

Our Curbstone Observer

"CHILD-SLAVERY."

THE other day I was attracted by an item in one of the French-Canadian papers of this city, in which mention is made of a little girl of twelve years of age, whose case has been taken up by the ladies of the new Dorchester Street Refuge, and whose story is a specially sad one, although, unhappily, it is not an exceptional case. In a few words, the circumstances are these: The father and mother of this little girl do absolutely nothing but drink. Since the age of eight she has begged all day and as far into the night as possible, and all that she brought home was taken by her parents to buy liquor. She has a brother seven years old, too young to beg but not to be ill-treated. She has another nineteen years of age, who works hard and used to give his parents an allowance weekly out of his wages, until it was seen that his money went all for liquor, and then he ceased sending it. And this is not the worst. The parents had sold every stick of furniture and rag in the house and spent the proceeds in drink. On one occasion a lady gave the little girl fifty cents to buy shoes, and her father took it from her, and while the mother was out purchasing gin for the money, the father beat the little girl most fearfully, and called her a bad character. It was at this point that she heard tell of the Refuge and the good ladies who are devoted to the cause of uplifting the unfortunate. They took her case in hand, and it is quite probable that her parents will get free lodgings for the winter, where there is no liquor to be had.

EXPERIENCES.—I have cited this case as it is one that is easily understood, that is of the present day, and that illustrates clearly the terrible character of that child-slavery that is engendered by drink. The passion for liquor seems to extinguish every other sentiment, every feeling, every virtue in man and woman. In the first place it effaces the very instinct of paternal care. I do not call it love, I call it brute-instinct, for the animal in the field, and the wild beast in his lair, will protest its young; and even if forced to abandon its offspring, it will certainly not destroy it. But the human animal, vacillating between the dignity of an intelligence derived from God, and the degradation of passions participated with the brutes, allows the demon of liquor to drag him down into the lower depths, and as he separates more and more from his original level, his mind becomes more and more obscured, and his soul grows darker and darker, until at last he skirts the wilds of madness, and finally stumbles over the yawning abyss of death, and staggers and reels—drunk and demented, red with sin and perhaps crimson with crime—in to the presence of God.

If this be an overdrawn picture, according to the reader's idea, then the reader can thank God for never having had any experience of the reality, and for never having been obliged to observe the terrors of such existences.

In my rambles, from curbstone to curbstone, I have seen a great deal of this; and I have always hesitated to record it, because the very recollections of some scenes are not suggestive of pleasant thoughts. I will, however, tell of one case, and it will have to suffice for all others. But I must state that it did not occur in Montreal, although the same might happen any day here, for scores of people in this city are exposed to similar experiences.

It was one evening, I had an invitation to go with a friend to the theatre, and I was to call for him at his residence. I was a little late, and I thought that by taking a side street I could find a short-cut. Not being well acquainted with the city I discovered that I was mistaken, for this back street, after running eastward for a short distance, turned off in a north-easterly direction, which was almost the opposite of the one that I desired to take. Having come to the corner, I was about to turn back when I saw, in an almost empty house, a poor place, devoid of furniture or any sign of comfort, a powerfully built man, beating and kicking a little girl. The moment he saw me he desisted, and, coward that he was, he began spluttering out excuses; just as if I had asked him any-

thing, just as if I were not more than half his size. He was very drunk; but not drunk to lose his equilibrium. He had the demonic strength of a madman. He tried to tell me that she was his daughter, that she would not do what he told her to do, that he was father, that he had a right to her obedience, and a whole lot more of like stuff. I spoke to the girl, but she was too frightened to make any statement. I then told him to let her alone, not injure her, and that she would go and do whatever he wanted. I did not, of course, know what that was; but I thought it a good way to get her out of danger. Off she walked down the dark street, he reeled into the house, cursing and talking to imaginary enemies, I hurried back.

