OUR CURBSTONE OBSERVER ON SCHOOL RE-OPENINGS.

Here is a subject that used to interest me greatly in my younger days, when I saw, with deep regret, the long vacation vanishing and the phantom of a coming term looming up in the near distance. It also interests me to-day, although my terms of school attendance are unfortunately over forever. If there is one thing in the world that I envy in the regular professor, or teacher, it is the opportunity of being always young. I do not mean that a teacher never grows old; in fact, the occupation is one of such importance, surrounded by so many cares, that the teacher has every excuse in the world for grey hairs and signs of ages. But he is perpetually associated with the young, and that, in itself, is sufficient to keep the mind fresh and youthful. He feels anew each year the ambitions, the aspirations, the hopes of the children whom he instructs. There are other ways of counting life than by years. Some live many lives in a very short space of time; others experience but very little of life, even in a long course of years. But this is about the only thing in a teacher's life that is calculated to excite my envy. The rest is routine, monotony, steady work, poor compensation and very little gratitude. However, it is within the power of both parents and pupils to do much that will make life more pleasant and labor more sweet for the teacher.

Take, for example, the opening of the school. The teacher is the same, but there is a difference in the pupils; some of the last year's attendants return—others go their ways in life, and the school knows them no more. There are new pupils, some of whom are totally untried and who must undergo certain tests before they can be assigned to their different classes. Then there are many of the old pupils that must change classes. These details, and a thousand others, have to be contended with by the teacher at the opening of the session. It stands, therefore, to reason, that he needs to have every one of his care in class from the very first. On that first day he gives a space of time to the rudiments of all to be taught in the school during the term. It stands to reason, then, that the pupil who comes in a couple of days or a week after the regular opening, is sure to miss that which must be of great importance to him during the next ten months. Or else the teacher is obliged to commence all over again for the benefit of the tardy pupil, and to the detriment of all the others. If the teacher does not do so, the result is that the pupil who came late must commence his course at a great disadvantage. I could fairly compare the work of a class, during a term, to a race. There is a prize at the end for the winner; there are efforts required to keep a foremost place from start to finish; and the one who gets an uneven start, even were it only the space of a day, will find it no easy matter to catch up during the remainder of the race.

All this may be somewhat outside my usual sphere; certainly it is not curbstone observation. But I think that all parents should be more or less interested in this connection. Even the parents who have not actually, at this moment, any children ready for school, know how necessary it is that rules be kept and that teachers be not hampered in their difficult task of replacing parents for the time being. If often have heard fathers and mothers tell how trying it is to watch over their children, to guide them aright, to save them from the million and one dangers that surround them. Yet, they expect miracles on the part of teachers. If it be such a difficult task for the parents to bring up their own two, or three, or four children, what must not be the difficulties encountered by the teacher who is obliged to perform the same duties for twenty, thirty, or forty children — that are not his own at all? The fathers and mothers would feel but slight gratitude towards the one who would put obstacles in their way and render their labor of bringing up their children more troublesome; then, why should they be the first to place impediments in the teacher's way, make his road more wearisome, his task more difficult, while exacting from him more than is always fair? Give the children a chance; and give the teacher a chance. The first step in this direction is to see that the pupils attend their school from the very first hour of opening.

I am led to make these observations from past personal experience. And if it be wise and even imperative that children should be present at the commencement of the term, it is equally necessary that their attendance be regular throughout the year. The same reasons and the same arguments stand good in both cases. I have known parents to keep their children at home on certain days of the week, simply to help them in some work, to run on messages, to take care of the house, or for some like objects. This, again, is unfair to both child and school. If parents cannot get on in the world without the labor of their children, it is high time that they should take other means of carrying on their affairs. If they never had any children, what would they do? If their children died young, how would they manage? They would simply have to do without the services of these little ones. Then, why not do without their services, as it is, in order not to render fruitless the advantages possessed by those children? It seems to me that all this is quite obvious, and I trust, in accord with the ideas of the "True Witness"—for a coupl? of weeks ago I gave expression to some views that seem not to have entirely harmonized with those of the paper.

I will, however, correct myself now, in as far as regards curbstone observations; it is certainly from the curbstone that I notice, at different times, the frequent appearance on the streets of boys and girls that should be in school. I know that they have no business on the street, especially at such times. Whose the fault? I am not stupid enough to blame the children. No more can the teachers be to blame. Of necessity it must be the parents that are responsible. It is an altogether false kindness to allow children to have their own way to the extent of destroying their own prospects and opportunities, for the sake of more recreation than is needed. I hope my observations will meet with general approval, and that when our schools open next week, every seat will be occupied.

RANDOM NOTES AND REMARKS.

