

MUCH TIME WASTED IN THE SCHOOLS.

Inspector Clancy Says Fads Are Spoiling New York's Educational System.

New York, January 23. — James Clancy, a lawyer and school inspector of the Twelfth district, and a non-Catholic, has written a letter to the "Sun" in which he seeks to give the causes for the conditions which recently led City Superintendent Maxwell to say in a report that dull children crowded the lower classes and forced others on part time. Superintendent Maxwell in part explanation said:

"I believe that a very considerable portion of such children are of foreign parentage or foreign birth, and are in lower classes because of their lack of knowledge of the English language."

To this Mr. Clancy takes exception. He says:

"The whole statement is unintentionally misleading. The reason for the condition said to exist is not because of a very considerable portion of the children being unable to speak English, but in crowding to the wall the essentials to make prominent a multiplicity of fads originally introduced as experiments into the school system by the present school administration."

"Our children are not dull; they are among the brightest in the world. That they are backward in their studies is an entirely different proposition. It is not their fault, but the fault of the system. When, about seven years ago, Mr. Maxwell began to make radical changes, his intentions were commendable. The principals were enthusiastic, and, notwithstanding the extra labor involved, were eager to give the new system a fair trial. That experimental stage has been passed. Result—the business men of this city, the employers of all branches of labor, are crying out against the crudeness of the material the public schools have been turning out."

Praise for the Parochial Schools.

Mr. Clancy says that in his investigation of the Catholic parochial schools he did not find conditions in the remotest degree like those set forth in Mr. Maxwell's report. The teachers in the parochial schools handled larger classes than the teachers in the public schools, he said, and generally obtained better results. This would be impossible were it not for the fact that the ponderous non-essentials of the public schools have no place in the parochial schools. The Catholic schools, he says, have shrewdly adopted what is good in the public schools and rejected what is bad.

"In the parochial schools," he says, "nature study (meaning the waste of fifteen or twenty minutes in telling children that a sparrow has two legs and can fly by means of two wings; that a lion has four legs and can roar, but that a cat cannot roar) is unknown."

"There are no abnormally old children in the parochial school grades, because there is no waste of time in teaching the children how to make toy baskets, paper toys, how to mix colors (as if the intention were to make each child a great painter), or in teaching the boys raffia work or the science of music in its advanced stages."

"The parochial schools recognize the fact that the important school age is from 7 to 12. Hence, reading, writing and arithmetic take the place of the art of composition, crude efforts at representation of the human form divine in the public schools, dissection of cockroaches, flies, etc. They also take the place of instruction in 'the correct way of climbing stairs,' and of manicuring."

"Nor are the little boys and girls of the parochial schools confused by instruction in 'the use, care and protection of bone, ligament, muscle, skin and special senses, and the organs of digestion and respiration.' Nor are they obliged to waste time in the vain endeavor to master the treatment in case of fits, drowning, choking, poisonings, sprains and burns and other surgical and medical things."

"All these abnormally old things, and more, I have encountered in my official tours of the public schools. The energies of the parochial school graduate have not been frittered away upon fads quickly forgotten, but have been concentrated upon the essentials, which they have thoroughly mastered."

A TALK ON FIRES.

Chief Croker, of New York, Gives Eight Sensible Suggestions Which would Save Lives and Property.

Chief Croker advises the following course of action in the case of an outbreak of fire:

1. Keep cool; no matter how hot everything around you gets retain a cool, calm equilibrium and you'll come out all right.
2. Send in the alarm immediately; do not take it for granted that some one has rung up the Fire Department.
3. Fight the fire yourself before the firemen arrive. Very few fires, if discovered at the outset, are beyond the control of the people on the premises, if only quick, intelligent action is taken. Fight the flames with pails of water; smother them with rugs and blankets; beat them out with wet brooms.
4. Block the spread of fire. If the burning room or rooms can be shut off from the rest of the building it will take considerable time for the fire to spread. Shut all doors, transoms and windows opening on shafts, and is possible those to the exterior. By closing up the burning rooms you prevent draughts and cut off a new supply of oxygen. The fire after exhausting the oxygen will only smoulder.
5. Never ascend to the upper stories of a burning building. The upper stories are always the most dangerous. The smoke, superheated air and poisonous fumes, which it is death to inhale, collect first in the top of the house. Fire in spreading through a building burns straight through to the roof usually by way of the halls and stairways, and then, widening its course, eats back to the stories below. The lower floors are the safest in time of fire.
6. Never try to climb up the stairs to the roof, and never open the scuttle. A hole through the roof to the open air would serve as a chimney and magnify the conflagration almost incredibly.
7. Keep out of the halls. The safe way to await the arrival of the firemen is in a room as low down in the building as you can get without running the risk of smoke-laden halls. Shut all doors and transoms in which you stay and open the windows wide to keep the air cool and pure. If smoke breaks in, lean out of the windows. Be careful not to get excited and not to breathe in the hot, smoky atmosphere.
8. Make your way from the building if the fire is dangerous and you can escape without braving too great heat. A wet towel held over the mouth and nostrils will enable you to live in an otherwise deadly atmosphere. But unless the fire spreads into the room you are occupying, it is best to wait for outside help.

