THE READER'S CORNER

CONDUCTED BY "COLUMBA"

In the May number of the Irish Rosary (Dublin) appears the opening chapters of a new novel by the Very Rev. Canon Sheehan, D. D. The author is easily the most distinguished Catholic novelist of the day, and his latest book, "The Sunetoi," looks as if it will deserve a place beside "My New Curate," and the other delightful books that have made the name of Canon Sheehan honored and loved by countless firesides. The Canon's masterly hand has woven a pretty story dealing incidentally with all the great problems of the day—art, literature, the drama, politics, etc. We congratulate the Very Rev. Ambrose Coleman, O. P., on his having secured this masterpiece for the pages of his magazine. "The Sunetoi" will not appear in book form until 1911.

"Time is the warp of life
O tell the young, the fair, the gay, to
weave it well."

Eloquent testimony to the spread of the Temperance Movement in Ireland was furnished on a recent Sunday afternoon in Dublin when the Very Rev. Father Aloysius, O. S. F. C., in the presence of about two thousand people, opened the new Father Mathew Park in the suburb of Fairview. The Park is intended to serve the purpose of recreation grounds for the people and a meeting place in connection with the Temperance Movement.

The Father Mathew Temperance Association, under the auspices of the Capuchin Fathers, Church St., Dublin, is one of the largest of its kind in the world. The amount of good it has effected for the people of Dublin is incalculable. Recently they determined to issue a monthly temperance magazine, and the little "Father Mathew Record," as it is called, has already a big circulation. As showing how thoroughly the Capuchins do their work, it is only necessary to mention that some time ago they asked the Dublin Corporation to hand them over the little ward round about their church, for three years, and at the end of that time, they would hand it back to the corporation, entirely rebuilt, the streets widened and cleared, and a little park in the midst of it—and all free of cost.

"We live in deeds, not years; in
thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial,
We should count time by heart-throbs.
He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest,
acts the best."

My notes re the suffragette movement have given the postal officials a busy time. Evidently there are some Cornerites who rather like the idea of a vote. Most of these, however, seem to regard it in the light of "Sara," who writes:

"So these are your ideas on woman suffrage! I don't believe any man believes in it—but I think with most of them it is rather a matter of sex than of opinion. You must not instantly conclude that I am a suffragette, for I'm neither one thing nor the other. I have an open mind on the subject, not having yet come across sufficiently telling arguments for or against, though I've discussed it many times."

"Marion D." sends me a marked copy of The Sunday Strand containing an article on the subject: "Are men more religious than women?" and wants to know what I think about the matter. Now, "Marion," in answering a question like yours I feel I'm on dangerous ground. And I don't want to offend the tender susceptibilities of any of my readers. However, I'm fairly safe in saying that, as in most matters, much may be said on both sides. Alessandro Manzoni spoke the truth when he said, "Right and wrong never are divided with so clean a cut, that one party has the whole of either." So with this question. There are really sincere religious men and women. There are hypocritical religious men and women as well. On the whole though I'd be inclined to give the palm to the men. With a woman religion is more a matter of the heart than of the head. She is more highly strung, nervous, sentimental, hysterical. She has no great depth. She is more disposed mentally to the appeal of religious ideas, but a really religious man is far and away her superior. His piety is more solid and lasting. He has more self-knowledge. He is not so liable to be influenced by the feeling of the moment.

Correspondence invited. Name and address must be given—not for publication. "Columba," Cathedral, Peterboro, Ont.

Missing Sunday Mass

Missing Mass on Sunday is the parent sin. It is the cause of causes when there is a question of Catholic defection. Human respect, scandal, mixed marriages, secret societies, bad literature and evil associations have slain its tens of thousands. It has filled the cities and towns in America with an army of bad Catholics, who contribute so large a percentage of our population. It has decimated thriving parishes and paralyzed the influence of the church in many American communities. It has been a blight upon the Catholicity of many European countries, and by breeding general indifference it has encouraged spoliation and plunder on the part of politicians, who rightly believe that they have nothing to fear from people who do not think enough of their religion to turn out to Mass on Sunday. It has scandalized believer and unbeliever alike, and supplied an additional argument in support of the pernicious doctrine that one religion is as good as another. It has ever been the first step in the downward road that leads to the loss of faith, apostacy and irreligion; in short, it is the basic weakness, the parent sin, at whose door almost every form of present-day Catholic defection can rightly be laid.—Intermountain Catholic.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

THOROUGHNESS

It is an old and a wise saying, "If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well." This was the rule followed by our fathers, but it is not followed by ourselves. The present generation lives faster than its predecessors, but not half so well. Much of their work has come down to us for it was made to last, but ours, because of the hasty and hurried manner with which it is put together will scarcely last our own time. In this view we may be said to be working in vain, for we are not doing justice to ourselves nor to those who will come after us.