A PECULIAR HEADING. — The Detroit "News-Tribune," the Sunday edition of which would furnish reading of a most indiscriminate character for a whole week, has a page dedicated to what it styles "Church News and Views." This page contains almost every kind of writing on questions affecting religion, from the "Peregrinations of a Church Tramp" to the "Confessions of a Clergyman," from the correspondent who will have no creed back to the peculiar texts that head the first column. Under a cut that might stand for a ruined tower, the end of a fortress, or the section of a church, we find these two texts :—

"I say unto you, resist not evil."—Christ.

"Overcome evil with good."—Paul.

What is the object of these two texts? There is an apparent contradiction in the two. Our Lord says, "resist not evil," and St. Paul advises to "overcome evil with good." Without any comment the two texts are set before the reader's eye in a manner best calculated to attract his attention and, at once, to suggest a contradiction of Christ by St. Paul. Was such the object in having two such extracts from Holy Writ placed side by side? We do not know; but if we are to judge from the other selections for that page we would be tempted to suspect as much.

This is a very striking illustration of the great danger of trusting to scriptural texts without taking into consideration the context of each. In reality there is no contradiction between Christ and St. Paul. By "resist no evil," Our Lord meant to shun the occasions of wrong doing. He intended that men should fly from evil, because it is dangerous to wrestle with it, there being so many chances of failing. St. Paul's words have reference to an entirely different thing, but they mean the same teaching. To "overcome evil with good" means plainly what it says; it means to return good for evil; or, in other words, to do what Christ had preached, not to resist the evil, not to struggle with it, not to play with it, but to simply counteract it by doing good. The two texts mean exactly the same thing, although taken, as they are thus presented, they would constitute a strong argument for weak minds to base their disbelief in Christianity upon. At all events it seems to us a duty of editors to deal respectfully with questions of this kind. It strikes us very forcibly that organs of the class to which reference is now made should avoid matters of a religious nature—the solemn truths of Christianity are too sacred and too exalted to be hashed up in a jumble of contradictory theories and expressions as we find them upon that particular page. Any way, whatever else may, or may not be done, for goodness sake leave texts of Scripture alone. The old archenemy himself can quote Scripture—but with a false interpretation.

TAKING A NAME.—"What is in a name?" If the Bard of Avon were amongst the living to-day he might find that not every flower would smell as sweet if called by another name. Here is a sample of the utility of changing one's name :—

"William Olejniezak, a resident of Green Bay, Wis., appeared at the office of the register of deeds, recently, and filed his declaration to make the change in his name. One of the paragraphs of this declaration reads as follows : 'The object and purpose of said change of name is to adopt a name more easily pronounced, and to comply with a request of my affianced wife, whose present name I intend to adopt. My name as changed or adopted shall be William McLaughlin.'"

In a Scottish settlement out West, a Chinaman tendered for a contract, and he signed his tender A. S. Macpherson. He got the contract, but when he appeared on the scene his identity was disputed. Having shown that he was actually the one who had sent in the tender, he was asked why he had assumed such a name. He made the very pertinent reply that in order to get a contract out there his experience had taught him that the one tendering must have a "Mac" in his name. The Chinaman's real name was Ah, Sin; he merely gave his initials with the unauthorized addition of the "Macpherson."

NUNS AND HOSPITALS.—Except in very rare cases, the internal administration of the public hospitals throughout Belgium is entrusted to nuns of one or other of the many congregations that devote themselves to the care of the sick, says the "Boston Republic," to the great gain both of the municipal finances and of the poor patients under treatment. In two or three places attempts have been made to carry out the process known as "laicisation," but the results have been the reverse of encouraging. Some twenty years ago the communal council of Ledeberg (a populous town near Ghent), in which body the Liberals had just gained a majority, decided on dismissing the sisters in charge of the public hospital, replacing them by lay nurses—a proceeding which naturally provoked considerable indignation among a large section of the inhabitants. But so frequent and so numerous have been the complaints against the lay nursing staff and so costly has the experiment turned out, that the managing committee of the hospital, composed almost exclusively of Liberals, have unanimously deemed it advisable to recommend the municipality to recall the sisters, one of the leading members of the committee, who also occupies the post of alderman, threatening to resign his functions if the proposed change was not effected. The committee's recommendation came before the town council some days ago, when the proposal for the re-entry of the nuns was adopted without a dissentient voice, Socialists as well as Liberals expressing themselves warmly in its favor. Under the management of the sisters not only will the annual budget of the hospitaf be reduced by one-half, but—which is of still greater importance — the sick poor of the town are certain to receive all the care and attention which their condition requires.

EXTRAVAGANCE IN DRESS.

