

CENTENARIES AND CENTENARIES

12th Centenary of English Missionary St. Willibrord

DUTCH CELEBRATION.

While we are celebrating the first centenary of this country it is interesting to learn that in the country from which Abel Tasman came, the Dutch have just been celebrating not the first but the twelfth centenary of the death of the first Christian missionary to Holland, St. Willibrord. He was an Englishman from Ripon and the authorities of the old Catholic Church of Holland invited the presence of representatives of the Church of England at the celebrations at Utrecht last November. The Bishops of Gloucester and Fulham were there, accompanied by some English priests.

The Dutch Christians are almost as badly divided as the New Zealand Christians, but the old Catholic Church of Holland shook off the usurpation of the Bishop of Rome something over two hundred years ago, just as the Church of England had done two hundred years before, and is now in full agreement and communion with ourselves. The Bishop of Gloucester preached at one of the services in the Cathedral of St. Gertrude at Utrecht. In the course of his sermon he said, according to the "Church Times" report:

We are met together to-day to commemorate one who lived twelve hundred years ago, and linked together our two countries—the Netherlands and England—in the closest spiritual union. St. Willibrord, in his life and works, illustrates the heroic age of the English Church.

Heroic Age of English Church.

That Church was the creation of two great missionary movements, the Mission from Rome under Augustine and then Theodore, and the Celtic mission under Aidan and Cuthbert. The one brought the order and learning of the Catholic Church, the other the eager Evangelical zeal of the

Celtic Christians. It was these two influences combined that created the English Church, and both these influences prevail to the present day.

There are three lessons that I would draw from this history. The first is the lesson of national friendship between our two countries. Behind all our history there is this spiritual unity. English martyrs shed their blood in Friesland. English bishops and priests preached to you the message of salvation.

We also owe a debt of gratitude for spiritual and intellectual gifts. To mention only two. The *Imitatio Christi* of Thomas a Kempis is one of those works whose influence is ecumenical, transcending the bounds of Church and nation alike; and the writings of Erasmus of Rotterdam have been a potent influence in enabling the English Church to build itself on a sound historical tradition.

There have been times in the past when there have been rivalry between our nations for the command of the sea and we remember that the Dutch sailors have defeated English fleets. But the need for rivalry is over, except the peaceful competition of commerce. We neither of us covet what the other possesses. We recognise that Holland, like ourselves, has a great colonial empire. We have the same political ideas of freedom and of orderly progress, of loyalty to our nations and our traditions. We hope to live for many years to come in peace and amity.

Misfortune Of Modern World

Next I would speak of Christian unity. It is our joy and our privilege that we can worship together with you in your church, and share in your Sacraments. But that must not be the limit of our aspirations. I have dwelt on the way in which the English Church was created by the union

of two great streams of religious life, and the strength that it gained by combining with evangelistic zeal the power of Catholic tradition.

The misfortune of the modern world is that different types of Christianity are shut up in sealed compartments. We want to break down the middle walls of partition and to bring the different types together. To correct the rigidity of order by the freedom of individualism, to mingle mysticism and rationalism, to make a truly Catholic Christianity out of the divided parts. The honour and glory of the nations are the gifts that are to be brought to the new Jerusalem. A united Christianity would be strong and effective and would present more worthily the fullness of Christ.

And third, we have to remember the command of Christ to preach the Gospel to all people. The preaching of the Gospel and the foundation of the Church was the beginning of your national life and the nurse of your freedom. Your Christianity has fostered your national growth and defended your liberties.

It is the duty of both our Churches to strive to fulfil our Master's command. To spread the Gospel of Christ. To build up His Church. To make the Kingdom of God prevail in the world. It is a time of darkness and gloom. There has been many such in history. We sometimes trouble for the future. But we believe that if we, as Christians, have faith, the troubles will pass. Let it make us work more earnestly that the kingdom of this world may become the Kingdom of Christ. And that God's will may prevail in the world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

The matron and staff of Abbotsford Home wish to very sincerely thank all those numerous friends who by their wonderful generosity made Christmas such a happy and joyous time for the big family. The children are once more at Aramoana Beach enjoying the hospitality of Mr and Mrs Forbes McHardy.