

The Catholic World

CANADA—A Generous Gift

Lord Strathcona, Canadian High Commissioner to London, in his desire to insure the fullest measure of success for the Eucharistic Congress, which is to be held in Montreal next September, has sent over a cheque for £1000 (says an American exchange). It is expected that Cardinal Vannutelli will be sent from Rome, and that the Duke of Norfolk also will attend.

ENGLAND—The Catholic Truth Society

The English Catholic Truth Society has since its foundation issued 850 separate penny publications. Of the Simple Prayer Book 1,170,000 copies have been printed. The sales of pamphlets dealing with misstatements against the Catholic faith number 900,000. As a bureau of information the society has a very large correspondence, especially in regard to letters in country newspapers misrepresenting the faith. The number of story books sold is 1,500,000.

FRANCE—A Peculiar Contention

The wretched moral condition of France (says the *Catholic Times*) is evident from the nature of the proceedings taken against Cardinal Luçon, Archbishop of Rheims, as the prelate who signed the Episcopal Letter against the 'neutral' schools. In this pronouncement proofs were given of the irreligious and immoral tendency in some of the so-called neutral schools. But the prosecutors, the members of the Teachers' Federation, at the opening of the case on Thursday, November 21, instead of dealing with the specific charges, raised the objection that the Bishops had no right whatever to interfere. The State and its teachers, forsooth, could impart whatever moral instruction they liked—might impregnate the minds of the young with sentiments hostile to religion and to God—but the Bishops were bound to preserve silence. That in effect was the plea of the prosecuting lawyer, Maitre Hesse, who indulged in a panegyric of the lay moralist as compared with the clerical teacher. The gravity of the affair will be perceived when we state that the Teachers' Association, of which this gentleman was the spokesman, numbers no less than 96,000 of the 120,000 school teachers in France. There is, we believe, no other country in the world, Catholic or non-Catholic, in which the Bishops' right to safeguard the morality of the young would be thus disputed. The moral teaching of the lay French schools is producing a rich crop of crimes, and the teachers practically claim that if they turn out criminals neither the parents nor the representatives of the Church are entitled to interfere.

FRANCE—The Christian Schools

The 'Ecoles Libres,' or Christian Schools of France, fully recognised and legislated for in the past by French law (says the *Universe*), have become a haven of refuge for Catholic children whose parents refuse to allow them to be perverted in the 'Lay' or State schools. In not a few communes the withdrawal of children from the State schools by indignant parents has almost emptied those mills 'for inserting a Christian at one end and turning out an infidel at the other.' The Joint Pastoral of the French Episcopate, which has produced such a deep impression upon Catholic parents, and even upon the children themselves, urged the faithful to multiply these Free Schools throughout France. But the Atheistic Government of the Republic was not likely to leave to its oppressed Catholic subjects this loophole of escape. Professedly bent on 'laicising'—that is, de-Christianising—the people of France at the dictation of the Lodges, and alarmed at the rapid spread and vigor of the thousands of parental Vigilance Associations that have sprung up, it has now resolved to tamper with the 'Ecoles Libres.' We have heard of the plan over here in England—that of crippling voluntary schools with a view to their final destruction. To quote the anti-clerical Paris correspondent of the *Times*, M. Briand's Ministry, assembled in council on January 11 last, 'has decided to frame a third Bill, which is intended to systematise the State control over private schools (Ecoles Libres).' Truly, these Ministerial Jacobins have raised dishonest euphemism to a veritable fine art!

GERMANY—The Centre Party

It is no exaggeration to say that the whole Catholic world will rejoice at the fact that harmony has been restored to the great Centre party of Germany. The dispute—or, rather, the misunderstanding—arose last year at the Catholic Congress over the question whether the party was to be regarded as a Catholic or as a political organisation. The late Dr. Windthorst always maintained (says the *Pilot*) that it was a political party, composed mainly of Catholics, but having among its members gentlemen who belonged to other creeds. The principal object which it had—and still has—in view is the promotion of peace among the Christian denominations of the empire and the safeguarding of their common interests. Last year some too zealous members advocated that it should be a strictly Cath-

olic party, with none but purely Catholic aims in view. All parties to the discussion have now agreed upon the following affirmation of principles:—The fact that nearly all its adherents and representatives belong to the Catholic Church is sufficient guarantee that the Centre will stand up for the lawful interests of the Catholics of Germany in all spheres of public life. Thereby, however, the party does not lose its political character. The Centre has never made allegiance to the Catholic Church a condition of admittance to its ranks, and in the national Parliament it has actually till to-day always had among its members men of other creeds, who, however, were present at the secret meetings. Of course, it is natural that in matters touching religion each representative will direct his conduct according to the principles of his faith. Animated by this spirit and standing on the constitution of the empire, the Centre will also in future do its duty toward the fatherland irrespective of denominational legislation injurious to the general welfare.

