

THE POPE ON HIS TEMPORAL POWER.

POPE LEO XIII. (says the *Catholic Review*) has written a letter to the members of the Italian Catholic Congress assembled at Bologna, congratulating them and pointing out the advantages which will arise from their organisation. He says:—

"These advantages will arise specially from the formation of local diocesan and parochial committees, which, wisely formed and animated with sentiments of discreet prudence, and daily adding to their number, will be able to smooth the way to a General Congress, the excellent fruits of which we await with the fullest composure. Thus assembled, and actuated by the accustomed zeal of your piety, under the ecclesiastical authority, to work for the glory of God, the triumph of the Church and the salvation of souls, you will be necessarily led to affirm and develop all that you have advocated up to the present, and to urge on the people to defend their faith with an ever-increasing devotion. Assuredly, if this Congress recognises in the See of Peter its principal support by drawing closer and closer to it, it will display its holy banner in bringing about peace and good-will among men, and taking advantage of all honest means not prohibited by the law, and approved by the Sovereign Pontiff, to endeavour to re-instate the ancient rights of the Pope, so that opportune remedies may be applied by him for the evils with which Italy is now so sorely afflicted. You are all aware how our country ruled other countries for centuries, owing to the renown of the Pontifical See, which, admitting no other limits on the globe than its Divine jurisdiction, could be compared to no other authority. Anyone who has the slightest idea of history must be aware of the powerful help which this land has received from the Sovereign Pontiffs even under the most difficult circumstances, and the immense benefits conferred on it by them in the improvement of morals, law, agriculture, arts, and sciences, as well as in the institution of works of public utility. The feeling of their own renown, and that of a profound gratitude, unite to illumine in the hearts of Italians the noble desire of restoring as far as possible the integrity and the plenitude of that religious and civil liberty of which the Vicar of Christ is in need in order to be able to perform regularly all the functions of his supreme ministry, and to accomplish the veritable welfare of the peoples. Therefore it is that this ridiculous mask of liberty which men of crooked minds boast so much of is of use only to insidiously hide the galling chains of servitude of which the people feel the weight while they recognise its detestable bondage. We are confident, beloved brethren, that, taking those facts into consideration, you will see your way in your deliberations to make this Congress not less useful to Italy than those which have preceded it, so that it may be a model for all future meetings, and that not alone it may redound to the true glory of the Church and of the Catholic name of the Italians, but that, still more, it will furnish to civil society an efficacious and well-balanced adjunct to its actual necessities."

ARCHBISHOP CROKE ON IRISH DEVOTION.

THE following passages are taken from a sermon lately preached at Carrick-on-Shannon by the Archbishop of Cashel:—You are a reading and intelligent people, and must be familiar with the leading ecclesiastical events of the epoch in which we live. Consider what is being done, and what of sacrifice is being made for religion's sake on all sides throughout the length and breadth of this great old Catholic land. Let me instance one case in point. Away in the very extremity of the south, in a town of not fully 3,000 inhabitants, and midst a people far from being exceptionally favoured as regards wealth or the means of acquiring it, a church is now all but completed at the enormous cost of £27,000, of which £24,000 is actually paid. The poor but spirited Catholics of that southern town have already given £12,000 of that vast sum, and have, furthermore, engaged to pay half as much again within a specified time. One other example also may be cited. When employed in missionary work as a bishop at the Antipodes, I remember having preached in a small Australian village for the good Sisters of Mercy who were solicited to settle down there and open a denominational school. Three hundred and five persons were present at the sermon. They were Irish without exception, and although above want, did not belong to what are called the wealthy classes. A collection was made by myself in person, on the occasion, and I solemnly assure you that, independent of promises, which were pretty numerous, I received then and there, in cash alone, the very considerable sum of £1,546. For these practical reasons, and for countless others, I am, and shall be, a firm believer in the big-heartedness and boundless generosity of the Irish race. Has anyone ever heard of a church having been put up for sale in Ireland, or that an Irish priest ever undertook a needful good work, however costly, which he was forced to abandon for want of funds? *There never existed, and does not exist this moment, on the face of the globe, a more faithful, virtuous, God-fearing, soverely-tried, and devoted people than ours.* How priests and bishops should love and labour for them! They are our pride, our crown, our glory. United in every interest of earth and heaven, sprung from the same stock, fed from the same fountain-head of faith, linked indissolubly together by the same bonds, for weal or woe, poor in each other's poverty, rich in each other's wealth, partners of old in the sanguinary penalties of our Irish origin, as we are now sharers in the advancing light of freedom and civilisation, who will dare attempt to separate the Irish priesthood from the Irish people—the pastor from his flock?"

The Russian Government have ratified the sentence of the Novgorod Court, condemning three peasants to no severer penalty than a slight Church discipline for burning an old woman as a witch. The crime is regarded as a pardonable prejudice by the Government, the judge, the jury, and a portion of the St. Petersburg Press!

