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SATURDAY, DEC. 24, 1904.

Calendar for Next Week.

DECEMBER.

- 25—Sunday—Christmas Day. The Na-
tivity of Our Blessed Lord.
- 26—Monday—St. Stephen, First Mar-
tyr of Christ.
- 27—Tuesday—St. John, Apostle and
Evangelist.
- 28—Wednesday—The Holy Innocents.
- 29—Thursday—St. Thomas, Archbis-
hop of Canterbury, Martyr.
- 30—Friday—Office of the Sunday in
the octave of Christmas.
- 31—Saturday—St. Sylvester, Pope.

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA DEFENDS ITSELF

In common with most of our Catholic contemporaries we have received from the Rector of "The Catholic University of America," Monsignor D. J. O'Connell, a letter marked "private," although there is nothing private about it, requesting us to publish all or part of an enclosed statement, with such editorial comment as we think proper. Several of our contemporaries, we notice, have published the statement without any comment, as if it was the result of their own investigations. We prefer to reprint the statement with our own comments.

A gratifying recognition of the eminent standing of the Catholic University of America among our celebrated educational institutions has been received recently from the University of Berlin. A communication from that famous educational center includes the Catholic University of America among the few American institutions whose bachelor's degree is accepted as the equivalent of the German requirements for admission to work for the doctorate in philosophy. Moreover, the three years term of residence hitherto rigorously required there of all candidates for the doctorate has been shortened to three semesters, or one and a half years, for students who receive the baccalaureate degree from any one of these universities and who do some graduate work at them. In virtue of this privilege, American students who desire to obtain the doctor's degree at the University of Berlin may do a large part of the work at one of the recognized home institutions, and obtain credit for the same in Berlin.

These concessions are made only to the institutions in the Association of American Universities. This organization represents the highest attainments of American scholarship, being composed of Harvard, Clark, Yale, Columbia, Cornell, Princeton, Pennsylvania, Johns Hopkins, and the Catholic University of America in the east, and Michigan, Chicago, Wisconsin, California, and Leland Stanford in the west.

The membership of the Catholic University of America in this Association is a testimonial of the excellent work it has accomplished in the comparatively few years that have intervened since its foundation. It is a recognition of merit by those most competent to judge, and an acknowledgment of its contributions to the intellectual life of the nation on the part of its foremost investigators. We admit that this recognition by Berlin and consequent admission to the charmed circle of the fourteen "great" universities of the United States sounds very fine. But what does it amount to at bottom? Have the Berlin University directors sent one of their men over to see for himself what was the standing of the Catholic University in the States? We are not told so, nor is it likely. Most probably the Rector himself, who has a European reputation due to his long residence in Rome, has some powerful friend in the council of Berlin University, to whom he has sent "The Episcopate, the People and the Catholic University of America," a pamphlet intended to boom that institution, and containing letters full of glittering general statements of results. To

this he has no doubt added descriptions of the imposing buildings of the Catholic University with their immense cost and the large salaries of a numerous faculty, together with the learned titles of the subjects they are meant to teach. The Berlin University authorities, seeing this array of testimonials from the Episcopate, and supposing, from the name, that this was the only Catholic University in America, concluded that it must be doing splendid work, and therefore recognized its bachelor's degree.

The present year is one of unparalleled activity at the University. Three important contributions to knowledge have just come from the press: Dr. Moore's "Study in Reaction-Time and Movement," Dr. Trahey's "De Nominibus et Verbis Ennodi Hieronymique inter se collatis," and Dr. Nieuwland's "Reactions of Acetylene." Other books in press or in immediate preparation for printing are Dr. Melody's "Physical Basis of Marriage," Dr. Butin "On the Pentateuch," Dr. Oswald's "Prepositions in Apollonius Rhodius," Dr. Healy's "The Valerian Persecution," "Responsibility and the Moral Life" by Dr. O'Connor, "St. Francis, Social Reformer" by Dr. Dubois, and Dr. Dubray's "The Theory of Psychological Disposition."

Note that three only of these ten publications have appeared as yet, and that, judging from the titles not one of the three has anything to do with Catholicism. Three or four of the others may have. We shall see when they appear. But in these days of aggressive scientific materialism what a Catholic university should produce first of all is a library of triumphant answers to the specious but shallow objections of infidels. We do not see anything of that sort in the "unparalleled activity" of the present year. However, the Rector is quite satisfied, as may be seen from the paragraph that follows.

