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# Our Curbstone Observer

## In Halls of Parliament

**FTER** writing this heading I am inclined to wonder if any of the readers ever did any "lobbying." If not they have no idea of what an interesting game it is—it beats chess and ping-pong combined. I may as well find a definition for the term "lobbying," as a basis for any observations. Worcester says: "Lobby (n.) a hall passage serving as an ante-room. The lobby of the House of Commons (Burke); Lobby (v. n.) To frequent the lobbies of a house of legislation, for the purpose of influencing the action of the members or of securing their votes for some favorite bill (Law) a committee has gone to Albany to lobby for a new bank charter." (N. Y. Courier and Enquirer); Lobby member, (n.) one who frequents the lobbies of the House of Legislation in order to influence the action of the members. (Greely). This is what is meant by lobbying, and we have the industry, or profession, or trade (or whatever else you like to style the occupation or calling) both in Quebec and in Ottawa. Naturally the latter House of Legislation, having to do with a much more extended area and being in touch with more numerous and vast interests, may be said to have the greater amount of lobbyists. As I have had occasion, during my long career of observation to get off the curbstone and to penetrate into the ante-chambers of the House of Commons. I have stood around the large lobby, leaning against the pillars and watching the coming and going of the various busy people, each of whom very probably was under the impression that the entire future of the Dominion depended upon him alone. I will take one occasion, as an example, for it would be too confusing to attempt to record my observations in general or in toto.

**IN THE LOBBY.**—It was 2.30 p. m., half an hour before the opening of the House for the afternoon sitting. I fortified my back by leaning it against one of the polished granite columns, exactly in front of the Post Office, and midway between the entrances to the two inner corridors. There was a buzzing sound of voices, and a confusion of footsteps, each distinct from the other, but all creating a chaos of sounds. The tall Dominion policemen at the doors seem to enjoy the changing scene and to participate in the animation, just about as a statue would take part in the bustle at its base—not more so. The two officials, or messengers, whose business it is to give information, and to take in cards, and to keep order, and to call upon the policeman for assistance when order declines to be kept, would serve as very great barometers whereby to gauge the value or importance of each passing individual. Up the main entrance and in by the side door to the lobby comes a serious, preoccupied looking man; the messengers put on a very busy appearance, bow exceedingly low, and clear the way; the policeman stiffens up and looks at the carved birds on the capital of the great pillar—it is a Cabinet Minister who is on his way to his private room to prepare for the coming sitting. A number of gentlemen rush in, tap at the wicket, get letters and papers, tear the letters open, scatter the envelopes on the floor (work for charwomen next day at 50 cents per morning), and dive into the corridor leading to the mysterious region within—they are members of Parliament. Then one of these is stopped by three or four persons who have been "hanging about" the lobby, and enters into an animated conversation with them—they are a deputation from his constituency looking for some favor or other. There is a lot of smiling, hand-shaking, witty remarks, loud laughter, led off by the member as soloist and joined in by the chorus he has around him. Finally two or three bow, shake off hands, shuffle off towards the door; one comes back for a last word; he is probably better acquainted with the M.P. than are the others. For a moment they link arms, there is a very confidential communication, the delegate goes off saying, "All right, sir," and the M.P. bows himself away with a cheery, "I won't forget, old man." The delegation "came,

and saw, and conquered," it retires, and the M. P. draws a long breath of relief. He meets a fellow-M. P. in the corridor, "who are the fellows?" asks the latter; "oh, constituents, as usual," answers the M.P. "Well, what is it all about?"—"Hanged if I know; they're satisfied any way and that'll do for this session." This is not lobbying really. This is honesty coming to seek legitimate assistance, and subterfuge cheering up the spirits of the expectant ones in order to get rid of them.

