

Our Curbstone Observer.

ON THE STREET PROBLEM.

YANKEE once contracted with a firm to remove an extra amount of snow which, owing to an unusual and terrific storm, had completely blocked the roads leading to the company's works. As in that particular section of the country snow blockades were of rare occurrence, no preparations were ever made to meet such a contingency. The Yankee contractor represented these facts to the firm, and was told that he might take as long as he liked to clear the roadways. Thereupon the Yankee lit a cigar and sat down upon the top log of an almost buried fence and contemplated the billows of white snow that surrounded him. When asked when he expected to commence the work, he calmly made answer, "some time in June." He was looking forward to the sun doing the clearing for him, and as no limit of time was set down in the contract, he felt quite justified in thus relying upon nature to help him along with his undertaking. Our City Council seems to have taken the Yankee's idea, as far as the cleaning of our streets is concerned. Not having any money to spend upon that work, the Council has decided to wait till the snow falls and covers up the mud and filth. How long it will be until the snow comes, to remain, is far from easy to tell; but in all human probability we will have sleighing some time between this and Christmas. If so the Council will have ample time, before the spring, to appropriate money for street cleaning, when the snow goes and this year's mud re-appears in March, 1903. What a glorious picture to contemplate; the resurrection of the mud with the addition of the winter's debris.

INTERESTING SIGHTS.—It has become so fashionable to complain about the filthiness of the lanes and streets that one almost hesitates to approach the subject. A person feels not a little mean, even when there is such provokingly good ground for criticism. It is like joining a crowd that is crushing some defenseless victim; the victim may be in the wrong, but nature rebels against the idea of every person kicking and cuffing him. Still, in the case of the autumn mud, the temptation is very great—especially if you have experienced any of the practical results of wading through a sea of mire. You are not inclined to be very charitable when your best suit has been ruined and your boots have to be cleaned with a hoe or pick axe. Yet, on the curbstone one does see some funny sights, especially in Montreal, and at this season. I was going to express the hope that before these few lines are in print we may have the merciful snow; but, on reflection, I remember that snow means cold, and fuel is both scarce and dear. Consequently the generality of the public would prefer to put up with dirty streets than to endure the cold or to be forced to buy coal and wood at the present prices. My business brought me down McGill street, to the corner of Commissioners' the other day. I have long been in the habit of walking on the curbstone, but this time there was no such thing to be seen, and I was exceedingly glad to find foot-hold on a strip of sidewalk, and not to have been forced to climb a wall. While looking around me I notice a gentleman coming along in hot haste. Business of importance was evidently propelling, or drawing him. He stopped short at the corner, intending to find some kind of ford where-by to reach the other side of the street—or lagoon. In vain did he look up and down; there was not a crossing in sight. To risk one's feet in the liquid mud, that might have floated a skiff, was out of the question. Presently a man, driving a span of horses and a large express-wagon, came along. The gentleman called to the teamster, and offered him five cents to drive him across the street. The offer was accepted; the wagon was backed up to the sidewalk; the gentleman got on; the driver turned his team, cramped the wagon, backed it against the opposite sidewalk, and the gentleman got down, paid his five cents, and went on his way rejoicing. The whole affair was so comical that the driver was grinning from ear to ear, and

his late passenger appeared to be chuckling, in the height of merriment, to himself.

A BIG SURPRISE.—After the express-wagon gondoleer had gone his way, I managed to round the corner and to proceed about my business. Half an hour later I was at the foot of St. Francis Xavier street. I met two gentlemen, and after a moment's conversation with them, I proceeded onward. I had not gone far when I heard a chorus of yells and some very unrefined language. I turned to learn the cause of the outburst of indignation, and I found that after I had left them two other friends came along, and all four stood chatting on the narrow sidewalk. At that moment a long truck, loaded with barrels, came floating—at least apparently floating—down the street. The truckman stopped his horse just a few feet beyond where my friends were standing. He got down to remove the iron pin that held the barrels on the truck. His intention was to shove them a few holes further up. As soon as he pulled out the pin the horse stepped backward, the truck ballanced in the same direction, and the last barrel rolled off—it fell in the lake of mud at about three feet from the four gentlemen. The reader can better imagine than I can describe the result. They were bespattered an inch thick from hat to shoes. The only consolation, if it may be so considered, was in the fact that one of the said gentlemen was a city alderman. However, I have since learned that he is not a member of the Roads Committee, and I am sorry for having been uncharitable enough to have rejoiced in his mishap.