This creditable array of recent publications (seven-tenths of which are not yet published and may not be for another year) illustrates the earnestness of the professors of the Catholic University of America in their efforts for the realization of the hopes of the University's founders, and indicates the distinguished character of the work which will be done to a much greater extent than the plans of the Trustees for increasing the number of its students are in practical operation.

These last words let the cat out of the bag. During the past twelve years the Catholic University has always been announcing new plans for increasing the number of its students, and yet its Rector now implies that the number is still unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, this is the crucial test of real success. Unfortunately, nowhere in his statement can the Rector apply this test. All statistics are wisely eschewed.

In addition to producing such works as those just enumerated, and thus stimulating and developing intellectual life, the University exerts its influence on higher education in a less apparent but very effectual manner. A considerable part of its student body is made up of members of the religious communities in residence around the University. Though few of these men take a complete course or remain until they attain the doctor's degree, because the exigencies of their congregations call them away to become teachers in the various colleges of their orders, they profit by their stay at the University and are better equipped for their work as instructors.

This indirectly corroborates what we said in our recent article on the kind of students who attend: "Many of the theological students attending the University lectures, far from being, as the original purpose was, priests ordained after a full seminary course of theology, had studied no theology at all before entering the University;" and now we learn that few of them even complete their course!

It is gratifying to learn that the Trustees of the University have decided to proceed at once with the full development of undergraduate courses of study. Two motives impelled to this action: the desire of increasing the productivity of the University in all its departments by the better preparation of young men for subsequent scientific investigation and research in the graduate schools and in the learned professions, and the urgent necessity of doing something to prevent the continued increase in the number of our young men attending non-Catholic institutions.

During the ten years which ended with that of 1900, the attendance at non-Catholic colleges increased 60 per cent., while that of our Catholic col-

leges showed, at the most a very meagre gain.

Why does the writer of this statement not give the percentage of this "meagre" gain, while he gives the percentage of non-Catholic increase? We know of several Catholic colleges in the United States where the increase, from 1890 to 1900, must have been nearly 60 per cent. And even if it was meagre on the average, that average increase was certainly greater than the increase of students in the Catholic University during the last ten years.

During this period of time our Catholic population maintained its normal growth, our people became more prominent in intellectual activity and our students increased in the proper ratio of numbers. This increment of our student body must have been educated, but in non-Catholic institutions. It is obvious that the majority of students who frequent non-Catholic universities and colleges do so in order to acquire a training which our colleges cannot afford. None of our colleges has or can hope to have an educational equipment which approaches in efficiency that of the larger American seats of learning, and, accordingly, such colleges will remain powerless to arrest the movement of our young men into other schools, the atmosphere of which is hostile to our faith. The Catholic University of America alone is in a position to retard this exodus of our laity, it alone has called together a corps of professors trained in the great universities of the world, side by side with many of the instructors who draw our students to their classrooms and laboratories.

Why, in the world, then, does it not retard "this exodus of the laity"? In spite of having all these advantages for quite a number of years, "it alone" does not seem to keep pace with the numerical advance of other Catholic universities in the United States. What can be the reason of this lamentable failure, of this contrast between splendidly supported hopes and such meagre results? No other, we believe, than the adoption of non-Catholic standards of education: fine buildings, highly paid professors, a multitude of special courses; in other words, a university must be a caravansary of innumerable unconnected departments, the more the better, with the result that such universities give no real mental training and produce nothing of any value but specialist professors and their learned treatises which no one who can do otherwise ever reads. The way to keep Catholic boys out of non-Catholic universities is to educate their parents, from the pulpit and the Catholic press, in the true principles of mental development, to prove to them that acquaintance with a host of disconnected subjects is not knowledge but dissipation of mind, that this flimsy, non-Catholic training is responsible for the ease with which the false reasonings of materialistic science deceive the world, and that the only chance of escaping a like deception is a thorough Catholic training by men who know how to think.

Having thus quoted and commented on every word of the Rector's statement, we leave his closing paragraph to the tender mercies of our readers.

Therefore, the Board of Trustees have inaugurated a new era in the history of Catholic education by placing the laboratories and libraries of the University at the disposal of a larger body of lay students working under the direction of the trained investigators of its professorial corps. It is to be hoped that, henceforth, every Catholic citizen of the United States will feel that he has a direct personal interest in the University, that it belongs to the Catholic people of the country, and that it is their right to partake of its advantages, and their duty to defend it and support it liberally.

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