

The Catholic World

CHINA—Increase of Catholics

The increase of Catholics throughout China during last year is reckoned to have been nearly 90,000.

Catholics in Shanghai

The district of Shanghai, China, contains a large Catholic population—upwards of 60,000. Many of the inhabitants are of old Catholic stock, dating back two or three centuries. This explains their fervent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and their tender love of the Blessed Virgin. A correspondent of the 'Ave Maria' writes: 'I have just heard from China that in the pilgrimage chapel of Our Lady of Zo-ce, about twelve miles from Shanghai, there were more than 2500 Communions for the opening month of May, and more than 7000 in the course of the month. On the feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, transferred this year to a day in June, there were 2000 Communions more, thus raising the number to about 12,000 for the May devotions and pilgrimages.'

Church Progress

A recent number of 'Die Katholischen Missionen,' published at Freiburg-im-Breisgau, under the editorship of the Jesuit Fathers, calls attention, in a long and interesting article, to a form of Christian devotion peculiar, so far as we ('Ave Maria') are aware, to China—the institution of consecrated virgins, girls and women who have vowed themselves to the service of God, but who are not religious, nor necessarily living in community. The Jesuit missionaries speak of the work done by these devoted women and girls as beyond praise. As long ago as the year 1846, one of the Jesuit Fathers at Shanghai wrote that 'in every Christian community there are found a number of girls who, without being bound by the vows of any Order, have of their own free will vowed a virgin life. Most of these dedicated virgins live at home, occupied in manual labor and good works; others in a kind of community. The institution has supplied many members to the various religious Orders and regular communities. It is wonderful how, in the last few years, the number of Chinese religious has grown. In one convent of Carmelite nuns, numbering thirty-three members, twenty-one are Chinese. A house of the Sisters of Mercy has three native members. In one mission (in Kiang-su) there are to-day 341 Sisters, of whom 230 are Chinese. Since Christmas, 1904, there has existed at Ning-po a wholly Chinese community of Sisters of Mercy, now comprising forty-eight members, with its own rule and a Chinese superior. The Sisters take each year the three simple vows. They are the first of their country to adopt the dress as well as the manner of life of European nuns. There are to-day in China about 600 European Sisters, already nearly 500 Chinese nuns, and between 3000 and 4000 virgins dedicated, in the world, to the service of God and of the mission. It is not easy to exaggerate the good work done by these last. They fill a place which could not, in their country, be filled by religious, and are a signal example of how our holy mother the Church under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, can lay hold of the capacities and special gifts of every nation, as of every individual, and consecrate all to the furtherance of the Divine Kingdom and the salvation of souls.'

ENGLAND—Nuns in Training Colleges

The question, raised by the Protestant Alliance bigots, of the presence of nuns in some of the London County Council schools, came up for consideration at a recent meeting of the Education Committee of the Council. The recommendation of the sub-committee was agreed to. Having stated that the nuns in question were working as regular students, that, like all students of training colleges, they were required to attend elementary schools for the purpose of practice in the art of teaching, and that they took no part in the religious instruction, but merely dealt with the ordinary classes according to the usual scheme for such student teachers, the sub-committee were of opinion that the Board of Education should be informed of the rule of the Council under which the students in question attended the school, and that it should be stated that the Council made no inquiry into the religious belief or the social antecedents of the students in training colleges.

British Sailors at the Vatican

A correspondence has taken place between the Imperial Protestant Federation and the Prime Minister and

the Admiralty with reference to the British sailors' visit to the Vatican, in July last. The Federation wrote to the Premier, enclosing a cutting from the 'Tablet,' giving a detailed description of the visit of a number of British officers and sailors of the Mediterranean Fleet to the Vatican, where they were addressed by the Pope, and asking if the facts mentioned in the article were true or untrue. To this there was no reply until the Federation Secretary wrote a second time, when Mr. Ponsoby replied—'I beg to state that the Prime Minister cannot be expected to express an opinion with regard to the accuracy or inaccuracy of newspaper reports.' In reply to a further letter, asking the Premier whether he would cause inquiries to be made, Mr. Walsh, the organising secretary, was referred to the Admiralty, to whom he sent a copy of his first letter to the Prime Minister, together with the extract. The reply he received was—'In reply to your inquiry on the subject, I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you that while the 'Prince of Wales' (battleship) was lying off Civita Vecchia, early in June last, twenty-one officers and eighty-seven petty officers and men of that ship when visiting Rome attended the audience of his Holiness the Pope, and that the address given on that occasion, as reported by the captain of the ship, corresponds with the version published in the 'Tablet.'

FRANCE—The French Soldiers

Referring in the 'Saturday Review' to the French campaign in Morocco, Mr. Richard Davey writes: 'The French army being deprived of its chaplains both in the field and in the military hospitals, it is at the present critical time impossible for French soldiers—be they Catholics, Protestants, or Jews—to obtain the ministrations of the clergy of their respective denominations on the battlefield at the hour of death or by the grave-side.'

The Little Sisters of the Poor

The persecution of the religious Orders in France has hitherto spared those devoted women the Little Sisters of the Poor, who are loved and revered by Protestants and Catholics alike in every quarter of the globe. Even the fury of the Combists feared to perpetrate the iniquity of their expulsion. But notwithstanding the odium of the act and the indignation of the populace, a house belonging to them has just been closed in the Ardennes. Sixteen Sisters have been turned adrift and their charges, consisting of 130 aged and helpless old men, have been thrown into the streets without bread or shelter. As the journal which records the act justly says, it is an abomination for which there is no adequate name.

The Courage of the Clergy

In a letter from Paris, quoted by the 'Manchester Guardian,' the writer says: 'With good courage and energy the French cure is putting his shoulder to the wheel and taking up a manual occupation. In the country many become gardeners, beekeepers, joiners; in the small towns they are printers, bookbinders, watchmakers, workers in metal, and so on. In the great cities it is evident by the marked increase of their presence at the great public libraries, that many of the most highly educated work at literary occupations—hack work often, no doubt.'

ITALY—The Weakness of the Government

The connivance of the Government in the recent outrages upon the clergy is bearing fruit (writes a Rome correspondent). The rabble of Rome have realized the inability of the authorities to keep order and protect the rights of the citizens. Emboldened by their success in the anti-clerical riots, they have practically gained the upper hand in the city. Not to mention repeated burglaries and thefts, which are increasing and hardly ever detected, criminality is growing alarmingly. Lately policemen have been waylaid and killed during the night. Within the past few days two policemen were attacked in the streets and mortally injured. The authors of these crimes remain undiscovered. Anarchism, Socialism, and Freemasonry are responsible for the anti-Church movement which was favored more or less by the civil authorities, and the present crimes are the inevitable result.

ROME—Death of a Cardinal

The death is announced of Cardinal Steinhuber, Prefect of the Congregation of the Index. The deceased Cardinal was a German, and a member of the Society of Jesus. He was a man of profound learning. He was in his 82nd year, having been born at Uttau, Germany, in 1825. He was created Cardinal by the late Pope Leo XIII. in 1894. Death was due to bronchitis after three days' illness, and occurred at the German Hospice, Rome.