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CURRENT COMMENT

The most important Catholic news of the week is the announcement, made by the Tablet's Rome correspondent, that Pius X. intends to revive the ancient functions of the Primates. Since the Reformation, which denied the central authority of Christendom, it was only right and proper that a process of centralization should have gone steadily onward to counteract the fundamental error of Protestantism. Thus, powers which, before the Reformation, devolved on local ecclesiastical authorities have been gradually transferred to the Roman Congregations, and, as far as English-speaking countries are concerned, all the increased work has fallen upon Propaganda. But of late years, with the expansion of the Catholic Church in non-Catholic countries, especially in the United States, ecclesiastical difficulties referred to Rome have multiplied so greatly that there has resulted a congestion of business, which unduly retards necessary decisions. To cope effectually with this congestion, the Pius X. has in mind to restore the real authority of the Primates. For centuries this title has been merely honorary and historical, except in the case of Gran, the Archbishop-primate of which has still the right of receiving appeals from all the other Archbishops in Hungary. According to the Holy Father's plan, each country will have its Primate, with extended powers and jurisdiction over the whole country, and with authority to settle many of the disputed questions which are now sent to Rome. Of Ireland's two Primates, one of them, probably the Archbishop of Armagh, will receive full primatial powers, the Archdiocese of Westminster will also become the centre of primatial jurisdiction; so will Sydney in Australia, Baltimore in the United States, and Quebec in Canada.

Although the Tablet correspondent says nothing about the revival of archiepiscopal jurisdiction, this will no doubt follow as a logical development of this decentralizing move. In the middle ages the Archbishops possessed ample jurisdiction over their suffragans, whom they could judge as a tribunal of first instance; but the Council of Trent transferred this jurisdiction to the Holy See. At present an Archbishop cannot even make an official visitation of any suffragan's diocese without an order from the provincial council. But it is probable that henceforth the archiepiscopal dignity will become more operative than it has been in the past three centuries.

This radical change in the government of the Church confirms what we ventured to forecast some weeks ago as to the present Pope's independence of character. Replying to certain Catholic writers who—perhaps because Pius X. gave no signs of leaning towards their favorite school of thought—prophesied that his Pontificate would be one of quiet progress along the lines laid down by Leo XIII., we expressed a diametrically opposite opinion, based on what was already known of Cardinal Sarto's life and action before and immediately after he ascended the Papal throne. And now the Tablet correspondent introduces the information given above and imparted to him by "a Cardinal who has had admirable opportunities for knowing the mind of the Holy Father" with this weighty remark: "The Pontificate of Pius X. is destined to be the most striking since the Reformation."

Here is a Papal anecdote that has not yet become public property in this part of the world. In

the earlier stages of the Conclave Cardinal Lecot, of Bordeaux, hearing Cardinal Sarto mentioned as a possible candidate, called on him in his cell and addressed him in French. Cardinal Sarto, smiling replied in Latin: *Non satis intelligo linguam Gallicam.* (I do not sufficiently understand French). The French Cardinal, horrified, exclaimed: *Qui non intelligit linguam Gallicam, non potest esse Pontifex.* (He who does not understand French cannot be Pope). "Deo gratias!" (Thanks be to God) was Cardinal Sarto's spontaneous reply, to the great amusement of the bystanders.

The Rome correspondent of "La Semaine Religieuse de Montreal," gives some edifying details of an important event in Cardinal Merry del Val's career. "When Leo XIII. named him President of the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics, thus opening out to him what is technically called a prelatie career, Mgr. Merry del Val accepted this post unwillingly. He would have preferred to be free to follow the inspirations of his heart tending towards the religious life. But the Pope was speaking. His will was the expression of the Divine will. The prelate consented, objecting only his youth and his little preparation for this presidency. As the Pope added that he would name him Archbishop, Mgr. Merry del Val begged him not to do so. "I accept the Presidency because it is a burden; but your Holiness will, I trust, allow me to refuse the Archiepiscopal dignity because it is an honor." Leo XIII. did not answer. But a few days later, he sent for the Spanish Ambassador, Mr. Merry del Val, the prelate's father. When he was ushered into the Pope's presence, the Ambassador noticed an unusually severe expression on his face, and wondered what he could have done to displease the Holy Father, when the latter said to him seriously: "Your Excellency, I sent for you because I am displeased with your son who refuses to execute my orders." The Ambassador, hearing this unexpected reproof, answered that he could not imagine in what his son could have disobeyed His Holiness; it must have been unwittingly, for he could assure the Holy Father that he had no more devoted adherent to his sacred person than his son. Leo XIII., seeing the Ambassador's confusion, changed his tone, and, with a radiant smile, replied: "Do not be troubled, your Excellency; I want to make your son an Archbishop and his modesty impels him to refuse that honor. I count on your authority to make him accept." Of course, Mr. Merry del Val promised to do so, although it assuredly was a sweet consolation for his fatherly heart to see that his son refused, not indeed to labor for the Church, but to be honored by her. This fact brings out the utter unselfishness of the new Papal Secretary of State. A man of that stamp is not self-centred, he does not seek applause, neither does he insist that all salutary measures should be initiated by him. He is willing to welcome all earnest fellow laborers in the Lord's vineyard. He will not, as too many so-called good men do, put spokes in the wheels of others, just because those wheels are not their own.