**THE REAL LOBBYIST.**—The dozen bells ring in all ends of the Building. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk flit from their offices to the Chamber, clad in long robes and loaded with books. The Sergeant-at-Arms enters the Speaker's apartments, takes down the golden mace, shoulders it like another Goliath of Goth, while the Speaker dons his three-cocked hat and flowing gown. The procession of two proceeds to the Chamber. The galleries are flung open, the spectators flock in. But all this does not interest me. Yonder I see two or three men in watchful conversation. Soon one sends in a card. A member comes out, clears the way for them; they pass inside, and a moment later the members go into the House and return accompanied by a Minister. Then a hurried and whispered conversation goes on; one attempts to draw out some documents from his pocket; the Minister makes a sign for him to not do so at that moment. Finally, the members say, "the committee meets at 10.30 tomorrow morning; be on hand." The Minister will do "his share," and suddenly remember that he is needed in the House. The three strangers depart; they halt in the vestibule and compare notes, form plans for the morrow, and finally go away, with a look of grave importance on their brows. These are lobbyists. They have come up to secure the passage of some Bill in which they are interested, and have taken the preliminary steps to pave the way—in a word have been pulling the first wire.

**AT THE COMMITTEE.**—Needless to follow along the list and to describe all the other lobbyists. There are some that hunt in pairs; there is here and there alone one, like a stray beaver, going about the business all by himself, and displaying no end of anxiety and nervousness. But the next morning is the time when the gentlemen, mentioned in the last paragraph, get in their work. They are on hand at ten o'clock. They are at the door of the committee room. They button-hole the members of the committee as they come in and such an amount of urging, and nudging, and promising, and threatening, and praying, and bullying, and cringing, and—well, "wire-pulling" is the only term—you never before saw nor ever did you dream of in your wildest night visions. Then the committee gets into action. The Bill comes up, it is examined, described, turned inside out, advocated, opposed; all wrangle about it. Finally, we will suppose, it goes through, and is to be reported—possibly—with amendments and possibly with none. The committee adjourns, the lobbyists shake hands with the friendly M.P.s., and then all go off, full of hope and joy, with a gleam of triumph in the eye, and a terrible volubility on the tongue. All go off, I said, to have lunch, or to "take something." That is the process of lobbying in the rough. Of course, each individual lobbyist has his own special methods and manners, and all are not of the exact same type. Then there are professional lobbyists who have no special axes of their own to grind, but who, "knowing the ropes," make it a business to push matters for the less experienced promoter—for a slight consideration. And this is a very profitable business as long as it lasts. Such some of my humble observations in the lobby of the House.

## Notes and Gleanings

**A MONSTER PICNIC.**—The large scale upon which Catholic organizations in large cities in the United States conduct their outdoor gatherings, may be inferred from the fact 50,000 tickets have been issued for annual picnic of the Catholic Order of Foresters of Chicago, to be held at Elliott's Park to-day.

Sodality of the Jesuit parish and the Foresters' baseball team for a purse of \$200; a tug-of-war between the Foresters of the South and West Sides and one between the police and fire departments for a purse of \$150 each, and a prize Irish jig and reel contest for a purse of \$125.

**A SACRILEGIOUS FRAUD** which has aroused indignation, has recently been perpetrated in Alsace-Lorraine, where two men have been peddling to credulous peasants an alleged "divine" letter signed "Jesus, Mary." They pretended they had discovered this letter in the grotto of Lourdes. The swindlers have been arrested.

**SANITATION.**—On this important matter a Catholic contemporary says:—

The London County Council's by-laws in the matter of spitting, throwing waste paper or refuse, of any kind into the streets, etc., are now in force. Under these laws, no waste paper, refuse, broken glass, or even advertising handbills may be thrown down or left on the streets, under a penalty of forty shillings fine. No person shall spit on the floor, side, or wall of any public carriage, public hall, public waiting-room, or place of public entertainment, whether admission is had to such by payment or not, under a penalty of forty shillings fine. Another useful rule is persons who clean windows, or do painting work, or the like, at a height greater than six feet from the ground below, must have a support to prevent falling, while the worker, if he transgresses, risks a fine of twenty shillings and the employer five pounds. Of the three heads, that relative to the unsavoury habit of spitting publicly is one that will do most good, for even not considering questions of health, we doubt if ever anyone but the spitter looks on the action and result with aught but natural disgust. For that law, at least, the L.C.C. deserves esteem.