AN INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF A MISSIONARY PRIEST.

(From the *Bazaar Journal*.)

THE subsequent experience of Father McB—, as related to me by my friend was even more strange than the first. One night in November he had gone to bed early, as the weather was very cold, and towards dark a heavy rain had set in, which, as the night wore on changed to hail and sleet. The bedroom was on the ground floor—indeed the house consisted of but one storey. Somewhere in the small hours of the night, Father McB was awakened out of a heavy sleep by what he supposed to be a tapping on the window pane. He listened intently but heard nothing but the beating rain. After a few moments he fell asleep when once more the sound was repeated, and this time he called out, "Who is there?" A voice, which seemed to be that of a boy or a woman, replied: "A woman is dying at Smithson Post-office—come at once for God's sake!" There was no mistaking this summons. The priest threw on some clothing, and opened the door. "Come in," he called out, "and I will be with you in a moment." No answer. "Have you two horses?" he asked in a loud voice. "Come in, come in out of the storm." Still no answer. Having dressed, he lighted a lantern, and again opened the door. Up and down the roads, around by the footpaths, near the stable, he looked in vain—there was no one to be seen.

Now Smithson Post-office is eighteen miles from St. Mary's, and it seemed almost impossible that anyone should have come from there on foot—utterly so that they should have gone back on this terrible night without waiting for him to accompany them. The good priest deliberated for a few moments, and began to think himself the victim of a practical joke. But this idea was scarcely tenable. He knelt down and asked the assistance of heaven. "I will go in the name of God," he said as he arose from his knees.

It did not take many minutes to saddle his horse and don a water-proof coat, and in half an hour from the time he first heard the tapping on the window-pane, he was on his way, the tears and protestations of his good old housekeeper notwithstanding. A hard ride of four hours through mud and storm, brought him to Smithson Post-office, which consists of two or three houses, and the same number of shanties near the railroad. He saw a light in one of the latter, and knocked at the door. It was opened by a man in his shirt sleeves, who held a candle in his hand, and thrust it into the face of the visitor, as he said: "Who are ye, in God's name, and where do ye come from?" "I am a Catholic priest" was the reply. "Did you send for me?"

"Did we send for ye, Father?" answered the man, "did we send for ye? shure we had no one to send; but the poor woman inside has been calling for ye since midnight, when death struck her. Come in, Father, come in." The priest followed the poor man into an inner room where a woman was lying, a new-born infant beside her, and three small children sleeping on a mattress on the floor.

"Father!" she cried out in a trembling voice, extending her cold hand, welcoming him with eyes which death was slowly sealing—"Father, I sent my guardian angel for ye, and he brought ye, praise be to Almighty God!"

"Sure we thought it was ravin' she was," said an old woman who was seated in front of the fire, "when she was dronin' to herself all night, 'Bring him, good angel, sweet angel!' she'd say."

The priest saw no time was to be lost in hearing the woman's confession. Her story was soon told, and she died almost immediately after the last sacraments were administered.

The man maintained positively that no one had been sent for Father McB—. They had no friends, were the only Catholics in the place. The daughter of a pious Irish mother his wife had kept her faith and piety as bright in that desolate spot as when she went regularly to the Sunday Mass and her monthly confession in the home of her girlhood. They had not seen a priest for months. She had always prayed that she might not die without the last ministrations of the Church.

Father McB—firmly believed that he had a supernatural visitant that night and so did his friend, Father A—. I tell the tale as it was told to me. Nothing is impossible with God, and His ways are not our ways.

TWO IMPORTANT APPOINTMENTS.

THE Holy Father has just confirmed the unanimous election of the Reverend Father Bonaventure Soldatic, a Dalmatian, and Rector of the Church of Padua, to the charge of General of the Conventual Minors of St. Francis; also the election that has taken place at Rome, of the new Master General of the order of St. Dominic, in the person of the Rev. Fr. Joseph Mary Larroca, a Spaniard, of the Convent of St. John the Baptist of Corias, ex-Socius of the Vicar General and Provincial of Greece, actually Visitor of the Dominican Province in the Philippine Islands. Father Larroca was born in 1813; has had the Dominican habit for 49 years; and is the 75th Master General of the Order after St. Dominic.

Let the enemies of Christ's Church take note of these elections, whereby duly constituted Heads are given to two of the oldest and most illustrious Orders of workmen that help her in her divine Mission of teaching all nations. Each of these Orders looks back to an ancestry that dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century; from the first year of their existence up to the present they have each proved themselves true servants of God and benefactors of mankind. As in 1878 the whole Church rejoiced when a Head was given to it by the election of Pope Leo XIII., so now all the children of the Church rejoice in the election of Heads to each of the two great Orders in the Church, founded respectively by St. Francis and St. Dominic.—*Bombay Catholic Examiner*.