

OUR CURBSTONE OBSERVER.

Anonymous Correspondence

In all probability I will be accused of "living in a glass house" when I commence to throw metaphorical stones at anonymous writers; but it will be readily seen that I have in view a certain category of such wielders of the pen. It is now about three years since the Curbstone Observer's articles began to appear in these columns. Needless to detail the vast variety of subjects that have been treated under this heading. But from the first line to the last one there is not a single personal allusion, not a word that might be taken by any individual as touching upon his or her character, not an expression that could possibly hurt the most delicate feelings of any man, woman, or child. But, had I ever deemed it necessary or advisable—which, thank goodness, I never have—to refer to individuals, or to criticise persons by name, I should have done so under my own name and over my address.

But when the pen is used to bespatter a neighbor's character, or stab him in his reputation—no matter how truthful that which is written may chance to be—it is at once cowardly and dishonorable for the aggressor to shield himself behind a non-de-plume.

If it be a sin to belie a neighbor, to bear false witness against him, to injure him wantonly in his good name, still graver when thousands become the channels through which the poison is instilled into the public mind. Does a person who decides to perpetrate such an offence weigh the evil that must necessarily result from his action? If so, he must be the possessor of a very elastic conscience; or else he is exceedingly reckless of consequences as far as his own future is concerned. If men, who are inclined to thus injure the good names of others were to reflect for a moment, and to consider the situation if their names were signed to their letters, possibly they might draw back before letting go that which they can no longer check; guide, nor direct once fired into the domain of public notice. Hence the great danger of anonymous correspondence. It is a shield for the unmanly, when they shelter themselves behind it, to attack those who are absolutely defenceless.

I do not claim that false, insinuating and injurious attacks upon the character of any person, are less culpable, because the one making them accepts the responsibility, by doing so above board and over his own name; but I do maintain, that if such writers were obliged to sign their communications the public would be treated to a far smaller number of them. I think it was Junius who characterized the Duke of Bedford as having "done good by stealth, the rest is on record." There are men, animated with a peculiarly destructive spirit—destructive of the characters of others—that they can never, by any possible means, discover the good that their neighbors do, while they keep a faithful record of all that might, by any means, be twisted into faults and shortcomings on the part of their fellow-citizens. Poor Hood knew something of life and of human nature when he exclaimed:

"Oh, for the rarity Of Christian charity, Under the sun."

Our Educational Institutions.

ST. LAURENT COLLEGE. — St. Laurent College loves to welcome back the children she has fostered, and sent from the class halls into the broad world. Never was the truth of this better shown, and more favorably commented upon than on the occasion of the visit of the Rev. William Rafter, of St. James Church, New York city, whose love for his "Alma Mater," neither time, nor separation has lessened. In this welcome St. Patrick's Society took an active part, and on the occasion presented the following musical and literary programme in honor of its reverend guest:—

PROGRAMME.

- Overture, College orchestra. Recitation, Selected, Geo. Kane. Essay, Trip to St. Helena, W. C. Humphrey. Recitation, Mahoney's Cat, John Dineen. Song, Selected, A. M. Garry. Recitation, Brian Boru, Jno. Bent. Essay, Skating Scene, Jos. McCarthy. Recitation, Wounded, A. C. Kennedy. Essay, Newspapers of To-day, Patrick Scullion. Violin, "Miserere," H. Gilranean. Essay, Independence, F. Hinchy. Recitation, Cataline, Edw. C. Cart. Essay, The Perpetuity of the Church, Francis M'Gue. Recitation, The Curse of Richelieu, Jos. H. Loughran. Vaudeville, Sketches, etc., Jos. Kennedy and C. Maher.

