

## Roman Notes.

A RECENTLY published number of De Rossi's *Bullettino* deals at length with the question as to whether the Consul acilius Glabrio, put to death under Domitian in the year 95, was a Christian. The researches of the renowned archaeologist have left little doubt on the matter, and he gives proofs in the affirmative that almost amount to complete certainty.

A result of the revolution in Brazil, approved of in Rome, has been the separation of the Church from the State, by which she is freed from certain restrictions that had heavily impeded her action. The way especially is said to be prepared for the more effective working of Catholic schools. The fear is that the improved condition of things may prove merely temporary, and that the Republic may after a little interfere more seriously with the free institution than the Empire did with that which was dependent on it. But of this, as yet, there are no signs, and sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

The sensation of the hour in Rome has been the arrival and performances there of Colonel Cody, otherwise known as Buffalo Bill, and his troupe. Immense crowds have thronged the circus. The cow boys of the show have confirmed the opinion formed of their skill and daring by putting the wild riders of the Campagna to shame, through their success in riding certain horses of the locality which had been declared completely untamable. The Indians of the troupe are devout Catholics and were received by the Pope in the Sala Ducale, on Feb., 20, the anniversary of his coronation, their great inducement to visit Rome having been the hope of seeing his Holiness.

In the political world a good deal of discussion is given to the formation of a new party among the supporters of the Government, whose object is to bring about a cessation of active hostility against the Church, and a *modus vivendi* with the Vatican. The more determined enemies of religion are incensed and among their denunciations accuse the Vatican of being at the bottom of the matter. But a sufficient denial of this is given by the names of the men concerned. The Jew Arbib, for example, who is one of them, can hardly be believed to be under Papal influences. The truth is, however, that even mistaken men, not wholly blinded by atheistical virulence, must see the evils of the existing state of things and consequently desire a remedy. But no *modus vivendi* with the Vatican will be found that does not involve the restitution of his rights to the Holy Father.

The report of the Parnell Commission has produced an excellent effect in Rome, where it is received as conclusive of a victory gained by the Irish Nationalists over their enemies. It is also considered a certain presage of approaching triumph.

A good deal of money has been lost by people who could ill afford it through the failure of the Bank of Ihrwagner. The Bank unfortunately commanded the confidence of Catholics, who have consequently been the chief sufferers. It is said that the Pope himself is among the losers—not, however to any great extent.

Another room has just been found in the recently discovered house of St John and St Paul. A fresco, said to be of the ninth century, on one of the walls represents the martyrdom of three persons, a woman and two men. The figures are supposed to be those of Saints Benedetta, Crispino, and Crispiniano, who were beheaded for searching for the bodies of the martyred saints who had owned the house. All such discoveries are additionally valuable as establishing the accuracy of Catholic tradition.

MYERS AND CO., Dentists, Octagon, corner of George street. They guarantee highest class work at moderate fees. Their artificial teeth give general satisfaction, and the fact of them supplying a temporary denture while the gums are healing does away with the inconvenience of being months without teeth. They manufacture a single artificial tooth for Ten Shillings, and sets equally moderate. The administration of nitrous oxide gas is also a great boon to those needing the extraction of a tooth. Read—[ADVT.]

Seldom has the difference between Irish and English courts of law been more strikingly demonstrated than it was recently in two decisions, rendered on the same day, in precisely identical cases. Captain O Shea applied to an English court for writs of attachment against the London *Star* and the London edition of the *New York Herald* for having published comments on his pending suit. Justice Butt refused to grant them. A similar application on the same grounds against the Dublin *Freeman's Journal* was promptly granted by an Irish judge, and the paper was fined 500dols. with costs of action.

Ostrich farming in California is not likely to be the success predicted for it some time ago. A Canadian paper says:—"Late reports from California do not give very rosy views of the prospects of growing ostriches for profit. The business needs, perhaps, some such wild men as are found in South Africa, whose lives are of little consequence. Even the reckless cowboys would hardly undertake the management of a herd of ostriches. Their kick will kill a man, and at certain seasons they are very fierce. With the increase of this bird, the plumes have naturally declined in price, so that the large profits at first expected cannot be realised. The business is not more profitable than any other branches of farming." Who are the wild men of South Africa who cultivate the ostrich? Our Zwartie Ruggens farmers would not like to be called "Wild men."—*Graaf Beinet Advertiser*.

## THE BAVARIAN PASSION PLAY.

(Sydney Freeman's Journal, April 19.)

THE Very Rev. Alphonsus O'Neill, Superior of the Passionists in Australia, delivered his promised descriptive lecture on "The Passion Play of Oberammergau" in the hall of the Catholic Reading Rooms, William street, on Monday evening.

