

THE CATHOLIC CONGRESS

During his recent visit to Sydney the Archbishop of Melbourne, who is doing his utmost to make the forthcoming Catholic Congress a pronounced success, addressed a meeting in the Cardinal's Hall, when he gave a lucid and interesting sketch of the work before the Congress, and the arrangements made for visitors. To a representative of the 'Catholic Press' his Grace gave the following particulars:—

'On what lines exactly will it run?' asked the reporter.

'Of one thing you need not be afraid,' said his Grace, smiling, 'it will not be confined to purely ecclesiastical subjects. It will be of interest to every class and profession. Besides the ecclesiastical side we shall have papers dealing with medical, architectural, social, historical, and antiquarian matters, also Catholic literature and charitable organisations. I mean organisations such as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Young Men's Societies, the League of the Cross, the Illobornian, and other societies and institutions. Already we have received a large number of papers on some of the above subjects.'

'All from Australia?'

'They are not. Some are from America, and others from Rome, Ireland, England, and France.'

'And the writers?'

'Amongst others from America we have received a paper from Archbishop Keane. The subject is singular enough, its title being "The Immaculate Conception in connection with Democracy." Archbishop Keane, as you know, was formerly Rector of the Catholic University at Washington. He is a very eloquent speaker and writer. Perhaps he and Archbishop Ireland are two of the most famous men in America.'

'And Cardinal Gibbons,' added his Grace. 'I have written to Cardinal Gibbons, but whether he will send a paper I do not know. I have also communicated with some of the other American Bishops and other well-known writers.'

'What has been received from Rome?'

'From Rome we have papers from Professor Marucchi, who is the successor of De Rossi, and whose works on archaeology are of the highest value. Professor Marucchi sends two papers; like De Rossi, he has made the inscriptions and paintings in the catacombs a subject of special study. One of his papers is on evidences of the faith of the Early Church in the Blessed Eucharist as revealed in the paintings recently found in some of the Roman catacombs. The other paper is on Egyptian obelisks in Rome. Another paper we have received from a Roman professor of Church music in connection with the recent "Motu Propria" of the reigning Pontiff.'

'Now, from Ireland.'

'Oh yes, from Ireland, we have several papers of great interest, one of them being from Monsignor Mollay, Rector of the Catholic University in Dublin. His paper is on radium, and is brought down to the most recent knowledge of the subject. Indeed, so anxious was he to have it up-to-date that he has re-written the first edition of his article which came to hand about two months ago, so that the second edition might contain the very latest discoveries in connection with this marvellous source of energy. We expect a paper from Dr. Healy, Archbishop of Tuam, whose published historical works have commanded universal appreciation. From Maynooth College we have four treatises written by professors of different faculties, and All Hallows' College has contributed two papers. The titles will be published later, as Dr. Kenny, I know, intends sending out a circular. Dr. Sheehan, author of "My New Curate," has also sent a paper, which, I think, deals with the agnosticism of the day.'

'Now, regarding England,' continued his Grace, 'we have received a paper from Dr. Barry, the well-known historian and novel writer. Father Hays, a very prominent temperance lecturer in England, is coming out to lecture for the temperance Alliance people of New Zealand—with us, I think, they are called the Australian Alliance—and he has some hopes of being present at the Congress. If not he will be out in February or March. Father Hays intends giving some lectures, and doing temperance work in Australia as well as in New Zealand.'

'What about Australia?'

'From all parts of Australia we have received a great number of papers, and expect many more, dealing with subjects of local and present interest. His Eminence the Cardinal is contributing two papers, one of them being the opening paper to be read at the Congress, treating on the Immaculate Conception, and the other is on the influence of Ireland on the early civilisation of Europe. Of course we have numerous other

papers. For instance, Mr. Benjamin Hoare is writing on criminal statistics or something of that sort, but I am not quite sure of the title. There will be many papers from Sydney.'

'And what is your Grace writing?'

'I will deliver the inaugural address.'

'Have you any lady writers, or papers on matters of interest to women?'

'I think not, but we hope to have one, or perhaps two, from Sydney.'

We talked about the conference of Catholic journalists to be held during the Congress, and his Grace expects great things from it. He is fully alive to the influence of the press, and how to stimulate Catholic journalism is one of the concerns dearest to his heart.

Talking of the plan of the Congress, he said: 'It will be substantially the same as that of the Sydney Congress. The most important variation will be that the Congress will be sectional, that is to say, besides the general meeting which will be held in the main hall, meetings dealing with sectional subjects will take place in the adjacent club rooms, so that even three sessions can be held simultaneously. In this way a larger number of papers can be considered than if there was only one section held or discussed at the same time.'

'There will be only two sessions each day, one at 10.30 a.m., and the other at 3.30 p.m. In Sydney there were usually three sessions, and I think it was rather severe on many of those who attended the Congress. In consequence of this we decided to hold only two sessions a day in Melbourne, but we make up a similar number of sessions by the larger number of subjects dealt with during the course of the day at the two sessions.'

'Regarding the social side of the Congress, your Grace?'

'The Congress opens on Sunday, October 23. That morning the Catholic Young Men's Societies will hold their annual Communion and breakfast. They will assemble at St. Patrick's Cathedral, and after the eight o'clock Mass their annual Communion breakfast will take place in the Cathedral Hall, where the Congress will be held. They intend inviting the Bishops, the clergy, and the laity, who will be in Melbourne for the Congress, to attend. Of course it will be an interesting event. At eleven o'clock there will be Pontifical High Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral, with "Chorum Cardinale," for which special preparations are being made by a full orchestra engaged for the occasion. There will be no sermon on account of the nature of the ceremonies. In the evening we will have Pontifical Vespers, and one of the visiting prelates will be invited to preach. I have written to Dr. Higgins, but do not know whether he will preach—but I expect he will. If not, we shall get some of the other Bishops to do so.'

'On the following day the session begins at 10.30 and at 3 o'clock. In the evening we will have a conversation for all the members of the Congress in the Cathedral Hall—at least, if the hall is regarded as sufficiently large.'

'The evenings will be free through the week, because it is rather heavy to hold a session of the Congress in the evening, as it does away very much with the social side of the Congress. Arrangements are not complete yet, but we hope to fill up the evenings in a manner that will be agreeable to all with one kind of entertainment or another, not of an educational, but of a social or entertaining character.'

'Outside the Congress Hall we will have two sessions during the week, one at St. Francis Xavier's College, Kow, and the other at the Convent of the Good Shepherd at Abbotsford. Of course in Melbourne we are badly circumstanced in regard to Congress matters compared with Sydney. Here you had St. John's College, which gave a great deal of diversity to the first Congress. We have nothing to correspond with it. However the two places I have mentioned will help to break the uniformity of the Congress. I may say that Abbotsford will be a revelation to anyone who has not previously visited it. There are so many wonderful things to be seen, and ladies who take a special interest in lace-making, for which the convent is famous, will find something to occupy their attention. All the boots worn by those in the home are made at the institution, and in the same way all the soap used is manufactured on the premises. A whole afternoon can be spent pleasantly at Abbotsford.'

'On the final Sunday, October 30, there will be ceremonies in the Cathedral, and in the morning there will be a special sermon dealing with the results of the Congress. In the evening Perosi's oratorio, "The Transfiguration," will be produced for the first time in Australia. The music recently came out to our choir conductor, Herr Lindon. I think it will be excellently rendered. The oratorio will have full orchestral accompaniment.'