At close of programme the Rev. Father McGarry, C.S.C., arose, and in a few choice and complimentary remarks, introduced the guest of the evening to the members as one of their own. The Rev. gentleman thanked all for the pleasure afforded him; and in the brief address he made, in a happy way he recalled many instances and events that happened when he was a student at the college. He contrasted St. Laurent of old with the present, and was not sparing in eulogies of those with whom he spent many happy days. He procured a holiday, and then a fond farewell, leaving behind him a host of new friends and admirers.

FRENCH-CANADIANS IN ONTARIO.

A move was started two years ago to induce all French benevolent societies to form a federation in the Province of Ontario and from time to time prominent French-Canadians in Ottawa have conferred as to the realization of the movement. Taking advantage of the presence in this city of C. Caron St. Elme de Champ, a number of leading citizens assembled in l'Union St. Joseph's the other evening. Ex-Mayor Durocher, general president of l'Union St. Joseph, was called to the chair, and invited Mr. de Champ to give his ideas. The eminent professor highly commended the idea of a federation of all French societies in Ontario for it gave an occasion to several French groups in the western part of the province to know their eastern friends, and no doubt such organization would largely contribute to the preservation of the French language and save it from complete annihilation. After remarks by other speakers, a resolution was passed, thanking Mons. C. Caron de Champ for his practical suggestions, and it was decided that the presidents of all French societies in Ontario be communicated with, inviting them to send delegations here to discuss the matter. Among those present were: Ex-Mayor Lurocher, Ald. P. H. Chabot, George Lebel, Ald. Champagne, Emmanuel Tasse, Ald. J. U. Vincent, Rev. Fr. Paradis, C. S. O., Boudreau, Flavien Moffet, Arthur Charbonneau, E. J. Lavendure, O. A. Roque and others.—Ottawa Free Press.

CATHOLICS IN ENGLAND AND THE COMING EDUCATION BILL!

FATHER GLANCEY'S ADDRESS.—At the 47th annual Birmingham Catholic Re-union, held in the Town Hall on Monday, January 20th, the Rev. M. F. Glancey, the president for the year, delivered an address on Catholics and the coming Education Bill, says the "Catholic Times" of Liverpool. He said we have been assured by no less an authority than the Duke of Devonshire that the education question upon which I shall have the honor of addressing you this evening has gone to sleep, and is sleeping a sleep so like death that neither he nor any of his colleagues of the Board of Education can detect even a snore. When speaking at Liverpool on October 26th of last year he seemed almost moved to tears by the evident lack of interest that met his gaze at every turn. He implored the public to provide the Government with the breeze of public opinion necessary, as he says, for the successful launching and navigating of any educational measure, great or small. The Government, he would have us believe, are eaten up with zeal and bubbling over with enthusiasm in the cause of education; but until the public make an active demand and give the Government the moving and potent force they ask for, they can only mark time and whistle for the wind. A very pretty story, marked by tenderness and pathos, and lacking only the prosaic element of truth to make it exquisitely perfect.

THE FACTS.—For a moment just look at the facts. (1) After the general election in 1895, which put in power a Government deriving much of its strength from its professed friendliness to Voluntary schools, there was assuredly no lack of breeze. Indeed, there was breeze enough to drive an ironclad. Hopes ran high and enthusiasm was unbounded. How did the Government profit by it? They brought in a large and comprehensive Bill, and having rolled it by the aid of a majority of over 200 strong up the Parliamentary hill, they were at pains to emulate the exploits of Sisyphus by letting it roll down again with increased velocity. They brought in a Bill which no one without making a virtue of credulity can believe that they ever intended to pass. That was the first encouraging use to which they put the popular breeze. (2) Then one Ministerial speaker after another was put up to cry down any and every proposal for placing the Voluntary schools on an equal footing with Board schools. (3) Next it was whispered in our ears with all the solemnity befitting a great State secret: that we must not expect too much, as the Government is not purely Conservative, but composed in part of men who were guilty of the Act of 1870. (4) To crown all, no one made greater effort to drown the aspirations of denominations than the Duke of Devonshire himself, who declared that all the members of the Cabinet did not look at the education question from the same point of view, and, therefore, nothing could be done until they had adjusted the focus. Indeed, so vigorously did he strive to quench their ardor that he was acclaimed by the press as the great prophet of cold water, whose chilling common sense could always be depended upon to reduce the temperature of feverish politics.

