to ask advice, express their conviction that dispensations for mixed marriages should never be granted.

In a contract, especially in one of such importance as matrimony, the obligation assumed by the contracting parties should be equal. In a mixed marriage this is far from being the case. The Catholic is bound for life, but the non-Catholic, according to his principles, thinks otherwise. If he has a religion, his church does not teach the indissolubility of marriage; much less is it a doctrine of unbelievers. Since the rise of Protestantism and the inroads of infidelity, the frequency of divorce has steadily increased, and is still growing in alarming proportions.

The pledges required by the Church are but too often violated. We can call to mind several who, having signed the agreement containing the required pledges, even boasted that they had never made them, or who considered them not binding because made under compulsion. Years ago a venerable Archbishop, in a pastoral letter, penned the following words on the violation of the required pledges: "This promise is sometimes readily enough made, but we have examples to show, how shamefully it can be broken. There are here and elsewhere melancholy instances of the bitterest and most unrelenting persecution of the Catholic party, until the very soul of the too confiding being is a slave, and this, in violation of the

most solemn pledges, given to the intended and her relatives, and to the minister of God, that the rights of conscience should be held sacred and inviolable. A Catholic priest would not give absolution to a Catholic husband who would persecute his Protestant wife for her religion's sake. Why are not anti-Catholic husbands rebuked into penance and humanity? And why, at least, do Catholic young men and women imperil their peace in time and their salvation in eternity by trusting to such delusive promises?

Those who contract mixed marriages, besides endangering their own salvation, jeopardize the salvation of the future children. Two elements are indispensable for the proper education of children. Good example of parents or guardians, and sound religious instruction. Words move, examples draw. But what example is given to children whose parents differ in religion? One of the parents, by example, teaches irreligion, or a false religion. The natural consequence is that the children practice no religion, or become careless in the discharge of their religious duties.

Even when the Catholic education of the children has been pledged, in many cases they are not permitted to attend a Catholic school, but are compelled to attend those schools from which religious instruction is excluded, and in which the Catholic religion is but too often reviled. The annual report of schools sent us at the beginning of each year proves this assertion. The answer to the second part of the question: "How many children attend public or district schools?" and "Why do they attend these schools?" is invariably: 1st, on account of distance; 2nd, on account of non-Catholic parents, who will not allow the children to attend the parochial schools; and 3rd, on account of the carelessness of parents in the practice of their religion. As a result of the want of proper instruction, and the influence of example of the non-Catholic father or mother, the greater part of the children, when grown up, do not attend Church or approach the Sacraments. Our assertion is fully borne out by a recent canvass in the city of Chicago made by the agents of a non-Catholic organization, acting in co-operation with the federal census bureau. They found that in families, both parents of which are Catholics, eight of a hundred young men do not attend Church; but out of a hundred young men of mixed marriages sixty-six are not church members. What stronger proof could be desired, to show the dangers to which those who contract a mixed marriage expose the salvation of their children as well as of themselves. How can they hope to save their own souls when they jeopardize the salvation of the children that God may entrust to their care? What anxiety must fill the heart of a Catholic mother, when dying, on hearing the sobs of her helpless children, who will most probably soon be under the care of a non-Catholic step-mother, and educated in a false religion or without any religion? Does not every Catholic young lady keeping company with a non-Catholic expose herself to the danger of such anxiety at the moment of death? And how difficult is it not for a man to raise his children in the true faith, if the mother is a stranger to that faith? What excuse can be brought on the great day of reckoning?

Parents should remember the sacred duty of guarding their sons and daughters against the dangers to which inexperience may expose them. Yet, there are parents so blind to the true interests of their children, or so cruel as not only to allow, but even to advise and urge them to risk these evils for the sake of some temporal advantage.

Do not delude yourselves by thinking that when the conditions required by the Church are promised, all objections are removed, and that love and attachment are sufficient reasons for disregarding her laws. Do not delude yourselves with the too often vain hope that the readily given pledges will not be violated. Thanks be to God, there are cases in which the promises given before marriage have been kept, and with God's grace the non-Catholic party has been gained over to the true faith by the prayers and the edification of the Catholic husband or wife. But we cannot conceal from ourselves that, far from being the rule, these cases are only the exception.—Extracts from Pastoral Letter of Bishop Richter, of Grand Rapids.

An Anti-Divorce Pledge

(By a Regular Contributor.)

