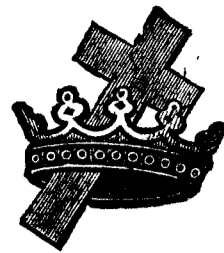


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CANADA'S DELEGATE.

HE IS AN AMERICAN CITIZEN AND AN ITALIAN ARCHBISHOP.

Catholic Columbian.

An item of great interest to our Catholic friends across the border stated the other day that Abp. Diomede Falconio, O.S.F., had been appointed first apostolic delegate to the Dominion.

Mgr Falconio was born at Pescocostanzo, a little town in the province of Abruzzo, Italy, in 1842, and at an early age joined the Franciscans who are numerous in that part of his native land. He spent the first four years of his religious life with the Franciscans of the Italian province of San Bernardine, and then he was sent to Rome, where he studied for five years. While still a scholastic, he had a companion, who afterwards became the well-known Fra. Anacletus de Roccagorga, O.S.F., was sent out to St. Bonaventure's, Allegany, N.Y., where they taught. In 1866 Fra. Diomede, who afterwards became president of St. Bonaventure's was priested by Bp. Timon, and before his ordination he and Fra. Anacletus became citizens of this country, and both frequently voted in state and national elections. The two Franciscans were subsequently sent to Winsted, Conn., a Franciscan mission, but after two years of service there Fra. Diomede was ordered to Harbor Grace, N.F., which diocese was then governed by a Franciscan bishop, Dr. Carfagnini. For ten years the future delegate labored in that bleak land, and then he was recalled to this country, and sent to help Fra. Anacletus, who then had charge of a large congregation in the lower part of New York City. While engaged on this mission Fra. Diomede obtained permission to revisit his aged parents in Italy. He fully expected to be back in New York in a few months; but while in Italy he was named provincial of one of the Franciscan districts there, San Bernardine, his own native province. His administration proved so successful that the general of the order noted it, and the result was that, after serving as provincial for two terms, he was elected procurator-general of his order.

Then the Pope took a hand at honoring him, and named him Bishop of Lacedogua, and a few months afterwards put him at the head of the United Italian dioceses of Acerenza and Metra. At the time that a delegate was to be appointed for this country Mgr Falconio's name was mentioned as likely to prove that of the papal representative. Mgr Satolli was, however, selected. Mgr Falconio is described as a tireless worker, a skilful organizer and a man of broad views, gentle ways and affable and courteous manners. He speaks English and French as fluently as his native tongue, and if he prove to be Canada's first permanent papal representative, our northern neighbors are to be congratulated upon their good fortune in securing so capable and accomplished a delegate.

THOSE MISSING DOILIES.

A STRANGE STORY OF COVETOUSNESS, REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION.

From the Chicago Record.

The upper crust of Washington society is just now agitated by a little sensation. It is a trifling matter, to be sure, but it involves a mystery and the good name of one of the prominent women in the Diplomatic Corps. Last winter several ladies who gave fine dinners and luncheons missed doilies. Some of them were of expensive embroidery, others of rich lace, and, while they are little, useless ornaments, a set represents a good deal of money, and to lose one of a set is to make the others practically useless, as every body knows. It is common at state dinners to call in caterers, who provide the table attendants, and many a serious consultation took place between fashionable caterers and hospitable women over the disappearance of these doilies, which, of course, was charged to the servants. Finally the leading caterer of the capital called the attention of one of the Cabinet ladies to a singular coincidence.

Doilies had been missed at every one of half a dozen dinners and luncheons he had served where the wife of a certain foreign Minister had been a guest. None had ever disappeared when she was not present. It was a startling suggestion that would not do to repeat. The lady might be a kleptomaniac, but to accuse her of stealing would cause international complications for which nobody cared to assume the responsibility. The caterers whose waiters had been accused held a conference. They decided among themselves that the woman referred to was guilty, but dared not accuse her even to exculpate themselves; so they devised a novel scheme, and when they found her name on a dinner card they removed the valuable doily from her plate at the table and substituted one of those cheap paper affairs that you find in the restaurants. The ruse was successful. There was no more complaint.

Three or four months passed by. The incident was almost forgotten, when a matronly woman, evidently of Irish blood, who declined to give her name, called at the residences of the Vice-Pres., several members of the Cabinet and Diplomatic Corps and at private houses where the upper crust are frequently entertained, and inquired if the lady of the house had missed any of her doilies last winter; if so, would she kindly get the pattern. When a sample was brought the mysterious visitor retired into a corner with an apology and pretty soon handed back the sample with the missing piece of lace or embroidery. In this way nearly all of the missing doilies have been returned without any further explanation, although the general understanding is that their recovery is due to the confessional of the Catholic Church.

Rev. Father Grenier, S.J., said Mass at Austin last Sunday.

BUILDING A RELIGION WITHOUT FAITH

A PROTESTANT MOVEMENT FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY THAT IS FOREDOOMED TO FAILURE

From the New York Sun.

A movement for Christian unity has been started in New York, but it is Protestant unity only. The Roman Catholic Church is excluded, though manifestly there can be no real Christian unity unless the majority of Christendom, which renders spiritual allegiance to the Pope, is brought into it. The great division is between Catholicism and Protestantism. In the first there is already complete unity so far, at least, as against Protestantism is divided into numerous denominations as necessity of its very genius.

