

Our Curbstone Observer ON PRACTICAL DEVOTION.

SI have more than once remarked, my sphere is not to preach but to simply record daily observations, if, at times these observations take a sermonizing form it is simply because everything that is said or written with a view to correct error, to improve morals, or to elevate humanity must have in it the elements of a sermon. This week I am going to briefly tell of a short excursion to a village, not far from this city, and of a few things that I noticed over there. The purpose of my visit to the place in question has nothing to do with what I observed while there. As the village possesses a couple of excellent educational institutions, as well as a very imposing looking church, I occupied the hour of leisure that I had in visiting that temple of faith.

At a distance the twin spires of the village church are very imposing; but on closer examination they seem to lose rather than gain in their proportions. This rambling through churches in day-time, and during the week days, is something that has always had a great fascination for me. I remember once reading a passage of Lamartine in which he says: "I love to wander alone into the great cathedrals of Italy or of France, and to enjoy the silence, the twilight surroundings, the repose, the indelible tranquility that mark the interiors of those huge gothic piles. Everything therein appears to pray, or rather to meditate; from the giant columns that stand in silent and respectful rows to the tiny lamp, suspended in mid-air that flickers its heart-affecting tribute of adoration before the shrine that holds the Divinity." No doubt, there is a sense of peace and of consolation that takes possession of the soul, in the quiet of the empty church. One therein feels inclined to sit, or kneel and meditate; and meditation is the sublimest form of prayer. Such, any way, has been my humble experience.

AN EDIFYING SIGHT.—On the occasion to which I allude I had not all the Church to myself. In a country village I would expect to find worshippers at that early hour—it was between three and four in the afternoon. But, to my surprise, there were several persons in the church when I entered. During my stay some of these went out; but others came in. All moved about silently and collectedly, without attracting very much notice. In fact, it was not until I sat down in a pew and began to take observation of what was going on around me that I noticed the number and the class of the people scattered here and there throughout the building. What most attracted my attention was the men. Not mere boys, but young men in the first period of manhood. A fact that they were nearly all young couple of elderly women, and one or two older men were also there; but not less than a dozen young men were in the church. They were all occupied in different ways. Some were making the Stations of the Cross; others were kneeling before the side altars; again others were in meditation in front of the high altar. In a word, each one of them had evidently dropped in, on his own account, to pay a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament, to say the beads,

or to go around the Way of the Cross. It was decidedly an admirable sight, and one well calculated to make the scoffer and the infidel pause and reflect. If the spirit of faith is said to be dying out in the younger generation, it certainly survives in that country district, and it is likely to be transmitted by such men to those who are to come after them.

A CONTRAST.—While I sat in that church and took mental note of all that I observed, I reflected upon the contrast between these young men, coming in the day time, from their work, or their business, to devote a few moments to serious prayer and recollection, with the vast multitude of Catholic young men in the city who scarcely ever put a foot inside of a church, except to hear Mass on Sunday. If you go to any of our parochial churches during any month of the year, during October, for example, when the prayers for the devotion of the Holy Rosary take place each evening, how many young men will you find there? How many men, young or old will attend the devotions? There is sure to be a goodly congregation; but mostly women and young girls. The men have not time, I suppose, to go to church during week-days, even in the evening. Of course, they find ample time for other occupations, for relaxations, for amusements, for sometimes more questionable pastimes. Decidedly if they cannot attend such services in the evenings during the week, they cannot be expected to attend a Low Mass on the day time. In fact, it is a wonder that some of them can find it possible to attend a Low Mass on Sunday. Were it not that the church has made it such a strict obligation, we might fairly entertain a doubt as to whether some of the young men would even take the trouble to snatch a half hour Mass on Sunday morning. This does not mean that there is a general lack of faith amongst the younger men; but, in proportion to their numbers, there is decidedly much less solid fervor and unostentatious devotion in the city than in the smaller towns and villages of the country district. It may be argued that the young men in the city have attractions outside that do not exist for those in the country; that may be very true; but there are facilities for devotion in the city that are not to be met with in the country. In this city of Montreal there are opportunities on all sides and at all times. Mark Twain once said, in referring to Montreal, that it was "a city in which you could not throw a stone without hitting a church." No matter at what hour, or in what section of the city, a man goes to or comes from his daily occupation, he is sure to pass the open door of a church. Yet how many ever think of going in? The young men, of whom I have spoken, out in that country village, must have their occupations, they must value their time, as well as do the city people; and yet they find the time and they seek the opportunity and they frequent the church at all hours. I need say no more on this subject. It seems to me that each reader should be able to draw, for himself, the lesson that these few observations contain: at least, I hope the recording of them may not be lost time.

