

CORRESPONDENCE.

Competent Teachers.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS.

DEAR SIR:—The gratitude of all friends of youth is due to you for your educational system.

Permit me, through your columns, to call attention to important phase of the School Question, i.e., the Competence of Teachers. How do our teachers, lay and religious, stand when viewed in this light? Are they learned? Are they experienced? I fearlessly answer, with a grounded knowledge of what I advance, that in too many cases they are not! If the worth of teachers is measured by the ridiculously simple test to which they are put to procure an elementary or even a model diploma, I say they are well enough, aye, and too well paid. How many of our representative men have ever been present at these examinations, and analyzed what sum of knowledge is necessary to obtain license to teach? Would it not be possible for the TRUE WITNESS to find out and publish the Teachers' Examination questions, which boys and girls just leaving school answer without the least difficulty? Were this done the public would soon perceive the need of reform. If teachers were subjected to a severe and thorough test, one-half of those who now occupy positions for which they are certainly unqualified, would be obliged to give place to competent men, and what profit would not education derive from such a change! Then there would be less slashing, less degrading punishments, less false ideas planted in youthful minds; the door of the profession would be closed to men who have failed at everything else; our teachers would be what they should be—learned men, and they could then claim a higher remuneration for their arduous and thankless labor.

This, however, can never be, so long as the examiners of our teachers possess but a superficial knowledge, and consequently dependent upon their books instead of their brains, in conducting diploma examinations. The educational department throughout is too much swayed by influences entirely foreign to the welfare of our children.

It is high time that in selecting those whose task it is to sculpture the heart, mind and soul of youth, more attention were given to those lines of the poet:

"Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
The rest is all but leather and prunello."

In a future communication I shall, Mr. Editor, with your kind permission, treat of the competency of our religious teachers.

Thanking you for space in your estimable paper and wishing you success in the crusade you have so generously undertaken.

I am, sir, yours truly,

A SUBSCRIBER.

What are the Duties of School Inspectors?

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

DEAR SIR:—Two weeks ago, I briefly unnumbered the "Duties of School Inspector" as laid down in the "School Act." This week, I shall speak of the performances of those duties. If the current reports of many of the teachers of Montreal are reliable, and I have no reason to dispute their truth, some of the fundamental principles of that "Act" are more than disregarded. It is too much to expect, much less to demand by "Act," any of our School Inspectors to lecture and instruct young aspiring pedagogues on the theory and practice of teaching? Why? it may be asked. Echo, answers Why? And so with regard to reporting on the methods and qualifications of teachers. Here, I must be understood to mean the genuine teacher, in contradistinction to the mushroom growth of that name.

Again, let us suppose; we need not say it has ever happened—but just let us suppose: such things are within the range of the possibilities; the Government Inspector and the Local Superintendent, visit one of our average English schools, officially. We will further suppose the pupils to be of the sterner sex, and the teachers of the same gender. These masculine creatures are not so easily frightened and excited as the weaker sex are. The presence of those officials has no terrors for them, as is often the case with the latter. To our supposition: the gentlemen in question, first ask for, and note down what they call the "statistics" of that school; and any other information requiring a merely

verbal answer; anon, they listen to the teachers questioning, and perhaps, teaching their respective classes; this, until they become apparently satiated; now they fall into a friendly chat—always *sotto-voce*; this pending the progress of the examination—they never presume to examine one of those classes themselves—perhaps, for good and prudent reasons? Now, strange to say, after their friendly chat, and the impression made on their absent minds, they are able to report: on the state of education in that school, the qualifications of the teachers, and their literary and scientific attainments. The position of Inspector, under the supposed circumstances, is a "soft thing"—a veritable sinecure. And so it is, indeed, for none of them are two whole months employed out of the scholastic year of ten months. There are many other little idiosyncrasies in this game of playing "School Inspector," that might be mentioned, but the foregoing will illustrate the toil, hardships, and increasing studies those men must undergo to enable them to draw their hard earned salaries. It is a pity to say, still it has got to be said, that these little aberrations on the part of Inspectors, whether commissioned or would-be, are open to public criticism, apart from condemnation and call for immediate reform. Why the "Local Superintendent" accompanies the Government Inspector on his city rounds of school inspection is not very clear. Their inseparable companionship on these occasions has given rise to much speculation and not a little controversy. Some people have been uncharitable enough to say, there is a twofold reason for their companionship: First, the Local Superintendent, acts as censor and regulator of the latter's reports with greater freedom thus; being jealous of anything in the shape of a report placing any other school in standing above the Plateau: Second, it is said he accompanies him for the purpose of picking up the best things he can find in the schools outside his own; just as the Plateau Academy requires annual proping to keep it from toppling over; so the system requires annual patching from the best material to be got in other city schools to prevent it going to pieces from its own inertia. It was thus reasoned by a Rev. gentleman of the West End, when he requested of Local Superintendent by letter, to remain at home and place some brains in the schools under his own control, declaring that his absence from his schools on examination days, would exalt him immensely in his (the Rev. Gentleman's) estimation. The receipt of such a missive; coming from the distinguished quarter it did, must have been gall and wormwood to my friend's cup of happiness.