The lecturer opened with the confession that it would be impossible for him, or indeed for any one, to give any fair idea of the beauty, the solemnity, and the impressiveness of the Passion Play as presented by the pious villagers. To thoroughly understand the Passion Play it was necessary to witness it, and he ventured to say that no one, believer or unbeliever, could witness it without being deeply and profoundly moved. He himself had been privileged to attend at the production in 1871 after the Franco-Prussian War, and again in 1880, the sacred drama being performed at intervals of 10 years. He went to Oberammergau with what he might describe as a strong prejudice, feeling that the Passion of Our Lord was too sacred to be represented save by the consecrated priest at the altar. He had a suspicion that he might see something that would wound the religious susceptibilities of Catholics and afford non-Catholics cause for adverse comment. But all his prejudices were quickly conquered and all his fears were soon dispelled, first by the character of the people, in the second place by the position of the village, and thirdly by the circumstances and associations of the representation. On the occasion of his first visit to the historic village there were over 6000 people assembled from all parts of the world to witness the representation, and the thought occurred to him while looking at the immense gathering, including many who were not Catholics, that it would be something approaching profanity to expose the sacred Passion of Our Lord to such an assemblage, while at the same time he could not help also thinking that as far as the spectators, at all events, were concerned mere idle curiosity would prevail and the proper feeling of reverence, the proper spirit of religion, would be wanting.—But as with the play itself, so his misgivings as to the spectators were soon set at rest. On both occasions he had witnessed the play the assemblage was stilled and awed by the scenes presented before them, and in the specially pathetic parts he had seen strong men weeping like children. Artists, critics, writers, poets were gathered there, and all were under the spell of the heart-moving solemnity of the representation, and the feeling of reverence reigned so supreme that such demonstrations as clapping of hands or applause of any kind were never thought of. The unaffected piety of the actors and the all-pervading air of solemnity raised the Passion Play high above the most powerful and most thrilling theatrical performance, and the whole effect was so deeply moving, so soul-stirring, that the scenes and incidents could not fail to linger in the memory of the spectator to his dying day. On one of his visits to Oberammergau, the Prince of Wales was present, and he (Father O'Neill) remembered that the Prince—being deeply affected by all that he had seen—sent for the villager who played the part of Christ (Joseph Meyer), and taking a costly ring from his own finger, placed it with many words of praise and admiration, on the pious peasant's hand.

The last home or resting-place of the Passion Play is the little village among the mountains of Bavaria. Sacred Mystery plays, the lecturer explained, were common in the ages of faith throughout Europe and England, and the representations of the Nativity, the Life and Death of Our Lord, as well as the Resurrection of Lazarus, the wise and foolish Virgins, and more of the same kind were given with the approval and often with the aid of the Church. These plays were the outcome of a strong religious feeling among the people. Time, however, brought changes, and when the old religious spirit which made these plays "sacred things" to the spectator began to disappear from the performances the church discountenanced, and finally suppressed the Mystery Plays. An exception was made in the case of Oberammergau, and for a special reason which the lecturer explained. In the year 1633 a terrible pestilence swept over the country, and the little village alone escaped. Unhappily, despite all the precautions taken, a villager who had been away for some time returned unobserved to see his family. This man brought the plague with him, with the result that, besides dying himself, some 80 of the other villagers also succumbed within a few days. Amidst the terror which the visitation inspired among the little community, it was resolved to make an appeal to God's mercy through the medium of the Passion Play, and this was done, with the wonderful result that no more deaths occurred. The villagers in gratitude for their deliverance made a vow to have a sacred representation of the Passion of Our Lord in their midst at stated periods, and eventually the custom of having the Passion Play every ten years was established. It was in consideration of this vow so faithfully observed that the Church granted the special privilege to Oberammergau when the general order against the plays was issued.

The village has a population of about 1000 souls, and at each representation 800, including women and children, take part. For a member of a family to be excluded from taking part in the representation is considered the deepest disgrace. The people are all extremely simple and rustic in their ways of living, and unlearned, perhaps, in all but the sacred Scriptures, of which they have a wonderful knowledge. Their lives are spent in homely pursuits, and the men and children in the winter time employ themselves in making those curious and graceful carvings which are sold abroad where the humble workers who fashioned them are perhaps never thought of. Notwithstanding the simplicity of the place the villagers live in an atmosphere of native art and native piety. The very approaches to the village, with the Stations of the Cross instead of milestones and the statues of the saints for guideposts, are characteristic of the inhabitants, and in the village itself the front of almost every house is decorated with a crucifix, while there is not one in which in the interior the cross and pictures and statues of the saints are not displayed. Without cultivating dramatic talent by artificial means, the villagers are born actors. The preparation for the Passion