

The Catholic World

BELGIUM—University of Louvain

The annual report of the Catholic University of Louvain, just published, shows a very flourishing condition in that famous institute of learning. The number of students inscribed for the year 1907 reached the record figure of 2144, of whom 139 were students of theology, 427 of law, 429 of medicine, 294 of philosophy and letters, 278 of science, 431 of special subjects, and 146 of agronomy. All but 260 of the students are Belgians, and of the foreigners there are 25 from the United States, 30 from Spain, 40 from Holland, 22 from Germany, 26 from France, 20 from Luxembourg, and 11 Poles.

The Congo

A complete agreement has been arrived at between the Belgian Government and King Leopold regarding the Convention additional to the Treaty for the annexation of the Congo. The most important concession obtained from the King by the Premier is that King Leopold agrees to the Congo Budgets being voted by the Belgian Parliament.

ENGLAND—The Fight for the Schools

In the course of a leading article on the Government's Education policy the 'Catholic Times' says:—The education in the Council school is as unmistakably Protestant and Nonconformist as the education in our schools is Catholic. Why, then, differentiate against the Catholic and in favor of the Nonconformist? We have before us the syllabus of Bible instruction in the schools of the London County Council which is to be taken as the programme for religious instruction in the public schools. In looking through it any one can see at a glance that though teachers are warned that no attempt must be made to attach children to any particular denomination, the information imparted to them must necessarily have a denominational complexion. The Bible is to be read and the teachers are to give from it such explanations and instruction in the principles of the Christian religion and of morality as are suited to the capacities of the young. The 'Lord's Prayer,' the Psalms, the Ten Commandments, leading facts in the life of our Lord, and various verses and passages in the Old and the New Testament are to be learned by the children and made subjects for exposition by the teachers. How could a teacher upon whom lies the duty of laying these explanations before the pupils avoid giving a distinctive doctrinal and denominational color to them? He might as well pretend to describe the human countenance without referring to the most notable features—the eyes, the nose, and the mouth. Well nigh all the more important truths in the teaching of the Catholic Church would inevitably come into a proper explanation of the 'Lord's Prayer,' the Psalms, and the Ten Commandments alone. The Council school syllabus is then for the Nonconformist child what the syllabus of the Catholic school is for the Catholic child; and who with any respect for logic or common sense will say that the Government would be justified in giving the parent in one case all that he desires and in penalising the parent in the other?

FRANCE—A Change for the Better

It looks as if the intolerance of the French Government was diminishing. An order has been given that five Franciscan Fathers who have gone to Morocco shall be allowed to minister spiritually to the Catholic soldiers.

ITALY—A Lenient Sentence

After years of suspense (writes a Rome correspondent) Nunzio Nasi has been dealt with by Italian law for malversation of public funds during his connection with the Ministry. Although the attention of Rome is concentrated every second week on some extraordinary event, few have seen the minds of the population so intensely absorbed in any matter as in the result of the Nasi trial. Nasi's sentence of eleven months' imprisonment and four and a half years' exclusion from public office is not regarded by any means as heavy for a Minister the extent of whose speculation ran into millions. But in Italy it is a strange fact that sympathy usually goes out to criminals, especially if they have belonged to certain spheres; and the address of the accused previous to the declaration of the Senate's verdict made no slight impression, seeing that it moved many in the visitors' gallery to tears. The fact that already no less than one hundred and seventy deputies have signed a petition to the King requesting the re-

mission of the term of imprisonment that still remains to be undergone by the ex-Minister—the last seven months passed by Signor Nasi under guard in his own residence in Rome are to be counted—shows that a good deal of misplaced sympathy is given to a man whose war upon everything pertaining to Christianity during his years of power was carried on relentlessly.

Religious Education

A discussion which has just taken place in the Italian Chamber (says the 'Catholic Times') affords an object lesson the significance of which will not, it is to be hoped, be lost on the Catholics of France and of the Continent generally. The Freethinkers, largely composed of Freemasons and Socialists, repulsed when they recently attempted to secularise Italian primary instruction, returned to the attack. On the motion of Signor Bissolati a proposal for banishing religion from the schools was brought forward and debated in the Chamber. The Catholics had made due preparations for the event. They appealed to the people in every part of the country, asking whether they would allow the enemies of religion to have their way by tolerating a godless system of education. The response was most gratifying. Petitions by the hundred poured into the Chamber. Local plebiscites were taken and proved that the godless system found little favor with the masses of the Italians. The discovery of the popular sentiment on the subject produced a marvellous change in the legislators. Men who at first sided with the Freethinkers spoke eloquently against them, and on February 27, at the end of a debate which extended over several days, the Bissolati motion was defeated by a majority of 303 to 100 votes. Here assuredly the voice of the people was the voice of God. The defenders of religion in the schools ought not to rest content with this victory. They should continue their agitation till public education in Italy is thoroughly Christianised.

ROME—International Sports

Preparations for the international sports in Rome in honor of the Pope's Jubilee are actively going on, and it is hoped that there will be a large number of competitors from the English-speaking world. The full programme has just been published in Italian and French.

The Holy Father's Counsel

Pope Pius X., in receiving the Lenten preachers of Rome on Sunday, March 1, counselled them to confine themselves to the principles and rules of the Christian life.

A Jubilee Gift

One of the most beautiful presents to be offered to the Holy Father by the world of art on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee is expected to be the marble bust of his Holiness which the young French sculptor, Jean Larrive, is just completing. Larrive, who belongs to the Villa Medici, Rome, as the winner of the Grand Prix chose as his subject the Pope holding an open book before him, in which the motto 'Instaurare omnia in Christo' is found. The bust, which is not yet finished, and will not be ready for presentation for a couple of months, is said by those who have seen it to be an excellent likeness. It is already arranged that a special commission will come from Paris to Rome to make the presentation. M. Larrive, who, by the way, completed some months ago busts of Cardinal Merry del Val and Monsignor Bisletti, has been the recipient of many congratulations on his latest artistic achievement.

The Sacred College

The issue at the beginning of the week of 'La Gerarchia Cattolica' (writes the Rome correspondent of the Dublin 'Freeman's Journal' under date February 22), which furnishes a list of the Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops and Prelates of the whole Catholic world in communion with the Holy See, is a work which gives cause for thought and admiration. At the present moment there are sixty-one members in the Sacred College—the death of Cardinal Richard occurred since the 'Gerarchia' was drawn up. Of this number, one—Cardinal Orsola di Santo Stefano—was created by Pius IX. in December, 1873,—thirty-five years ago. Of Leo the Thirteenth's creation, he who filled the Sacred College twice over, forty-five still remain; and the present Pontiff has created fifteen Cardinals since he was elected. Nineteen cardinals have died since that warm day in the early August of 1903 when Cardinal Macchi announced from the balcony of St Peter's to the crowds beneath the election of Pope Pius the Tenth. Since that day the Pontiff has erected five Episcopal Sees into Archdioceses, eleven new Dioceses, two Abacies and