PUBLIC OPINION.—But in spite of extinguishers public opinion grew and asserted itself, the wave of angry indignation that swept over the country in 1896-7, when the Government seemed inclined to betray the Voluntary schools, convinced it that it was dangerous to trifle with the supporters of those schools, and compelled it to pass the Voluntary Schools Act of 1897. How strong was the movement may be gathered from a speech on education delivered in January, 1897, to the Drapers' Company by the Duke of Devonshire himself, who said: "I trust that, at all events, an amount of powerful public opinion has been aroused on this question which will not allow it to sleep until it shall finally be disposed of." Is it possible that the powerful public opinion to whose existence the Duke testified in 1897 had, after all, gone to sleep almost immediately and had vanished like a dream in 1901? Of course not. Now, as then, great stress is being laid on the alleged serious differences in the demands made by the various sections of denominationalists. The National Society is being pitted against the S. P. O. K., the Convocation against themselves, and

we are told that the Lord President who has whistled for a wind does not want a dozen contrary winds, and will hardly be helped if gales are to spring up from all quarters of the compass. Now, it may be freely confessed, that in 1896 the Voluntary school ranks were weakened by dissensions. North and South were at loggerheads. All this is now changed. Denominationalists, no longer divided, have closed their ranks and offer a united front. The Convocations of York and Canterbury have joined hands, and between them and the National Society and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge there is substantial agreement. All have practically thrown overboard the system of voluntary subscriptions; all are agreed that all public elementary schools are to receive equitable support out of public funds for secular instruction; that the appointment and dismissal of teachers must rest with the owners or trustees of the school; that the cost of the sites and buildings of denominational schools should be found by the various religious bodies; that representatives of ratepayers are to be admitted on the board of managers in a proportion not exceeding one to three. In the face of this agreement on all important points it is surely trifling with the question to argue, because one or other of these bodies lays stress on other points besides and offers various suggestions for carrying them out, that there is serious disagreement between them.

ATTITUDE OF CATHOLIC.—How does the Catholic body stand? On this point one witness shall suffice. We have it on the unimpeachable authority of the "School Board Chronicle" (Dec. 14) that the resolutions of the Convocations are identical in all essential matters with the resolutions of the Catholic bishops. "Though somewhat different in terms and circumstances," it continues, "they are one in principle and effect." Thus this modern Balaam who set out to curse us ends, quite unconsciously, by blessing us in bearing witness to the essential identity of the denominational demands. This rapid healing of the dissensions amongst denominationalists, who a little while ago were at war on fundamental principles, is, I venture to think, one of the most wonderful events in the recent history of education, and shivers into splinters the theory that all this time public opinion has been in a state of apathy and stagnation.

Since, then, public interest in education is alive and active, and since the Government, in the words of the King's Speech, is about to introduce "proposals for the co-ordination and improvement of Primary and Secondary Education," it will be well for us to state the problem that has to be faced and what are the main objects to be aimed at.

PROBLEMS TO BE FACED.—The problem may be summed up in the words of Sir John Gorst, who tells us that the one point on which the essential agreement exists is the establishment of one local authority which shall be able to form a plan for the general public education of its district, suitable to the circumstances of the population, and which shall exercise jurisdiction over all schools within its area. The objects to be aimed at are described in the words of the Royal Commission of 1888: "That the time is come when, for the best interests of education, some more comprehensive system of administration should be found: first, to remove as far as possible the grave and inequitable inequalities of the two systems of Voluntary and Board schools as now existing, and secondly, to eliminate as far as possible, for the future, the friction and the collision that have so often and so injuriously arisen between them."