A Franciscan Father's Views

The second chapter of the rule is for Tertiaries of the greatest practical importance, being concerned with the practical and systematic formation of the Tertiary character. In my opinion the various points of this chapter cannot too frequently be made the subject of conference by directors and others, whose duty it is from time to time to address Tertiary meetings. In this paper I propose to call attention to that point of the rule which says :

Members of the Third Order will refrain from excessive cost and elegance in their dress and toilet, and will observe, each according to his state of life, the rule of moderation.

The rule of the Third Order in this point touches on one of the characteristic evils of our time—the passion for luxury in the matter of dress. This is an evil that is very much in our midst, and one that is productive of much moral and social mischief. It is, naturally, more noticeable and more obviously hurtful among the middle class of all grades, and among the working class, than it is among the higher class. In persons of the first two classes mentioned it shows itself generally in a tendency to live up to the very limit of their means, sometimes even beyond their means, in order to ape, in the matter of apparel, the fashion —or supposed fashion—of people in higher station and of larger means. The result of this is often ludicrously vulgar—for instance, while the gentleman born to wealth and affluence is content to display one ring on his hand, and that usually of modest dimensions and quality, the middle class tradesman, who has "made his money," will usually display three or four, and these of striking dimensions and brilliancy. The same applies to every other department of apparel. Persons of the middle and working classes seem everywhere to regard it as being obligatory upon them to cultivate, in the matter of dress, and to conform to, the very latest and most extravagant fashions which are usually initiated and put in circulation by interested traders through the medium of over-wealthy people whose chief object in life would appear to be to pose.

The golden rule, to dress simply and becomingly, seems to have no meaning for the majority of people in the face of the tyranny of fashions. I think it may safely be said that nothing in our modern life is so generally and so persistently made to minister to insincerity and hypocrisy as is this passion for luxury in the matter of dress. It is the commonest means by which persons at the present day seek to suggest their being something which they are not. The tendency which leads the shop assistant or the clerk to don a yachting-cap when down at the sea-side for the week-end, or riding-breeches when out for the day at a horse show or a race meeting, is but a consistent and perfectly logical, though highly ludicrous, outcome of this passion. They put dress to what appears to be about its principal modern purpose; to making it appear that they are what they are not. This is only one ludicrous phase of the subject matter of this article. A painful phase of it is seen in the habit so prevalent among young people of both sexes, who have no sooner begun to earn a little wage wherewith to discharge part of their filial debt than they consider themselves free to lay out the greater part, if not the whole, of their scanty earnings on unnecessary and frivolous articles of dress. Such persons have been kept and maintained by the hard toil of their parents during the years of their childhood while at school, and, perhaps, for a considerable time afterwards, before getting employment, and in many instances even while actually in employment. But in the majority of cases they do not seem to regard themselves as under any obligation of giving over their earnings for the common maintenance of the household, and to be expended at the discretion of their parents, and in the majority of instances in which they do give of their wages to their parents, it is but a fraction of their earnings that they give. In the majority of instances the money thus retained is spent in procuring unnecessary and frivolous articles of dress for the purpose—though not, perhaps, always conscious of insincere display—of appearing to be that which they are not. Who is there that has not, at one time or other, been shocked by hearing from the lips of a stylishly-dressed young man or woman the shameful admission that their aged parent was in the workhouse! In conclusion, I will illustrate one other aspect of the mischievousness wrought by this evil by a mournful example. Let us suppose that a workingman's mother-in-law happens to die—a not extraordinary occurrence. No sooner has the sad intimation reached him and his family than his wife and grown daughters, probably without even pausing to say, "May the Lord have mercy on her soul," prepare to issue forth to the nearest fashionable showrooms "to get a bit of black." The "bit of black" comprises such trifling items as ties and crape for the male portion of the household, hats, and veils, and sundries that it passes my ability to specify for themselves, and gloves and vulgar black-bordered handkerchiefs for all. The result of the quest of a "bit of black" is that on the day of the good lady's obsequies the workingman's family is arrayed in mourning stuffs profuse enough to cast a shadow of grief over an entire village. And for all this extravagant and vulgar display hard-earned and otherwise much-needed savings have been drawn upon, or, perhaps, what is worse, debt has been incurred, or other sufficiently becoming clothing or useful household furniture has been pledged. There are no Masses said for the deceased. The family cannot afford that. Everything has been over-taxed to get that "bit of black." How essentially un-Christian such conduct is! Yet it is but one mournful instance of the tyranny which the passion for luxury in the matter of apparel exercises over our people.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN NORWAY.

The Norwegian letters of William E. Curtis to the Chicago "Record-Herald" are interesting. "Sociologists," he says, "divide the people of Norway into four classes :

"1—Wage-earners whose incomes are 700 kroner or less (a krone is worth twenty-six cents). They constitute 87 per cent. of the population, pay 50 per cent. of the taxes, and consist of workingmen, farm laborers and household servants.

