

## Our Curbstone Observer ON CONVERSATION.

There is no source of instruction more fruitful of beneficial results, I might say educational results, than conversation. But I am beginning to feel from my continued and varied observation that Madam De-Sevigny's saying "the art of conversation is becoming a lost art"—finds application in our day and in our land. Few can converse. People can talk about the weather, the crops, the fashion, the latest item of sensational news, their neighbor's faults or follies, business matters, the stock exchange, athletics, and the hundred and one topics that constitute the bill-of-fare served up by a good general daily paper. But this is talk, not conversation. The longer I live and the more I observe the stronger my certainty that there is scarcely any conversation in society to-day. It was not so in olden times, nor even in the days of our fathers. There were no telephones then, but people conversed and educated each other in an imperceptible manner. I am not going to give a lecture on this subject, but I cannot help referring to some eminent writers.

**SOME WISE SAYINGS**—St. Ambrose, somewhere, says: "manners polish insensibility in holding conversation with those who are virtuous." This is a truth that I have found illustrated almost daily. You take the person who is accustomed to spend a few hours daily or weekly with members of a religious order, or to visit certain persons of well-known virtuous character, it is almost impossible not to note the refinement that they carry into every other sphere in life. Their presence has at once the effect of changing the current of sentiment, of ideas, and of conversation. And, no matter how refined the home-education of a man, or how high the social sphere to which he has been accustomed, or how complete his education, that man, if he frequents for a time, the company of the immoral will lose his polish, and beneath his fine clothes, his glitter of jewels, or his suavity of manners, his normal degradation are apparent. He cannot hide it from the eye of even the most ordinary observer. He sooner or later, sinks in the estimation of those who even for policy sake, pretend to hold him in respect. In a word, this simply brings out more forcibly the old saying, "tell me your company and I will tell you who you are."

But to come back to the starting-point of conversation. Farney says: "I reduce the law of conversation to three principles. It ought to be a principle of instruction, a bond of society, and a source of pleasure." Now, how often do we find, in what we are accustomed to call conversations, these three principles, or even one of them? Day after day I meet with most estimable people, who will talk to me, as we ride along in the cars, or will sit to smoke a cigar for an hour on my balcony, and from whose conversation I do not receive the slightest bit of useful instruction, nor does the social bond between us seem any the closer, nor do I look forward with eagerness or pleasure to their coming to continue the tread of their chat.

LaBruyere says: "The art of conversation consists far less in showing much than in drawing out others. He who goes away from your society, pleased with himself and with his visit, is perfectly so with you." There is a lot of common sense in this. If you allow a man to do the greater part of the talking and appear deeply interested in what he has to say, you may depend that he will consider you one of the very best conversationalists that he has ever met. This is human nature. And possibly by refraining from having too much to say you escape showing that you are not conversant with the subject and thereby mar the pleasure of others as well as display your lack of knowledge. A most reliable critic—Vauvenargues—once said: "When you do not see the gist of things, speak only doubtfully, and as if questioning." And no matter how learned one may be there are always subjects upon which he is not at home, nor is he expected to be so. There is no greater danger of incurring ridicule than to pretend to know all about some matter with

which you actually are not acquainted. And the really learned frequently gain the reputation of wearisomeness when they insist upon displaying their learning. It is not natural for any person to like the sensation of inferiority, and, while all are only too glad to acknowledge real and unostentatious superiority, none care to subscribe to an assertion of such on the part of any person. There is in conversation a trick, if I may so call it, of making others feel that they are drawing you out, which creates in them a special satisfaction and one that forbids all feeling of jealousy from entering into their minds. Lacordaire says: "In the controversy of Ozanam was to be observed an extreme endeavor not to wound those who disputed with him, whatever their errors might be, but this mildness never was carried so far as to disguise his thoughts." There is the true art of pleasing and of instructing in conversation as well as in controversy. Do not ever hurt the feelings of any one. You may hold different opinions, and may also give expression to them, but learn to do so in such a manner that the one with whom you converse may draw instruction from your statements and may be so pleased with your manner of stating your opinions that half the battle is won before the subject is well commenced.