Apart from the comparative youth of the nominee—which, for any one that knows him, is merely a matter of years, not wisdom, for he has all the maturity of old age—there are many extraordinary features in this appointment. In the first place Cardinal Merry del Val, albeit ecclesiastically trained in Rome, is not an Italian, and all his predecessors in the Secretaryship were Italians. Then again, he is the only Papal Secretary of

State who knows the English-speaking world thoroughly. Moreover, he is the only one who is familiar with Canadian interests. Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, and especially our own Winnipeg are cities with the leading citizens of which he, who has a most retentive memory, has a more than superficial acquaintance. Finally, it should not be forgotten that the very Cardinals who raised Giuseppe Sarto to the See of Peter, also, of their own accord, in their first meeting, chose Raphael Merry del Val as Secretary of the Conclave and pro-Secretary of State.

The four or five days Archbishop Bruchesi spent here were a great delight to his many friends. They remember his coming here for the consecration of Archbishop Langevin in March, 1895. He was then a Canon of the Montreal Cathedral, and it was his Archbishop (Fabre) that consecrated Mgr. Langevin, Canon Bruchesi's classmate. The two college chums were almost exactly of the same age. The possibilities of the future were even then looming up. Two years later, after Archbishop Fabre's death and during Mgr. Merry del Val's visit, Paul Bruchesi was raised to that Archiepiscopal chair to which his virtue and varied talents had long since destined him. Mgr. Langevin was there to return the compliment and witness his preferment. In the six years that have elapsed since that time His Grace of Montreal has writ his name large on many most important measures for the moral and intellectual improvement of the Canadian metropolis, his birthplace and the home of his family. When he comes here he is rightly hailed in religious communities as their Father, for is he not the immediate Superior of those many Mother Houses that centre in Montreal, such as the Grey Nuns, the Sisters of Jesus and Mary, the Sisters of Mercy? Then, he finds here a large number of priests either belonging originally to that nursery of priests, Ville Marie, or ordained by himself. Everywhere he meets with dear friends and ardent admirers, and none more so than Adelard, his brother Archbishop.

Among the many plausible explanations of the pseudo-Malachian motto "Ignis ardens" (burning fire) attached to the present Pope, a distinguished visitor suggests that it may refer to the fact that Pius X. is the first Pope that smokes. That he does, seems to be generally admitted. Whence one may infer that the burning of this Nicotian incense is no bar to holiness.

His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface introduces the Holy Father's encyclical in a short but pithy circular. He styles the Papal document a message of charity, peace and hope. He calls attention especially to the fact that Pius X. attributes the contemporary decay of faith, not to the progress of science, but to sheer ignorance, and that the Pope insists on religious instruction as the principal way to "restore all things in Christ."

There is much unconscious humor in the fact chronicled by the Telegram last Wednesday, that a certain venerable dame, lately deceased, the mother and grand mother of seven Protestant ministers, was born "a Roman Catholic, and became a member of the Church of England, over fifty years ago, through the means of a New Testament which was given to her husband when he was a child," and that "this New Testament, a valued heirloom, is now in the possession" of one of her sons, rector of a church in this city. That New Testament must be a curiosity, if it

estranged her from the Catholic Church. Perhaps if the valued heirloom were examined, it would be found to be judiciously expurgated of inconvenient texts, such as "Thou art Peter, etc." Whose sins you shall forgive, etc." This is my body, this is my blood." "The Church, the pillar and ground of truth." "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord . . . for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." "Our beloved brother Paul . . . in all his epistles . . . in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Mr. Preuss's "Review" very properly scores that pretentious Catholic magazine, "Men and Women," of Cincinnati, for praising Parkman as if he were conscientious and truthful. Francis Parkman, as Mr. Edouard Richard proves conclusively in his two volumes on "Acadia," is a most skillful and systematic distorter of history. He is even more dangerous, because more plausible and less easy to detect, than Froude.

