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THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1900.

"We Have Seen His Star in the East"

On the 6th of January, twelve days after Christmas Day, the Church celebrates the Feast known in the calendar as the Epiphany. The word Epiphany means an "appearance" and denoted among the ancient Greeks a festival held in commemoration of the appearance of a god in any particular place. The word subsequently passed into the usage of the Christian, which was the Catholic Church, and was used to designate the manifestation or appearance of Christ upon earth to the Gentiles, with special reference to the day upon which He was seen and worshipped by the Wise Men or Magi who came from the East.

The story is beautifully told by St. Matthew in the gospel of the day.

"When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews?' For we have seen his star in the East and are come to adore him."

And King Herod hearing this, was troubled and all Jerusalem with him.

And assembling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born.

But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda. For so it is written by the prophet:

"And thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda art not the least among the princes of Juda: For out of thee shall come forth, the captain that shall rule my people Israel."

Then Herod privately calling the wise men learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him.

Who having heard the king, went their way; and behold the star which they had seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was.

And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding joy.

And entering into the house they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country."

And this was the invitation given unto the Gentiles by the Infant Saviour, the acceptance of which by the three Wise Men, the representatives of the Gentiles, inaugurated the beginning of a new time. The old order of things was changing, a new star had risen to shine in time over all the lands of the earth. God sent his only begotten Son for the salvation of Jew and Gentile alike, to establish a new law, the law of faith and Christian charity. "He came into His own and His own received Him not"; in the flesh He came but they knew Him not. He came into the Gentile revealing Himself by the star of faith, and in faith the Gentile sought him and worshipped Him. That was the difference. To the Jews He manifested himself in the flesh, in His life and miracles and they crucified Him; to the Gentiles He revealed Himself through the teaching and miracles of His apostles appealing to the ears and eyes of faith and they followed the cross, the emblem of man's salvation and the undying love of the Saviour. That bright particular star which shone in the heavens and guided the Wise Men to the house in which they found the Child with Mary, his mother, may no longer be visible to the eye, but it shines in the

hearts of millions upon millions who have heard the Word and believed. Yet in spirit shall we see that star the bright harbinger of the Redeemer to a world awaiting redemption, and once again, like the Wise Men, follow its steady radiance to the Orb of Bethlehem, and with them make offering of the gold, frankincense and myrrh of a grateful heart.

Leo XIII.

Two striking figures stand out in the world's eye to-day, Leo XIII. and Queen Victoria, the latter representing the greatest material empire the world has ever known, the former, the spiritual empire over all nations, established by Jesus Christ, which was to endure to the end of time. There is something very touching in the solitary grandeur of these two aged rulers, both of whom have survived their contemporaries. The 80 men who might rightly be regarded as Leo XIII.'s rivals in intellect and equals in statesmanship have all gone—Bismarck, Bismarck, Gladstone, Goriot, Schöckhoff, O'Connor, Blaine—but He, the Sovereign Pontiff, sits upon the throne of St. Peter, and is almost universally looked up to as the most distinguished figure, and the first statesman of the world. He is indeed a wonderful illustration of what human life and endurance are capable of. Close upon ninety years of age, he is still able to undergo the fatigues of an exciting and impressive ceremony extending over two hours and a half. In good health, clear of brain, alive to every question, zealous and enthusiastic, he stands at the helm and with unerring hand, guides the bark of Peter through the stormy waters that mark the close of the nineteenth century.

The Chicago Tribune says of him: "Naturally, greatest interest in the solemn jubilee exercises at the Vatican, and St. Peter's attaches to the aged and venerable Pontiff. This interest, moreover, will not be confined to Catholicism alone. Leo XIII. is everywhere readily acknowledged to be one of the greatest men of the century now drawing to a close. All creeds, classes, nationalities and races willingly recognize the wisdom, gentleness, patience and high moral impulses which have characterized Leo XIII.'s pontifical reign. Under his able sway the Church of Rome has regained much of its ancient dignity and power, as every student of modern history will readily admit."

When the hard conditions of the time of his accession to the Chair of St. Peter, resulting from the loss of the Church's temporal power and territorial possessions, are considered, it is a matter of wonder how Leo XIII., by his own personal force, as much as by his exalted dignity—even that of the illustrious "Prisoner of the Vatican"—has endowed the Papacy with a power amongst nations, never perhaps surpassed in its annals. This power has been most evident in the formation of public opinion, in the guidance of the moral forces that sway mankind, and in the wonderful spread of the Catholic faith in all the regions of the earth.

The New Era of Peace.