ROME—A New Dignity

To the dignity of Archpriest of the Basilica of St. John Lateran his Eminence Cardinal Respighi has been nominated by the Holy Father, in place of the late Cardinal Satolli. As the Lateran Basilica is the Pope's Cathedral Church, it was considered appropriate that the dignity of Archpriest should belong to the Vicar-General of his Holiness, which position has been filled with distinction for many years by Cardinal Respighi.

The Congregation of Rites

The session of the Congregation of Rites (says a Rome correspondent) commenced on January 18 its year's work. The members of that body, so notable for rigid and painstaking labors, have a long programme before them for the next twelve months. At present the total number of causes for beatification and canonisation to be dealt with by the Sacred Congregation amounts to 321. Of these Europe claims 281, Asia 10, Africa 5, North America 10, South America 13, and Australia 2. The division of the different European claims in the number given above is interesting. Four causes belong to Austria, three to the Island of Malta, one to Hungary, one to Dalmatia, two to Ireland, two to Germany, one to England, one to Turkey, seven to Belgium, three to Switzerland, one to Holland, twenty to Spain, four to Portugal, 68 to France and her colonies, and no fewer than 155 to Italy. During the present year it is improbable that any ceremony either of beatification or canonisation will take place. In all likelihood, provided that present anticipations come true, the first causes for canonisation to be concluded will be those of Blessed Chanel, protomartyr of Oceania, and Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, propagator of the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

The Lambs of St. Agnes

There are few ceremonies (writes a Rome correspondent) so interesting to Catholics and non-Catholics in the Eternal City as that of the blessing of the lambs from which the wool for palliums given to Archbishops by the Pope as a symbol of jurisdiction is obtained. This ceremony takes place each year on January 21 over the tomb of St. Agnes, Virgin and Martyr, in the church which stands over the Catacombs excavated some eighteen centuries ago on her father's estate, and exercises a rare fascination on foreigners of all persuasions who happen to be in the city at the time. The two lambs, having been selected from the fold of the Trappists of the Three Fountains, are carried to the Church of St. Agnes on the Via Nomentana, some couple of miles from Rome, and laid upon the altar. They are decorated with blue and red ribbons emblematic of the saint who suffered under Diocletian in 305. Towards the end of the High Mass, sung in honor of St. Agnes, the lambs are blessed by the Celebrant—usually a Bishop or mitred Abbot—and then driven in a carriage by representatives of the Lateran Chapter to the Basilica of St. John Lateran. The Canons of the Basilica take formal possession of the dainty little animals, and send them immediately to the Vatican, where the Pope blesses them and then has them despatched to St. Cecilia in Trastevere, where they are cared for by the nuns until Easter. At Easter time the lambs are sheared. The wool is made into palliums which, having been blessed by the Holy Father, are placed upon the tomb of St. Peter. Here they remain until they are required at the election of Archbishops, each of whom receives one from the Chief Shepherd in Rome. One of the first acts of the present Pontiff, as far as the relics of saints are concerned, was to order the conveyance of the head of St. Agnes from the chapel of the Sancta Sanctorum, where it had lain enshrined for centuries, to the church built in her honor in the Piazza Navona, upon the site of the heroic maiden's martyrdom.

UNITED STATES—The Paulist Fathers

At New York on January 19 the Paulist Fathers of America celebrated their golden jubilee with great pomp and enthusiasm. Cardinal Gibbons delivered a fine eulogy on Father Hecker, the founder of the Order, and Archbishop Farley celebrated the Pontifical Mass, which was attended by over 5000 people. Archbishop Falconia came to New York all the way from Washington as Apostolic Delegate in order to deliver personally a cabled blessing from Pope Pius