

The Eucharistic Congress at Vienna

We arrived in Vienna on a cold, rainy morning the day before the Congress officially began, and found the city so full of strangers and visitors to the Congress that it was with difficulty that places at a hotel were secured. A visit to the Central Committee of the Congress showed that that body had been completely thrown off its feet by the influx of visitors and participants in the Congress. They are not a people used to taking care of huge throngs of visiting delegations, as we are with our political and other conventions, and to add to their perplexity there was the question of rank to be taken into consideration. An Archbishop or Bishop, a duke, count or baron, or such like personage, must not be provided for in a manner beneath that of the ordinary priest or citizen. This led to confusion, hesitation and much delay. After all the question was solved in good style, considering the unique difficulties thus presented.

The city through the Ring and Karntnerstrasse, Stefansplatz and Wollzeile, was profusely and beautifully decorated: the Viennese colors of red and white, the Papal colors of white and gold, the Hapsburg-Austrian colors of yellow and black, and the Galician colors of yellow and blue were chiefly in evidence. These were generally in long streaming banners fastened near the house-top and extending down the entire building. The imperial Austrian flags and the flags of other nations were often seen. In the public squares and wherever there was sufficient room flagstaffs had been erected and from them hung the banner of the Blessed Sacrament, in pure white, with the design thereon of the Lamb and the Cross and the inscription: "Ecce Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi" emblazoned in gold or yellow. Many shops and stores put large religious pictures in their windows with appropriate draperies, and everything was done to accentuate the importance and meaning of the celebration.