

ROME LETTER

(From a correspondent.)

December 30.

THE POPE AND PEACE.

From end to end of Europe the yearning for peace is evident—a feeling that the daily chronicles of slaughter intensify. How will this desire be satisfied? By mutual exhaustion of the belligerents or by a fight to a finish? If the Vicar of the Prince of Peace can help it, by neither way. Strenuously and constantly Benedict XV. is striving to bring about peace: all his influence as Pontiff and as skilled diplomat is continually working in every part of Europe to cope with the most terrible situation any successor of St. Peter ever had to deal with.

THE IRISH PRIESTS IN GERMANY.

For the rest of their lives Father Canice O'Gorman, O.S.A., and Father Crotty, O.P., will, I suppose, be able to say they had the proud privilege of having been 'through the war.' Their letters to their friends in Rome arrive regularly, from the week they left the Eternal City on the mission of taking spiritual care of Irish soldiers who are prisoners in Germany. Father O'Gorman has no fewer than 2486 Irishmen under his charge. And this reminds one of the deep interest the British censor continues to take in private letters going to Italy. Sometimes a paragraph is cut out if it mentions anything of the war not to the liking of the personage empowered to use the scissors. Papers of the most delicate and official nature, some of them pertaining to the domain of conscience, are examined by this individual. Scarcely one is spared. It would be too much to expect entire immunity from his sway, but certainly letters from bishops to their representatives in Rome ought to be immune.

AUDIENCES OF INTEREST.

Addressing the staff of the Pontifical International College of the Dominican Order, whom the Very Rev. Hyacinth Cormier, General of the Order of Preachers, presented to the Holy Father some days ago, Benedict XV. said in the course of his remarks: 'If Our predecessor had not honored your college with the title of "Pontifical," We would feel very proud to do so.'

Another body of general interest, received in special audience by the Holy Father, was the staff of writers attached to the *Civiltà Cattolica*, whom the editor, Very Rev. Father Chiaudano, S.J., presented to his Holiness. Pope Benedict warmly congratulated the Jesuit Fathers on the work they are accomplishing for the Church and the Holy Sec by means of their periodical. In this connection it is an interesting fact that the Society of Jesus is bound to give from its body the staff for the *Civiltà Cattolica*, but, once ap-

pointed, only with the express permission of the Pope may they be withdrawn.

With regard to the reception of the prominent bodies who, as a matter of course, repair to the Vatican at Christmas, to wish the Vicar of Christ the time-honored greeting, it is worthy of note that Benedict XV. has changed the order back to the form observed in the days of Leo XIII.

THE FINANCES OF THE VATICAN.

At this stage of the war the economic crisis is, I am given to understand, rather keenly affecting the finances of the Holy Sec. From several countries the collection of Peter's Pence has almost ceased to come. Needless to say the countries that are not much affected by the war continue to think as of old of the wants of the Holy Father; but, so deeply does the international crisis strike, that their number is comparatively few.

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