**REFLECTIONS**—I have just selected, at random, some of those remarks of eminent observers of human life, and I have strung them together. Not that they may be likely to furnish new ideas to the reader but simply to show how, in all lands and at all times, the art of conversation has been the subject of study for superior and thoughtful minds. I do not pretend that anything I might write could possibly change the current of life at present, which is rapidly curving away from the conversational banks between which it has flowed for centuries. But I am at liberty to state what I have observed, and what I regret. It is like the reaching of an oasis in a desert to come in contact with a person—man or woman—who knows how to sustain a clear, pleasant, intelligent and instructive conversation. One seems to plunge into the cooling fountain with a joy and a relief that only the experience of parched and arid talks in life can really produce. It is in the schools that the art of conversation should be taught. The young people shape their future so much after the models they have had before them, that to teach a young person how to sustain a proper part in conversation is as necessary as to teach him or her, how to read and write. All may not be called upon to make public speeches, but all are supposed, at some time or other, to converse with those interested in them, and to know how to converse is to know how to become beloved.

## The Benefactions Of the Millionaire

From the latest instalment of "Under the Cedars and the Stars," by the Rev. P. A. Sheehan, D.D., in the Dolphin, we take these suggestive passages:

To keep one's heart unhardened until death is the achievement of a saint. Every stroke of the hammer of experience tends to anneal it. The two great impulses of nature, even in its lowest forms, are self-preservation and reproduction, and both demand the wisdom of the serpent more than the meekness of the dove. And these impulses are accentuated and intensified by experience. Every man stands solitary, with all other men's hands against him. He must fight for existence. Failure, defeat, is the one hell to be dreaded. Success is the supposed Elysium. Nay, all our modern systems of education tend thitherward. For what is all this terrible and complicated apparatus of education intended? What is the meaning of all this competition, rivalry, gaining of prizes, etc.? What but the preparation for the greater struggle? And struggle means rivalry; and rivalry, enmity. "One alone can attain supremacy." And that one must be thou, and no other. How are the best feelings of the heart translated into sense here?

Nay, in such a struggle, where the watchword appears to be, "We neither ask, nor give quarter!" would not the uncontrolled impulses of the heart be the great traitors? Could there be any hope of success for a man who would be, above all things, generous, compassionate, self-sacrificing, kind? It is all right for you, my Croesus-friend, whom I see

labelled "multi-millionaire and philanthropist!" You can be lavish now, as much as you please. Nay, you must get rid of much of that glittering ballast, else it will sink your stately argosy. For gold is a weighty metal, you know; and you cannot steer well the ship of your fortunes so long as you have so much of a dead weight in the hold. But "philanthropist"? It is a pretty euphemism; and I don't want to quarrel with it. But I should have liked to know how you fared in the good ship Argos, as you set out in pursuit of the golden fleece. For I notice that Jason was very generous and considerate and pious to the gods, after his many adventures and trials. He built a splendid mausoleum to the island king whom he accidentally killed; and sacrificed a sheep or two, after he, in concert with the amiable enchantress, Medea, had strewn the waters of the Euxine with the disemboweled remains of the young Absyrtus.

I will suggest something to you, "multi-millionaire and philanthropist," which may obviate such expiations by suspending the possibility of your errors, at least for a lustrium. What would you think of building and endowing a new species of educational institution to be called the Collegium Christi? It will have for its motto, S'effacer; and "Bear ye one another's burdens" may be inscribed over the lecture rostrums in the class-halls. It shall have all the latest appliances of science for the further conquest of nature and advancement of mankind. The extirpation of disease, the destruction of social evils, the bridging of the mighty gulf between rich and poor, the lifting up of fallen humanity, the study of criminology from the standpoint of Christ, the ventilation of grievances, not as subjects for parliamentary eloquence but as subjects to be grappled with and destroyed and removed—these shall form the curriculum of studies. We shall by no means exclude even Pagan ideals. You may have busts of Crates and Cincinnatus, but not of Croesus; Minerva and Apollo may grace your corridors, but the long perspective must not be bounded by glittering idola of Mammon and Plutus. For the former are merely symbols, and, alas! rarely pass beyond their symbolic state. But these latter are the dread divinities that haunt the steps of mankind from the cradle to the grave.

