



OPENING OF THE HOLY DOOR.

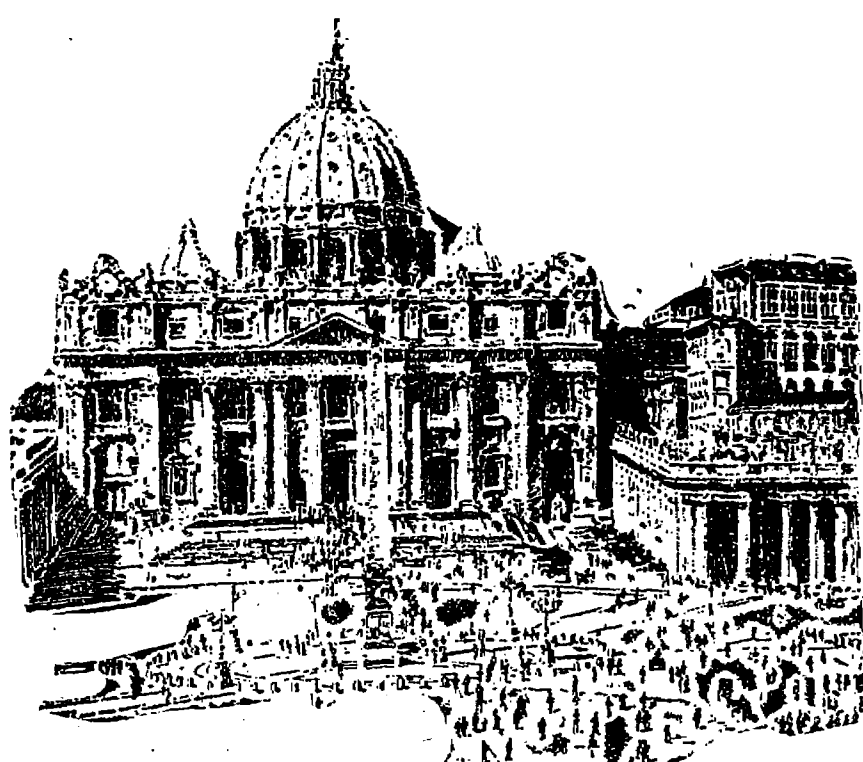
His Holiness Leo XIII. Presides at this Imposing Ceremony on the Occasion of the Opening of the Century Jubilee.



THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF STRIKING THE THREE BLOWS OF THE HAMMER ON THE SACRED DOOR AT THE BASILICA OF ST. PETER'S.

The pomp, ceremony and circumstance that, at special times, accompany the more significant and more rare celebrations in the Catholic Church, lend to that immortal institution a grandeur and a strength that exercise influences over the world unapproached by any other establishment religious or secular on earth. Of these none more significant and attractive than the solemn opening of a jubilee year by the Sovereign Pontiff. The "Holy Year" — the year of jubilee par excellence — is celebrated every quarter of a century; but for reasons beyond the control of the reigning Pontiffs, this magnificent spectacle has not been witnessed since 1825. It was reserved for Leo XIII., to revive, or rather to perform, with full freedom, the opening of the sacred door. On Sunday last — at noon — the Holy Father went through all the ceremonies of that imposing overture. As a rule it is at midnight that the three strokes of the golden hammer are given; but owing to the feebleness of the grand old man of the Vatican, it was anticipated by twelve hours on this occasion.

At twelve noon, therefore, there was a grand assemblage at the Sistine Chapel of the civil magistrates, the canons of the Vatican, and the cardinals and bishops then visiting Rome. The lay dignitaries were clad in their robes of state, the clerical in their rich vestments. The Pope received and blessed them, holding in his hand a lighted wax taper, and intoning the "Veni Creator Spiritus." He then despatched three cardinals to open the doors of St. John Lateran, Santa Maria Maggiore and St. Paul Outside the Walls. Formerly the cardinals sent on this mission used to go in great state, preceded by trumpeters, pipe players and troops of people, armed half in the panoply of war and half in that of religion. At present, however, they simply get into their private carriages and drive to their respective destinations.



THE BASILICA OF ST. PETER'S.

year in his sedia gestatoria, borne on the shoulders of minor ecclesiastics.

Singing the "Veni Creator," they arrived in the great square opposite St. Peter's. Here they met a procession of all the minor secular and regular clergy in Rome, arrived in the square for the same purpose, from the Apostolic Palace. All the doors of the church are closed, all the entrances to the portico occupied by guards, who prevent the crowds from entering.