**PROF. SMITH'S FEARS.**—The Ottawa "Free Press" says:—Dr. Goldwin Smith expresses the fear that the advent of Irish Home Rule would mean the empire's suicide. It is recorded that he had similar fears prior to the accomplishment of Confederation with regard to Canada. Confederation has tended to fan the dormant life of the Empire into action. It is needless to say that peace in Ireland would remove the sole source of danger, and the one weak link in the chain which constitutes the binding force of the Empire.

**INNOVATION AT A HANGING.**—The miscreant Dougal, who was hanged on a recent Tuesday for what is familiarly termed the Moat murder, did not pass his last moment on earth in peace, says the London "Universe." It is reported we were not there and cannot say for certain, that the chaplain, as the murderer stood for the last moment, called out aloud to him: "Dougal, are you guilty or not guilty?" and that, no answer being given, he repeated the question, which then elicited an answer in the affirmative. We cannot see what purpose was served by the chaplain's query, if it was made, since it was plain to all that the man was guilty. Anyhow it is a most unpleasant innovation in the dread details of an execution to have, as it were, an appeal made to the criminal by a fellow-man just at the last moment of life. Had the incident happened in a Catholic country, and been brought about for the laudable end of enabling confession even late, we fancy an outcry would have been made that would for a day have drowned that of the passive registers.

**DIPLOMAS FOR NUNS.**

Two Franciscan Sisters successfully passed this year's examination in pharmacy at the College of Pharmacy attached to the California State University, and received their diplomas from President Roosevelt on his recent trip to Berkeley, Cal.

**IN HONOR OF A PRIEST.**

A movement is on foot in Liverpool to erect in that city a statue of Monsignor Nugent, better known as Father Nugent, and widely respected for his life-long services in the cause of temperance as well as in the rescue and protection of destitute boys and the reform of juvenile criminals. One of the originators and promoters of the statue movement is Mr. Cohen, an ex-Lord Mayor of Liverpool, and a Jew.

## France's Catholic Revival.

By "CRUX"

**MOST** interesting and very timely subject has just come under my attention, suggested by an account of a lecture that I read in a French paper. The lecture was entitled "France's Catholic Revival," and was delivered by the now famous Dominican orator, Rev. Father Gaffre. It was at Dijon that the lecture was given, and the audience consisted of the elite of French society in that section of the country. Before touching upon the lecture itself, I will say a word about the lecturer.

The name alone of Pere Gaffre brings my mind back ten years when that great preacher—the most eloquent I have ever had the fortune to hear—delivered his series of Lenten sermons in Notre Dame, Montreal. I can recall as vividly as if it were only yesterday that Easter Sunday afternoon, when Father Gaffre preached to ten thousand, or may be more, members of the faithful on the glorious subject of the Resurrection. The picture remains so impressed upon my mind that the name of the preacher always suggests to me the scene which he depicted of the crucifixion and which he contrasted with that of the Resurrection. There was a charm and a magnetism about the orator that carried the soul away, that caused one to sweep over the vast expanse of intervening centuries, and to assist, as it were in reality, at the tragic events that marked the close of Christ's career on earth. Never before did I hear aught like it; never again do I expect to hear from the lips of any public speaker, be he preacher or other. Two seals have set indelible pictures of the scene on Calvary upon my mind—one that great chapter in Ben Hur, the other that sermon of Father Gaffre. No wonder, then, that I should have been attracted by the name and the subject. So much then for the lecturer; now turn me to the subject-matter of his lecture.

Before dealing directly with that mastery exposition of the situation in France to-day and of the reviving spirit of Catholicity in the land, we may be permitted to consider briefly the present conditions in France—especially as far as regards Catholicity. It is not necessary to recall the Law of Associations, nor its evil fruits; no more need we dwell upon Combes and his infamous mission; these are all so many things well known to the public. But we will glance at the Catholic attitude in recent years.

