

The Catholic Record.

Published Weekly at 481 and 483 Richmond Street, London, Ontario.

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION.

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA. To the Editor of THE CATHOLIC RECORD.

OFFICIAL.

LENTEN REGULATIONS FOR 1904.

The following are the Lenten regulations for the diocese of London: 1st. All days of Lent, Sundays excepted, are fast days.

Pastors are required to hold in their respective churches—at least twice in the week during Lent—devotions and instructions suited to the Holy Season.

A FRENCH ACADEMY PRIZE AWARDED TO A NUN.

It is something notable that at the very moment when the French Government is engaged in closing all the schools in France which are taught by religious orders, the French Academy has awarded to a nun the Montyon prize for virtue exercised specially in French territory for the benefit of suffering humanity.

This prize is at the disposal of the Academy every year, but it is seldom that this learned body looks to what the religious orders are doing in this regard, owing perhaps to the fact that devotedness and self-sacrifice are expected from monks and nuns as a matter of course, inasmuch as it is their duty to devote themselves to the mitigating of suffering in every form.

M. Thureau-Dangin, the chairman of the Academy, named several who had distinguished themselves by their acts of self-sacrifice and heroic virtue, but in relating the deeds of those who had been eminent for such acts, he declared that, in the judgment of the Academy, Sister St. Charles of the religious order named above stands pre-eminent.

This sister has devoted her life to the welfare of the negroes of Equatorial Africa, especially at Gaboon. She has been at this work since 1859, having been engaged both in hospital work and in teaching youth the elements of science as usually taught in primary schools, and also domestic economy.

Sister St. Charles showed special devotedness during a violent plague which visited the territory, and it is both on this account, and on account of the length of time she has been leading a life of self-sacrifice, that the prize has been awarded to her.

religious lady has been awarded this distinction, which is very highly esteemed by the French people.

HOMERULE.

There are not wanting signs that the contest for Home Rule for Ireland will be continued by the Irish Parliamentary party with all the more vigor owing to the great victory secured last year in the passing of the Land Purchase Act.

On the 3rd inst. Mr. John Redmond, the National Leader, speaking in the House of Commons on the address in reply to the speech from the throne, declared on behalf of the people of Ireland that "for the Irish party there is no such thing as an alternative policy to Home Rule."

RITUALISM AMONG NON-CONFORMISTS.

The non-Conformists of Great Britain have always taken great pride in the fact that they are irreconcilable foes to the use of any ritualism in their worship which might resemble a return to some of the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, and they have been almost in the war waged by the latter on Ritualism, even giving their material aid towards the acts of violence which the Kenites perpetrated in endeavoring to stop Ritualistic practices in the Established Church of England.

A change, however, seems to be coming over the spirit of their dreams, and in many places of late, practices decidedly Ritualistic have been introduced into some non-Conformist chapels, and the congregations seem to be generally well pleased that such innovations should be introduced; for they have found out by experience that it is more conducive to piety that there should be something more reverential in public worship than the bare recital of a form of prayers, which is sometimes even loosely and incomprehensibly put together, so as to be rather ludicrous than solemn and respectful to Almighty God.

In the King's Weigh House Chapel, Grosvenor Square, London, which is a Congregational church, a surplised choir was introduced for the first time on a recent Sunday.

A few members of the congregation at first made objection to the innovation, which, they said, is unwarranted in any non-Conformist religious service, and contrary to all non-Conformist traditions, which are decidedly averse to anything but the greatest simplicity in worship.

The church was crowded on the Sunday when the new choir made its first appearance. The choristers, who had been well drilled as to what they should do, marched in procession into the nave, while the organist played a selection. The boys wore white surplises but not cassocks, and sat on benches in front of the organ.

The amount of overtaxation to which Ireland is subjected was estimated by a Royal Commission some years ago at £3,000,000 (\$15,000,000) per annum.

In the debate on the address already alluded to above, Mr. Redmond bitterly attacked the Government's attitude on education in Ireland, describing it as grossly absurd, and irreparably harmful to the youth of Ireland.

ment's course on the Irish University Question," he said, "is a dishonest evasion of an admitted duty, and a grievance which poisons the life of Ireland, and condemns her to failure in the struggle of nations."

