

OUR PHILADELPHIA LETTER.

The American Catholic Historical Society and Its Work.

Brilliant Intellectual and Social Gatherings During the Season Now Drawing to a Close—A Glimpse Into Its Well-appointed Home—The Modern Idea of St. Valentine's Day—A Capital Suggestion to Aid the Memory.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

PHILADELPHIA, February 14, 1898.—This has been a winter of social festivities at the home of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia. The Woman's Auxiliary of the Society, having accomplished a great deal, and reached a point where its influence seemed needed in another line, altered the plan it followed in former years, and has simply appeared as a very efficient aid in the matter of entertaining the guests of the Society at a course of its lectures given at the hall, 715 Spruce street. The American Catholic Historical Society belongs, in strict truth, to America rather than Philadelphia, and its members are widely scattered, but its Philadelphian members enjoy a certain of its 'good things' through their proximity to its home. These lectures have been delightful, and a full appreciation of them has been practically evinced by each audience. Miss Agnes Reppel opened the course—place aux dames, of course—with a very woman's lecture on 'Woman in Finance,' which was of that graceful and gracious nature which puts everybody in good humor with the next neighbor, but there have been learned and instructive lectures since that have fully established the Society's weight and solid standing as a 'historical' body. Marc F. Vallette, J. D., the Rev. Charles Warren Currier, the Rev. James A. Doonan, S. J., have been already heard on such subjects as suited their mental bias and have been grave or gay, exact or lofty, statistical or prophetic, as each subject required. Each lecture has been followed by a reception to the lecturer of the evening, and it is this feature of the occasions that is novel and delightful. The whole of the handsome old house is thrown open to the guests—for the lecturers are not for money but for love alone, and can be heard only through the Society's special invitation—and the crowd each evening has been more than ordinary. The committee on reception and entertainment is not one of name only. They

RECEIVE AND ENTERTAIN WITH BEAUTIFUL HOSPITALITY,

and simple refreshments are daintily served in the pretty rooms, while flowers, pretty china and pleasant faces add to the attraction of the scene. Very many of our people in Philadelphia have reason to praise the efforts of the American Catholic Historical Society for what it has added to their lives in intelligent and cultivated acquaintances; a better feeling towards each other and a better understanding of each other has resulted from the casual intercourse. People who have long wished to know other people of whom they only heard, but whom no everyday current floated near each other, have cast anchor for an hour or for the evening in the same nook, and been thus enabled to decide for themselves whether or not they were congenial souls, to the great addition of their social pleasures. Then, the students and kindly curious news seeker find the reading rooms and the files of Catholic newspapers and periodicals of the greatest use and information. Those files of papers, always open to the members, have done more to make the Catholics of Philadelphia acquainted with the strength of their reading public, and the creditable and earnest matter provided for it, than any number of lectures, any amount of statistics, any spoken eloquence of the pulpit. It is quite a common thing to hear a reference made to a far off paper, seen at the Society's rooms, and we no longer observe astonishment and incredulity with the former expression: 'Why, I did not know there were so many Catholic papers!' And some of them are so good! Already there has been done a good work among those who cared least for the work when it was taken up—those who are not hard students. For the intellect that finds its enjoyment, its true labor and its best results in study and investigation, such a society must, of course, fill a need of keenest longing, but it is necessary to further interest others, and this has been done. The books, the papers, the pictures, the relics of a noble and holy past, few as have been our years as a nation, all gathered in a beautiful and stately old-fashioned home, cannot but impress the most careless stranger to that past, as added claims upon the respect and the investigation of the present.

Two lectures are yet to be heard. The Rev. Joseph V. O'Connor—who is thoroughly well known for his eloquence and attractive style in addressing an audience, comes next on the programme on Tuesday, February 15th, with 'Prominent Catholics of the Revolution.' Dr. Edward J. Nolan is expected to close the course in March.

St. Valentine's Day.

'A saint's day without a saint,' one of our widely known advertisers calls the 14th of February, in one of his advertisements of valentines. The further expatiation on the subject proves how much there is yet for some very clever people to learn. One would think that with so many authorities on every conceivable subject just 'ready to hand,' the most ignorant, the most bigoted, the busiest of men and women, would look up the true meaning of even 'St. Valentine's Day.' But, then, there is a good deal of truth in Mark Twain's old witticism on the 'Encyclopedic.' When

one goes to it for information, it usually refers you to 'the other volume'—that is, the volume that is up stairs if you are down stairs, or down stairs if you are up stairs, or borrowed by the neighbor's daughter, or—if you are taking it by subscription—the volume that has not been delivered yet. There is nothing that so often tries one's patience or so surely cools one's enthusiastic desire for correct information as the search for it through the pages of an Encyclopedic. But, for all that, there is a saint for St. Valentine's day, and we know it, if the Presbyterians do not.

