

A LOSS TO FRANCE

Ten years have now passed since the monks of the Grande Chartreuse were expelled from their monastery and scattered to the four corners of the earth (says a writer in the *Saturday Review*). Members of all political parties in the Department of the Isere joined at the time in an almost unanimous protest against the decree which drove them forth. Even some strong supporters of M. Combes' government objected to the exile of a body of men who had not only rigidly abstained from all political agitation, but who had shown their charity and their philanthropy on every occasion. Their wealth, which was the product of their own industry, had also done substantial good to the whole countryside. The wages that they paid were very high for the poor district in which they lived, and varied from sixteen to eighteen shillings a week for their farm laborers, to whom they also gave an old-age pension of £16 a year after 25 years' work. They contributed £60,000 a year to national and local taxation. They did not waste their substance in riotous or extravagant living, but built churches, presbyteries, schools, and hospitals. Thus these monks subscribed £2000 to relieve the distress occasioned by a disaster at Voiron. A boys' school was opened by them at St. Pierre d'Entremont and a girls' school at St. Pancrasse. Annual subscriptions of £200 were paid to the hospital at Voiron, and £520 to that of Entre-deux-Guiers; £56,000 were spent in 1892 in building a hospital at St. Laurent-du-Pont, and from that time until their expulsion they donated £3600 annually towards its maintenance and its support. They opened a school for sixty-five deaf and dumb children at Curieres, and devoted £2400 a year to their elementary education and instruction in the trade to which they were best fitted. Their liberal contributions gave substantial help to every public object. Thus they rebuilt the village of St. Pierre des Chartreux in 1846. They repaired over and over again all the mischief done by fires and floods, and spent their substance liberally wherever a road had to be either mended or opened.

None of this good work was of the slightest avail against sectarian animosity. They had all assembled in the church choir on April 29, 1903, every monk in his own stall, when they were forcibly removed by two men and escorted to the door of the monastery by the police, who then marched them off to the hotel. Since then all the buildings have been in the custody of the State, which during ten years did little or nothing to arrest the havoc wrought by time, and by the inclemency of the weather. The long corridors are threatened with ruin, the vast roof was giving way under the weight of the winter snow, water did its full work through the leakages in the gutters and pipes, and much of the masonry was crumbling away; the windows were broken and neither they nor the doors sufficed to keep out the wind or rain. No urgent repairs were made, and it was estimated that if this were allowed to go on the buildings would crumble into decay in two years' time. It is said that a member of our own royal family who lately paid a visit to the Grande Chartreuse observed, 'In my own country this would be called a crime.'

It is only within the last year that an agitation has been started by all those who have the interests of the country at heart. They have succeeded so far in inducing the Ministry of Fine Arts to class the Grande Chartreuse as a 'monument historique' and to devote a small annual subvention to its preservation from absolute ruin. This money will necessarily come out of the pockets of the taxpayers; whilst had the authorities consented to eat humble pie and acknowledge the hideousness of their monstrous mistake, the Chartreux might themselves have been invited not only to return to their old home, but to restore to the Department of the Isere the wealth and prosperity which they once brought in their train.

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WEDDING BELLS

DUFFIN—GRAHAM.

(From our travelling correspondent.)

St. Patrick's Cathedral, Auckland, was the scene of a very pretty wedding on Wednesday, November 12, when Mr. James Duffin, of Auckland, and Miss M. Graham, of Stirlingshire, Scotland, were united in the bonds of Matrimony. The bride, who wore a pretty white silk costume, and veil, was accompanied by her sister (Miss B. Graham) and the little Misses K. Duffin and A. McVeagh, as bridesmaids, whilst Mr. H. Duffin (brother of the bridegroom) was best man. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Father O'Malley. At the breakfast, which was held at the residence of Mr. H. Duffin, a number of friends and relatives assembled, amongst those present being Rev. Fathers O'Malley and O'Doherty (St. Patrick's), Rev. Father Forde (St. Benedict's), and Rev. Father Brennan (Te Kuiti). The toast of the newly-married couple was proposed by Father O'Malley, who wished them every happiness and blessing in their married life. Other toasts proposed were 'The parents of the bride and bridegroom,' by Father O'Doherty, supported by Councillor P. J. Nerheny, J.P., and responded to by Mr. Duffin; 'The bridesmaids,' by Mr. J. J. Moriarty, and responded to by Mr. Duffin, jun.; 'The clergy,' by Mr. W. Wright and responded to by Fathers Brennan and Forde. The popularity of Mr. and Mrs. Duffin was shown by the large number of valuable wedding presents received by them from their many friends. The newly married couple left the same afternoon for their new home, taking with them the good wishes of all.

Greymouth

At the first elocutionary competition, held in connection with the Catholic Boys' Club, Greymouth, Very Rev. Dean Carew presided. The accommodation was taxed to its utmost and the whole proceedings were of a very interesting and promising nature. The programme was opened with the orations, readings, recitations, and impromptu speeches following in the order named. The subject selected for the impromptu speech proved a very suitable one to the competitors and interesting to the audience, and some very novel arguments were put forth by the budding orators. 'How I would end the strike,' was the query each competitor had to concentrate his thoughts upon and endeavor to tell the audience the logic of those thoughts. At the conclusion of the four items the Rev. Father Clancy announced the results, remarking that, after listening to the young competitors he was sure that New Zealand, and the Coast in particular, had nothing to fear in the line of elocution. The lads, he said, had signs of a future in the elocutionary world, and the competition was one of the most pleasant he had had the pleasure of adjudicating. In announcing the results he made special reference to the winner of the prepared reading, his reading being almost perfect, and he had awarded Master J. Deere 140 out of 150 marks in this section.

The following are the results:—

First prize and elocution championship—J. Deere, 343 marks; second, James Bell (late of Dunedin), 308; third, W. Trouland, 287; fourth, F. Conaghan, 276. The gold medal for the first prize was a beautiful Maltese cross presented by Mr. M. Quinlan. There were nine competitors.

The president of the club, Master W. Ryan, thanked the Very Rev. Dean Carew for presiding; also the Rev. Father Clancy, who had so kindly consented to adjudicate. He also thanked the public for their attendance and for the manner in which they had appreciated the work of the club, which he hoped gave satisfaction to its founder, the Rev. Father Fraher.

The usual vote of thanks to the chairman was carried by acclamation.

DR. J. J. GRESHAM

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