After the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's on Christmas Eve, Leo XIII. is reported to have said:—"I have opened a new era, in which may God give peace." Never, perhaps, at any time in the history of the world was there more reason for such a prayer. The last year of the nineteenth century promises to be the bloodiest century promises to be the bloodiest of man shed by his fellow-man. At the time of writing two great armies, after a series of bloody conflicts which seem to have merely whetted their appetite for more bloodshed, stand face to face with one another, only waiting for the time and opportunity to dash themselves together in what promises to be the deadliest struggle of the century—Britain and Boer, Christian against Christian, as if the end of a two-thousand-year civilization were slaughter—human slaughter. It is useless to argue the cause—fruitless to inquire who is right and who is wrong. Man in spite of nineteen centuries of civilization, of humanizing influences, of Christianity is no more open to reason and peace argument than he was before Christ came on earth. The sword and its companion of modern times, the cannon, are supreme. It only remains to pray—to pray as His Holiness the Pope prays that in the new era which he has opened "may God give peace."

This same year which is closing on scenes of blood, saw the most repre-

sentative gathering of distinguished men for the purpose of establishing peace tribunals, that should minimize the chance of war and regulate disputes which in the past were wont to be settled by the sword. From the Hague Peace Conference, owing to the machinations and animosity of the Italian Government, the Pope was rudely and most unjustly excluded, his voice was not to be heard—his counsel not sought. And on the great Conference which was to have accomplished so much, ended by doing nothing that has practically advanced the cause of peace among nations. We do not mean to imply that had Leo XIII. the recognized Father of Christendom, been represented at the Hague Conference, that the result would have been different and more divine, but we do not hesitate to say that the one man in all the world, who above his fellow men, has the peace of the world at heart, the one man in all the world who, by his exalted position, his recognized ability as a statesman, his spiritual sovereignty over two hundred and forty millions of devoted people massed or scattered in every land, should have had a voice in the deliberations of that Conference. The deliberate and cowardly ignoring of the ancient prerogative of the Papacy to be the peace-maker among Christian nations reflects nothing but discredit upon the promoters and participants in the Conference. That the slight was appreciated by the sovereign Pontiff, he has since in his own calm dignified way signified to the world.

It is for the future, however, that the Holy Father prays. The past lies behind, the present is dark and ominous, the future he looks for the motto of his Pontificate, and "may he live to behold it, as Constantine saw, shining in the heavens—the radiant light of Peace!"

Divorce.

T. P. O'Connor in his new paper, Mainly About People, has this to say of Her Majesty, the Queen:

"The Queen intimates that the pronouncement on the part of the prelates might have been written in stronger terms, as she is 'totally averse to divorce under any circumstances whatever.' Her Majesty is willing to admit that in no institution are there more people wronged than in marriage; nevertheless, her belief is that an infinitely more satisfactory state would arise were marriage made indissoluble both by church and State."

"The Queen adds that she has no objection to judicial separation, her strong disapproval of divorce being due to the liberty which it imparts to divorced people to marry again, but to the re-marriage of divorced people, no matter what the grounds for divorce, she is 'unshakably and most strongly opposed.' This is the first official expression Her Majesty has given to her views on the subject."

We are glad that Her Majesty has so expressed herself on a subject that so closely touches the foundations of society. With pleasure we do what we can to spread these noble words, and could wish that in some wise they may reach home in this fair and tolerably happy land. Not that Canadians are much given to seeking to annul the marriage contract, nor that Canadian laws lend themselves to such detestable practices; but to confirm our people in their happy abhorrence of this murdering of the home and the breaking up of family ties. Also to remind them of the sad state of affairs amongst our neighbors across the border, which is the deplorable result of easy and frequent divorces. The words, coming from the Queen who, as wife and widow, has through a long period practised what she preaches, carry with them the weight and importance that attach to a noble example. She has lived; she has spoken; that is all she can do. But one cannot help thinking that the Divorce Court as it now exists in England would be short-lived had Victoria the making or rather the unmaking of the laws. No doubt, there are women, even Canadian women of "advanced ideas" who will sneer and affirm that Her Majesty is retrograde and not "advanced." She is advanced in two respects, in years and wisdom, and knows what to say and when to say it better, probably, than any woman living. There is besides a breadth and dignity about this utter-