A MORNING EXPERIENCE.—One day last week I had to leave home at a very early hour, and before going I was anxious to empty a pail of refuse that stood in my shed. It undertook to carry that pail down was an hour before daylight when I a winding, cork-screw, stairway at the back of my house. I succeeded somehow in getting down without breaking my neck, but how I was preserved I can never tell. When I opened the lane door I discovered that my barrel had vanished, and that the nearest one was six doors down from me. I confidently stepped out with my load, and stepped into a lake up to my ankles. Seeing what I thought was a piece of solid earth I jumped for it, and landed in a cut-away made by coal carts and scavenging wagons, this time sinking three or four inches lower, and leaving one of my rubbers in the depths of that excavation. Visions of my great-grandfather, who was once caught by night in the Bog of Allen, and who had sunk to his neck when he was discovered, came floating through my mind. Thus stimulated to renewed efforts, I dived back again, ever heading for the distant barrel. This time I fully expected to land in another mud hole, and being prepared for it, I was entirely upset by finding myself upon a solid ridge. I lost my balance, and my pail; and my neighbor's dog—taking me, very likely, for a tramp, or thief—set up a most infernal howl, and made frantic efforts to get over the fence at me. I saw a light turned on in the next house, and I made up my mind to get into my own castle without further delay. But, for the life of me, I could not put my hand on that pail again. Twice I grabbed the broken hoop of a dilapidated butter-firkin, thinking I had my own property. Finally I succeeded, by stumbling over it, to get my pail, which had been freed of half its contents in the fall. I soon scattered the remainder and dived for my own door. But, strange to say, I could not find that door. It was pitch dark in the lane, and the four doors of the four houses are exactly similar. I tugged away at my next neighbor's back door for a while, but finding that it did not yield, I recrossed the red-sea, in which I had been so nearly engulfed, and eventually got inside my own citadel. If I did not bless the lanes that morning, my wife did, and that served the purpose just as well.

The Study of The Scriptures

APOSTOLIC LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIII., APPOINTING THE COMMISSION FOR PROMOTING THE STUDY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.



Mindful of the vigilance and zeal which we of all others are bound to put forth for the proper custody of the deposit of faith. We published in 1893 the Encyclical letter "Providentissimus Deus," in which we dilated upon many points concerning the study of the Sacred Scripture. The importance and utility of this great subject demanded that we should devote the utmost attention in our power to this matter, now especially when the progress of modern scholarship has opened the door to so many new, and at times temerarious questions. We, therefore, set forth what all Catholics, and especially what those in sacred orders, might do in their respective spheres on behalf of these studies, and we described minutely the mode and manner in which these studies might be advanced in harmony with the present time. Nor was our document without fruit. It is pleasant for us to remember the many expressions of obedience on the part of bishops and other learned men which followed that letter, in emphasizing the necessity and importance of our injunctions, and in promising their aid to have them put into effect. And it is equally consoling for us to remember the efforts made in this direction by Catholics who gave themselves with enthusiasm to these studies.

But it is clear to us that the causes which impelled us to write that letter still exist and even increase in urgency, and we have therefore resolved to urge our previous instructions with still greater force, commending the same again and again to the zeal of our Venerable Brothers of the Episcopate.