This want of thoroughness applies to every class of work, mental as well as manual, scientific as well as industrial, literary as well as commercial, for the too strenuous American is found in all the various classes and the great amount of indifferent and unstable work of every kind produced is the proof of it. Much is done for the present moment, but little for the future, and this spirit of thinking and working only for the present moment is the bane of all genuine efforts and all true progress.

Time was when masterly work was done by master minds but it was not done in a few days but in a lifetime. Their work showed effort as well as genius and it compels our admiration today. What explains our condition? It is attributable mostly to the spirit of the age in which we live which is one of commercialism. Money is the first thought. We sell our labor and we turn out as much of it as we can in as short a time as possible for the dollars and cents it will bring us, hence from haste the poorness of the quality of what we produce.

Hand-made goods in household furniture must largely yield to machine-made for the need of the masses both as regards quantity as well as quality, but in the scientific and in the literary and in the professional avocations surely there should be no unseemly haste, and no unbecoming neglect, for the results of the labors of the present generation should be a rich heirloom to the one coming after it.

In the work done by some investigation is reached which enlightens those of the present and will serve to light their successors to newer and greater discoveries; but in the work done by most of us its character can only serve to instruct, entertain and encourage our successors, who by reason of the greater opportunities which no doubt they will enjoy will be able to eclipse anything we have done.

May we not rightly say that conscience is the only remedy we can call on to cure lack of thoroughness? If a man must answer at the bar of divine judgment for every idle word he speaks, how much more will he have to answer for poor work done, mental or bodily, literary or scientific according to the talents and opportunities God gave him? Let the conscience rule and thoroughness will prevail—From "The Bishop's Column" in the Catholic Union and Times.

WORKED SIX YEARS AND NEVER SAVED A CENT

Going home on a street car the other evening we heard a young man say, "After my apprenticeship, I got $2.75 a day. I worked six years and never saved a cent." The speaker was only a young fellow and he spoke in a boastful manner.

It would be interesting to know how much the gentleman is getting now and whether he is saving anything. He is the kind of man agitators and anarchists and all-around discontents are made of. The young fellow just out of his apprenticeship and having mastered a good trade, begins to feel very "cocky" as the boys say. Money is no object to him, and he proceeds to spend his income in nonsense.

Later on he develops the idea that the world is all wrong; that economic affairs are not as they should be; that the rich are getting richer while the poor have less than ever; the government is upside down, and needs immediate reformation. He forgets that had he used just a little judgment and instead of never saving a cent, had laid by each week a small portion of his wages, opportunity's door might have been opened to him and he might have taken advantage.

Very few of our wealthy men to-day are so by inheritance. In early years they dug and delved and worked hard for a start. Having secured the nest-egg, the chance came and they took advantage. Rockefeller's old rubber boots are still owned by a man in Chautauqua county—a man who was the companion of the multi-millionaire when he worked among the derricks of Pennsylvania.

We are free to admit that conditions are somewhat out of joint, but the days for accumulating a fortune are still with us. All that is necessary is a determination to save; when the chance comes, as come it will, money will be at hand for investment that will bring prompt and satisfactory returns.—Catholic Sun.

THE READING HABIT

It is a curious fancy that education is a thing to acquire in a lump and have done with as soon as possible, as if it were measles. In nine cases in ten the child leaves scholastic associations on leaving school. When the graduates, in white dresses or their best coats, are reading essays on the art of government and the relation of the passages in the Pyramids to the astronomic theories of the Chaldeans, it would seem to a sympathetic observer as if the work of the school had just begun. It is too bad that in many cases it not only ceases, but the scholar goes backward. This does not mean simply that he forgets what has been taught, for much that we go through in schools is for training, not remembrance.