Persons and Facts

Dr. Mecklenburg, the eye specialist, of 207 Portage Avenue, is a graduate of the University of Munich, Bavaria. His many testimonials from prominent public and professional men in Canada and the United States are really worth examining. He uses the "shadow test system," which enables him to see the interior of the eye, thereby avoiding mistakes.

Mr. H. A. Wise, the druggist, has moved into his new place at the entrance of the McIntyre Block, 414 Main Street. It is a pleasure to see how tastily all his drugs, perfumes, etc., are arranged.

"The Universe, of London (Eng.), November 14, announces that Mrs. Dowie, wife of the "Prophet," and Dr. J. A. Gladstone Dowie, son of the same, were badly received by a very small audience in Caxton Hall.

A cablegram from Marseilles, dated November 21, says that the expulsion of the Fathers from the Oblate Convent on Calvaire, was achieved that day by the police in spite of strong passive resistance on the part of the fathers. The police were compelled to demolish the doors of the Convent, enter the Chapel and sanctuary and then break down barriers which had been erected before the cells and drag out the occupants. A large crowd witnessed the expulsion, but no interference with the police was attempted.

By the official report of the Labor Bureau of the United States, we glean the following statistics of divorce in different countries:

	1886.
France	6,245
Germany	6,161
Austria	1,718
Russia	1,789
Italy	556
Great Britain and Ireland	508
Holland	339
Sweden	229
Canada	4
United States	25,535

When Lord Northcote recently vacated the governorship of Bombay to become Governor-general of Australia, the Bombay post was offered to Sir Anthony McDonnell, but he very naturally declined to give up his present post in Ireland.

Lieutenant P. H. Sheridan, of the Fifth Cavalry, a son of the famous Civil War general, has arrived at San Francisco from the Philippines, after a year's campaigning.

Rev. Father Wilpert, Papal envoy recently presented to Emperor William of Germany the Pope's present of an illustrated book of Roman art.

His Grace Archbishop Bruchesi dined with Hon. Judge Prud'homme last Saturday evening. They were college friends at the Montreal College. By a curious coincidence last Saturday was Judge Prud'homme's fiftieth birthday; he has been on the bench nineteen years. Archbishop Bruchesi is two years his junior.

The Archbishops of St. Boniface and Montreal spent Monday evening at the Hon. Judge Dubuc's, in Hargrave street.

Mr. Charles Kelly, fireman, of 173 Maple street, has lost a valuable volume entitled "The Faith that Never Dies." It dropped out of a large parcel somewhere in the north end of the city. The book, if found, should be brought to the office of the Northwest Review.

Winter is here for good. The mercury once touched 25 below zero this week. Sleighing is pretty fair.

Clerical News.

Rome, Nov. 13—Dr. B. F. De Costa formerly a distinguished Episcopal minister of New York, who came to Rome last January with Mgr. Kennedy, rector of the American College to study for the priesthood, has been obliged to go to Piesole, near Florence, because of the bad condition of his health.

Dr. De Costa has become so seriously ill that it has been decided to hasten his ordination. He will be made a subdeacon Nov. 15, a deacon Nov. 22 and a priest Nov. 29.

Rev. Father Rutten, S.M., a Hollander, stayed here last Monday on his way to the Pacific coast, continuing his journey the next day.

Rev. Father Kostorz will have charge of Hun's Valley and dependent missions.

Rev. Father Van Gistern, O.M.I., now has charge of three German settlements at Indian Head, Qu'Appelle Station and File Hills. There is a small village of German Catholics south of Qu'Appelle station, where they have a church which is already too small for the congregation, so that they will have to build soon.

Rev. Father Beys, O.M.I., who has mastered the Cree language in a very short time, has charge of the Indians around Indian Head, Qu'Appelle Station and the File Hills.

Very Rev. Father P. Magnan, Vicar of the Oblate Missions, recently made a rather trying journey to Cross Lake. On the way he and his companions Rev. Fathers Poitras, Hugonard and Beys, O. M. I., had to remain one whole week with nothing to do but wait for a steamer at Warren's Landing, north of Lake Winnipeg, 400 miles from here. At Cross Lake they found the intrepid and zealous Father Bonald, who makes his headquarters there and thence visits the neighboring fishing stations where the Indian fishermen have been very successful this year. Several of these Indians are nominal Protestants, evangelized by