These are all common-sense rules, but they are ignored by most persons who have a fire in their premises. People need to learn that in the case of fire they must quiet their nerves, and keep from screaming and rushing madly about.

The wise householder will take the following preventive measures, recommended by Chief Croker:

1. Locate the nearest fire box, and make sure that all the members of the household know of its situation.
2. In retiring for the night close carefully all the doors in the cellar and basement, and all doors and transoms immediately between the halls and sleeping rooms.
3. Place patent fire extinguishers at least in the cellar and kitchen. Most fires originate from the furnace or kitchen range.

There are numbers of safeguards, persons can make use of that will make death and even loss of property by fire well nigh impossible.

If prudent people act upon the sensible advice of Chief Croker, exile the perilous parlor match from their homes, see that their furnaces are not overheated and look well to their kerosene lamps, doubtless there would be fewer big fires.

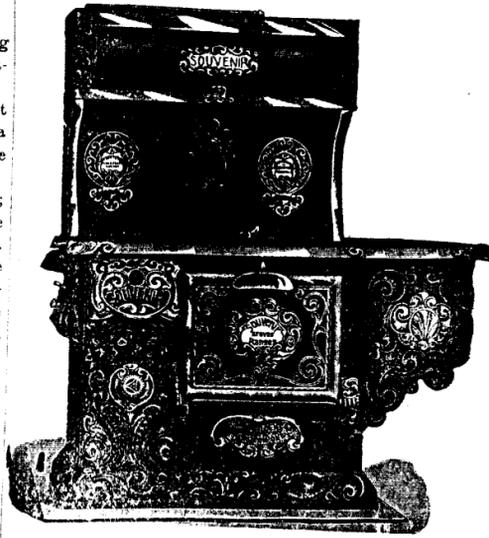
THE OLD SINNER.

(Continued from last week.)

him the gifts of His mercy, with which they are filled. You know, my dear friend, there is more rejoicing in heaven over the conversion of one poor sinner than over the perseverance of a hundred just."

"While I was thus speaking, the old man's countenance looked singularly radiant. His eyes were fixed on me intently, and he kept stroking his long snowy beard, as if to say, 'I owe all this to you.' It was about seven o'clock

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when I arose to leave my host, remarking that it was growing late.

"Won't you come back to-morrow?" he asked with eagerness. "I must have another talk with you."

"I will come back," I said, "but on condition that you do something for me."

"What is it?"

"Promise me to say a little prayer to-night before going to bed."

"Prayer?" he echoed. "But I don't know any prayer. It is seventy years since I prayed last. And I have't any prayer-book."

"You do not need a prayer-book, my dear friend. Kneel down by the side of your bed and say three times 'O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me.'"

"Well, that's easy. I'll repeat those words, to please you and have you come to see me to-morrow."

"Thereupon we shook hands and I left, well satisfied with my afternoon's work."

"What passed in the old man's soul during that night; what joy, what pain he experienced in the struggle, for struggle doubtless there was, ever remained a secret between him and God. The next morning the sexton found on the altar of the Sacred Heart a large bouquet of beautiful violets."

"After Mass I returned to the old man's place. He met me at the garden gate. We sat down and talked for nearly two hours. I was about to leave, when he got up suddenly and said, 'I must put an end to this, Father. You must hear my confession.' So saying, he fell on his knees and without more ado, began his confession. And most beautiful and touching were the sentiments of sorrow which that repentant sinner expressed during the sad recital of his many past infidelities."

"The next day he came to church, neatly dressed in a new suit of clothes. As I complimented him on his elegant toilet, he replied, 'That's the way I used to fix up formerly to go and offend God; it is but fair that I should do as much to-day when I come to visit Him for the first time in so many years. I spent a long time in trimming my beard, he replied with a smile, 'for to it I owe the happiness and peace which I now enjoy.'"

"How is that?" I asked.

"Well, it's very simple, Father. If when we first met, you had begun by speaking to me of God, of the Pope or of hell, it is most likely that I would have insulted you. But when you began by praising my beard, I felt so pleased that I was ready to do anything for you."

"Well, you see before setting out on my arduous mission I asked the Sacred Heart to come to my help and to suggest to me some way of ingratiating myself with you, and immediately this thought came: Praise his beard and his violets. And then you must not forget the little prayer you addressed to the Sacred Heart and the beautiful violets you placed on the altar. They, I am sure, had a great deal to do with your conversion."

"He looked at me through the big tears that hung on his long lashes, and said, 'Yes, God is good and merciful.'—Ex.

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