One does not do so when he enters the business world with a fixed purpose. He knows that his preparation is never complete; that he must always study, examine and inquire; that he could not know all that is to be known of a subject if his lifetime were doubled. That man may well be alarmed who discovers that he has ceased to grow; that he no longer profits by new experiences; that he can no longer address himself with energy and interest to new subjects; for such a man has come to the end of his life, even though the day of his death may be far distant.

After falling into business habits not one person in a thousand tries to fall out of them. The easy way is the usual way, though it is not always the way of the higher profit. If one were to take but half an hour out of the twenty-four—though a whole hour would be little enough for profitable reading—he would before long be master of a theme, and would be a man of note in his specialty. He could command a language, or a science, or an art, and double his usefulness and happiness. And that is the main thing, to increase content. There is a mean satisfaction in stagnation, but there is a high satisfaction in the knowledge that we are of use to our fellows, and that our lives are not in vain.

We can then associate with our seniors when we are young, and with our juniors as our hair grows gray; for as we age our minds will broaden instead of harden, our views and sympathies will grow warmer and mellower, and our place in the world will be higher than if we had merely dropped our books at the end of school.—True Voice.

SERMONS IN STONES

At a recent horse-race one of the horses attracted a great deal of attention before the start by his remarkable appearance, and many spectators thought he would surely win. He was so full of life, and so eager to begin the race, that he broke through the barrier and ran several hundred feet before the jockey could stop him. The animal was full of confidence and life, but he finished fifteenth in a race of sixteen.

This horse furnished a pretty good illustration of the human bluffer, the man who struts and brags, who makes great pretensions, lots of noise, but never gets anywhere. The silent, unpretentious man, who keeps pegging away, distances him in the great life race.

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OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

A SISTER'S LOVE

She was only an ordinary girl, with an ordinary schoolbag hanging over her arm, and, as my mind was busy with other subjects, I should scarcely have noticed her at all, had it not been for the kind words I heard her utter.

I was waiting on a street corner for a car, and she, with some other children was standing there, too.

"Oh, come on, Daisy!" one of her companions exclaimed. "What are you waiting for, anyhow?"

"I'm waiting for Tad, of course," she answered, good-naturedly.

"Oh, well, let's don't wait for him!"

"Why, I promised him, you know," was the serious reply, "and I couldn't go without him, Sarah."

"Well, he's only your brother. You needn't be so particular about keeping your promise to him."

"But I need be particular about keeping my promise to anybody — my brother just as much as anyone else," Daisy replied, firmly, but in the same low, sweet tone. "I never disappoint Tad if I can help it, and he knows it, too, and depends upon me. Mamma says breaking a promise is as bad as telling a lie, and we don't want to do that, you know."

"Well, what is he about? Where is he, anyhow! Ho ought to be here by this time," remarked one of the boys.

"He went home at 2 o'clock to go on an errand for father, and he was to meet me here to go with me to the entertainment."

"Does he know the time it commences, and will he surely be on time?" some one questioned, anxiously.

"He knows the time, and will be here, I am certain," said his sister.

"I'm afraid we'll be late!" grumbled another lad.

"Yes, we will!" some one else said.

"Then suppose you all go on, and don't wait for me," Daisy said, quietly. "I shall not mind, but I wouldn't go without Tad for anything."

"Oh, it wouldn't be so nice to go without you!" Sarah objected.

"Well, here he comes now!" cried the boy who had first spoken and just then a lad of about ten years could be seen hurrying along the street. In a few moments he joined the group, and asked: "I didn't keep you waiting long, did I?"

I looked at Tad and saw there was nothing about him that would attract the attention of a stranger, except it might be his bright, happy face, but his sister's eyes rested lovingly upon him, as she replied: "Only a few moments, Tad."

"Here, Daisy," he said, "I brought your waterproof and rubbers. It looks cloudy, and I'm almost sure it will rain before we get home. No, you needn't take them." And he held on to the bundle he had in his arms. "I can carry them. I just wanted you to know they were on hand."

"Oh, thank you, Tad!" the girl said, heartily, "I probably shall need them."

They were starting off now, and as Sarah took her place beside Daisy she remarked, wonderingly: "How polite you two are to each other! Do you always act that way?"

As they hurried on I caught only a part of Daisy's surprised answer, and that was: "Of course. Why shouldn't we be?"

And the question will bear being repeated, with some additions: Why shouldn't all sisters and brothers be happy in the same love and confidence that Tad and Daisy gave to each other?