Not to encroach on space I will reserve for another week the continuation of this subject. K.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

DEAR SIR:—In your last week's issue, under an article headed "Free Libraries," you mention one already in use for Catholics. I presume you refer to The Sacred Heart Union Library, and if so, I would beg to state, for the information of your readers, that this library is free to all, Catholics and non-Catholics. It is open for men on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings, at 8 p.m.; and for ladies on Friday and Sunday afternoons. A catalogue of the books contained in the library can be obtained from the Librarian for 5 cents. As the promoters of this institution are anxious to extend its influence, I would ask all who may read this letter to kindly make it known to their friends, and thus aid in introducing good, sound, wholesome literature into our city homes.

H. J. C.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

DEAR SIR:—Permit me to call the attention of your readers, to what seems to me a very mistaken course, on the part of many of our parishioners. I think that a person should be as attentive as possible to the services and offices conducted in his own parish church. For some reason or another, I notice that a number of our worthy citizens are content with keeping inside the strict limit of the law, and of going to their own church merely at Easter time. As a rule they attend other churches every other Sunday of the year. I do not think it right that (taking St. Patrick's as an example) the people should avoid their own church to go hear Mass at other churches. Some claim that it is

nearer to go to the Jesuits, or to other places of worship; some give as a reason that they find the singing more attractive in outside churches. My idea is that many think it more high-toned. I may be wrong. If so, I would like to have the question, spoken of in the TRUE WITNESS, in order to be put right myself, and to obtain the real reasons (if any good ones exist) why people don't go to their own church. I may add that hundreds never hear a sermon in their own language, except at Easter. This cannot be right. Yours truly,

A PARISHIONER.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

DEAR SIR:—In connection with the Federal Civil Service pension fund, will you allow me, with your usual kindness, a few remarks on a grievance and its remedy.

Quite a number of officials die after contributing to that fund for 10, 15, 20 years, and even a longer time, without, of course, deriving any benefit therefrom, leaving widows and children unprotected, as the law does not make any provision for the latter.

Now, then, do you not think that as a matter of justice, those officials should, at their death, have the satisfaction and consolation to know their families will not be thrown adrift on the world's mercy and charity, but participate, to a certain degree, in the pension fund, and this is the suggestion I beg humbly to make:

Grant to the widows the pension which the husbands would be entitled to at their death for a period extending from five years and more according to average; the average of the time during which pensioners draw pension could be established by official returns, and be a basis for settling the widows' pensions.

I can understand that officials drawing large salaries are in a position to lay aside a certain amount for the future welfare of their families, but I must say that for those in the yearly receipt of \$600 and \$700, and even \$800 and \$900, that fact is utterly impossible, when you consider the high rate of the necessities of life, schooling of children, etc.

May I trust you will entertain favorably my view and give to a just cause the influence of your powerful pen and all the weight your benevolent heart can bring to bear on the subject?

J. A. J.

HON. JOHN COSTIGAN.

A Splendid Banquet and an Able Speech.

The citizens of St. John's, N.B., tendered the Hon. Mr. Costigan, Minister of Inland Revenue, last week a grand banquet in that city. It might be called a non-political gathering, since those who took part therein, were all admirers of the honorable gentleman, and were of different creeds, nationalities and political stripes. In the course of the evening, as was expected, Hon. Mr. Costigan delivered a speech. It was indeed an able and careful statement of the position occupied by the government and the obligations of a minister of the crown. We take the following synopsis of the address from the St. John's Sun:

