

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT OF PAUL.

A BRANCH of this inestimable society has been established in Wellington. With a view towards furthering its extension throughout the colonies, we publish the following letters:—

Paris, Sept. 4th, 1877.

General Council, Rue de Furstenberg, 6, Paris.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,—

I am extremely happy to be able to renew with you the correspondence opened up by you in Glasgow, but too soon broken off; and it is with the greatest pleasure that I learn from you that you have founded a Conference of St. Vincent of Paul in Wellington. It is the first that has existed in that distant land, and our Council is overjoyed at the happy news of its foundation.

Though unacquainted with certain details, which we pray you to furnish us by filling up the printed sheet herewith enclosed, the General Council, in its Session of the 3rd inst., has aggregated the Conference of Wellington to the Society of St. Vincent of Paul; and it affords me great satisfaction to make this announcement to you in sending enclosed the printed Letter of Aggregation.

Knowing your zeal, I need not recommend you to make every effort to advance the new Conference conformably to rule—to meet every week, to visit the poor frequently, to celebrate the Feasts of the Society in a suitable manner, to read from time to time the rule as well as the monthly report of our Association, of which an English edition is published in Dublin. Write often to us, and we shall feel grateful to you.

Some time ago a Conference was formed in Melbourne, but we fear it is broken up. Could you not, with the assistance of the good Marist Fathers, re-establish it, and found new Conferences in Sydney and the other chief cities of Australia? It is much to be feared that the Masonic lodges are very numerous in those cities. Why should Catholics always allow these lodges to surpass them in zeal and energy?

Awaiting the pleasure of having a letter from you soon again, accept, dear sir and brother, the expression of my sincere attachment, and be assured we shall remember you in our prayers.

AD. BAUDON,
President General.

The President of the Conference of Wellington.

LETTER OF AGGREGATION TO THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT OF PAUL.

Paris, Sept. 4th, 1877.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,—

The General Council has commissioned us to announce to you that in its Session of September 3rd, 1877, it has aggregated the Conference of Wellington to the Society. This Aggregation has the effect of associating our fellow-members in a communion of prayers, intentions, and good works with the other Conferences, and of enabling them to participate in the precious Indulgences granted to the Society by the Briefs of January 10th and August 12th, 1845. Amongst these spiritual favours, we particularly desire to point out to you the Plenary Indulgence that may be gained by the new members on the day of the Aggregation of the Conference, which is the date of their admission into the Society. The General Council permits you to fix this day, following your own convenience. It requests your most earnest attention to the recommendations which follow. Accept, dear sir and brother, the assurance of our affectionate devotedness in our Lord Jesus Christ,

AD. BAUDON, President General of the Society.
A. DANGIN, Vice President General.

POINTS OF RECOMMENDATION TO WHICH THE CONFERENCE SHOULD GIVE PARTICULAR ATTENTION.

1. Circumspection in the Choice of Members of the Conference.

Nothing is more injurious to a Society than an imprudent selection of members. It is preferable to be less numerous and composed of members possessing the necessary qualifications. If, in fact, it admits within its bosom persons who do not fulfil the obligations prescribed by the Church, and especially the Paschal Obligation the most solemn of all, it incurs the very serious risk of soon becoming but a work of purely human beneficence, and of losing sight of the spiritual good of the poor. Besides this chief qualification which is always required, it is desirable that the aspirant should have a sincere love for the Society, should enter it with a good will, be disposed to love the poor, and have an engaging and benevolent disposition.

2. Assiduity in Visiting the Poor.

This work forms the distinctive character of the Society. It is the most suitable to its needs, and the fittest to arouse the zeal of its members. The Brothers of St. Vincent of Paul, in accustoming themselves to sit by the poor man's fireside, and to come in contact with his physical and moral wretchedness, learn all the better to love and console him. Besides it is an easy task. A long apprenticeship, nor an amount of time which some could not spare, is not required for it. The Conferences should, as an essential point, hold to the visitation of the poor in their own houses, and especially to the practice of it in the Christian spirit of their well-beloved patron, St. Vincent of Paul. When, in visiting the poor, we are convinced that it is Jesus Christ whom we visit, it is easy to do it with an intelligent charity.

3. Regularity at Meetings and Cordiality among the Members.

It would be dangerous to neglect either of these two points, and all the more as they are closely connected; in fact, without regularity the meetings become wearisome, the members are discouraged, the collections diminish, and many undertakings which would otherwise be easy are rendered impossible. Moreover, without cordiality the meetings become painful and fatiguing; members will attend simply to fulfil a duty of conscience, but without that pleasure felt by members of flourishing Conferences when they find themselves together. No Conference has ever failed in decorum by permitting its members

a sweet and Christian gaiety. Many, on the contrary, have lost by not cultivating amongst their members, that cordiality which is an evidence of the union of hearts.