And while all this is undeniable truth, we are informed that on the very day when Mr. Redmond made his lucid speech in the House of Commons, the executive committee of the Liberal-Unionist or Chamberlain party at a meeting held in London decided that the Liberal-Unionist organizations must be continued in order to combat the claims of Ireland, and that "it can only be dissolved by a declaration of the Irish party that they had abandoned all hope of converting Great Britain to Home Rule."

The Irish party will not abandon that hope, and the declaration of the Liberal-Unionist Committee will only make the Irish party more resolute.

IMPUDENCE UNPRECEDENTED.

It appears that Premier Combes of France is now attacking the Church in a new direction. We are told in recent despatches that he has presented a sort of ultimatum to the Pope in which he says substantially that the Pope must approve the selections of the French Government, or the Government itself will announce them officially without his approval.

In addition, the despatch tells us, the Papal Nuncio will be asked to leave Paris, the clergy will be forbidden to collect Peter's pence in the churches, and the concordat will be denounced.

We can with difficulty believe that these attempts at persecution will be actually attempted, but M. Combes has already proved himself to be so violent a hater of the Church that it is impossible to foresee what he may do with a rabid red-Republican majority of the Chamber of Deputies at his back.

It will be readily understood that the Holy Father is unwilling to come to an open rupture with the French Government, if it be at all possible, without violating any principle, to arrive at an amicable termination to the dispute.

Bismarck's attempt to coddle the so-called "Old Catholic movement" into a successful schism was so farcical that Premier Combes will scarcely venture to imitate him.

The manner in which the innovation has been received may be judged by the expression of opinion by a member of the congregation who was asked what he thought of the change. He "answered dryly," that "it was a great improvement, as there will not be in future such wonderful examples of artistic millinery displayed in the choir seats to distract attention from the sermon, as under the old regime."

This is to say, that the staid ecclesiastical dress is more becoming to divine service than the fashionable fads which are worn on the streets to attract attention to the person of the wearer.

We may remark that the dress sanctioned by the tradition of nineteen centuries includes the cassock, without which the surplise is incongruous.

Even the First and Third Napoleons never attempted to control the Church after the fashion in which M. Combes is said to have indulged, and this accidental Premier of a year will find himself much mistaken if he expects to succeed in such a tyranny.

they would not need now to take instructions in this matter piecemeal. At all events, we may now see that the non-Conformists are becoming aware that the use of a Ritual in divine services is not such a wicked thing as during the last three centuries they would have had us believe.

THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM.

M., of Hawkesbury, Ont., enquires "What is the Catholic doctrine in regard to the condition of infants who die without baptism?"

Answer. Baptism is necessary to salvation, and therefore children or others dying without Baptism do not enjoy the happiness of heaven. But as infants are not guilty of any actual sin, that is to say, of sin committed by themselves, they are not actually punished. Hence it is the general belief of theologians that they will enjoy that natural happiness which would have been the lot of a good man if he had not been raised to a supernatural state by the grace of God.

There is no injustice to the children who do not enter into heaven for want of being baptized, because the reward given to those who are regenerated by Baptism is a supernatural gift coming from the special mercy and bounty of God, and not from the merits of man himself.

Among the proofs of the necessity of Baptism we may mention the texts of Scripture: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The original Greek text, tis, any person, shows that the words "a man" mean here "any human being."

"We were by nature children of wrath . . . for by grace you are saved through faith, and this, not of yourselves; for it is the gift of God."

LORD CURZON AND THE BAPTISTS.

When the Earl of Dufferin and Ava was Viceroy of India a request was made to him by the Buddhists of Upper Burma expressing the wish that he should appoint a high-priest of Buddha for that territory who should have also an official seal for the purpose of administering justice in the capacity of a civil magistrate.

This policy has been apparently reversed by Lord Curzon, who recently, on request, made such an appointment with the very privileges which Lord Dufferin refused to grant.

It is also reported that Lord Curzon

have existed in the past between the Church and the French nation. The Church also has borne the greater part of the burden of educational and benevolent work, and there cannot be the least doubt that the religious education imparted by the Church schools made better citizens than the secularized education given by the State.

It has been already proved by statistics that the religious education given by the Catholic schools is more effective than the education imparted by the State; and over and over again it has been proved that the best nurses in the hospitals and the best managers of other benevolent institutions are the religious sisterhoods.

