

Regular Visit of Notre Dame.

Made by the Very Rev. Superior-General. Opened on the 19th of March, 1870, and closed on the 7th of July of the same year.

On the 19th of March, A. D. 1870, We, Edward Sorin, Superior-General of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, opened the Regular Visit of Notre Dame, Indiana, observing, on the same occasion, all the prescriptions of our Directory.

After a conscientious observation and a close examination of men and things for several months; after hearing personally, in direction, every member now residing in this Institution, and comparing year with year for the last five years (that is, since 1865), we have obtained, we think, a more thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the affairs of Notre Dame than we ever possessed before.

This long and serious investigation of the movements of this important establishment has filled our mind and our heart with various impressions and sentiments. Towards God and His Holy Mother it is an ever-increasing feeling of profound gratitude, and great astonishment in presence of so many proofs and evidences of a merciful and paternal Providence, watching over, shielding and protecting the Institution, and marking each day of its existence with new blessings. And, in the first place, towards our Religious, we feel a greater esteem and affection for the vast majority of them than we ever did before, in consideration of their unswerving fidelity. A few, however, whose conduct has caused pain, regrets, and even disturbance and disedification, force us to confess that here, too, not every man has been what he ought to be. Had it not been for this lamentable exception at times, or, in other words, had every Religious done his duty fully and unflinchingly these last five years the College would have closed this year with double the number of pupils, and the prosperity of the Institution at large would be increased in the same proportion. By this we do not mean that Notre Dame would have doubled its prosperity, had talent and human resources helped to secure it; we mean that, had the Vows made here been simply fulfilled as they should have been, for the last five years, by all the Religious in the Institution, its success, to-day, would be what we just stated. An act of disobedience has sometimes dismal consequences. Witness that of Adam and Eve, in the beginning. It disturbs, at times, all the plans of a most merciful Providence. Those who have read with a judicious eye the annals of Religious Orders will acknowledge a fact which is found everywhere, in all ages and countries; namely, that God blesses and punishes in justice. In a Religious

House the sum of virtue determines that of success; the lack of it is the foreboding of an approaching calamity. Merchants succeed by talent and ability. With them human wisdom, human exertions are the best means to secure their ends, which are all of this world. With a Religious body, whose object is supernatural, something more is necessary, namely the blessing from above. It is for Religious chiefly that the declaration was made: *Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui ædificant eam*—"Unless God blesses them, those who build a house work in vain." And inasmuch as the vow of obedience in a Community embodies the other two vows, and contains in itself the essence of a Religious life, we must say that such among our Religious, during the past five years, who have best fulfilled their solemn engagements as men of obedience, bound before God and the world to obey; have best contributed to the building of this Institution. God has blessed their devotedness, their good will, their prayers, their every act. What need has He of talented or rich men to do His work? Worldly undertakings require such means; they rest on them. Not so, however, with God's works: they depend on His blessings. Long life to men of obedience in a Community! They are its main stay, its lightning-rod, its joy and its glory. The first merit of a Religious is to obey. The first obligation of a Superior is to establish and preserve obedience in his House.

We are naturally inclined to love those who flatter our inclinations, and to dislike Superiors who correct our defects and require of us the strict fulfilment of our duty. An arbitrary Superior, who would substitute his whims for the Rule, would soon offend, and deservedly; but one who requires no more than what the Rule allows or commands, should be sustained. Let us illustrate this maxim by a comparison: Suppose a Superior who, during his administration, lets every one act as he pleases. Every one is delighted with him at first; but gradually all lose the spirit of obedience, and, in the long run, they seem to forget they ever made a vow of obedience. After the lapse of a few years, things are changed: you may have a certain number of subjects; but the number is no longer an increasing value; they are in the way of each other; before long, you may still have men, but no Religious. To you, children of the Holy Cross, who have, for a number of years devoted your best energies to found and develop this noble Institution of Notre Dame, and whose devotedness God has blessed even beyond your hopes,—to you we now appeal, that you may protect it against attacks and dangers which, although not frightful nor shocking at first sight, are no less to be feared. Serpents hide themselves under green grass as well as beneath dead leaves. If you intelligently desire to secure for yourselves a splendid home, such as the sweat of your brows, under God's blessing, has made