We went to the theatre, my friend and I. About eleven o'clock I was returning homeward when I saw an ambulance turn down into the street where I had had my queer experience. Curiosity overcame me, and I followed. It went to the very house of that unfortunate man. It was for him that it had been called. They carried him out; but he was dead. He had died in a fit of rage and drunken fury. The little girl, the sole being belonging to him, stood in astonishment, in bewilderment; the transposition was too great and too sudden. She was about fourteen years of age. As the ambulance moved away, she recognized me, and it seemed as if, in the vast and horrid desert of life that spread out on all sides around her, she had met one friend, at least one being to whom she could speak. I need not tell the rest of the story; inside of forty-eight hours from the scene of the evening, before the theatre hour, the father slept in the grave of a drunkard, and the daughter was under the care of the Sisters of Charity, in an Orphan's Home.

But there remains one secret to tell—it is the point that gave me the heading for this paper, "Child-slavery." What was it the father wanted the daughter to do on that fatal evening, and for the refusal, on her part, he was beating her? She had been unfortunate or rather thoughtless enough to have told him that the only way she had of securing some money was at the cost of honor, and that she would not make that sacrifice. And it was to that sacrifice he was trying to drive her, with blows, and curses. She escaped; God took her unnatural father; a home and salvation for body and soul became her reward for sufferings endured and for temptations resisted. That is the experience, and, as I said, it will suffice to illustrate the terrible depths of depravity to which the curse of drink can reduce a human being.

CONCLUSION.—I have not much more to add. There is sufficient material in the foregoing to form the basis of long and profitable meditations. When I read the story of the foundation of an organization for the purpose of rescuing children, and especially girls, from the lives of mendicancy and misery to which they are driven by their miserable parents, I felt that a great boon had been done for society, and that the day might yet come, in this city, when our streets would no longer know the presence of those youthful beggars, whose tiny shoulders are forced to carry the heaviest of crosses—the crosses of degradation, mental and physical suffering, privations of food, clothing, shelter, rest, and even of one moment's relaxation, and all for the simple purpose of feeding the passions of ungrateful and abominable parents. This "Child-Slavery" must be effaced, cost what it may.

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Patent Report.

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

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

CANADA.

Nos. 83,581—Joseph Georges Bouchard, St. Hyacinthe, Que. Heater or cooler for liquids.

83,591—Louis Lacaille, Montreal, Que. Lock.

83,650—Archibald Edward Wilson, Winnipeg, Man. Freezing box.

UNITED STATES.

Nos. 681,718—Geo. Thos. Martin, Smith's Falls, Ont. Variable speed gearing for bicycles, etc.

682,808—Henry B. Maldeis, Montreal, Que. Leather working machine.

693,424—Anderson McIntosh, Wallace, N.S. Cheese cutter.

724,469—Frederick C. Harris, Sackville, N.B. Snow clearing machine.

732,082—Capt. Charles Johnson, St. George, N.B. Apparatus for cleaning ships' bottoms.

EAGER FOR RICHES.

In decrying the methods of promoters of commercial companies which have become so popular during recent decades, especially since the mighty dollar is the key to open the door to social rank and public office, an American journal in referring to the shipyards trust inquiry recently held in the United States, says:— Dummy directors were furnished in the persons of young clerks qualified by the gift of one share of stock each. From their number a dummy president and a dummy secretary were taken. By the acts of these dummies, dummy stock was created to the face value of many millions, and a vast quantity of bonds. These latter seem to be the only product of organization having other than a dummy character, for they are a mortgage upon real property of actual value.

TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

If parents desire to enjoy happiness in their declining years they should attend to the important duty of their children's education. An exchange very wisely remarks:—

Parents should clearly understand that inefficient training, or no training at all, must mean for their daughters ill-paid and subordinate positions. It requires an exceptionally clever woman to pursue a successful career under unfavorable conditions, but with very moderate endowments success may be assured to the one who is given proper equipment and training at the right time.

ALCOHOL'S POISON.

Opinion of scientists on the above subject, at a recent meeting, was expressed as follows:—

"Alcoholism produces the most varied and fatal diseases of the stomach and liver, paralysis, dropsy and madness. It is one of the most frequent causes of tuberculosis. Lastly, it aggravates and enhances all acute diseases, typhus, pneumonia, erysipelas. These diseases only attack a sober man in a mild degree, while they quickly do away with the man who drinks alcohol.

"The sins of the parents against the laws of health visit their offspring. If the children survive the first months of their lives, they are threatened with imbecility or epilepsy, or death carries them away a little later by such diseases as meningitis and consumption.