When, therefore, a national system takes the place of the present patchwork system, with its multiplicity of authorities acting without reference one to another, its costly multiplication of administrative machinery involving in 1900 an expenditure of 9 per cent. of the total School Board rate; its want of co-ordination between the infinite variety of schools, ranging from the young ladies' academy to the great public schools—when educational chaos is to be moulded into shape and system, the first problem to be solved will be: Who shall be the paramount educational authority in each district? In answering this question we must keep steadily in view the objects to be aimed at in re-organizing education. Those objects the Royal Commission tells are twofold, (1) to remove the existing inequalities of Voluntary and Board schools, and (2) "to eliminate as far as possible for the future the friction and the collision which have so often and so injuriously arisen between them." Moreover, in choosing the local authority we must also consider what are the inequalities to be removed and who has caused those inequalities. The words of the Royal Commission above quoted were written about thirteen years ago, but, to the shame of the nation, they are still a dead letter. The grave inequalities spoken of are still rampant. The practical outcome of this system of gross inequality "has condemned millions of children to receive a maimed and stunted education in badly equipped schools served by underpaid teachers."

LOCAL AUTHORITY.—How much lies in the choice of the local authority? The authority will have jurisdiction over all schools within its area; not merely the elementary schools or the secondary schools, but over both one and the other—the elementary schools, both Board and Voluntary, convent schools and dames' schools, higher grade and grammar schools, and even over public schools and colleges. In a word, the whole range of education below the University will be subject to its authority, while we have been swayed hitherto by a Government Department in our elementary schools, we have had a free hand in our convent schools and grammar schools and colleges. To that freedom we must now bid farewell. Over one and all the local authority will have dominion; it will regulate the curriculum, it will fix a standard of efficiency, it will inspect us all round in a variety of ways. But all this shows what a tremendous power for good or for evil this new local authority will have, and therefore the supreme importance of selecting the right body for that authority. The choice, it seems, will fall on the County Council. And it is hoped they will realize the great expectations that centre in them. Their past record is good; they enter on the work with clean hands; the goodwill is theirs; they have done nothing as a body to forfeit public confidence in their willingness to deal out even-handed justice to all schools under their jurisdiction.

RIGHTS OF MINORITIES.—Still, we have neither the desire nor the intention of delivering ourselves bound hand and foot even to such a correct body as the County Council. For a County Council is not always composed of angels; sometimes it is composed of men; and it is surprising how much human nature may linger in a County or City Council. The first and chief safeguard is the protection of the rights of minorities. At present those rights are safeguarded by School Board elections by the cumulative vote; and we make the most remarkable request that when the cumulative vote is abolished we shall not be worse off than we now are. As Mr. Yoxall clearly sees, we Catholics feel the question of the constitution of the local authority to be vital. For, as he says, we are in a minority with most everywhere. He therefore suggests "that the Bill should lay down that due regard should be had to the representation of minorities in framing the scheme and appointing the personnel of the Schools Committees." The Catholic Bishops have stated the point with still greater definiteness and precision. They consider it essential that there should be on the committees "representatives of the great educational interests that have grown up with the Board of Education." The Hon. Mr. Stanley, vice-chairman of the London School Board, tells us indeed that quite the worst thing to do is to pack the committees with interests. A plain man, I fancy, would say that to drive out the interests—i.e., those who have a stake in the concern—is the surest way to ruin the business.