But it is quite clear that to yield to heart-impulses and generous and generous emotions is to court failure in the struggle for existence, which has become with us synonymous with the struggle for wealth. Life is a masked ball, ending in success or failure. If you raise your domino you might as well order your carriage, or droschky, or cab, and go home. You have revealed your identity and the revelation is fatal. Unknown you might have moved safely amongst the unknown. But when everyone else knows you, whilst they remain unrevealed, what chance have you? You have lifted your visor in the tournament and exposed yourself to deadly blows. Yes, get away from the tumult as quickly as you can; and, with the experience of so terrible a lesson, get away amongst the world's anonymity and hide yourself. Or take some other mask, and wear it closely; keep a close hand upon those traitorous, if generous emotions which are the fatal gifts of your heritage. It is all very melancholy; yet it is consoling to know that men still have hearts to feel, and if they must stifle their appeals, they cannot altogether still their beatings. And, now and again, secretly and with misgivings, they may yield to the luxury of fine, pure emotions without the danger of ultimate betrayal.

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## Archbishop Keane On Intemperance.

Archbishop Keane, of Dubuque, in a pastoral letter issued sometime ago in a clear and convincing manner outlines some of the many evils associated the soul-destroying vice of intemperance. From that pastoral we take the following extracts: His Grace says:—

"One of the evils most to be lamented in this land is, without doubt, the abuse of intoxicating drinks. This abuse is constant incentive to sin and the prolific source of much misery. It accomplishes the ruin of numberless individuals, brings whole families to pitiable need, and drags innumerable souls to eternal destruction. And, since the scandal given to those outside of the fold, when this vice is found to exist among Catholics, hinders to a great extent the spread of the true religion among our compatriots, the love of country as well as the love of religion should stimulate Catholics to use all lawful means to uproot and to banish from our midst an evil so destructive."

"In this work we look for aid in an especial manner to the priests of the Church, to whom God has committed the preaching of the word for the edification of the faithful."

"The priest should be insistent in admonishing his people—particularly during times of special spiritual exercises—to avoid not only the sin of drunkenness, but also all its dangerous occasions, for 'he that loveth danger shall perish in it' (Eccl. iii. 27). Mindful, too, of the doctrine of the Apostle, he should teach the people committed to his care that it is written, that drunkards shall not possess the Kingdom of God (I Cor. vi. 10). Moreover, since example teaches more effectively than precept, the priest, who, according to the Apostle, is made the pattern of the flock, should himself be a model of the virtue of temperance."

"The following in the footsteps of the Fathers of the former Councils of Baltimore, and supported by the teaching of the Angelic Doctor (II. II. q. 149, a. 3), we approve and heartily commend the laudable practice of many persons who, in our times, abstain altogether from the use of intoxicating drinks; in order the more effectually to repress the vice of intemperance, and to ward off its dangerous occasions from themselves, as well as to give to others the noble example of Christian temperance. We freely bear testimony to the good already effected by the example of those persons, and from their zeal in this cause we hope for much more abundant fruit in the future. The Catholic Total Abstinence Union, and the Sacred Thirst Society, we recognize as deserving of the highest praise; particularly as they are animated by the truly Catholic spirit which prompts them to seek the aid needed for their work, not in their own natural strength of purpose, but in the power of prayer and the grace of the Sacraments. These societies, also, Christ's Vicar on earth has more than once enriched with indulgences and his apostolic benediction. Wherefore, as a token of our esteem and for their benefit, we commend these societies to the paternal care of all our priests, that they may encourage the members, and ever point out to them the path of Catholic duty."

"Finally we warn all the faithful engaged in the liquor-traffic to seriously consider that, though this pursuit is not in itself illicit, it is nevertheless surrounded with many and very great dangers and occasions of sin. Let them choose, if possible, a more honorable means of subsistence; otherwise let them endeavor to the utmost of their power to remove the occasions of sin from themselves and others. Let them not sell intoxicating drinks to the young, nor to those they foresee will take it to excess. Let them keep their places of business closed on Sundays, and at no time permit on their premises improper or unbecoming language. But if they culpably cause or co-operate in bringing religion into disgrace, and men to ruin, let them remember that there is in Heaven an Avenger who will exact of them the severest penalties" (Nn. 260 to 263).

These most solemn and impressive pronouncements, addressed to us by the supreme ecclesiastical tribunal of our country, and approved by the

apostolic authority of the Holy See, I have quoted to you in full, venerable and beloved brethren, because they truly express the doctrine by which I have been inspired, and the rule which I have endeavored to follow, in combating the evil of intemperance. I am aware that certain interested parties, in order to counteract my influence, have exaggerated and misrepresented my words and my acts in this matter. Against these detractors I utter not the blame which they deserve; but I appeal to them in all charity to cease from the unworthy task of resisting and misrepresenting their ecclesiastical superior, who is acting in strict conformity with the law of the Church, and whose only motive is a paternal desire for the temporal and eternal welfare of the flock entrusted to him. Would to God that the zeal with which they labor for a cause so disapproved of by the highest tribunals in both Church and State, were transformed into zeal for the diffusion of virtue among our people and for the removal of temptations from their pathway."

