

The Catholic World

BELGIUM

CARDINAL MERCIER'S VISIT TO ROME.

Referring to Cardinal Mercier's visit to Rome, a news agency says: 'Last November Cardinal Mercier abandoned the idea of coming to Rome, because before leaving he desired to have absolute guarantees that he would be allowed to return to Belgium. Having applied to the Governor of Belgium he received assurances, but not any guarantees, as he was told the question depended on Berlin. The negotiations dragged on until it was too late. The delays were probably caused purposely, in order to prevent Cardinal Mercier from being present at the Papal Consistory. Now the Berlin Government has given the necessary guarantees, and no obstacle will be raised against his return to Belgium.'

CANADA

CATHOLIC LOYALTY.

Speaking at a meeting in Laval University, in aid of the military hospital of that institution, his Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Bruchesi, Archbishop of Quebec, spoke as follows about the war and the attitude of Canadian Catholics relative thereto:—'As Canada is a part of the British Empire, it is the sacred duty of the Canadian people to assist Great Britain in her heroic defence of liberty. This position was taken up by the Episcopacy of French Canada at the outbreak of the war, and this attitude our Bishops still maintain, and will continue to maintain to the very end. The obligations we owe to the British Crown are sacred obligations. It is the solemn duty of every Canadian citizen to the utmost limit of his force to stand side by side with the Motherland in a heroic effort to crush the tyrant who wishes to trample small nations and States beneath his iron heel. What fate would be ours if the Germans obtained a foothold here? Were Great Britain defeated Germany would dominate the St. Lawrence. French-Canadian countrymen, I, for one, do not want to be a German citizen.'

CHINA

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH.

The Rev. Father Boyle, writing in the *Irish Catholic*, gives the following particulars of the progress of the Church in the diocese of Pekin. At the beginning of the last century (he says) there were only a few Catholic missions in China, with a small number of Catholics. Even half a century ago conversions in China were comparatively few, but since the beginning of this century—that is, since the persecution of the Boxers, in which so many thousands of native Christians gave their lives for the Faith—the number is truly wonderful. If we take the diocese of Pekin we find that 38,465 adults were received into the Church during the past year, and 50,000 are at present preparing for baptism in that diocese. The history of the state of that diocese reads like a chapter of the history of the early Church. In the diocese of Pekin there are 87 priests, of whom 60 are Chinese. To furnish a large number of edifying, zealous priests is the best proof of the progress of the Church in a pagan country. There are 82 Trappist monks, 47 Marist Brothers (of whom 19 are Chinese), 39 Sisters of Charity, 73 Sisters of St. Joseph, who are all natives; 185 native virgins, consecrated to God, living in their own homes, as was customary in the primitive Church; 46 ecclesiastical students in advanced classes, and 135 students in the junior classes. Five thousand seven hundred and eighteen dying pagan children were baptised during the past year. Masters and mistresses teaching in various schools number 2715. At the end of last year the Catholics of the diocese of Pekin numbered 193,602. It is no exaggeration to say that the

progress of the Church in the diocese of Pekin is marvellous. This will not astonish us if we call to mind that a few years ago, in the persecution of the Boxers, 5000 native Christians shed their blood for the faith. In each case they were offered their lives if they gave up their faith. A church has been erected to their memory in Pekin, and on the wall are inscribed the names of those 5000 heroic Christians.

ENGLAND

PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH.

The *Catholic Times*, commenting on the statistics in the *Catholic Directory* for the current year, says:—The number of priests, secular and regular, attached to the dioceses of England and Wales is 3892, compared with 3985 for last year, being apparently a reduction of 93. But, in reality, all of the 300 chaplains serving with the army and navy are not included in the total. Of these 3892 priests, 937 seculars and 710 regulars belong to the Province of Westminster, whilst that of Liverpool has 1041 seculars and 340 regulars, the figures for the Birmingham Province being 497 seculars and 367 regulars. The Catholic population as a whole also shows a slight apparent decrease, being returned at 1,885,655, against 1,891,006; but, when we remember the terrible havoc the war has made amongst Catholics, this really means not a falling off of 5351, but a very substantial increase. Evidence of this increase is found in the school statistics, the number of schools being 1198 against 1185, whilst the children attending them have risen from 352,148 to 354,497. These figures concern only the elementary schools. The growth of the secondary schools is still more gratifying, and promises well for the future of Catholicity in the country. Last year there were 404 of these schools, with 25,738 pupils; now there are 424, with 29,099 pupils.

ROME

THE VATICAN AND FALSE REPORTS.

It is earnestly to be hoped (remarks a Rome correspondent) that the definite denial that the Holy See has been attempting to induce the Entente Powers to accept what is called 'a German peace' will have the desired effect. In its issue of January 4, the *Osservatore Romano*, the organ of the Vatican, reiterates its denial in the most absolute manner, and it protests forcibly against the unworthy system followed by the enemies of the Church with a view to damage the humanitarian and pacific work of the Holy See. This protest is applicable in a very particular manner to statements made by anti-Catholic newspapers published in Rome. Alternately they afford us amusement for amusement and for indignation—amusement when, for example, they inform their readers of a supposed meeting in Switzerland between Prince Bulow, Father Ledochowski, General of the Company of Jesus, and Mgr. Marchetti, Papal Envoy in Switzerland, in the interests of the wounded of all the belligerent countries; indignation when they announce that Cardinal Maffi, Archbishop of Pisa, came to Rome to remonstrate with the Holy Father regarding the Allocation he pronounced at the late Consistory. Now we have them distorting a discourse of a religious character delivered by the Cardinal Vicar of Benedict XV. into a declaration of quasi-opposition 'to the mind and to the interests of the Vatican.' Really, there is nowadays nothing too wild or too absurd for the anti-Catholic press to proclaim from the housetops.

Freedom of movement, relief from trouble and anxiety—that's the benefit you derive from checking baggage through us. We call for it, check on, meet at far end, and deliver at once. A safe, sure, dependable system.—THE NEW ZEALAND EXPRESS CO., LTD., 87-91 Customhouse Quay.