Room-Door Bulletin.

Does anybody you know have a room-door bulletin? It is a very great comfort to those who have short memories or few spare moments. A great many beautiful, or odd, or useful facts adorn the columns of the most ordinary news paper, and one is apt to heave a sigh of regret that they must be forgotten—crowded out of one's memory by the rush of life. I happen to know a woman who has a clever way of keeping some of them. Be it verse or prose, fact or fancy, she cuts it out, fastens it with a sweep of the mulligan brush on a stiff piece of paper, and pins it on the door jamb of her room. As she goes in and out, a glance at a word or two, or a line or two, will soon make her sure of it. When the first is mastered, down it comes and up goes another. I caught the idea, and I too, have a 'bulletin' on my door. The first thing I put up was Rudyard Kipling's 'Recessional,' and it stays, for I like to see it and go off with the roll of its noble music and the humility of its thought sweeping through my mind. It is an excellent and an easy way to memorize what may stand you in good stead many a day. It is a sort of 'pick-up' that no one could object to, for it is unobtrusive, and yet catches and holds one's thoughts in moments that are apt to be idle and wandering.

SARA TRAINER SMITH.

CHATS TO YOUNG MEN.

It is a suggestive fact that the season when man is barred from marrying, till he has fasted forty days, is fast approaching, and it is also a fact, and equally suggestive, that the privileged season, it may be called, which intervenes between closing Advent and opening Lent, is, and ever has been, recognized as especially dedicated to marriage. A Sunday American exchange treats its readers to a homily on the subject which will probably be of practical interest to some, perhaps to many, readers of the TRUE WITNESS, who may contemplate entering the connubial and happier state.

To the whole world of women—now and in all time to come—no subject possesses such deep and absorbing interest as that of betrothals. It is the bright star of hope of every maiden's existence, and the maiden looks back to it always as the first golden gleam that greeted her in life's pathway. Yet there is no subject which should be looked into more thoughtfully and which is, unfortunately, entered into, in many a case, so lightly and insincerely; for the betrothal vows should be just as sacred and binding as the marriage bond, which, rightly enough, is always expected to follow. There should be a sweet and beautiful sympathy between these whom Heaven has destined for each other—a blending of opposite natures, an intuition that, out of all the world of men and women, the two have met and recognized in each other the one who could make the happiness of this world complete for them. Unless this feeling exist there should be no engagement of marriage.

Man should look for beauty of soul in woman. He should search until he finds an earnest, pure woman, in whose heart has been instilled the reverence and love of God, to make home happy and his own fireside the dearest magnet on the earth to him. Men should choose wisely, remembering that beauty fades as quickly as do the flowers of a season. Faces lose their bloom, bright eyes grow dim, and brown tresses silver with the flight of time, but the beauty of the soul, which should always be sought for ere the betrothal words are uttered, last forever when true hearts are rightly mated.

It would be one of the most wonderful achievements that could be accomplished if young people could be made to really understand how solemn a thing is an engagement to marry. No man should utter words of love to any woman unless an offer of his heart and hand follow it as a positive proof that he has not spoken lightly, and marriage should follow quite as soon as circumstances will permit. If a man has no thought of marriage it is doing a woman a wrong to monopolize her time, cause her to build her hopes upon him, and then leave her a prey to conflicting regrets, which she would never have known had he wisely divided his attentions among many.

Possibly if we spent less time worrying over the wrong we have received and paid more attention to the wrong we have done, our personal happiness might not be augmented, but that of others would assuredly be.

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Note and Comment

A CORRESPONDENT writes suggesting

ing the organization of an Irish Catholic bank for the transaction of a general banking business, and suggests that steps should be taken to secure the premises of the Banque du Peuple. It must not be forgotten that banking in institutions are not of the growth of a day, month or year. The administrative machinery required in the operations of such institutions, more particularly if carried out on sectional lines, such as proposed by our correspondent, could only be perfected after years of patient and earnest toil. There are many institutions which are of more vital importance to the well being of the religious, national, social and commercial condition of English speaking Catholics of Montreal, but we have almost given up hope of beholding their establishment until another generation comes upon the scene, whose inclinations will be more unselfish, whose love of religion will be more practical, and whose pride of nationality will be more spirited. We have societies and parish organizations almost beyond enumeration. We are nearing the mark of the fifty thousand in this community, and yet we are indifferent, inactive, apathetic, and practically allowing other races and creeds to cater to our wants in secular affairs, and, in consequence, holding a position of inferiority. In all that concerns our religion the same slumbering, happy-go-lucky methods prevail, when there should be hundreds of stalwart and enthusiastic Catholic men, young and old, ready and willing to share the burden with our spiritual guides in promoting the prosperity of the several parishes, studying them with institutions religious and secular, in order to fully equip the youth that are some day to take up their task.