SOMETHING ABOUT BOLDNESS

A single quality cannot justly be considered, by itself, either a vice or a virtue. Its moral nature depends upon the conditions under which it is exhibited, or upon its relations to other qualities. Boldness is vulgar when associated with ignorance, incapacity and selfish rudeness. It is a resplendent virtue when exhibited in a just cause and in the presence of danger. It is not then a mere synonym for courage—for, courage may not be aggressive. Boldness adds to courage, decision and aggressive determination. It is shown at its best when directed by an honest purpose, and exhibited with full understanding of the risks involved. Except for the latter qualification it might degenerate into recklessness. The English language, with its wealth of words, is capable of expressing almost every shade of meaning. Courage, boldness, recklessness may be confounded, one with another by the unobservant, or boldness may be confounded in its other meaning with imprudence, but all these words should be distinguished one from another, that we may better appreciate the moral qualities they express. Boldness, when thus set apart, may be regarded as a virtue, because it is then associated with other good qualities, and it remains a good quality, even though misused. The idea of boldness is associated with quickness, decision of character and aggressiveness. The courage of the bold man is actively displayed; he strikes at once and yet with clear understanding, not recklessly, and such a man is usually in the right, or thinks he is. Where the term boldness is applied to a bad man, it is usually with its secondary meaning of imprudence or audacity. It is not mere fancy that pictures the courageous as good and the evil as cowardly. Bad men may put on an appearance of boldness or of courage, but they cannot sustain it with the fortitude exhibited by good men and true. The thought is aptly expressed by Shakespeare, in the phrase "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." There is a great truth in this which all who admire courage or boldness, and would seek to develop these virtues, should consider. The foundation of these qualities lies in truth, honor, justice. The man who has right on his side, who has been true to himself and to the world, is inspired to boldness of demeanor by the consciousness that he has wronged no one; but the evil-minded whose consciences prick them, cannot sustain in great trials their assumption of boldness. Boys delight in reading stories of brave deeds, and rightly desire to emulate the heroes who have done them, but to make sure that they can do so they must keep their consciences clear. If they have been honest, upright, virtuous, they can face the world, and no man shall make them afraid. They may not be called upon to exhibit their courage on the battlefield or in the arena, but the same virtues that distinguished the heroes of such encounters are required in those who exhibit courage and boldness in civil life, and the ambitious boy who wants to distinguish himself in this way cannot make better preparation therefor than by living in such a way as to keep his conscience clear, so that when duty calls he may step forth to be seen of all men and not feel ashamed.

FOUR AND TWENTY BLACK BIRDS

All know the rhyme about the "four and twenty blackbirds," but have you ever heard what it really meant? The four and twenty blackbirds represent the twenty-four hours. The bottom of the pie is the world while the top crust is the sky that overarches it. The opening of the pie is the day dawn, when the birds begin to sing, and surely such a sight is fit for a king.

The king who is represented as sitting in his parlor counting out his money is the sun, while the gold-pieces that slip through his fingers as he counts them are the golden sunbeams. The queen, who sits in the dark kitchen, is the moon, and the honey with which she regales herself is the moonlight.

The industrious maid, who is in the garden at work before the king—the sun — has risen, is day dawn, and the clothes she hangs out are the clouds. The bird who so tragically ends the song by nipping off her nose is the sunset. So we have the whole day, not in a nutshell, but in a pie.

THE HOLY FATHER AND THE SAILOR

The Pope remembers old friends and when he knows that some person he is acquainted with is in Rome he never fails to grant an audience. A few days ago a sailing vessel from Malta was shipwrecked on the Roman coast. Four men of the crew were drowned and the remaining seven swam ashore and were rescued with great difficulty by some shepherds.

The master and mate were injured and they were conveyed to one of the hospitals in Rome. The Pope read about the shipwreck in the newspapers and the name of one of the men sounded familiar to him.

"I think that I must have known this man called Rugier in Venice, where he used to come on a schooner from Malta," said the Pope to his secretary, "and I would like to see him."

An audience was arranged and Rugier, the mate, went up to the Vatican. The Pope kept him over an hour in his private library, heard the story of the shipwreck and presented him with a gold medal.

"I saw your Holiness in Venice once years ago," said the mate.

"To be sure," answered the Pope, "I remembered your name and the vow you told me about, the vow you made when you were shipwrecked once before. Do you still keep it?"

