

'I can understand why you ask that question. You no doubt believe, as thousands in Australia believe, that the whole country is in a blaze—the wildest excitement prevails. Nothing of the kind. The cablegrams to our papers are quite misleading. The whole time I was in England I never once heard the anti-Ritualistic campaign alluded to publicly or privately, and the newspapers, with the exception, perhaps, of the *Times*, give very little space to the controversy. The fact of the matter is, the English people are too indifferent. They don't care a brass farthing about High Church or Low Church. The educated classes decline to bother their heads about "the new Reformation," as it is called. The middle classes are blissfully indifferent, and as for the lower or working classes, the bulk of them, on the evidence of their own eyes and ears, have come to the conclusion that the only two "working" religions in England are the Catholic Church and the Salvation Army. Beyond the shadow of a doubt Ritualism is gaining ground, and many of these churches go as near the Catholic Church as it is possible to go without breaking away entirely from the Church by law established. Anglicanism in England appears to be doomed. Disestablishment is not far distant. If there was what we might call a religious civil war to-morrow, "the mob" would, I firmly believe, throw itself, not against the Catholic Church, but against the Church of England.

THE IRISH CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY.

PETITION FROM ENGLISH CATHOLICS IN ITS FAVOUR.

THE following petition was drawn up by the English Catholic hierarchy. On the departure of the last English mails, it was being signed by Catholics in England, chiefly of the educated classes, for presentation to Lord Salisbury—

'We, the undersigned, beg to invite the earnest attention of your Lordship, as Head of Her Majesty's Government, to the state of things by which the Catholics of Ireland—three fourths of the people—are in fact cut off from the benefits of University education. We are spared the necessity of demonstrating the existence of this national misfortune by the wholly honourable but momentous admissions which have been made within the last year by members of Her Majesty's Government. Only last October the immediate representative of the Queen in Ireland, the Earl of Cadogan, used these words in a public meeting at Belfast.

"I am convinced that, as long as you have that question unsettled, as long as you do not intend to render justice to those who are not of the same religion as yourselves in this high and important matter, so long will Ireland have one grievance, and one serious grievance, which will be unredressed."

Mr. Balfour speaking as the Leader of the House of Commons last February, declared that it filled him "with dismay that Parliament should tamely acquiesce in a condition of things which practically and substantially deprives two-thirds of the population of Ireland of higher educational advantages."

'We pray that this admitted inequality of educational opportunities between the Protestants and Catholics of Ireland, and the people of Ireland and Great Britain, may be redressed without delay.

'All we ask is that in the matter of higher education the "policy of the open door" shall be adopted in Ireland, and that something of the considerateness which in the case of the Gordon Memorial College has been so conspicuously shown for the religious feelings of the Mohammedan Soudanese shall now be extended to the conscientious convictions of Irish Catholics.

'We would remind your Lordship that this subject of Catholic University education in Ireland was made a Cabinet question twenty-five years ago, that, in the interval, the Catholic Bishops of Ireland and her representatives in Parliament have never ceased to urge her Majesty's Government to right an admitted injustice, by establishing a University in Ireland, which Catholics could attend without doing violence to their religious principles; that the want of such facilities for higher education condemns the young Catholics of Ireland to go into the world robbed of their fair chances of achieving a successful career; that the Catholics of Ireland have eagerly availed themselves of the advantages offered by the intermediate or secondary colleges, as the results of the Royal University examinations year after year abundantly show, and that continual denial of all opportunity to complete their studies in a University course is bitterly resented, not only as a penal disability suffered for conscience sake, but as a most grievous handicapping in competition of life.

'Finally, we would recall that the Catholic Bishops of Ireland have done everything in their power to make easy this great act of justice, that they have disclaimed any demand for an endowment of the teaching of the religious sciences; that they are willing to see a majority of laymen on the governing board; that they offer every reasonable guarantee for fixity of tenure, for the members of the teaching staff; and that the advantages of the new University shall be open to all, irrespective of religious belief.

'We, therefore, earnestly beg that your Lordship will cause a Government Bill to be immediately brought into Parliament, which shall lead to the establishment of an act of justice that has for years been demanded by the immense majority of the people of Ireland.'

Such are the terms of the petition. Its issue was accompanied by a strong letter from Cardinal Vaughan. The *London Tablet* practically threatens the political secession of English Catholic Conservatives should the Ministry remain inactive in the matter of the Irish Catholic University. It says—'If the Ministers, in face of the words of the Lord Lieutenant and the repeated declarations of Mr. Balfour, are content to do nothing and to let the wrong go unrighted, they simply knock the bottom out of the Unionist position.

It is obvious that a Dublin Parliament would quickly find a remedy—will a Unionist Government do as much? If not, all we can say is that many Catholic Unionists will feel it necessary to reconsider their position.'

Friends at Court.

BIOGRAPHICAL GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR.

(Written for the N.Z. TABLET.)