I give thanks to God, and to you, dear brethren, for the response with which my appeals have been everywhere met. From my heart I bless the multitudes of men and women, young and old, who, listening with filial docility to the voice of the Church, have stood up in protest against the curse of intemperance and against the agencies which are upholding and disseminating this great evil. I especially bless those who have ranged themselves under the banner of temperance, and who, for greater security, and for the sake of good example, have exposed the cause of Total Abstinence which the Church has so solemnly approved and blessed. At the convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America, held in Dubuque last August, it was an unspeakable consolation to me to see how honorably the champions of temperance in our archdiocese stood among their fellow-Catholics from every other part of the country. We then promised that we would endeavor to double our numbers before the next convention. I now appeal to our priests and our people to make that promise good. In localities where a temperance society could be useful but has not yet been founded, I hope, and I earnestly request that I shall shortly receive the good news of its having been established. And where the society is already in existence, I ask for a renewal of zeal and endeavor for increasing its membership and redoubling its efficiency. At the convention of the Diocesan Union shortly to be held, I trust that I shall be gladdened by the spectacle of what the zeal of our pastors and the Catholic loyalty of our people are accomplishing for carrying out the wish of the Church in regard to this most vital interest."

Arise, venerable and beloved brethren, and stand by our Divine Lord in His struggle against the corrupting influences which lead so many souls astray. Remember, it is His fight that we are engaged in. We seek no selfish interest, but only His glory, the welfare of His flock and the honor of His Holy Religion. It is no phantom of fanaticism that we assail, but a public and widespread evil, which the Bishops of the whole country have repeatedly declared to be the chief source of scandal and sin among their people. It is no innocent and well-meaning body of trades-people that we are hindering and harassing in a harmless and beneficent business; but, on the contrary, a strongly organized, fiercely aggressive and absolutely selfish interest, against which Church and State have raised their voice again and again, but which stands as resolute and defiant as ever, which scoffs at law and order, which seeks to control governments for its nefarious ends, which multiplies public temptations in order to multiply its unholy gains, and against which we are therefore compelled to fight in defence of Christian morality, in defence of our weak and tempted young people, in defence of the happiness of our homes and the salvation of innumerable souls. In such a contest there can be no neutrality, for our Lord says: "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." Range yourselves, then, on His side, and earn by your devoted zeal the reward which He will surely give to His faithful servants and soldiers. Multiply your societies, multiply their membership, multiply their earnestness and energy, multiply the good which they accomplish for the abating of public temptations and the safeguarding of morality. And may he be ashamed who would dare to raise his voice against this most Catholic work for the glory of our Lord and the honor of His Holy Church."

Two deaths and several prostrations from the heat were recorded in New York yesterday.

## Jews and Popes.

It is quite interesting for Catholics, as well as for Jews, to know that the best friends of that unhappy and often persecuted people have been the Roman Pontiffs. When such events as the recent massacre of Jews in Russia take place, it is wonderful to see how the leaders of the Hebrew race turn at once to the Pope of Rome to ask for mediation and protection. They know, from the experience of centuries, that there alone can they expect just treatment and charitable—not to speak of merciful—consideration. The following statement is the famous Rabbinical pronouncement, made at the great assembly held in Paris in 1807:—

"It is in consequence of the sacred principles of morality that at different times the Roman Pontiffs have protected and received into their States the Jews persecuted and expatriated from different parts of Europe. About the middle of the seventh century St. Gregory defended the Jews and protected them in the whole Christian world. In the tenth century the Bishops of Spain opposed with the greatest energy the people who wished to massacre them. The Pontiff Alexander II. wrote to those Bishops praising their course. St. Bernard defended them in the twelfth century from the fury of the Crusaders. Innocent II. and Alexander III. also protected them. In the thirteenth century Gregory IX. preserved them from the great evils which menaced them in England as well as in France and Spain; he forbade, under pain of excommunication, any one to force their conscience or to disturb their festivals. Clement V. did more than protect them; he encouraged their means of instruction. Clement VI. gave them an asylum at Avignon when they were persecuted in all the rest of Europe. In the following centuries Nicholas II. wrote to the Inquisition to prevent the forcing of Jews to embrace Christianity. Clement XIII. calmed the anxiety of parents alarmed at the fate of their children, who were frequently torn from the breasts of their mothers. It would be easy to give an infinity of other charitable actions of which the Israelites had been at different times the object on the part of ecclesiastics instructed in the duties of men and in those of their religion. The people of Israel, always unfortunate and almost always oppressed, have never had the means or the occasion to manifest their recognition for so many benefactions. Since the eighteenth century this great and happy occasion, which we owe to our august Emperor, is the only one which has been given us to express to the philanthropists of all countries, and notably to the ecclesiastics, all the sentiments of gratitude with which our hearts are penetrated towards them and their predecessors."