"Yes, your Holiness, and I have increased it now," answered the man.

He then told the Pope that he ascribed his rescue to a repetition of his old vow, namely that he would fast on bread and water twice every week for the rest of his life.

"But you already fasted twice every week for the other vow and now you will have to eat bread and water on four days out of seven," exclaimed the Pope; then he added: "You are an old man and it is cruel to starve yourself, so I prohibit you from keeping both vows."

The seaman expostulated. He said a bargain was a bargain, and as God had saved his life he was bound to fulfil his promises. The Pope insisted. He tried to convince the seaman that the vow was not binding as it was too hard for a man of his age, but realizing that it was useless to argue the point he had a regular brief of dispensation drawn out there and then, signed and sealed it in due form and then handed it to the seaman saying:

"If you do not obey this you will be excommunicated, and this exempts you from fasting."

The seamen then bowed his head and promised to obey.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

SNOWFLAKES

Two as pretty poems with regard to the snowflakes as have, perhaps, ever been written, both of them by Catholic poets, have recently been reprinted so as to call particular attention to them—Louise Imogen Guiney's verses "In Snowtide," and Francis Thompson's "To a Snowflake." Both of these Catholic poets have seen something much more than the mere natural beauty of the snowflake and have read a lesson of time and of eternity into their verses. This is the distinction between the Catholic poet and the non-Catholic in the present time. Because the Catholic sees under the veils of Nature the things of God, his thoughts rise into a realm of poetry where there is something more than verse-making. It is no wonder that we have so much more than our proper proportion of Catholic poets writing English, and no wonder that so many of the poetic thinkers find themselves eventually in the Church. Miss Guiney sings—

For our life is, I know,
But a search in the snow
Where boundaries change and the trail
disappears;
Where blurring, impeding,
Subduing, misleading,
Drive downfall of moments and drift of
the years.

From a soft, from a sly
And inscrutable sky,
Time closes man round, let him travel
or sleep;
The game to the strongest,
An hour at the longest,
And play-fellow powers shall bury him
deep.

Francis Thompson's wonderful poetic expressions of the significance of the snowflake should be in the note-book of every Catholic interested in literature and in poetry, for they probably represent the most beautiful in our time of the significance of the fairy, fragile, feathery crystals that might have been mere commonplace particles of ice, for they are only frozen water, but because Nature's God never made anything without making it beautiful, are among the most wonderful artistic creations in endless beauty and charming variety that occur anywhere in Nature. Only Francis Thompson can fully express in his marvelous word-music all that their beauty means—

What heart could have thought you?—
Past our devisal
(O filigree petal!)
Fashioned so purely,
Fragilely, surely,
From what Paradisal
Imagineless metal,
Too costly for cost?
Who hammered you, wrought you,
From argentine vapor?—
"God was my shaper,
Passing surmisal,
He hammered, He wrought me,
From curled silver vapor,
To will of His mind;—
Thou couldst not have thought me!
So purely, so palely,
Tinily, surely,
Mightily, frailly,
Insculped and embossed,
With His hammer of wind,
And His graver of frost."

Read the above lines again and then again. Poor Thompson! How incomparably sad it is to contemplate that the brilliant mind which produced those fascinating lines had not the strength to throw off the delusive nerve quieters that if persisted in mean death.—Catholic Union and Times.

Perseverance Counts

For young men who incline towards weariness, even in so noble a work as the total abstinence crusade, we may again say that Rev. Theobald Matthew gave eighteen years (from 1838 to 1856) to the work of organizing his temperance battalions. The effect of such a mission and such persistent crusading is visible in so many total abstinence organizations, which still grow apace. By a mission of eighteen years, he established the movement all over the world. Such eighteen years of temperance effort speak of apostolic zeal. These eighteen years enabled the temperance apostle to inspire many thousands. By eighteen years of persistent effort, he was able to influence the world, Father Mathew's works like those of St. Patrick continue as a part of the world's history. He was the center of the movement. He made a great pioneer effort for temperance reform, so much so that still his memory is an inspiration and a benediction. Individual enthusiasm is needed in every member of a temperance society, so as to promote utility of the whole organization.—Freeman.

The example set by St. Joseph can be copied by all of us: we can study in his school the virtues of the Hidden Life.

St. Joseph is the patron of hidden lives, of obscure virtues, of hard work, and of happy deaths.—Father Russell, S. J.

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