FEBRUARY	26, Sunday.—Second Sunday in Lent.
"	27, Monday.—St. Marcellus, Pope and Martyr.
"	28, Tuesday.—St. Ignatius, Bishop and Martyr.
MARCH	1, Wednesday.—St. Hyginus, Pope and Martyr.
"	2, Thursday.—St. Simplicius, Pope and Confessor.
"	3, Friday.—The Holy Winding Sheet of Our Lord.
"	4, Saturday.—St. Lucius I, Pope and Martyr.

ST. IGNATIUS.

St. Ignatius, surnamed Theophorus, a word implying a divine or heavenly person, was a zealous convert and an intimate disciple of St. John the Evangelist, as his acts assure us; also of the apostles SS. Peter and Paul, who united their labours in planting the faith at Antioch. It was by their direction that he succeeded Evodius in the government of that important see, as we are told by St. Chrysostom, who represents him as a perfect model of virtue in that station, in which he continued upwards of forty years. During the persecution of Domitian, St. Ignatius defended his flock by prayer, fasting, and daily preaching the word of God. In the year 106, the ninth of his reign, Trajan set out for the east on an expedition against the Parthians, and made his entry into Antioch on the 7th of January, 107, with the pomp of a triumph.

Ignatius as a courageous soldier, being concerned only for his flock, willingly suffered himself to be taken, and carried before Trajan, who thus accosted him: 'Who art thou, wicked demon, that durst transgress my commands, and persuade others to perish?' The saint answered, 'No one calls Theophorus a wicked demon.' Trajan said: 'Who is Theophorus?' Ignatius answered, 'He who carrieth Christ in his breast.' Trajan replied: 'And do not we seem to bear the gods in our breasts, whom we have assisting us against our enemies?' Ignatius said: 'You err in calling those gods who are no better than devils, for there is only one God Who made heaven and earth, and all things that are in them, and one Jesus Christ, His only Son, into Whose kingdom I earnestly desire to be admitted.' Trajan said: 'Do not you mean Him that was crucified under Pontius Pilate?' Ignatius answered: 'The very same, who by His death has crucified with sin its author who overcame the malice of the devils, and has enabled those who bear him in their heart to trample on them.' Trajan said: 'Dost thou carry about Christ with thee?' Ignatius replied, 'Yes, for it is written, I will dwell and walk in them.' Then Trajan dictated the following sentence: 'It is our will that Ignatius, who saith that he carrieth the crucified Man within himself be bound and conducted to Rome, to be devoured there by wild beasts, for the entertainment of the people.' The holy martyr, hearing this sentence, cried out with joy, 'I thank thee, O Lord, for vouchsafing to honour me with this token of perfect love for Thee, and to be bound with chains of iron in imitation of Thy Apostle Paul, for Thy sake.' Having said this, and prayed for the Church, and recommended it with tears to God, he joyfully put on the chains and was hurried away by a savage troop of soldiers to be conveyed to Rome.

He arrived at Rome on the 20th of December, the last day of the public entertainments, and was presented to the prefect of the city, to whom the emperor's letter was delivered at the same time. He was then hurried by the soldiers to the amphitheatre. The saint, hearing the lions roar, cried out: 'I am the wheat of the Lord: I must be ground by the teeth of these beasts to be made the pure bread of Christ.' Two fierce lions being let out upon him, they instantly devoured him, leaving nothing of his body but the larger bones. Thus his prayer was heard. 'After having been present at this sorrowful spectacle,' says our authors, 'which made us shed many tears, we spent the following night in our house watching and praying, begging of God to afford us some comfort by certifying us of his glory.' They relate that their prayer was heard, and that several of them in their slumber saw him in great bliss. They are exact in setting down the day of his death, that they might assemble yearly thereon to honour his martyrdom. The Greeks keep his feast a holyday on the day of his death, December 20. His martyrdom happened in 107.

ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA.

St. Margaret of Cortona was born at Alviano, in the diocese of Chiusi, in Tuscany, about the middle of the thirteenth century. At the age of sixteen she fell away from God, and for nine or ten years Margaret led a life of shame. She was still in the bonds of sin when one day she saw the body of her partner in guilt, who had been murdered, covered with worms. She then entered into herself, and resolved to do penance for her evil life. She returned to her father's house, and he received the prodigal child. Margaret spent night and day in bewailing her past guilt, and with a rope round her neck begged pardon publicly in the parish church for the scandal she had given. Her stepmother objected that her penance compromised the respectability of the family, and persuaded her father to send her away. Margaret thereupon went to Cortona, and put herself under the care of the Friars of St. Francis, who, after a long trial to test the sincerity of her conversion, admitted her to the third Order, called the Order of Penance. She who had once lived in luxury, pampering her body, lived henceforth a life of heroic patience and mortification in a narrow cell, but perfectly obedient in all things to her confessors, growing in holiness, in mastery over self, and in perfect detachment from the world. She died February 22, 1297, and her incorrupt body still testifies to the efficacy of her penance and to the recovered purity of her soul.