ance that appeal to the thinking mind. She admits that wrongs may and do result from marriage, and she lays her finger on the moral or immoral touchstone of divorce. She declares herself "unshakably and strongly opposed" to the re-marriage of divorced persons. It is no use trying to shirk the question by pleading the misery of the life entailed by a luckless marriage. There would be fewer luckless marriages and fewer divorces in those countries that favor divorce if a divorced person could not marry again. What is the use of making a farce of the marriage contract by thus degrading it? According to a late report made to Congress by Carol D. Wright, Commissioner of Labor, on the subject of marriage and divorce, it appears that the whole number of divorces granted in the United States for a period of 20 years, commencing with 1805, was 328,716. There can be only one cause for this wholesale shattering of the most sacred contract known to civilization and Christian life, namely the knowledge that what the law has bound the law can break. The destructive seeds are sown broadcast by the State which pledges itself to break asunder the knot it has tied should the contracting parties desire to break it. The consequence is that, even on the admission of American writers the social condition of the American people, by reason of the prevalence of divorce, is undermined to a most alarming extent, until the abomination is coming to be looked upon as the most threatening evil in the life of the great Republic. Canadian people ought to be thankful that there is no Divorce Court in this country and there can be no better sign of a vigorous and healthy minded people than the infrequency of application to run through the not inexpensive and very formal form that leads to what is here considered under any circumstances a not very creditable unwinding of coils grown irksome. It is a hopeful and satisfactory sign in the moral tone of the wives and mothers of Canada that they do not countenance the evil.

The Holy Year Midnight Mass.

The celebration of midnight Mass on New Year's Day throughout the world was an event unique in the history of the Catholic Church. No more impressive ceremony, viewing it in its object and bearing on the Holy Year of 1900, could have been conceived or ordained by His Holiness Leo XIII. It was met and just that the very first moments of what promises to be an epoch in the annals of the Catholic Church should be sanctified by the most sacred sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ upon our altars. The solemnity of the Mass and of the hour, as well as the train of associations accompanying the service—all tended to inspire extraordinary feelings of devotion and piety in the Catholic heart.

It is the Pope's wish, as so beautifully expressed in his Encyclical, that as many of the Church's children as possible should visit Rome during the jubilee. That wish seems likely to be fulfilled in the countless number of Catholics who will either visit Rome in the flesh, or at least lovingly and yearningly turn towards the Eternal City in spirit. Thus will those bonds which have bound the Catholic world to the Chair of St. Peter for nineteen hundred years be strengthened and maintained.

Never, perhaps, was response to a pastoral more prompt and satisfactory than was accorded to that of His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto, formally introducing the Pope's Encyclical to pastors and people. So great was the attendance at all the Catholic churches in this city at the midnight Mass that it would seem as if the voice of the Voice of Christ upon earth had reached beyond the limits of the Catholic Church and into the hearts of those estranged from her in doctrine, but at one with her great object and purpose of the celebration of the Holy Year. At the Ball of promulgation specified, that object is two-fold—the consecration of the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

From what we witnessed and from the reports coming in to us from the various parishes of the city, hundreds had to be denied admittance into the already overcrowded churches, in all of which the holy sacrifice of the

Mass was celebrated with the utmost solemnity and devotion, as so conspicuously evincing in the very great numbers of people who received Holy Communion.

Midnight Mass at the Cathedral.

The appeal of the Holy Father Leo XIII. to the entire Catholic world for a solemn celebration of the opening of the Holy Year was splendidly answered by the Archbishop of Toronto. First came the luminous and beautiful Pastoral Letter of His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto, in which the object, meaning, and manner of celebrating the Holy Year were explained with a clearness, force, and piety, that have rarely been equalled, even in the many eloquent and liquid pastorals of the distinguished Archbishop of Toronto. The answer to the Holy Father's appeal and the Archbishop's pastoral was such as has been rarely, if ever, seen in Toronto. Midnight Mass was celebrated in all the city churches, and every church was crowded. In the Cathedral the Archbishop pontificated at solemn High Mass, and Benediction. The doors were opened at 10.30 p. m., and at 11.30 p. m., the immense church was so packed that the doors had to be closed and hundreds sent away. The solemn celebration began with a grand Te Deum by the Cathedral choir in full chorus, and was sung while the Archbishop was vesting in the sanctuary. His Grace was assisted at the High Mass by Rev. Father Ryan, assistant priest, Rev. Dr. Tracy as Deacon, and Mr. W. Curtin as Sub-deacon. Perhaps the most impressive and significant part of this most solemn and touching celebration was the number of devout communicants that reached nearly one thousand, most edifyingly led by the young men of St. Michael's L. and A. Association who turned out in full force joined by an unusually large number of the men of the parish.

After the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the Archbishop came forward in full Pontificals toward the altar rails, and gave a brief, but most impressive and eloquent address to his people. His Grace spoke with much feeling, and was evidently affected by the magnificent expression of faith and piety he had witnessed. Taking his text from the Epistle of the Mass, he first expressed his exceeding great pleasure and happiness at the splendid manifestation of piety on the part of the people of St. Michael's parish. He warmly congratulated pastors and people on this magnificent response to the Holy Father's appeal and this most edifying opening of the Holy Year. He told his dear people how in the words of St. Paul they would continue this most auspicious beginning by lives of sobriety, justice, and Christian piety.