Bishop Spalding And the Coal Miners

Before he received an official notification of his appointment as a member of the commission on the grievances of the coal miners, Bishop Spalding was asked for an expression of his views about the strike. He replied:—

"It is impossible for me to say anything of importance in this matter, as I have not been officially notified that I have been appointed. I am highly sensible of the honor that such an appointment would confer,

and I feel that it should be my duty and pleasure to accept it in the event that the President considers me worthy. I should be most happy to do all in my power to assist in bringing the coal strike to an amicable and just termination. I have had no other notification of the deliberations of the President and his advisers than that contained in the newspapers, and I have not had any intimation that my name has been considered by them. I am much surprised by the newspaper announcements. It is certainly a great honor, and imposes a sacred duty on whomever it may descend."

About a month ago the editor of a labor paper asked the Bishop for a statement concerning the strike and he complied with the following:

"It is my opinion that the condition of the Pennsylvania coal miners

is a National disgrace, and I sincerely hope that the strike may prove to be the beginning of a better state of things for these, our overburdened and oppressed brothers."

Robert C. Greer, secretary of the Peoria Board of Trade, expressed himself as well pleased with the appointment of Bishop Spalding on the commission for ending the coal strike.

"Protestants and Catholics alike," he said, "in the vicinity of Peoria are well satisfied with the appointment. No better ecclesiastical selection could have been made. He is a man of great charity and of wide influence in the soft coal district, of which Peoria is the centre. I saw Bishop Spalding less than a week ago, and he expressed great sympathy with the coal miners."

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ST. ANN'S T. A. & B. SOCIETY, established 1868.—Rev. Director, Rev. Father Flynn, President, D. Gallary, M.P.; Sec., J. F. Quinn, 625 St. Dominique street; M. J. Ryan, treasurer, 18 St. Augustin street. Meets on the second Sunday of every month, in St. Ann's Hall, corner Young and Ottawa streets, at 8.30 p.m.

A.O.H. LADIES' AUXILIARY, Division No. 5, organized Oct. 10th, 1901. Meeting are held on 1st Sunday of every month, at 4 p.m.; and 3rd Thursday, at 8 p.m. Miss Annie Donovan, president; Mrs. Sarah Allen, vice-president; Miss Nora Kavanaugh, recording secretary, 155 Inspector street; Miss Emma Doyle, financial secretary; Miss Charlotte Sparks, treasurer, Rev. Father McGrath, chaplain.

ST. PATRICK'S SOCIETY.—Established March 6th, 1856, incorporated 1865, revised 1864. Meets in St. Patrick's Hall, 92 St. Alexander street, first Monday of the month. Committee meets last Wednesday. Officers: Rev. Director, Rev. M. Callaghan, P.P. President, Hon. Mr. Justice C. J. Doherty; 1st Vice, F. E. Devlin, M.D.; 2nd Vice, F. J. Curran, B.C.L.; Treasurer, Frank J. Green, Corresponding Secretary, John Kahala; Recording Secretary, T. P. Tansey.

ST. ANN'S YOUNG MEN'S SOCIETY organized 1885.—Meets in its hall, 157 Ottawa street, on the first Sunday of each month, at 2.30 p.m. Spiritual Adviser, Rev. E. Strubbe, C.S.S.R.; President, M. Casey; Treasurer, Thomas O'Connell; Secretary, W. Whitty.

ST. ANTHONY'S COURT, C. O. F., meets on the second and fourth Friday of every month in their hall, corner Seigneurs and Notre Dame streets. A. T. O'Connell, C. R., T. W. Kane, secretary.

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