

The Catholic World

ENGLAND

RE-OPENING OF A FAMOUS ABBEY.

On April 18, on the 650th anniversary of its foundation, exact as to date, the famous and ancient Abbey of Burnham (Bucks) was re-opened, when a Community of Augustinians took possession of it. The abbey has passed through many vicissitudes since it was founded on April 18, 1266, as an Augustinian Convent, and, strange to say, it is nuns of the same Order who have taken re-possession of the abbey. From the date of its foundation until 1539 the Augustinians carried on their prayerful work there, but in that fatal year, on September 19, the abbess and nine nuns were driven from their home, the beautiful buildings which had been consecrated to the glory of God for all time. Afterwards the place fell into disrepair, and became almost a ruin, until eventually the once famous abbey was turned into a farm. Of the original chapel nothing remains except the seat of the Mother Abbess, and the chapter house was turned into a cowshed. About two years ago the property was bought by Mr. Bisley, who at once decided to restore the ruins as far as possible, as he hoped that when restored they might once more become the home of a community, and thus fulfil their original purpose. He has been wonderfully successful, as, owing to his extraordinary and expert technical knowledge, he has been able to have many of the old buildings restored. And so by a strange coincidence the same number of nuns who left the Abbey in 1539 returned to it on the anniversary of the very day on which the abbey was founded.

BISHOP AMIGO'S JUBILEE.

A letter has been addressed to his Eminence Cardinal Gasparri by the Duke of Norfolk, as chairman of the Bishop Amigo Jubilee Fund, expressing thanks for the message of encouragement which his Holiness the Pope recently forwarded to the Bishop of Southwark. His Grace stated that the members of the committee of the fund established on the occasion of the sacerdotal jubilee of the Bishop of Southwark for the reduction of the debts upon the institutions and poor missions of the diocese respectfully thanked his Eminence for the letter graciously sent to them. They humbly requested his Eminence Cardinal Gasparri to convey to the Holy Father their profound sense of the paternal solicitude which had induced his Holiness to send them a message of encouragement accompanied by his Apostolic Blessing. They trusted his Eminence would assure the Holy Father that his kindly interest would move them to renewed efforts, and that they hoped for many benefactions as a result of his Apostolic Blessing upon their special work for religion.

FOREIGN MISSION WORK.

The latest issue of its quarterly publication reminds us that St. Joseph's Foreign Missionary Society is celebrating its golden jubilee, having just completed half a century of work (says the *Catholic Times*). The present is a period of depression for those who are engaged in foreign missionary labors, and that no doubt is the reason why the society has—so far at least—refrained from having any public commemoration of the interesting event. But it has done so much during the fifty years for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ and its efforts have been so fruitful that we feel sure it will continue to increase in strength and flourish. St. Joseph's Foreign Missionary Society is a splendid memorial of its founder and first Superior, the late Cardinal Vaughan. No organisation of the kind has ever been animated by a purer Christian spirit. Its missionaries have been true soldiers of the Cross. They have gladly sacrificed their own comforts and enjoyments to carry the light of the Gospel to those who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. To-day the society can point to distant missions where churches,

schools, hospitals, and thousands of practising Christians who were once pagans bear witness to its zeal. Under the energetic and prudent guidance of Father Henry, who succeeded Cardinal Vaughan as Superior-General in 1904, it is successfully overcoming the difficulties caused by the war and, with the steady help and co-operation of the faithful, the progress of its work is assured.

FRANCE

DECORATIONS AND HIGH PRAISE.

The 'Medaille Militaire,' bestowed only for distinguished service, has lately been given to the following ecclesiastics (writes a Paris correspondent):—Sergeant Davy, professor in a college of the diocese of Rodez, whose right hand is mutilated; to Corporal Bellon, both of whose hands were gravely injured; he is a member of the Congregation of Foreign Missions; to Corporal Massey, noticed as 'a very good soldier,' who was professor in an ecclesiastical college at Troyes; to Adjutant Bruni, 'a remarkable non-commissioned officer,' says the official mention. Before the war this adjutant, who distinguished himself by his ability, presence of mind, and courage at Verdun, was a 'vicaire' at Notre Dame de Tonnerre, in the diocese of Sens. A priest well known in Paris, the Abbe Rudynski, 'vicaire' at St. Denis de la Chapelle, has just received the decoration of the Legion of Honor. Although over fifty years of age, he volunteered as military chaplain, and has already been honored by a splendid mention, recording his 'superb attitude under fire.' During the battle of Verdun, he never ceased to assist the wounded at the most dangerous points, continues the 'citation,' 'giving a magnificent example of his sense of duty and spirit of sacrifice.' Among the other 'citations' we find that of a young seminarist of Mende, twice mentioned for his excellent service; a 'vicaire' of a Breton village is praised for his 'courage and presence of mind' at Verdun; a well-known Paris priest, M. Anizau, is honored for his 'unwearied devotedness and for valor above all praise'; another seminarist is, says the 'citation,' 'a vigorous and brave soldier, who gave an example of splendid courage.' A 'vicaire' of Noyen is mentioned as having displayed absolute devotedness, calmness, and courage under fire; 'he is as kind as he is modest,' adds the official document. Another corporal, who is an ecclesiastical student at Rennes, having volunteered to act as 'agent de communique,' was wounded in the foot, but, crawling on his knees, he made his way back to his commanding officer and safely transmitted an important piece of intelligence. Another seminarist from Nantes 'refused to leave his post, although wounded, and continued to fight with the greatest courage.' A corporal seminarist from Blauvais never ceased to minister to the wounded under intense fire. A soldier priest from Poitiers is reported to be 'le devouement incarné,' devotedness personified. A 'vicaire' from St. Plour is said to have solicited perilous missions, in order to remain close to his men, although he was officially enrolled among the stretcher-bearers. A former professor of philosophy at Tours 'devoted himself to the wounded under fire.' The cure of a village near Poitiers has a longer 'citation' than the others; he saved the life of a wounded soldier who, in a sudden fit of insanity, refused to leave the battlefield. 'During two hours,' said the commander, who gave the 'Croix de Guerre' to this good priest, 'the cure carried his charge on his back, under the enemy's fire, till it reached a place of safety.'

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