At an annual meeting of the alumni of St. Ignace' College, Cleveland, O., Mr. John V. Ginley, J.P., told how he has put into practice his own views concerning divorce. Since last September he has been a Justice of the Peace, and whenever a couple came before him to be married he first asked them to sign an agreement not to ever seek a divorce. It is true such an agreement would not be binding in law, but it has had the effect of making many hesitate before taking such a serious step as marriage. Justice Ginley gives some very sound reasons why the inviolability of the marriage tie is at the basis of society; and he tells how so many unhappy marriages are the results of unreflecting flirtations in the dance-halls, or of the reading of sensational novels. He says that in his state there are three divorces to every five marriages. All that the Justice says is very good, and he is doubtless very well-intentioned in seeking to check young people from entering thoughtlessly upon the serious state of married life. We have no doubt that the alumni of that Catholic College were edified by what the Justice said, and commended him highly for the courage he displays weekly in regard to divorce. But there is another phase of the subject that seems to have totally escaped their attention, and his also.

Justice Ginley says that when the parties seeking to be married by him sign the agreement or contract, not to seek divorce, he marries them. But what power has he to marry them? He has the legal power, given him by the law of the State, to witness and sign a civil contract called marriage. But that is of no value, or should be of none, in the eyes of the Catholic. When dealing with matters of marriage and divorce, the law that governs the Church in her unfinching attitude is this: "Whom God hath bound together, let no man put asunder." In this there is a mention of God being the One who ties the knot, and it is only such as He unites that man is forbidden to separate. In the case of a marriage performed by Justice Ginley God has no part. He does not unite the couple; it is Justice Ginley that does so. Consequently the law of God does not apply; the law of the State alone is applicable; and the law of the State does not say "let no man put asunder." It is a civic contract, into which two citizens enter of their free will, and by which they covenant to cohabit as man and wife. And they are perfectly free, before entering upon that contract, to invest it with any conditions they deem proper—for example, the condition that it shall be binding only as long as both parties are satisfied. Divorce is the natural and logical outcome of civil marriage. The wrong done is to marry a couple, not to divorce them. The fact of marrying them is intrusion upon the domain of religion, and a usurpation of God's own prerogatives.

If, then, according to Mr. Justice Ginley, divorce is the curse of society, and the family is the support of the State, the only conclusion is that the Catholic Church, which cannot admit of divorce and which is the bulwark of the family, is the only power that properly supports the State and the only authority upon which the State can lean and depend when shaken by the immorality of the age and menaced by the spirit of corruption that undermines it.

Notes From Outside Districts

From Our Own Correspondent.)

Tingwick, Feb. 29.

A solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated here for the repose of the soul of our late Bishop, Mgr. Gravel. The Church was draped in black. Our pastor, Rev. Father Jutras, officiated. The choir, under the direction of Principal Briere, surpassed itself. Although the weather was stormy quite a number of the parishioners attended. The ceremony was very solemn and impressive.

Feb. 15, a very fashionable marriage took place in St. Patrick's Church. The contracting parties were Miss Marie Anne Cantin, one of our most popular young ladies, and Mr. F. Labelle, of Kingsley. The bride was escorted by her father,

Ruling Passion Stronger than Death

(From The Western Watchman.)

A prisoner escaped from the St. Louis jail six months ago, who was awaiting trial for murder. His partner was subsequently tried and sentenced to be hanged. As to this escaped prisoner's guilt there was, and is, not a particle of doubt; and it was this certainty of conviction that nerve him to make one of the most daring and sensational escapes ever recorded in the annals of local crime. To have executed it required daring of the most reckless sort; and to have planned it needed a mind of more than average quickness and

penetration. If this man had turned his talents to honest enterprise, he would certainly have made his mark. He would have made a great general; a splendid speculator, a successful engineer; perhaps a world-renowned inventor. Having turned his attentions to law-breaking and chosen a criminal career, he is now in jail with the hangman's noose dangling above his head.

The most extraordinary feature of this man's criminal record is the fact that he had twice eluded his pursuers and was in the full enjoyment of liberty, and both times allowed himself to be captured through reckless indifference to the most ordinary precautions. After his escape six months ago he could have travelled over the world and never once be startled by the hand or tread of the sleuth. The press had finished talking about him, and the detectives had lost all track of him. In those six months he could have placed half the globe between himself and a Missouri court. But, strange to say,

JUBILEE GIFT.

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