Action is what is now required. The English speaking Catholic and lay circles of Montreal are in need of earnest, enthusiastic and practical men.

UNTIL intruding carts and ruthless spades disturbed the stately piles that lined its length on either side, St. Catherine street, with its picturesque embankments and the snow way they enclosed, had all the features of a winter canal, and, with its gondola sleighs and fur-washed gondoliers, suggested the idea of a frozen Venice. The comparison seems far fetched, if it is not libellous, but, romantic and lovely as are the charms of the Venetian city, it is doubt full, with their bluest skies and calmest waters, they could rival the attractions of our beauties of our northern climate. Even 'Avon's Bard' would hesitate to treat as a 'winter of discontent' a season that could boast such 'scenes of enchantment' as those which suburban Montreal, and the broad acres beyond it, have presented for the past several weeks. Warmer winds and softer skies have now dispelled these fancy views, and what yesterday was pure, spotless, and undisturbed, is today a cruel mockery of its former self. Apart from picture life, winter, unquestionably, has its drawbacks, serious enough, in many respects, to justify the poet's charge of 'discontent,' but it has its redeeming features from an economic point of view and otherwise, and these are in sufficient force to offset the complaints preferred against it.

It is the lumberman's 'harvest moon,' and the logs he trails on the welcome snows are as gold from the mine or grain from the field. It is the ice man's busy time, and the blocks he cuts and hauls and stores are to him as wealth from the bosom of frozen river and lake, and as life to the parched and fevered months of the summer world. It is the hey-day of the furrier's year, and they who would be 'of the season' must dress in skins of seals or mink, of otter, of beaver, or of other fur-bearing animals provided by hunters, preserved by curers and dispensed by dealers, thus representing a great and important industry.

It is, too, the season of exhilarating sport, when bracing air and frost and snow give health and vigor to the nation's youth and bring out the truer instincts and best powers of its manhood. What summer sport or pastime can hold rank with the work of the hockey field? What better tests the science, the pluck, the physical powers of the youth? What truer or more picturesque exercise than the mountain tramps of the snow shoe clubs? What more grateful motion or pleasurable excitement than gliding over the yielding snow in a well-robed 'pung' or cutter to the merry music of the bells? What to compare with the lightning speed of the modern, but neglected, toboggan, and the wild delight of those it bears from steepest heights to lowest levels?—or with even the sharp-shooter's rival rush on its coasting hills? Without any depreciation of or any desire to underrate or undervalue the great and many games of the summer, it must be admitted that there are sports in the months of sub zero thermometers, icy winds and snow-clad grounds that can challenge comparison with the best attractions of the warmer days.

THE Boston Republic, in its last issue, has a lengthy review of the advance sheets of Hoffman's Directory, in regard to the present position of the Church in the United States. It gives the Catholic population of the United States as 9,856,622—an increase of about 445,000 over last year. There are 10,911 priests—an increase of about 500 since last year. There are 14 Archbishops and 77 Bishops. There are 230 colleges for boys, 600 academies for girls, 97 seminaries (regular and diocesan) for the training of 3,873 seminarians—about one seminary for each forty students. There are 819,576 children in the parish schools, and 38,000 more in orphan asylums.

MR. E. J. LLOYD, formerly chief constable of York, and recently appointed constabulary magistrate at Cahirovee, Co. Kerry, at a session, some weeks ago, speaking from the bench, vol-

untarily made the following reference to the law-abiding spirit which prevailed in the district. He said:—

'I should like to congratulate the public and the police of this district on the fact that after four months of constant attendance as resident magistrate in this portion of Ireland, comprising an area of 1,000 square miles, I have never yet had before me a single complaint of theft and not one case of criminal assault on women or children. Both these classes of cases are so terribly common in England, I say so as an Englishman, having lived all my life in England until recently. I think it speaks volumes for the people of Southwestern Kerry that they should be so strictly upright and honest, considering their great poverty and the hard times they now are patiently enduring.'