During the last half century the Catholic spirit of France has been as deep-rooted and as fervent as ever; but, like the coral insects, a way down in the ocean, unseen by the eye of the ordinary observer, the adepts of masonry and the members of all the continental secret societies: have been building up, cone over cone, the reef of irreligion. Its summit tops at last the surface of the waters; and the Catholics, confident in their strength, feeling a trust in the immutability of the Church, merely looked on and made no great united effort to destroy that menace to their future. Soon shrubs and grasses grew upon the reef, and trees sprouted and an island appeared, peopled with beings of action, filled with the inclinations of destruction, and while the Catholics foresaw to realize the danger, it was too late to avert it. Even then the great Catholic body of France went on, keeping "the even tenor of its way," and allowing those nefarious influences abroad and to crush all that came under them. Still did a species of confiding lethargy exist, and while the Catholics foresaw many evils ahead, yet they hesitated to arouse, to defend themselves, to assert their rights. They knew that the enemies of all religion and of authority were capable of going to any extreme, if only they dared do so; but they never dreamed that they would dare.

Encouraged thus by the lack of endeavor on the part of the element they wished to destroy the enemies of religion went on from outrage to outrage, until, within recent months they shocked the entire civilized world by the audacity and wickedness of their tyrannic action.

And yet the Catholics of France were content to complain, but not ready to act.

A pause has come; Combes and his followers have done their worst; they have run to the end of their rope and have forfeited the sym-

thy of every respectable element in the world. And now that they draw breath, in order, probably, to continue again, with greater vigor than ever the crusade of persecution, the Catholics of France are stirring into life, are combining, are getting ready for a fray that has become a necessity; and one movement in this general revival of courage and life is that exemplified in the action Pere Gaffre at Dijon.

Turning now to the lecture, I will translate therefrom a few extracts that will give an idea of the spirit that is being awakened in that land of religious turmoil.

As the audience noticed the arrival of Father Gaffre, dressed in a black soutane, instead of wearing the white Dominican garb, to which they were accustomed, but which French law forbids, the lecturer seized on the incident to introduce his lecture. He said:—

"You are surprised to see me in black. I am wearing mourning for my departed liberty; but fear not, my courage is not dead; I bring it under this garb to aid the untiring fense of our unscriptable rights." Then he proceeded:—

"Yesterday, we might well have said 'Poor France.' She is a prey to the parties that make crumbs of her energy and multiply her divisions; monarchists, socialists; oh, how many titles, how many factions. What clashing on all sides! What oppositions to all things good!

"But to-day no such cry. I behold standing on a common platform men of views as opposite as the poles. Royalists of olden stock extend the hand of fellowship to advanced democrats; Jews, Protestants united with fervent Catholics in one grand and national protest. A new classification now simplifies the chaos of differences and of classes. There are henceforth but two categories of Frenchmen—Persecutors and Persecuted."

I will not attempt to reproduce the wonderful passage in which he draws the contrast between the sentiments, aims and characters in these two classes. After seeking for a name that might fittingly apply to the policy of the "men of the hour," he discovers that the only one suitable is "Renegadism." He styles this new "ism"—"the hatred of religion, of religion in general, but above all of the religion that we profess. And as the renegades who govern us belong to the Catholic religion, this their system is an official hatred for that same religion." This first part of the lecture deals entirely with the horrid picture of "Renegadism." The second part displays the brighter side, and in it the orator indicates the means of successfully opposing the destroying course of this phantom of "Renegadism." Above all does he advocate "a robust faith and a charity capable of every sacrifice."

Then he appeals to them for courage in the assertion practical and universal of that faith and that union. He points out how he and others have been robbed and persecuted. But if the Government has snatched him from religious life and driven him into the world against his will, he will make use of that force freedom from religious rule to assert his rights as a citizen and to enter the arena of combat against the system of destruction that has been imposed on France.

It is this spirit, and by such means, that France will arouse to her dignity and Catholic strength will yet win the victory.

## WITH OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

From N. B. a subscriber writes:—Enclosed find one dollar subscription for the "True Witness" from May 24, 1903, to May 24, 1904.