it here for yourselves and successors; if you wish to extend to generations yet unborn the salutary blessings of a monument now the legitimate pride of Religion; if you wish to share in the merit of numerous successors continuing your work—saving souls, procuring God's glory, and extending daily the kingdom of Jesus and Mary over this fair land of our adoption,—in a word, if you love your immortal soul; if you love your vocation; if you love your Congregation, and wish to see it honored, commanding respect everywhere, instead of seeing it in a few years the byword, the object of the scorn of the enemies of our holy Faith, let it be your firm resolve to stand, to the last hour of your lives, by our divine Standard of the Cross in which alone is salvation; to stand by your solemn engagements—the vows of your Profession; to stand by your Rules and practices; to stand by your former spirit of childlike obedience, of innocence and poverty. Satan, who foresees the good you may do and perpetuate, is continually roaming around, seeking whom he may devour. Why do you cast to him at times one, and then another, and thus encourage and increase his efforts? In vain do you try to justify yourselves by affirming your regret for their loss. Ah! if we pause to investigate each one of those sad cases, we will find that perhaps every one of us here had something to answer for in the loss of this one or that one. Those who came to us came, generally speaking, well disposed. Such as were admitted to the holy Habit, and, later again, to vows, were deemed by the Community worthy subjects. Why, then, have they subsequently left our ranks, and gone again to the world? Our conviction is that nine out of ten of such losses will be charged one day to the responsibility of some unfortunate members, by whose example, conversations, insinuations, complaints, censures and expressions of dissatisfaction they were disedified, weakened, detached from the Community, until they yielded and went to ruin.

If you never influenced directly and purposely anyone thus, you may have done it indirectly and unintentionally, but no less effectually.

Again, is it a proof of zeal and love for the Congregation to look upon such a work indifferently? A true Religious, who sees one of his Brothers in temptation, and doing, sometimes, the work of the wolf in the sheepfold, will have no rest until he has removed all danger. Who could rest in peace in a house knowing that some part of it is on fire? It is your own House that is concerned and in danger.

The statistics of the Institution give, for the present, the following figures, viz.: Religious, 112; Boarders, 240; Apprentices, 50; Franciscans, 15; Professors, 13; Sisters, 30; Domestic 20. A total of 480 souls in the House.

The buildings of Notre Dame, the premises, the farm itself—in fact, everything, now looks more pleasing and better finished.

The new Novitiate, which is now occupied by the Novices of both branches together, is finally completed, and stands beautifully at the head of Lake St. Joseph. There has been an average of twenty-five or thirty persons living in it this year. It is the best House on the premises.

The old Novitiate of St. Joseph has been since twelve months the Professed House, and answers well the object for which it is now intended. The Professed, who have the real spirit of their vocation, and who love to live retired from wordly intercourse, will always cherish that beautiful spot, where they can live together without any foreign element, and where, furthermore, they have the advantage of possessing the precious Chapel of Our Lady of the Angels, or the Portiuncula. The former Novitiate of the Salvatorists has been since a year the Scholasticate of the Province, and we hope to see it full next September.

The farm, as has already been stated, has improved of late in appearance. The yield of crops has also increased in the same proportion. New stables and sheds for cows should be immediately constructed in place of the old ones; now decaying, were it not that the cows are to be removed, with the slaughter-house, next fall to St. Joseph's Farm. Nothing should delay the removal.

The new St. Joseph's Farm we have not seen lately; but we are told that it proves to be what had been expected, namely, a considerable tract of land, a little over 1,300 acres, containing excellent grass and turf. A hundred acres have been cultivated, and even more has been ditched and fairly drained since it was purchased. It is contemplated to transfer there the cows, hogs, sheep, poultry, etc., next autumn—a plan which entirely meets our approbation. Of course, a new house will have to be built there, sufficiently large for eight or ten Brothers and a Priest, with a little chapel for the use of the Community and the few Catholics around. Eventually this new establishment, under the protection of our glorious Patron, may become the centre of a Catholic congregation. It is six miles distant from here, towards the east, and a new railway passes through a portion of the tract. If properly used, that large farm may yet become a great resource to Notre Dame.

THE AVE MARIA continues to be a source of consolation and enjoyment to its readers; and, if not of great revenue to the Institution, at least it is not a bill of expense. We are glad to find that it meets fairly all its expenses, even after paying, with its own funds, for building, presses, type, etc. Should the Community be able to take it all on its own members, then profits might be realized. We are pleased with the manner it is conducted, and we sincerely congratulate all connected with it upon its success, and the blessings it will doubtless secure to them.

The SCHOLASTIC YEAR also deserves our encouragement, and

for its improvements and its tone, as well as for its artistical appearance and correctness in general, we freely offer it our congratulations, and indulge the hope that it will continue next year without any change.

We are happy to renew the praises we bestowed, in 1867, upon the two offices, and the manner the books were kept, giving entire satisfaction to the public dealing with Brother Edward, in the General Office, and the parents of children with Father Maher, in the Students' Office. For the latter, however, we recommend him to return to merchants, or dispose of in some other way, all the old stock that has been remaining there for some time. There is at present double the amount that should ever be kept on hand.

The Franciscan establishment we find in the same state as we left it, three years ago. We are satisfied with its results, and commend it earnestly to the solicitude of the Administration.