"The minister heartily thanked the citizens for the honor paid him. He saw around the board gentlemen occupying prominent positions in the mercantile and manufacturing life of the city, and gentlemen who from their position are not always to be found around festive boards of the character of this evening. In the past thirty years he had been engaged in some important fights. He was also pleased to meet, irrespective of party or creed, gentlemen of this city, and he felt such meetings were wholesome. There is one present to-night, and his presence carries me back to over thirty years, a gentleman whom he esteemed and whom every New Brunswicker should honor. It was indeed a pleasure to him to find Sir Leonard here, and he might add when he entered the cabinet of the late Sir John Macdonald he did so with the full approval of Sir Leonard, and up to the time of his retirement to accept the position of lieutenant governor, they worked along in perfect harmony together. The meeting was non-political, but there was one question he never feared to touch, and that was the policy of live and let live. He had full confidence in the great Protestant heart of this country. Of course there might be mistakes in a section or district but there is no reason why the country should be governed by a religious cry. He did not care what a man's religion is. All should live in peace and harmony together and all good Christians should do this. Give him a good Protestant, one who lives up to the teachings of his church, and he will point out a good, law-abiding citizen; give a good Catholic one who lives up to the rules of his church and the country in which he lives, and he would point out a good, law-abiding citizen. In this country we should all live in peace and harmony. There should be no religious strife in this country—it should be frowned down by all the better class of people and all should live in peace and harmony together. The Globe had asked him to tell the public something about the Manitoba school question. He would consent. The minority of Manitoba had taken an appeal in the case to the privy council and until that body had given a decision the Globe ought not to think any minister was enough to give his opinion. When that decision was given it would be time enough for the government to take its stand and announce its decision."

A Cordial Wish.

Rumors are again current about the retirement of Sir John Abbott from the Premiership of the Dominion Cabinet and the accession of Sir John Thompson to that responsible position. Many changes will, no doubt, take place in the personnel of the administration, and room will be made for the infusion of new blood. On more than one occasion we have expressed the hope that Mr. J. J. Curran Q. C., M. P., should be given a cabinet office. We take this opportunity of reiterating that hope. Mr. Curran is a representative Irish Catholic not in a provincial, or any other narrow sense, but as one who has earned and who enjoys a Dominion reputation.—Toronto Catholic Weekly Review.

Ecclesiastical Appointments.

His Grace, Archbishop Fabre, has made the following appointments: Rev. F. X. Leclerc, Almoner of the St. Jean de Dieu Asylum, vicar of the foreign vicariate No. 3. Rev. J. S. Thérèse, pastor of Varennes, vicar of the foreign vicariate No. 13. Rev. P. Derome, curate of the St. Edmund Mission. Rev. Abbe Lebel, curate of St. Vincent de Paul, of Montreal. Rev. A. Quesnel, curate of St. Scholastique.

Notre Dame Church.

On Sunday vespers as usual were sung at 8.30 p.m. In the evening, at a quarter past seven, the young ladies' retreat was opened. Throughout the three days (Monday, Tuesday and to-day) Mass at 8 a.m.; and Rosary, Sermon and Benediction at 7.15 p.m. To-morrow morning, at seven o'clock, the general communion for the young ladies will take place, and the retreat will close to-morrow evening at 7.15, with a solemn Benediction.

We clip the following from Truth; it is quite in accordance with Libby's style. There is considerable truth in it, and a little tinge of ignorant bigotry, as the last remark evidences:

"Mr. Beaufort Moore, on behalf of the 'Anti-Popery Association,' sends me a copy of a petition to the Queen against the appointment of Alderman Knill as Lord Mayor. In so doing he observes that 'I shall no doubt make such remarks as the genius of my paper dictates.' The genius of my paper has already led me to say that Mr. Moore and his friends are making themselves supremely ridiculous, and inflicting the utmost injury upon the cause which they have at heart. After reading this petition and the reports of the proceedings at the Memorial Hall last week, I have come to the conclusion that Mr. Moore is secretly in league with the Papists for the purpose of making the name of Protestantism stink in the nostrils of all right-minded persons; and I should not be surprised to learn that he is really the new General of the Jesuits in disguise."

The second number for November of "Arcadia" is to hand. It is impossible to give a just analysis, or even a synopsis, of all it contains. We would recommend every one of our readers—especially those who have a love or admiration for music, art, or literature—to secure that most valuable publication. It is exceptional in tone, exact in information, and interesting to the highest degree. It is not necessary to be a professional in order to appreciate the fine arts. The man or woman who is not stirred by music, charmed by art, or entertained by lofty literature, is really to be pitied. "Arcadia" is a boon not only to Montreal, but to all Canada; and its influence is not circumscribed by the limits of our Dominion. If any one person, in the realm of Canadian letters, deserves high credit for his energy and enterprise, and substantial encouragement in his work, that person is certainly Mr. Joseph Gould, the editor of our first and best high standard publication, "Arcadia."



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