And in order that our purpose may be more easily and abundantly realized, we have now determined upon adding a new and authoritative aid for this end. For, in view of the complexity of modern studies and the manifold errors which prevail, it has become impossible for individual interpreters of the Sacred Books to explain and defend them as the needs of the hour require. It has therefore become necessary that their common studies should receive assistance and direction under the auspices and guidance of the Apostolic See. We think this can be done by adopting in this matter the same plans we have followed in promoting other studies. We are, then, pleased to establish a species of Council or Commission, as it is commonly called, of serious men, whose duty it will be to devote their entire energy to ensure that the Divine words may receive that more minute explanation of them demanded by the time, and may be not only preserved free from all taint of error, but even raised above rash opinions. The fitting seat for such a Council is Rome, under the very eyes of the Supreme Pontiff himself, that inasmuch as the City is the mistress and guardian of Christian wisdom, so the teaching of this necessary doctrine may flow from its centre, sound and incorrupt, throughout the whole body of the Christian republic. In order that the men comprising this Council may collectively fulfill this most serious and honorable of duties, they will have for their special guidance the following principles:

First of all they will carefully investigate the modern trend of thought in this branch of study, and regard nothing discovered by modern research as foreign to their purpose—nay, they will use the utmost diligence and promptitude in taking up and turning by their writings to public use whatever may from day to day be discovered useful for Biblical exegesis. Thus they will pay

great attention to philology, with its kindred sciences, and carefully follow their developments. For immediately attacks on the Scriptures break out we must look for weapons to prevent truth from going down in the contest with error. So, too, we must see to it that the study of the ancient Oriental languages, and the knowledge of the codices, especially of the earliest codices, be not held in less estimation by us than by those who are not with us; for both these branches are of great moment in the studies in question.

Next, with regard to the uncompromising maintenance of the authority of the Scriptures, they must exercise earnest care and diligence. They must work especially to prevent among Catholics the prevalence of that objectionable mode of thinking and acting which attributes undue weight to the opinions of the heterodox, almost as though the true knowledge of Scripture were to be sought principally in the show of erudition made by those who do not belong to us. For no Catholic can have any doubt about the truth which we have already dwelt upon at greater length, that God did not deliver up the Scriptures to the private judgment of doctors, but gave them to be interpreted by the teaching authority of the Church; in matters of faith and morals, relating to the formation of Christian doctrine, that must be held to be the true sense of sacred Scripture which has been and is held by Holy Mother Church, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and so no one may lawfully interpret Holy Scripture contrary to this sense or even in opposition to the unanimous consensus of the Fathers; that the Divine Books are of such a nature the laws of hermeneutics no not avail to dispel the religious obscurity in which they are wrapped, but for this a guide and teacher has been divinely given in the Church; and, finally, that the legitimate sense of Divine Scripture is not by any means to be found outside the Church, nor can it be handed down by those who have repudiated the Church's teaching power and authority.

The men who form the Council will, therefore, have to be sedulous in the guardianship of those principles, and endeavor to win over by persuasion all those who are prone to an excessive admiration for the heterodox, in order that they may more studiously hear and obey the true teacher, the Church. And although it has now become an established Catholic practice to take advantage of the writings of others, especially in criticism, this must be done always with caution and a judicious spirit. Our own workers will, with our emphatic sanction, cultivate the art of criticism as being of prime importance for the understanding of the opinion of hagiographers. We have no objection that in this branch they make use of aid furnished by the heterodox. They must be on their guard, however, not to be led thereby to intemperance of judgment, for this is frequently the result of the system known as the higher criticism, the dangerous temerity of which we have more than once denounced.