MR. J. J. FOY, Q.C., a well known Catholic lawyer, of Toronto, has been unanimously chosen as a standard bearer, in the interest of the Conservatives, in one of the divisions of the Queen City. Mr. Foy, in accepting the nomination, is reported to have said:—'In this city (Toronto) he did not believe that the question of religion entered into the matter of a man's acceptability so far as the Conservatives were concerned. He was born in Toronto, lived there all his life, and would be astonished if now for the first time in his life he should discover that a man's religion was any bar to his attaining any office. If it had existed it had been splendidly concealed.'—I has not been our privilege to have spent much time in the leading city of the neighboring province, but it has been our opinion for many years that the question of religion, especially the Catholic religion, made quite a difference in a man's prospects. Election day will tell the tale.

IN the February 'Cosmopolitan,' E. Benj. Andrews has an interesting article on 'The Selection of One's Life Work.' Discussing the ministry as a vocation, that is, the Protestant ministry, the writer, who is a Protestant layman, says:—

'We here face one of the real difficulties of the holy calling, the temptation which it offers to be indolent. In no other sphere of life is one so tempted as here of ineffective spur to hard and honest toil. So far as the employment of his time is concerned, the clergyman is his own master. If he will, he can idle late and idle away the best hours nearly every day. He can gad about, attend parties, lounge at his club or sleep, with little fear that any parishioner will take him to task in time to do any good. Many fall victims to this seduction, postponing work to pastime and contracting habits of idleness at length losing all power of application and being deservedly cast aside for better men.'

'Another extremely real temptation besetting clergymen is that of insincerity, arising from the routine character of their ministrations. The very character of their ministrations, the very being of a sacred nature, they come to consider their performance of it as of necessity proper in temper. But it need not be so. Good habits are highly dangerous to morality, more so than aught else save bad habits. Liturgical acts executed in a careless spirit cannot but result in hollow character.'

'More than any other servant of the public a pastor of a church is in peril from what we may term 'coddling.' He is popular, and often when he is so, many praise every utterance of his as 'eloquent,' 'scholarly,' 'most edifying' or as noteworthy in some other respect. Elderly ladies are a clergyman's worst enemies in this. Their habit of greeting him after each service with those stupidly laudatory estimates of his effort is not all.

'Foolishly tender inquiries about his health follow, he seems to them to look pale and need rest. Will he not please be good to himself, remit his arduous spiritual labors for a few days and go to recuperate at yonder retreat? Some fear that this will not suffice; the reverend gentleman must take a tour in Europe. They raise the money for this purpose, and bundle the sturdy victim off upon the next Liverpool steamer. How often is not a clergyman's self respect undermined in ways like this. Worse influence upon his character could hardly be imagined, unless it were being sent abroad at the expense of some one rich parishioner.'

TO make diamonds artificially is a dream of the modern scientist. Mr. Hudson Maxim, of New York, brother of the great Hiram Maxim, and himself a scientist of note and important achievements, believes that he can make diamonds with electricity. He calls the process 'electrical deposition.'

MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH, President of the Woman's Relief League of New Jersey, is still looking for the scalps of bachelors. She recently issued a circular asking the people of New Jersey to join in a movement to secure the amendment of Assemblyman Weller's bill to tax bachelors. She wants the tax made \$10 a year instead of \$2, with a provision that the

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money shall be devoted to the support of dependent maids who are fifty years old and upwards. In order to conform in some slight degree her antipathy towards the bachelors, she has also taken the warpath against rich spinsters. This foe of bachelorhood also desires to have old maids possessed of an annual income of \$5,000 or more taxed \$10 a year, the money to be devoted to the support of indigent bachelors who are sixty years old or more.

As a natural outcome the Bachelors Club of Hoboken has adopted resolutions calling on the Senators and Assemblymen from Hudson County to oppose the bill.

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The consumption of beer in the United States during the last year amounted to 35,000,000 barrels, a decrease of over 2,000,000 barrels. According to the United States Internal Revenue Department there has been an enormous decrease in the consumption of whiskey and spirits since 1890, and this is a most important fact for those people who believe that temperance and sobriety go hand in hand.

There is hope for the man or woman who has sufficient force of character to feel above all criticism of persons and dress.

A NERVOUS WOMAN.

I was completely run down and had a bad cough, due to a cold. I was very nervous, but since taking Hood's Sarsaparilla I have more appetite and feel a great deal better. I have also used Hood's Pills and find them very excellent.' Mrs. M. G. Galt, 653 Crawford street, Toronto, Ont.

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NOTICE. '98 CENTENARY. THE Delegates to the '98 CENTENARY ASSOCIATION are respectfully requested to assemble on SUNDAY, 20th inst., at HIBERNIA HALL, No. 2042 Notre Dame street, at 2:30 P.M. JOHN P. O'HARA, Secretary.

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