4. Frequent Communication with other Conferences.

The members of a Conference should clearly apprehend that they form a part not of one Conference only, but of the whole Society. Consequently, they should set a high value on an intimate communication with the neighbouring Conferences, with the Council on which they depend—should their Conference constitute part of the district of a Particular, Central or Superior Council,—and lastly with the General Council, the centre of the whole Society. To the present moment the spirit of union has constituted the strength of Conferences, and as long as it shall be perpetuated, we may be confident of their success.

5. Deferential and Respectful Relation with the Clergy.

Catholic above all, our Society should esteem it a special honour to stand close by the Clergy of the parish and the Bishop of the diocese. Its intimate union with the Church, of which the benedictions of the Episcopate and the high approbation of the Sovereign Pontiff are a precious testimony, is for the Society of St. Vincent of Paul, as for all other Catholic works, an indispensable condition of permanency, and the most necessary of duties.

6. Perseverance and Resignation in Difficulties. Necessity of Humility.

Sometimes the exercise of charity is marred by obstacles and contradictions, and the Conferences are not exempt from them any more than other pious institutions. It is important they do not suffer themselves to be cast down by them—that, on the contrary, they consider them a special mark of the blessing of God. If, faithful to this counsel, they always endeavour to support contradictions with patience, avoid all species of strife and contest, and await from time and God their justification, their meekness will certainly be recompensed. If, on the contrary, God should bless their labours with success, they ought earnestly strive to place their progress under the powerful safe-guard of humility. The members should always bear in mind they are but unprofitable servants.

MONUMENTS OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

We clip the following from the London *Universe*, as it may be interesting to the Rev. Charles Clark when he again lectures on his saintly brother, Oliver Cromwell:—"We congratulate Mr. Alderman MacSwiney for his proposition, presented for acceptance to the Corporation of Dublin, to the effect that the two streets in the city hitherto known as 'Cut-throat Lane' and 'Murdering Lane' should bear for the future the much more appropriate titles, of 'Roundhead Row' and 'Cromwell Lane.' We have also to compliment the corporation on its great good sense in unanimously agreeing to Alderman MacSwiney's proposition. There is nothing more certain in history than that (so far as Ireland is in question) the Roundheads were cut-throats and Cromwell a wholesale murderer. We shall feel obliged to a writer in the *Daily News* if he would inform us what he means by 'the charities of history.'" In all probability he has not the remotest notion. Or does he think it would be "charitable" to falsify history, and, for the sake of avoiding a hard saying, to write down that the Calvinist Roundheads were the most clement of conquerors, or that 'the butcher of Drogheda' was not a cold-blooded, hypocritical, crop-eared villain? We fancy that history, as written by the *Daily News*, would be found so full of "charity," as to be perfectly worthless.

VANITY OF VANITIES.

FIVE-AND-TWENTY years ago a cobbler from Provence landed in Cairo and became boot-maker by appointment to Said Pasha. M. Bravay, for this was the "souter's" name, soon rose in the favour of Said. He was an extremely funny Frenchman, full of wit, and something of a clown and contortionist to boot. With Said's help, he became a politician, a court intriguer, a financial agent, and a millionaire. He took to speculating on Egyptian stocks, and ultimately became Egypt's financial representative on the continent. Returning to France in 1860, he was received for the sake of his money and wealth, and very privately, in some respectable houses. At court he was publicly taken by the hand. The Emperor sent him down to Nismes, as an official candidate. Guizot's friends prayed for heaven not to rain down fire and brimstone on the town. Bravay had been twice rejected before this happened, by the Corps Legislative, to which he was returned, for "indignité." That chamber was obliged by the Emperor to accept him the third time he applied for admission. Said Pasha was prompted by M. Bravay to present to the Emperor a gold coffee service, inlaid with gems and other knick-knacks. Whenever Lord Palmerston gained an advantage at Cairo against Lesseps, the Tuileries sent the *cidevant* cobbler to counteract it. M. Bravay paved the shoe-heels of his valets with diamonds, lined his carriage with gold and silver brocade, and shod his horses with an amalgam of precious metals. De Lesseps found in him a valuable auxiliary, for Bravay had studied the weaknesses of Said Pasha and ministered to them. He was worth forty-five million francs in 1866.

In 1866 Dame fortune began to give her wonderful cobbler the cold shoulder. He fell desperately in love with an Italian lady of rank, who was little better than an adventuress, and accompanied her to her Piedmont home. She had a mania for Bourse and other speculations, and often came to Paris to indulge in her passion. He paid her losses and was reduced by her to the merest pittance—thirty thousand francs or thereabout. Blindness overtook him; the contessa died; and Bravay had to trust himself and the wreck of his fortune to a servant who robbed him at Geneva, leaving him in the direst poverty. Death freed him the other day from his misery, as he was on the road to his natal commune. He was going there to obtain leave from the mayor, who was his friend, to settle down into a wayside Bartimeus. On Bravay's tombstone, which a quondam friend has erected, are inscribed the words; "Vanity of Vanities. All is Vanity."