THE D'YOUVILLE READING CIRCLE.

It will be a very long time ere the memory of Dr. McGinnis' lecture, on Jan. 27th, will fade from the minds of those privileged to hear it.

The following brief summary will give some idea of the nature of the address: "Ideals of Sanctity" might, at first sight, appear a strange subject for one of the lectures in a literary course, but spirituality and true culture are very intimately associated.

There are two very common errors with regard to the spiritual life; first, to pay too much attention to externals, and, secondly, to disregard the external entirely.

When we consider the heroes of God's Church—the saints—we are impressed by the great variety we find. What a contrast between the child-martyr, Agnes, and the saintly, old, austere Jerome! Yet they are both on our altars. There must be something in common between them. What is that something? The love of God.

If the saints are to help us to feel that love for God which they feel, we must be acquainted with them. How many of us have an intimate, personal knowledge of the life of Our Blessed Lord or of even one saint? Some excuse there has certainly been in the past for this ignorance.

Many of the saints were called upon to suffer martyrdom; but in our time we have to do what is sometimes harder—to live for Christ. To do this we require all a martyr's strength and love. Love that will make us ask not to be delivered from temptation, (to be sent off the battlefield, as it were). No, not that, but love that will make us ask for courage to stay right there and fight the good fight—love in which there is not a shade of selfishness—love that will make us scorn to be found begging, begging, always begging from our Divine Lord. This love of God would make us more happy than we can imagine. Our very sufferings would bring us a supernatural joy. Suffering is always the test of love, and we would be happy to suffer with the Object of our love—Christ Crucified.

The very severe weather interfered with the attendance at the regular meeting on Tuesday last.

There are no very important new current events. Developments in the

at a State function at Mandalay, urged Buddhists to cling to their religion, and at Aligarh urged Mahometans to do the same thing.

At the Convention it is stated that there were four thousand native Christians present, and that these joined in passing the condemnatory resolutions which contain the following clause: "Whereas this policy is unduly and unjustly partial to one religious body by giving a state to its head, be it resolved that we deplore this new policy of the present Viceroy, and urgently desire that time honored avowed policy of religious neutrality be strictly adhered to by the Government of India."

Lord Curzon's action goes certainly beyond the policy of strict neutrality; but it seems to us that there is an excess of modesty on the part of the Baptist missionaries when they declare so positively that a Christian Government ought to be content with complete neutrality between Christianity, Buddhism and Mahometanism.

What does the prophet Isaiah mean when he says: "And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and thy queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. . . . I, the Lord, am Thy Saviour, and Thy Redeemer, the Mighty one of Jacob. (Is. xlix. 23-25; King James' version.)"

We have been accustomed to regard these words as indicating the subjection of governments to Christ our Redeemer; but the Baptists appear to think that they are just as applicable to Buddha and Mahomet, nay, even, from the apologetic tone of the resolution, the false God and the false prophet would seem to have somewhat of a superior claim.

Evidently our Baptist missionaries in the far East have no higher notion of the Church of Christ than the rustic sexton who defined it: "Tis a tall building with a tower and bells."

STRAY THOUGHTS.

The following is a collection of stray thoughts, and is not intended to be a serious contribution to the literature of the day.

What happened might have been free use of writ, much beyond that unlettered. Ne the present, who fanaticism, spirit of the human subject imposing of priv and worse than to an alarming al doctrines of ce which I m ased in distance ment was writt logical issue if to think and i the region of such an exten multitudes do that thinkers, and are going of authority. widely circula lands without Christian socie issued upward. That this shou sidering. I s Patriarch of V of the "Societ object of which and since he l aged the hous every part of I of the New Te and comments reading and in lation therei. takes a Divin tion — which "higher critic clearly its i accepted thro intellect, but ance on an or. But my ob point out the from the sign every man is s statements of oracle. In re House of Lo reign of Quee Scripture qua and notes is q For the exc Scotland for years member New Testame most powerfu all pages sa "Because Sa "he was a Kin Saul his g ferred the him and fr then the stor the King of S thou hast let the man that life shall b people." * Mary, escape will, for the prince and and the Isra "The Qu (Bzekiel xxx-fifty princ also in Scrip both inferi Mary, have executed, tion comm Psalms on the mighty ful works of killed all th further argu the gatheri