NO SURRENDER OF RIGHTS.—What, then, is to be the Catholic attitude towards the proposal to place our schools on an undenominational basis? The attitude of Catholics all the world over. Turn your eyes where you will; to France or Belgium on the continent of Europe, to the land of the Golden Fleece at the Antipodes; pass on thence to the snow-capped regions of Canada and the vast continent that owns allegiance to the Stars and Stripes, and return home by the Emerald Isle; if you have eyes in your head you will see one fact ever present, ever living—that in no country of the world have Catholics bowed the knee to the secularist or undenominationalist Baal. And think you that we in England are going to be the first to surrender? Ask the Liberal Education party and the Birmingham School Board what they think of the chances they have already conceded to the principle for which you have fought—the principle of Catholic schools for Catholic children. How pleasant it is to find that our friends are at bottom thoroughgoing denominationalists! Thus Liberals and Catholics have kissed. Let, then, the British public know once for all that we will have none of their undenominationalism. Till the last man behind the trenches has fallen we shall fight to maintain the Catholic character of our schools. To protect the rights of those schools we claim to be represented on the local education authority, and we insist on retaining the appointment of teachers, without which the Catholic character of our schools would be insecure. And taking our stand on the broad principles of freedom and justice, we demand equal opportunities for all the children of the nation; we demand when Voluntary schools have performed a public work on behalf of the nation they should receive what the nation considers a fair wage when that work is done by Board schools; we demand, that is, that we should no longer be out of pocket in doing the work of the State. This burden we have borne long enough, and now we hope to cast it from our shoulders for ever. Therefore we call upon the Government to wake up and to give effect to those principles of common statesmanship and common justice which have been so admirably set forth in the statement of the Catholic claims put forward by the Catholic bishops.

It is the honor of a Christian mind to show itself superior to every false shame by trampling under foot all human respect in order to manifest its faith in the eyes of the entire world.

DWELLINGS IN NEW YORK CITY.—Only one-tenth of the dwellings in New York city are occupied by a single family each.

Symptoms and Causes of Premature Old Age.

We hear it said of this man or that, "He is old before his time." What are the symptoms and causes of such premature old age? We find the question answered by the well known alienist, Dr. Allan McLane Hamilton, in an interesting essay entitled "The Neurotic Indications of Pre-Senility" (William Wood & Co.). Of course in order to understand what is meant by pre-senility, or premature old age we must have a definition of senility, that is to say the degeneration which, normally, may be looked for at a certain period of life. Dr. Hamilton accepts the definition of senility given by Dr. T. S. Clouston in his "Lectures on Mental Diseases." That definition runs substantially as follows:—"Physiological senility means the disappearance of reproductive power; a greatly lessened affection faculty; a diminished power of attention and memory; a diminished desire and a diminished power to energize mentally and bodily; lowered imagination and enthusiasm; a lessened adaptability to change; a greater slowness of mental action; slower and less vigorous speech, as well as ideation; feverish blood corpuscles, red and white; a lessened power of nutrition in all the tissues; a tendency to disease of the arteries (hence a man is sometimes said to be as old as his arteries); a lessening in bulk of the whole body, but notably of the brain, which is altered structurally and chemically in its most essential elements, the cellular action and the nerve currents being slower, and more resistance being encountered along the conducting fibres." Again: "As in the young man there is organic craving for action, which, not being gratified, results in organic discomfort, so in the old man there is an organic craving for rest, and not to gratify it causes organic uneasiness." The changes embraced in this definition of senility characterize the normal weakening incident to age. When they begin to appear, however, before fifty, they must be regarded as pathological instead of physiological. They constitute pre-senility.