Now, at the extreme right of the portico there is a door known as the *santa porta*, or sacred door, which has been walled up for the last three quarters of a century.

It is always kept walled up, saved during a jubilee year. The ceremony of opening it, therefore, is the opening ceremony of every jubilee. The Pope takes the lead in the procession, which now solemnly files up to the sacred door. He halts in front of it. A pelate presents to him a golden hammer. He approaches the door and strikes it three times, saying: "Aperthentur portae iustitiae in nomine domini."

doors of justice"), to which the clergy respond, "This is the eternal door which the just shall enter."

Meanwhile the master masons set to work in removing the little wall which has temporarily closed the holy door. When this has been torn down and the bricks have been distributed as relics among the spectators, the pontiffs of St. Peter's sweep the doorway clean with their brooms. Then the Pope and the clergy march singing into St. Peter's, where the immense crowds by this time have been admitted.

The jubilee ends by the closure of the "holy door." It is walled up again, in the presence of the Pope, the cardinals and the clergy, on Christmas Eve, one year after the jubilee opening. His Holiness lays the first stone in its place.

In the Catholic Church the institution dates from the pontificate of Boniface VIII., who in 1300, issued a bull in honor of the new century. A plenary indulgence was granted to all pilgrims who came to Rome during that year, on condition of their penitently confessing their sins and visiting the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul fifteen times. To residents of the city was granted the same privilege on visiting the same churches thirty times. Boniface's plan was that of a centennial celebration, but the period was shortened successively to fifty, forty-three and twenty-five years where it remains at present.

The pilgrimage to Rome is no longer an essential in gaining the indulgences which are promised during the jubilee year. All who can go should go, but for those who find it inconvenient or impossible certain works of charity and devotion in their own localities are substituted for the pilgrimage. Every parish priest announces to his congregation the exact method by which they will be permitted to gain the privileges of the holy year.

PORTICO OF ST. PETER'S.—The portico of St. Peter's is 234 feet long and 43½ feet wide. It is 66 feet from the floor to the ceiling, which is magnificently decorated with stucco. It is so large that one of the guide stories is to the effect that a "Rome-in-a-day" tourist, having seen it, went away thinking he had been in St. Peter's. It was walled off and curtailed for the ceremony of the opening of the Holy Door. This ceremony, by the way, has not been performed since 1825, and the door has consequently walled up since then. In 1850 there was a revolution going on in Italy, and no jubilee was proclaimed, and in 1875 the Italian Government had taken possession of Rome, so the ceremony was again omitted. The Holy Door is located inside

the portico, of the extreme right, and cannot be seen in a representation of the facade. It is a plain square opening, having an iron cross set in the center of the bricks with which the aperture is closed. This brick wall is carefully sawn through its four sides. When the Pope strikes the three blows—prescribed by the ritual—on the iron cross, the wall immediately falls on a temporary platform mounted on wheels behind it and is carried off.

The Vatican basilica must then be absolutely empty and the Pope the first one to step across the threshold. All the other doors of the basilica must be kept closed during the function.

If the Pope could not have officiated in person the ceremony would have been performed for him by Cardinal Rampolla, the archpriest of St. Peter's. It is a curious fact that the first Pope to personally officiate at the opening of the Holy Door was the famous Borgia, Alexander VI. He did it on the eve of Christmas, 1499.

The solid gold hammer and trowel which Pope Leo used on the occasion is the gift to him from the Bishops of the Church at large. These tools are by custom the prerequisites after the ceremony of the Cardinal Grand Penitentiary and after are usually sent as gifts to some royal personage.

While the Pope was officiating at St. Peter's, Cardinal Satolli, at the Basilica of St. John Lateran, Cardinal Vincent Vanutelli, at St. Mary Major, and Cardinal Orsini, at St. Paul's Without the Walls, officiated at similar ceremonies of opening the holy doors of these jubilee churches.

POPE LEO'S POLICY TRIUMPHANT.