In the third place, with regard to that branch of the study directly concerned with the exposition of the Scriptures, seeing that this is a subject of the greatest utility for the faithful, the Council will have to devote special care to it. It is hardly necessary to say that in texts, the sense of which has been determined either by the sacred authors or has been authentically declared by the Church, men must be convinced that this is the only interpretation that can be approved according to sound hermeneutics. On the other hand, there are quite a number of texts in which there has hitherto been given no certain and definite exposition by the Church, and here private doctors may follow and defend that opinion which seems to them individually to be the most reasonable, but in these cases the analogy of faith, and Catholic teaching are to be followed as a guiding principle. When the questions of this kind come under discussion great care must be taken not to allow the heat of argument to outstep the bounds of Christian charity, and the revealed truths and divine traditions themselves to seem to be made a matter of doubt. For it would be idle to hope for great results from the divers studies of many individuals without a certain principle of agreement and the frank recognition of fundamental principles. Wherefore it will also form a part of the work of the Council to ensure a due and dignified treatment of the principal questions discussed between Catholic doctors, and to afford all the light and authority of which they are possessed to the attainment of a decision. One important result of this policy will be

that it will afford the Apostolic See time to declare at the proper moment what is to be inviolably held by Catholics, what is to be reserved for further investigation, and what is to be left to the judgment of private individuals.

We therefore by these letters institute in this "alma Urbs" a Council or Commission for promoting the study of the Sacred Scriptures according to the laws above defined, in the hope that it may conduce to the preservation of Christian truth. It is our wish that this Council be composed of a number of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church to be named by Our authority, and it is our intention to add to these with the title and office of "Consultors," as in other sacred Councils, a number of distinguished men of different nationalities, noted for their sacred, and especially Biblical knowledge. It will be the task of this Council to hold regular meetings, to publish reports either on certain days or as opportunity may require, to reply to those who may ask its opinion, and finally to promote in every way possible the defense and the increase of those studies in question. It is our wish, too, that all matters treated by the Council in general be referred to the Pontiff by that one of the Consultors whom the Pontiff shall have appointed for this purpose.

In order to afford a timely aid for these labors in common. We have now set apart a certain portion of Our Vatican Library; and we shall see to it shortly that a large collection of codices and volumes dealing with Biblical subjects be here placed so as to be at hand for consultation. To carry out this plan it would be very desirable that Catholics of means should render their assistance by contributing funds or by forwarding useful books—so doing they will be co-operating by timely service with God, the Author of the Scriptures, and with the Church.

We have, indeed, full confidence that this undertaking of Ours, inasmuch as it concerns the preservation of the faith and the eternal salvation of souls, will be abundantly favored by the Divine goodness, and that through it all Catholics who have devoted themselves to the Sacred Books will respond with full and unlimited obedience to these prescriptions of the Apostolic See.

All the provisions that it has seemed good to us to make in this matter. We hereby ordain and decree to have the full force of statutes and decrees, all other provisions to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome at St. Peter's, under the Ring of the Fisherman, on October 30, in the year 1902, the twenty-fifth of Our Pontificate.

A. CARD. MACCHI.

Translation of the Freeman's Journal.

The Temperance Cause in Ireland

Amidst all the causes for discouragement which present themselves on a review of the condition of Ireland—the constant drain of emigration, the Government oppression, and the sufferings of the poor—there is a prospect of an Ireland free from the blight of intemperance. The total abstinence movement is steadily making headway, and it is bound to progress still more rapidly for the most representative men in the country are now lending to it their influence in increasing volume. Last week at a temperance meeting in Wexford Town Hall the Bishop, the Mayor, and the Protestant Archdeacon were present and seven hundred persons, being unable to get in for want of room, were turned from the doors. Another meeting was held at Waterford and was attended by the Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. Sheehan, the High Sheriff, thirty Catholic priests, the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and Non-conformist ministers. A similar union of hearts was exhibited at a great meeting in Sligo favored by the presence of Bishop Clancy and the Mayor, and Dublin has honored itself recently by quite a number of large gatherings held for the purpose of promoting the temperance cause. The sympathy and aid which the temperance movement is receiving from bishops, priests, and people may well gladden the hearts of all its supporters.

WALTER G. KENNEDY,
DENTIST.

758 LaSalle Street (Palace St.)

Two Doors West of Beaver Hall.

MONTREAL.

*Conc. Vatic. sess. III, cap. II.