Please excuse my neglect in not remitting sooner, but it was unavoidable. I hope you did not think I was going to drop the paper, for I could not do without it. I have stuck by the "True Witness" since 1870 with only one short interruption.

A. C.

A subscriber from Western Canada writes:—

The "True Witness" is—and if you will permit me to say so—has been for some time in a very fine literary condition; it is one of the very best that comes into the house, where a great many papers and magazines find their way, and we would miss it very much if we were deprived of it. Let me then thank you, and at the same time express my appreciation of the work it is doing as a messenger of Catholic spirit and high literary ideals."

From the great Northwest a subscriber writes: "Please find enclosed \$1.00 for one year's subscription, from June, 1903, to June, 1904. Please excuse delay in remitting amount. Wishing you every success in your good work which should receive the support of every Irish Catholic."

J. K.

## Gerald Griffin's Centenary.

(By a Regular Contributor.)

On the 12th December next the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Gerald Griffin will be celebrated. It is to be hoped that the name and fame of that lovable writer will not be ignored by Irish people all over the world when that day comes. It would be a fitting occasion for a grand concert at which several of Griffin's delightful songs might be sung; or a lecture upon his life and works be given; or his drama of "Gisippus," or even "The Colleen Bawn," a dramatization of his "Collegians," a story now running in the "True Witness," might be produced. One of the recent commentators in the American Catholic press says:—

"As a poet, however, he cannot be fairly compared with James Clarence Mangan, whose centenary was celebrated early in the year, and who is perhaps the most individual of all the Irish bards of our time—an own brother in his art to Edgar Allen Poe."

There is no comparison to be instituted between Mangan and Griffin; they are absolutely dissimilar in every sense. Mangan was dreamy, grand, oracular, mystical; oriental in his translations and ossianic in his original pieces. Griffin was intensely religious, mild, nature-loving, delicate, we could almost say holy in his love-inspiring music. Nor was Mangan at all like Poe. The sole resemblance might be in the gloomy spirit of nightmare originality that each possessed. But Mangan's "Nameless One" was a picture from life, Poe's "Raven" a picture from an opiate dream. Mangan was entirely original, Poe posed as original with borrowed plumes. The peculiar metre and rhythm of the "Raven" were conceived by Mrs. Hemans; the spirit of "El Dorado" was imitated from Longfellow's "Excelsior"; the "Bells" were translated from a page of Chateaubriand's "Genius of Christianity." The reverse with Mangan; he often wrote most original pieces—such as "The Time of the Barmicides," "Sailing Down the Bosphorus," and others—and pretended that he had translated them. Very unlike both was Griffin; but equally excellent in his own domain.

There are few poems in English more delicate in description than Griffin's "Matt Hyland," and it is one of the longest that he has attempted. Then his shorter poems are all gems; miniatures in which nature is reproduced in all her varied beauty, or else some grand religious sentiment, or some passionate expression of pure love radiates. "The Sister of Charity," "Kate of Gornavella," and "Sweet Adare," are samples of a muse that should be immortalized by the children of Erin and the lovers of song.

When yet a young man Griffin forsook his literary career, just as he was beginning to reach the level of fame and prosperity. He renounced the world, at the age of thirty-five, and entered the Order of the Christian Brothers at Cork. The remainder of his days were spent in the humble occupation of teaching little children. In 1840 he died, and was buried in the graveyard of the Christian Brothers; near Cork. He was long remembered as the holy and mild Brother Joseph. But he will be much longer remembered in the world as the author of so many delightful productions. And one of the most admirable accounts of his work and his career, is the "Life and Letters of Gerald Griffin," by his brother, Dr. Griffin, published in 1846. The letters are most charming, and in them one can easily trace the changes that took place in his mind, his aims, and his disposition as he glided from the glitter of the world into the silence of the religious life that he had selected.

## CONSCIENCE.

I care not for the outer voice  
That deals out praise or blame;  
I could not with the world rejoice  
Nor bear its doom of shame—  
But when the Voice within me speaks  
The truth to me is known;  
He sees himself who inward seeks—  
The riches are his own.

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.