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Society Directory. ST. PATRICK'S SOCIETY.—Established March 6th, 1856, incorporated 1868, revised 1884. Meets in St. Patrick's Hall, 92 St. Alexander street, first Monday of the month. Committee meets last Wednesday. Officers: Rev. Director, Rev. M. Callaghan, P.P. President, Hon. Mr. Justice O. J. Doherty; 1st Vice, F. E. Devlin, M.D.; 2nd Vice, F. J. Curran, B.C.L.; Treasurer, Frank J. Green, Corresponding Secretary, John Cahill, Recording Secretary, T. P. Tansy.

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ST. ANN'S T. A. & B. SOCIETY, established 1863.—Rev. Director, Rev. Father McPhail; President, D. Aillery, M.P.; Sec., J. F. Quinn, 625 St. Dominique street; M. J. Ryan, treasurer, 18 St. Augustin street. Meets on the second Sunday of every month, in St. Ann's Hall, corner Young and Ottawa streets, at 3.30 p.m.

ST. ANN'S YOUNG MEN'S SOCIETY organized 1885.—Meets in its hall, 157 Ottawa street, on the first Sunday of each month, at 2.30 p.m. Spiritual Adviser, Rev. Father Flynn, C.S.S.R.; President, R. J. Byrne; Treasurer, Thomas O'Connell; Rec.-Sec., Robt. J. Hart.

A.O.H. LADIES' AUXILIARY, Division No. 5. Organized Oct. 10th, 1901. Meetings are held in St. Patrick's Hall, 92 St. Alexander, on the first Sunday of each month at 2.30 p.m., on the third Thursday at 8 p.m. President, Miss Annie Donovan; vice-president, Mrs. Sarah Allen; recording-secretary, Miss Rose Ward, 51 Young street; financial-secretary, Miss Emma Doyle, 776 Palace street; treasurer, Mrs. Charlotte Bermingham; chaplain, Rev. Father McGrath.

A.O.H. DIVISION NO. 6 meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, at 816 St. Lawrence Main street. Officers: W. H. Turner, President; P. McCall, Vice-President; J. Emmet Quinn, Recording-Secretary, 981 St. Denis street; James Scullion, Treasurer; Joseph Turner, Financial Secretary, 1000 St. Denis street.

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Gardien de la Salle Lecture. Assemblée Législative.

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NOTES

HONESTY IN BUSINESS.—path of the transgressor hard one. If the timid young men in devising methods of defrauding others, were only used to enee and to promote to their rewards would be than they expect, and greater than they expect. Leaving aside all question, the conscience art and considering the mere standpoint of temperance, one is inclined to young man a fool who casts aside a certain one hand he has certain future competency, wealth and decidedly honor and the other, he has the certain failure, of detection, of misery, degradation, prisoner's cell.

There is abroad a fever quickly and without warning youth who occupies a trust in an important corner establishment, if it comes seized of that fever mad, run to stock getting, and all kinds of derailing of money in a must be in all the amusements and pleasures of and to meet the cost of he has to work like a man with burning brain, means to meet his demands that our papers are full of young men whose lives by this awful thirst for keep pace with the times the papers do not publish er of the sad cases. We could fill a page with these men. All the worry, the sleepless nights, misery that they bring selves—and all for nothing sanctifies the old adage: "It is the best policy."

CATHOLIC CONGRESS would seem as if the Catholic Europe were waking up to city of proper organization, in Italy, on the 10th 12th of next month, a great Congress will be held there is considerable talk sent, and of which much is One grand object is to d together the bonds that various Catholic associations thereby strengthen them affecting their temporal well as those of a spiritual. It is understood that subjects to be discussed in gramme concerning univers is desirable that all Catholics should, in their own tions, seek to study science junction with religion, and purpose it is suggested that should keep in communication the Italian Catholic School. Another matter considered at this congress, is cessity of greater activity Catholic women. And it is sidered as a subject of p importance. Always with approval, it is a committees of ladies and be established in the various for the purpose of interest the well-being and the those who are of the female influence of woman, as wife, ther, is so great in the soc that a strengthening of t between the associations of women is also considered a final Catholic triumph.

C. R. DEVLIN'S LECTURE