How are we to recognize the approach of pre-senility? We derive from Dr. Hamilton's essay a good deal of information on this subject in the form of the observation of a large number of cases. For instance, the condition of cerebral irritation exhibited when in an ordinary anaemic brain flushes of hyperaemia occur is pronounced as evidence of pre-senility. The mental impairment resulting from altered blood pressure and the consequent malnutrition of the cortical elements is detected by the patient himself as well as by onlookers. In ordinary men possessed of an average power of self-control there is a stability which is lacking in the pre-senile state. The sufferer from pre-senility becomes flushed and irascible under slight emotional stimulation, or lose the patience and ability to throw off care which may have characterized them in former years. Among other early indications of mental deterioration Dr. Hamilton notes "an indisposition to undergo intellectual exertion, and a tendency to avoid anything that may be regarded as complex reasoning. The association of ideas is weakened." The sufferer from pre-senility "tries as a rule, to arrive at the result desired with the least effort, and in the quickest way, and much of his mental activity is automatic. Especially is man's weakness disclosed in his inability to reluctance to follow out new channels of thought or to accept and store away professional impressions. If he be a professional man, he prefers routine work to work that demands original research; he shrinks from the precise expression of ideas which can only be obtained with mental effort; under all circumstances, he seeks the broad road of colloquialism and thoughtless speech; he submits willingly to the yoke of old mental habits; he evinces a sensation of relief when he has accomplished the task required of him. Another symptom of pre-senility is "an early impairment of memory, especially of substantives;" with this waning of the recollective faculty grows a kind of apathy and dullness. "Little mistakes are made in calculations, letters are misdirected and cheques are unsigned." Such omissions, if rare, may be insignificant, but, as they gain in frequency, they roll up proofs of pathological weakness.

In Dr. Hamilton's opinion, the importance of vertigo, considered as an indication of progressive arterial occlusion, has not received due attention. He has observed, he tells us, that for a long time before incapacitating or even troublesome symptoms have developed, the pre-senile victim of pre-senility is apt under unusual cardiac stimulation to become giddy. This giddiness "often has no other origin than an excited dispute, attendance at an absorbing play or the temporary effects of excessive heat or cold; even a sudden glance forward or the act of bending over to tie one's shoe may cause confusion and slight tottering." Insomnia is another indication of pre-senility. "The patient is exhausted toward the latter part of the day and seeks his bed soon after dinner, but, after a short period of sleep awakens, or else does so at a very early hour of the morning. In both cases the awakening is sudden and complete, and he is tormented by a veritable kaleidoscope of active thoughts." The avoidance of excessive indulgence in alcohol and tobacco is, of course, commended to pre-senile persons, inasmuch as such agents produce a rapid and repeated deter-

(Continued on Page Eight.)

OUR... It is said that... cent success of Mr. J... to us a slight change for "lucky," and ha... rich." There is no doubt great measure due to degree to his faculty... ciate the situation an... Mr. Cochrane has remains to be seen if...

Notes... The recent success M. Santos-Dumont w... at Monte Carlo, is at... derable attention a... thereof may be more... than can now be well... cording to reports, worked perfectly. "Answering her hel... least trouble, M. S... made a tour of the h... returned without mis... shed where the balloo... The entire town witn... riment, M. Santos-D... cheered enthusiastica... turn. He made a sec... afternoon, encircled... then proceeded a... trailing a guide rope... turned he again encir... following the shore a... tude, thus enabling t... onlookers to watch t... which his airship w... swarm of small vess... lowed him to sea ve... keep pace with the l... landing, M. Santos-D... an immense ovatio... could have crossed t... near."

IRISH ENVOYS. Star Line steamship sailed from Liverpool had among her passen... H. K. Redmond, mem... ment for East Clare, Devlin, of Belfast, w... a tour of the United... purpose of completing organizing the United... Devlin come to the U... the request of the League of America, v... ranging their tour of...

A RICH COOK.—Th... an Tenu, head cook a... Astoria, New York, July 1 last, appointe... Margaret, and Nichol... ectors. The estate v... 000.

MORE MONEY.—I... announcement at the... ment exercises l... J. Pierpont Morgan l... erect at the cost of o... three of the buildings... the accommodation of... Medical School, Presi... nounced to the medic... Saturday, that J... proposes to give \$1,0... chance of this great... vided that other tris... versity will raise a s... the neighborhood of... used by the Harvard... for land, buildings or...

Famous Irish Distillers JOHN JAMESON & SON J. J. & S. DUBLIN This Celebrated Pure Pot Still Whisky commands the highest price in the London and Dublin Markets for Fine Quality, Age and Purity.