The Infirmary deserves, perhaps, more attention than is bestowed upon it. No pains should be spared to remove from it parties pretending to be sick, and to secure to the really sick all the care and devotedness they are entitled to. But if health is an object worth the attention of Superiors, morality is more so; hence, the watchfulness to be exercised day and night over young boys detained in the Infirmary. This is a grave matter for a Superior and for Prefects. The two Infirmaries should be separate. But morality in a college requires our attention even more strictly among those who are well. Morality is entrusted to Prefects more than to anyone else in the Institution. If they are zealous, active, and fully impressed with the weight of responsibility resting upon their consciences, they will go far in preventing sin, and protecting innocent hearts, against the invasion of corruption. If not so impressed, they will converse with a few students, will see nothing, will hear nothing, will notice nothing; while a good Prefect should know all that passes, and make his presence felt everywhere, and at all times. When will it be understood that morality is not a fruit of our vitiated nature? To maintain it against the bent of our senses, we all, young and old, need God's grace. A close and perpetual *surveillance* is indispensable everywhere in a boarding school, or else it soon becomes a seminary of iniquity.

Another subject in the College should engross the Superior's attention, namely, the proper teaching of all classes, once opened; to see that every class be taught regularly, orderly and actively; that teachers be not changed in the course of a session; that they be not multiplied unnecessarily; that every Professor teach, not only regularly, but also his full quota of hours; finally, that strangers be gradually dispensed with; otherwise, you will never derive much profit from all your pains and labors, and your own members will be more exposed to become worldly there than anywhere else. It

is a sad sight to see that, after twenty-six years' teaching here, we are yet unprepared to fill our chairs with our own men. At least, let it be clearly understood that no stranger should be employed where some one of ours could do as well; and that preparations should be commenced at once to organize, among our own, teachers for all branches.

In furtherance of this resolution, the Scholasticate must be filled up with our most promising young Religious—even at some expense and sacrifice—in order to obtain for them, and among them, a higher standard of education. Our teaching members on mission, thus far, have brought scarcely anything; more than one is even now an expense. Some establishments must be suspended for a time to fill our Scholasticate.

It is our desire that the method of teaching be thoroughly learned in the Scholasticate, and that an opportunity be given to all to teach daily, for a few hours, in the College. The Christian Brothers' method being evidently not written for a country like this, should be revised, abridged and printed for the use of our Congregation.

We attach a great importance to the Scholasticate, and we trust the Administration at Notre Dame will not fail to carry out our design. Twice a month theological conferences shall be held in the Scholasticate, presided over by the Provincial, and attended by all the Salvatorists residing here, at St. Mary's, at South Bend and Lowell.

We call the attention of the Administration to the regulation of steam, to the ventilation of all apartments, and to the health of the College in connection with the heating-apparatus. Proper fuel should be provided in time, and no steam should be wasted.

The grounds and avenues, though much improved of late, require still great attention; trees and shrubs should be planted with more care and skill than before; the roads should be fixed and kept in order, and precautions should be taken to prevent all intrusion on the grounds around the Lake. Our rights are clear.

In conclusion, we recommend most earnestly to all Religious at Notre Dame a more scrupulous attention than ever to regularity, to all the religious practices of old, to the vows, to silence and retirement, to the spirit of faith and charity.

1st. There shall be a Committee of three members—namely, Rev. Father L'Etourneau, Bro. Edward and Bro. Casimir—to examine, every Sunday, at 1 p. m., all demands in regard to the clothing of the members of the Community. All such bills approved by the Committee will be presented to the Council of Administration, whose orders only the heads of shops will receive.

2d. The Local Superior will keep a list of the *personnel* of the House, and will see that each one observes his Rules daily, weekly, and monthly; a full report of the same shall be made monthly to the

Provincial, whose conscience is first charged with the responsibility of the religious discipline of the Province.

3d. To the Local Superior all Religious must apply for direction. He also provides, upon the demand of the President of the College, for all services required in the College. Let it be one of his duties to withdraw his Religious from every unnecessary intercourse with strangers.

When a pupil shall have to be dismissed, the three chief officers in the College shall meet to examine the case before a decision be taken.

All excursions are hereby forbidden.

No one shall be allowed to visit the town without a Prefect.

The officers of the College should see that their "calendar" for recreations, etc., as printed in the Catalogue, be not a sham, but a correct guide for the year.

The discipline of the House is to reach the Musical Department as well as the other branches of studies. The practice of the Band, in this point, has been sadly neglected of late. A musician should never be shut up under key anywhere beyond the reach of the Prefects of Recreation.

Any musical instrument lent to a student should be returned at the time he leaves, in good condition, or all damages should be paid for by him.

The sum of \$300 should not be exceeded, in premiums and medals, at the closing Exhibition.

We recommend economy—the spirit of economy—the virtue of economy; and for the sake of the Congregation and its members, we heartily deprecate its neglect or its fall into disregard. The future destiny of Notre Dame chiefly rests upon it. Of the finest place in the State, an administration somewhat relax might, in a few years, make a scandal, a ruin. On this point the history of Religious Orders is fraught with severe lessons, by which we should all profit.

To sum up, let *obedience*, *poverty* and *discipline* be watchwords for all!

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior-General.

