

The Catholic World

ENGLAND—A Relic of the Penal Days

One of the leading provincial dailies, in its description of the opening of Kingsway, wrote:—The big wide highway runs straight, like a Roman road, through banks of ruins and hoardings and cuttings and dense masses of tenements. In places the jagged ends of old buildings hang over the road, and the smell of newly-fallen bricks and mortar still tinges the air. At another part some buildings have been stripped away and have left the western end of the little Roman Catholic chapel exposed to the sun that has not seen it for centuries. It is a striking sign of the Council's respectful sentiments for Old London that this interesting little chapel, with its two galleries and quaint carving, has been spared. It was attached to the Sardinian Ambassador's house (you may still see his coat-of-arms in the front of the house, which faces Lincoln Square), and here the London Roman Catholics used to worship furtively in the days of the penal laws. It had a visit from the Gordon rioters.

The Holy Father on Education

The Archbishop of Westminster has received a letter from the Pope on the subject of education. His Holiness says he has not failed to attend to that gravest of all matters about which the Catholics of England are at present anxious, namely, the endeavor to safeguard and maintain their schools in conformity with the belief and profession of the Catholic Faith. His Holiness praises the Cardinal Archbishops of Westminster for the great earnestness with which during 35 years the Catholics in England have defended their schools, asserting above all things the necessity that the education of the young should be of a religious character. This example Dr. Bourne has also followed, and he has been a leader to the Catholic people in their united determination to obtain what they desire most of all in the teaching of their schools. In pleading for this cause, the Pope observes, Archbishop Bourne will be helped by the approval of many, not of the Catholic Faith, who agree with him as to the religious education of the young. His Holiness exhorts Catholics to strive for this most praiseworthy object, and especially addresses an exhortation to those who defend Catholic claims in books and the press.

FRANCE—Furious Anti-Clericals

The Holy Father's letter to Cardinal Richard, Archbishop of Paris (says the 'Catholic Times') has had the effect of maddening the anti-clericals. They look upon it as an insult and a menace to the Government. It is intolerable, in their eyes, that the Holy Father should dare to write to an Archbishop, and say that at the proper time he would send instructions how Catholics should act, meanwhile urging on all the duty of prayer for the French Church and for France. More than all, they are angry that he has met their charge by denying that his action caused or called for the Bill of Separation. This quick and efficient reply to their mendacious accusation has pricked a useful political bubble, and now they threaten reprisals, and proclaim their determination to provide new and stronger fetters for the Church. Apparently, Catholics are not to be allowed any liberty in France, but are to be punished for being Catholics. It is clear that the infidels desire the total extirpation of all religious ideas.

ROME—Audience with the Holy Father

In the early part of November the Holy Father received in private audience the Most Rev. John Conmy, Bishop of Killala, and the Most Rev. Joseph Hoare, Bishop of Ardagh. The Bishop of Killala presented his Holiness with £635, and the Bishop of Ardagh with £1102 as Peter's pence. The Pope thanked them warmly for the gift, and entered into a long conversation with them concerning their dioceses, expressing his high esteem for the Irish people and his hope that they would persevere in the Catholic Faith, so that Ireland might be again in the future what she had been in the past. His Holiness imparted his Apostolic blessing to the two Bishops, authorising them to extend it to their dioceses on their return.

The Bishop of Salford

Reuter's Rome correspondent says the Bishop of Salford, in the course of his private audience with the Pope, presented his Holiness with Peter's pence to the amount of £1164. The Pope thanked the Bishop in the warmest terms, and conversed with him at length with regard to affairs of his diocese, and the condition of Catholics throughout Great Britain, expressing his great satisfaction at the fair treatment accorded them. Dr. Casartelli presented Canon Joseph Tynan, who is accompanying him as his secretary, to his Holiness.

The Irish Augustinians

Various Roman newspapers, and finally the 'Osservatore Romano,' but in an unofficial column, have published a report (writes a Rome correspondent) that Padre Ferrini, of the Congregation of St. Camillus of Lellis, parish priest of the Church of Santi Vincenzo ed Anastasio, and the Confraternity of the Anime Purganti, whose church of San Nicola in Arcione is to disappear, are on the point of purchasing the entire property of the Irish Augustinians, namely, the foundations for the spacious church, the adjoining large convent, and the enclosure in front of this. Their plan, according to this report, is to combine all the moneys at their disposal, buy out the Irish Augustinians, complete the erection of the unfinished church, have it dedicated under another invocation, and make it parochial for the Ludovisi quarter and, at the same time the confraternity shrine of the Anime Purganti. The Rector of the Confraternity, however, is in England, so some delay will be inevitable. On the other hand, the plan is substantially an old one, and it has been rumored about time and again during many years, but the expropriation of the Church of San Nicola in Arcione entailing upon the Confraternity the necessity of finding a seat is a new and hopeful element in the case. The report upon which I have commented is stated to have the approval and support of the Holy Father.

A Remarkable Priest

One of the most remarkable characters in the ecclesiastical world of Rome died the other day. Father Marcellus Masserenti was almost ninety years of age, and sixty of them he spent in the Vatican, where he was one of the high officials of the Papal Alms Office, Three Popes, Pius IX., Leo XIII., and Pius X., endeavored time and again to thrust honors on him, but he refused even the most trifling of them, and preferred to live as a simple priest rather than as a prelate. When Pius IX. was obliged to fly from Rome to Gaeta during the Republican outbreak about the middle of the last century, it was Father Marcellus who looked after the plan of escape, and attended the Pontiff. As a young man he was enormously rich, but he died in comparative poverty in a small room in the Vatican—for no fortune could stand the inroads of the good priest's generosity. Once he gave a million francs in a lump sum to provide for the necessities of the Holy See. On another occasion he presented a million and a half francs to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Two communities of nuns whose property was plundered by the Italian Government were supported by him for years; and whenever he appeared in the streets he was followed by a crowd of poor people, to whom he distributed a pocketful of small coins, which he always carried about with him. Father Masserenti received decorations from almost every Sovereign in Europe, but he kept the insignia carefully hidden away, and was never known to wear one of them.

The Next Peace Conference

It is understood that the programme of the work for discussion at the next Peace Conference at the Hague will comprise nearly all the questions which arose during the recent war. Pourparlers have taken place regarding the participation of the Holy See in the conference. Relations between Italy and the Vatican have improved so much that the present Cabinet would not object to the Holy See being invited. The difficulty is to find a plausible reason for the change, in order that what five years ago, when the question of Vatican participation at the instance of the Czar was raised, was a victory for Italian diplomacy may not now appear as a defeat.

SCOTLAND—Catholic Club for Edinburgh

The movement recently set on foot in St. Mary's Cathedral parish, Broughton-street, Edinburgh, for the establishment of a Catholic Men's Club is evidently no mere parochial affair, but one which in its broad principles of liberality and hospitality is in every way worthy of the Metropolitan Church of Scotland. Whilst the club is principally meant for, and conducted by, the gentlemen of the Cathedral congregation, guided by Canon Stuart as president, it is open to all Catholic gentlemen in the city and country who desire to become members. Valuable central premises at a cost of over one thousand pounds have been purchased by Canon Stuart and are about to be fitted up in such a modern manner as will render the building something like a Catholic Social Institute for the Scottish capital. The business-like way in which the administrator and his lay associates have gone about this excellent undertaking augurs well for its permanent success and leaves the Catholic gentlemen of the city of Edinburgh under a deep debt of obligation to them as supplying a long-felt want.