On that occasion the assembled delegates passed these resolutions:—Resolved, That the deputies from the Empire of France and from the kingdom of Italy at the Hebrew Synod penetrated with gratitude for the successive benefactions of the Christian clergy in the past centuries in favor of the Israelites of the different parts of Europe; full of acknowledgments for the reception which the different Pontiffs and many other ecclesiastics have given at different countries where barbarity, prejudice and ignorance united, persecuted and expelled the Jews from the bosom of society."

Resolved, That the expression of our sentiments shall be placed on the records of the day, that it may ever remain as an authentic testimony of the gratitude of the Israelites of this assembly for the benefactions which the generations which have preceded them have received from the ecclesiastics of the different countries of Europe."

In the period of the Revival of Letters in the West, learned Jews were especially patronized by the Popes on account of their Oriental scholarship. Boniface IX., Julius III., Martin V., and Paul III. selected for their trusted physicians' men of Hebrew faith and race.

And if we come down to days within our own recollection we find the Supreme Pontiff of Rome ameliorating the condition of the Jews in that city in a most remarkable manner. A leading Hebrew gentleman of Montreal, speaking about the illness of the present Pope, said to us the other day: "We are all deeply touched with this sad news. We love the Roman Pontiffs, one and all, and with good reason. How can we forget that it was Pius IX. who threw down the walls of the Ghetto and freed our people from the cruel imprisonment that they underwent from sunset to sunrise every night? We pray to the God of Israel to protect the Pope."

## Signs Of The Times

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St. Peter parish, West one of the highest Ang of the Protestant Episcopate. The altar has absolutely everything be found on a Catholic except the consecrated Eucharist. Down to detail, everything is the same. Rev. Dr. Clendenen, with his congregation, he claims that it is more than to ritual. The situation he gives and new reasons (for a clergyman) why all the and externals of Catholicism are retained. The new reasoning opens up an vista. He says:—

"We hold that the worship and ritual of Church have always been and where any part of has departed from the order the ancient order stored. Or, to be more that a man who lived five hundred years ago and years ago should come again into the Church to-day and find the worship the same as found it in the beginning."

As far as ritual, externals, go this is not so because it is Church should be to-day was one thousand years this Rev. Doctor says in essentials as he is there would be no altar him but to enter at the only Catholic Church. He the great danger. He and yet not far enough far to lean to any further the pathway of dogma enough to possess in that which the Church hundred and a thousand Where we see this lack leaves the domain of the arena of dogma. His doubts. He says:—

"What must a man ed? Protestantism has different answers, but the Church is clear and Holy Ghost dwells in it is received through the Catholic Church."

Here again he is right the Catholic Church. "There is nothing new world but the Catholic. However, the great difference in this very point of view of the Catholic Church that is Catholic circumscribed by territorial limits. This we see in remark, which immediately to the foregoing one:—

"In a more local sense word, I am a Churchman life is cast where Church has lawful jurisdiction, and it is every man to be loyal to the Church of his own it is in error he must to bring it right, but intrusion of schism and of dissent."

It is in a "local word" that he accepts the Church; therefore, fragment detached from Church that he belongs still more evident from the statement:—

"But the Anglican Church pre-eminently Saxon race—having a lie and humiliating as may well hope to be which, under God, is peaceful union the new olic Church, and in the answer to the prayer 'That they all may be sent Me.'"

Like the Catholic Church the ultimate union of dom under one Head; like the Catholic Church that the Church should be able, in ritual as well like the Catholic Church there is nothing stable except the Catholic Church all these beliefs, he adds in full, and rejects the other words, he accepts and discards the Anglican declares the Anglican the body that can be the the parts of the Catholic Church."