Of late we have made several references to the Roman correspondence of large American papers—amongst others to "inimicatio" of the New York Sun,—and we have pointed out that they are almost unanimous in their support of the Papal foreign policy. We know that an attempt has been made by the anti-clerical element in France, to deprive the Vatican of a French Ambassador; but the signal failure of this "blow in the side" has only served to accentuate the more the influence of Leo XIII., with the great powers of Europe. Dealing with this question, one of the Roman correspondents of the Catholic Standard and Times says that "the passing hour is the one of triumph for the Papacy," and he thus explains himself:

"It was hardly conceivable and it certainly was not easily to be conjectured that the twentieth vote of the French Budget Commission against the Embassy to the Holy See would have had such important effects. Yet such has been the case, and it is truly marvellous how great a triumph for the policy of Leo XIII. has come out of it. This is not the only factor which makes the passing hour one of triumph for the Papacy, but to deal at all completely with it we must reread the striking declaration of M. Delcasse. Why? Because diplomatic comment has discovered mines of meaning in their every part. Mr. Mesurer and the madmen—viewed from a French standpoint—who are his acolytes on the Budget Commission demanded a retrenchment on the 800,000 francs annually voted for the religious missions abroad supported by France, as well as the suppression of the embassy to the Holy See."

After quoting the minister's words, in asserting the necessity of diplomatic relations with the Vatican, the same writer says:

"The orders given by Freemasonry to M. Mesurer and those of his colleagues who abet his anti-clerical action year by year have not been obeyed, and in a declaration which was certainly not provoked by the mere annual vote of the Budget Commission, the Minister reaffirmed the Christian vocation of France, corresponding to the policy of Leo XIII., afforded the best possible explanation of the act of the Pope in 1898, when he confirmed to France its traditional protectorate in the East."

"But there is a phrase of M. Delcasse which is still more striking. This, he said, was least of all the moment to consider any such measure as that of suppressing the French Embassy at the Vatican, for Germany and Russia were approaching nearer and nearer to Leo XIII., and simultaneously and particularly just at this very time, M. Delcasse undoubtedly knew the facts. Germany would be glad to see, it is possible, a Nunciature in Berlin, or if this be not possible, then an Apostolic Delegation, and

literally day by day it strives to strengthen its influence at the Vatican. It has in Rome a little party in its favor and a great party against it, or, to speak more accurately, there exists a little knot of influences in the spheres of ecclesiastical diplomacy which would tend to assert its special favor. It always makes a show of being satisfied with small favors, such as the having a gag set on the "Osservatore Romano," but in reality, though it treasures that boon, it always says: "Excelsior!" and at the present time it is especially straining its efforts to link itself more closely with the Vatican. The time is not ripe for me to speak about its hopes, but its assumption of a German foreign protectorate is a matter of recent history.

Russia is striking not less vigorously, but more successfully. The master of two Emperors is statecraft, the high priest of the Cabinet, the procurator of the Holy Synod, M. Pobodonotoff, works collision with the Dowager Empress to restrain the Czar, whose mind is wholly made up and whose will is wholly set in favor of Rome. The Dowager Empress and the procurator of the Holy Synod have tradition—the supreme law—prejudice—the supreme factor—custom, authority, technical reasons, bureaucratic influence, almost everything on their side but after all the Emperor is master. And so, though they have just succeeded in preventing Mgr. Tannassi from being sent on his special mission, the Czar has taken the matter into his own hands. And this is everything. They would do anything rather than see an Apostolic Delegation, an Intermuniciature or a Nunciature established in the Russian capital, but time and events are moving forward over obstacles greater than any they could create to this conclusion.

"I have shown the difficulties which do not prevent the three great powers of Europe from emulating each other in their court to Rome. One of my highest informants says: 'The action of these powers is not surprising. I can give you assurance that it is only the natural outcome of the assiduity with which Leo XIII. has followed his policy of pacification and recuperation during twenty years. During seventeen of those the Argentine has been represented in Rome, and how it has sent a most able and important diplomatist, and diplomatic proceedings move as if naturally. More news of the kind will be forthcoming that is, before many months have gone, and the increase of the successes will be marked by a geometrical progression. This progress is always slow, by reason of the slowness with which the Vatican moves, but the reader will have perceived that, if slow, it is scarcely less marked.'"

REOPENING OF THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL.