"2—The second class is composed of farmers, mechanics, clerks, bookkeepers, foremen, small tradesmen and others, whose incomes are between 700 and 3,000 kroner. They constitute 11 per cent. of the population and pay 26 per cent. of the taxes.

"3—Tradesmen, professional men, small manufacturers, large farmers and others, whose incomes are between 3,000 and 10,000 kroner. These constitute 1.3 per cent. of the population and pay 12 per cent. of the taxes.

"4—Remaining inhabitants, with incomes greater than 10,000 kroner a year, compose the balance of the population and pay 10 per cent. of the taxes.

"According to the census of 1901 the average income of the inhabitants of Norway is only 326 kroner, or about $85 a year. This includes men and women and children. Nevertheless, there is one savings bank for every 5,000 inhabitants, one depositor for every 2.8 inhabitants with an average deposit amounting to 119 kroner. No country in the world shows such thrift and economy, for this statement includes only the savings banks, without referring to the other banks of deposit. The savings banks are under government control, with very strict regulations concerning the investment of the deposits.

"Wages in Norway have been gradually increasing during the last twenty-five years. This is due to the introduction of manufactures, labor-saving machinery and the development of skilled labor by industrial schools, thus increasing its productive capacity, and largely to emigration, which is an excellent regulator. During hard times, labor troubles, financial depression and low prices, emigration is active. Large numbers of people leave the country for the United States. When activity is resumed a demand for working men and women is created, and better pay is the result.

"The most rapid increases in wages has been among mechanics, factory operatives and domestic servants. The average increase in all occupations during the ten years between the census of 1891 and 1901 is at least 15 per cent.

"Recent statistics show that the average expense of living in Norway, including the entire population, men, women and children, is 160 kroner per capita, or about $32 a year — nine cents a day. This is probably lower than that of any other country except those of Asia. Nevertheless there are no poorhouses outside the large cities, and comparatively few people are dependent upon charity. In every municipality and parish a board of guardians, composed of the priest, the chief of police and some member of the council, affords relief from the public funds to those who need it, but it is comparatively small. Sixty per cent. of the applications for charity are due to illness, 10 per cent. to old age, 10 per cent. to accidents, 2 per cent. to drink and the remainder to various causes. Forty per cent. of the relief is rendered in the form of medical assistance, 40 per cent. by food and the remainder by fuel and clothing. Habitual loafers are sent to the workhouses, and their families, if they have any, are taken to the homes of the neighbors as servants.

"As 54 per cent. of the manufacturing establishments of Norway are in country villages the question of housing the working classes is not important here, although it is attracting some attention in Christiania, where building land is dear, and most of the people live in apartment houses. An official of the Board of Health has charge of the sanitary arrangements of all dwellings, but the laws are not very strict, and the absence of sewerage facilities makes it difficult to modernize the houses. Private companies, however, have been organized by benevolent people, as in other places, for the purpose of constructing model dwellings for workingmen.

"A paternal government serves as a building and loan association, and 2,500,000 kroner, which is equal to about $900,000, is now loaned at a nominal rate of interest to persons who desire to build homes of their own. Two per cent. is charged in the country and 2½ in the cities. The loan are made through a bureau of the treasury in charge of what is known as 'the house loan fund.' No public money will be loaned, however, to people who have not saved enough to buy their own building lot, fully paid for, and they are expected to refund the government loan in ten annual instalments. There are private building loan associations also which do a large business."

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL.

The drawing of prizes in aid of the Catholic High School, which has been postponed since June last, will take place in St. Patrick's Hall, on September 30th, at 8 p.m. All returns must be handed in before that date.

NUNS GO TO KOOTENAY. — A party of fifteen Providence Sisters left here on Monday for the Kootenay District, six Grey Nuns for Great Slave Lake, and six Oblat Fathers, who are going to work on Father Lacombe's missions in the Northwest.

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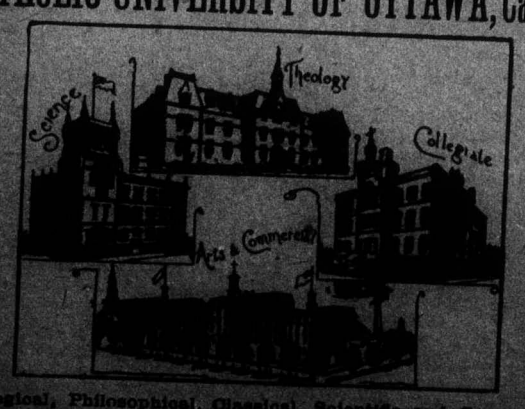

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