Gounod's Messe Solennelle was splendidly rendered by the Cathedral choir. Mr. Richardson leading; Miss Smith presiding at the organ.

Promiscuous Reading.

The tremendous growth and development of the art of printing, and the enormously increased and ever increasing facilities for publishing, have made the press practically the arbiter of nations. The spread of popular education has still further increased the power of the press; for people will read when they will not listen, and swallow with avidity in the columns of a newspaper what they would strain at in the pulpit or rostrum. The habit of reading is a dangerous one and should be carefully guarded; for it is easy for the reader to persuade himself that he is forming his own opinions, when, in reality he is only digesting the opinions of other men perhaps a trifle less knowing than himself.

We are wont to look upon the daily or weekly paper as a very ordinary and harmless institution, and few amongst us realize the influence such reading has upon mind and character. But the influence is there and at work nevertheless, and it behoves the man who would reserve the right to think for himself to pause occasionally, and amidst the promiscuous mass of reading matter, and conflicting opinions that some way or another force themselves upon him, ask himself the question, "Where in the world am I? Where do I really stand on the various leading questions agitating this inquisitive, restless world?" In other words, reading without thought and the careful exercise of judgment

is mind-murdering, soul-destroying, and opposed in every way to a strong, robust, militant method.

People will read. No better proof of this is required than the immense mass of reading matter turned out every day. The public mind is insatiable. People will read—and not the best. The general tendency, as proved by newspaper success, is downward, towards the sensational, the novel, if indeed not to the doubtful and even parient and immoral. Everywhere, in all lands, the Catholic Church from the Pope down to the humblest priest recognizes the almost irresistible force which nineteenth century genius has let loose upon the world: and how best to stem the tide of irreligion, worldliness, cant, immorality, hypocrisy and irrepressible teaching is a problem to which the ablest and best leaders in Catholic thought are continually devoting their greatest efforts. With this object in view they have turned their attention to the Catholic Press, to the establishment of Catholic Truth Societies, to the publication of Catholic books, and to the encouragement of Catholic literature generally.

But the struggle is one-sided and wearying, because of the superior force of the enemy. It is so easy to ridicule religion, to dress vice in the garb of virtue, to mock at modesty and true manliness or noble womanliness, to sneer at virtue of fashion, and to pervert the meaning of the maxim, "To the pure, all things are pure." Art also has lent itself to the enemy, because riches can buy art. It is no easy task for a Catholic magazine, with its limited circle of readers, to compete in the world of illustration with the colorless magazines, religiously speaking, that nowadays flood the market. The Catholic reader must be ready and willing to sacrifice something for principle or conscience's sake, and be prepared to give both moral and material support to Catholic publications.

A Gratuitous Assertion.

"Bystander," in the Weekly Sun of the 27th ult., begins his comments on current events in the following sprightly fashion: "Readers of the Sun might fancy that the Bystander, being in Europe, was nearer the centre of European affairs than they are. But here in South Italy he is really further off."

Certainly, whatever distance the Bystander may be from "the centre of European affairs," he is very far away from the truth in affairs connected with the Catholic Church. He says:

"I have already recognized the Church with its ritual, its pomp, its art (though here in Naples greatly debased), its poetical legends and religious emotions as an elevating, refining and ennobling influence in what would otherwise be an utterly degraded and barbarous life. I do wish to charge her as she is at present with the criminal actions of her persecuting days, though unhappily she has never disowned them, and her most recent manifestoes, the Syllabus and Encyclical, embody the principles upon which they were done."

It is impossible to conceive that a man of Bystander's recognized intelligence could make a statement so insulting to two hundred and forty millions of people who are under the "elevating, refining and ennobling influence" of the Catholic Church, even if he furnished some show of reason for it further than his own mighty though empty assertion. Would it be asking too much of Bystander—when he comes home, of course, and gets away from the disturbing influence of Italian skies and Italian people—to point out "the principles which they (the criminal actions of the Catholic Church's persecuting days) were done," as embodied in her recent manifestoes, the Syllabus and Encyclical? It has become the fashion to speak of the arrogance of wealth—there is also such a thing as the arrogance of intellect which assumes the right to make gratuitous assertions and "pass them current too." But—we want to know.

IN NATURE'S STOREHOUSE THERE ARE CURSES.—Medicinal experiments have shown conclusively that there are medicinal virtues in even ordinary plants growing up around us which give them a value that cannot be estimated. It is held by some that Nature provides a cure for every disease which neglect and ignorance have visited upon man. However, this may be, it is well known that Paracelsus's Vegetable Pills, distilled from roots and herbs, are a sovereign remedy in curing all disorders of the digestion.