This beautiful structure was reopened with all the impressiveness and splendor usual on all such occasions pertaining to our Holy Religion, at the midnight service of Christmas. Long before the hour the church was filled with devout worshippers, eager to participate in the joys of Christmas, happy in being the first to assist at the first service in the church since its reopening for nearly eight months, and proud to have taken part in the reopening ceremony. The great sacrifice of the

vary should be continued and commemorated every day. Nothing was left undone to make the affair worthy of the occasion. The beloved and energetic pastor, Rev. Father O'Donnell, was busy night and day in arranging every particular, even to the minutest detail. The Rev. Father McDermott, the worthy assistant, had his hands full too, in looking after the carrying out of the programme for the occasion, but in every sense of the word he was equally to the occasion, precisely as usual.

organ pealed forth its solemn strains to the magic touch of the well-known organist, Professor James Wilson. The celebrant of the Mass was the Rev. Father O'Donnell, assisted by the Rev. Fathers Shea, of St. Anthony's and Kelly of St. Laurent College, as deacon and sub-deacon respectively. The choir rendered the beautiful and soul-inspiring Mass of Faucouner, with telling effect. The solos were admirably rendered, the attacks perfect, and the chorus parts well sustained; while the magnificent orchestra under the able direction of Prof. William Sullivan, brought out the many fine parts of the Mass, and at the same time lending an additional charm to the imposing celebration. The church in her fine and gorgeous decorations was seen at its best, as the newly-fitted up electric lights spread their rays around the dome and brought to view the grandeur contained therein. Here is chiefly contained the work which adorns and beautifies this neat little church, and proclaims to the casual observer, the beauty of Christian Art. There are eight pictures shown. The first is St. Anne and the Blessed Virgin, the second the Annunciation, the third the Visitation, the fourth the Nativity, the fifth the Presentation, the sixth the Holy Family, the Resurrection and the apparition to His Blessed Mother, the eight the Assumption. The figures in all the pictures are perfection, whilst the colors beautiful, and bring out in bolder relief, the real significance of the work. There is one picture in this group, that deserves more than a passing notice, it is the Apparition of Our Saviour to His Blessed Mother. Such a work never appeared in art yet, and St. Mary's Church can now claim the proud honor of being the first one to have such a painting decorating and adding lustre to its interior. The work of such a painting originated with the architect, Mr. W. E. Doran, who after long and careful study now sees that event which comes down to us through tradition and custom placed before the observant eye, to be a subject of joy as well as admiration. Banging right around the dome are the words: "Ave Maria Gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus," in letters of exquisite design and beauty. The ceiling, pillars and other parts of the church though clause are remarkable for their unity and shows the skillful hand of the artist. Another row of electric lights has also been added, and these throw their light on the beautiful marble altars. Around the lower part of the walls marble slabs to the height of six feet are placed, which also serve to add their quota to the already existing grandeur contained in the decorations. Two new altars are yet to be placed in positions, as well as a new hardwood floor and two new confessionals. The pews are at present being re-varnished and when everything is finished the church of Our Lady of Good Counsel will be second to none in this city. Great credit is due to the architect, W. E. Doran, for his great endeavor, to make St. Mary's a model of architectural beauty. But we must not forget the worthy artist, Mr. Locke, with his able and efficient assistants Messrs. Filbig and Priddy, who were most assiduous and conscientious in the work entrusted to them. In fact the Rev. Pastor of St. Mary's says that he never met men more obliging and willing to give every satisfaction. Their one great object was to make the dome the finest of its kind in Canada, and we think without exaggeration that they succeeded in their intentions. To Messrs. McDermott, the contractors for the woodwork, a word of praise is due as they had the difficult task of placing the marble slabs, and many other alterations which the church has undergone. The Rev. Father O'Donnell must feel greatly pleased with the beauty of his church, one that will be known far and near, as the gem of architectural and artistic work, and we know that his nerves were greatly strengthened by the silver and gold shock which he received at the opening services of Christmas night. The crowd was a record one. Admission was by ticket, the first time tickets were ever issued for the midnight service. The Rev. Pastor desires to thank through the medium of the "True Witness" all those who aided in any way to make the event so successful. He desires to thank in particular, Mr. M. Hicks, for his kindness in lending a large number of carpets and rugs for the occasion, and to Ald. Gallery in sending a large number of potted plants for the decoration of the high altar. The "True Witness" congratulates both pastor and people on the magnificence of their church, and trusts that Rev. Father O'Donnell, will long be spared to his devoted parishioners.

LORD EMLY DISMISSED.—Lord Dunraven, Lord Lieutenant of the County, acting on instructions received from Dublin Castle, has dismissed Lord Emly of the Deputy-Lieutenancy which he held for County Limerick. This step is stated to be in connection with Lord Emly's speech at a recent labor meeting in Kilmallock, and for refusing to retract or explain why he was removed from the commission of the peace by Lord Chancellor Ashbourne.

BIRTHS.
Movey.—On the 7th inst. Mrs. Laura Avenue, 53 St. James St., gave birth to a son, Mrs. W. P. Movey.