This movement for Protestant unity, therefore, in not for "immediate organic unity." That is dismissed by those concerned in the enterprise as impossible. It is simply for "reciprocation in religion" and "inter-religious co-operation," the circular announcing the project asking: "Has not the hour now come when the Churches should join hands in a new brotherhood?" With that end in view, a "State Conference" is to be held in New York, and like conferences are to be held in other States.

Already however, the theological and doctrinal enmities between these many Churches have lost their old bitterness, and they are no longer at sword's point; yet where there has been any obliteration of their lines of denominational distinction it has been due to declining belief on both sides or on all sides. If they come together, it will be because they are now indifferent where once they were fired with earnest conviction. When orthodox Protestants are prepared to go into conference with Unitarians the days of orthodoxy as a living faith are drawing to a close. The two are not attracted together by a common belief, but rather by a common unbelief. On that infidel ground unity may be possible, even organic unity; for only so long as each denomination devoutly believes that it exists separately in obedience to Divine command it is impossible. If, following the example of the agnostic, they all confess that the mystery of life and death is unfathomable by men, there will be no difficulty in their getting together as a philanthropic organization, with a common ethical system as a substitute for their old religion.

The new view of the Bible introduced at this time by the Briggs school of critics, though not originated by them, for it is a half century old, is dividing every Protestant Church into believers in Scriptural inspiration and those who loom upon the Bible as a fallible human production "containing revelation"—the meaning of which phrase is explained by Dr. Lyman Abbott when he puts Abraham Lincoln on the same plane of authority as the old Hebrew prophets. Accordingly, the younger generation is growing up to a

large extent without the old faith in the Bible. Recent literature bears notable evidences of this change; it is losing its Biblical color. Many men in the Churches who once accepted the Bible unquestionably and without a thought of criticizing it have now ceased to regard it reverentially. Dr. Briggs professes, with the assent of Bishop Potter, that he has made it more "vital," but he has killed the Book for all those who have been affected by his teachings. That is a fact apparent to every observer, and there is no getting away from it.

The unbelievers, as we have said, may combine to get up a new Christianity, with a purely ethical system as a substitute for the old theology. But the believers, where will they go? It seems not improbable that they will undergo a change of sentiment toward the Roman Catholic Church, with which they will be in sympathy, so far as concerns the infallibility of the Bible, while they must turn away sharply from the infidelity of the Briggs disciples. Really the great rock of defense of the inspiration of the Scriptures is now the Roman Church, and its exclusion from consideration by the proposed conference on religious unity suggests that the movement is propelled specifically by the new unbelief in the Bible. That it is a project for unity in unbelief rather than belief, for a sort of agnostic combination, the interest in it and sympathy with it manifested by Unitarians seem to bear witness.

The movement will never come to anything, however, for there is nothing to give it life. It is only an attempt to gloss over religious negation so as to give it the semblance of positive religious faith.

THE MIDDLE AGES.

Providence Visitor.

The commencement orator is abroad, and "rechauffes," more or less spicy, of old familiar subjects are served up for the delectation of admiring audiences. We had occasion to look over the first "oration" of the season in these parts.

It is about the progress of science and the relations between science and religion, and is as valuable as such things usually are. Our interest in it is confined to the opening paragraph. To emphasize the glories of the present age, the speaker "cast a glance backward" upon the period popularly known as the "Dark Ages." A gruesome vision unfolded itself before his gaze. It was a time when humanity was impotent; when the Church exercised complete and uncontested dominion; when ignorance was dense and widespread and superstition was flagrant and universal. It was a period "of ecclesiastical tyranny and intellectual bondage." "Free thought was condemned everywhere by the Church, and few indeed cared or dared to know anything beyond the accepted dogmas." The compiler of the oration in question is a master-hand at generalizations. Within the brief space of 15 lines he has managed

to summarize the whole contention of historians of the school of Robertson, whose broad and baseless assertions have been repeated so often that they form part of the hereditary convictions of multitudes of English-speaking peoples. On the Continent the study of the middle ages has become more and more general, serious and popular. Those who first among Catholics put their hands to the task nearly 50 years ago deserve undying gratitude. They have done much to revise the verdicts of wilful ignorance and among them Montalembert stands pre-eminent. The opening volume of his "Monks of the West" taken with Dr. Mailland's "Dark Ages" is the principal work upon which, so far as we know, English speaking Catholics must rely for help in challenging the calumnies and misrepresentations of those whose scorn of the middle ages is the outcome of their hatred for the mediæval faith.

Perhaps no period of Christian history, has been more misjudged than the so-called dark ages. And a large part of the judgments passed upon that period is mere declamation representing the prejudice of the partisan rather than the calm, well-founded verdict of the searcher after truths. There are some points, however, which stand out in such strong relief that it is difficult to see how even blind partisanship can overlook them. The first is that the Church civilized the barbarians who destroyed the older Western Empire. Her ministers were the depositaries of the meagre remains of the old Roman culture. They had, thanks to circumstances, the monopoly of education. They were the only class which possessed even the rudiments of knowledge. To say that the Church condemned "free thought" in these days is to talk crass nonsense. The Church did all she could to foster the spread of culture. Little by little, knowledge cherished in the cloisters became more and more diffused until it was disseminated among the masses of the people. Another point is that the Catholic unity in the Middle Ages quenched in no degree either political or intellectual life. The submission of men to the teachings of the Church excluded no prepossession for and no discussion of the great questions of philosophy and morality.

On the whole, perhaps the Dark Ages were not so very dark or our own days so very light as commencement orators want us to believe. Men lived simpler and slower, but surely happier lives. And it is doubtful whether the boasted scientific progress of this century has not degraded men rather than elevated them.

BICYCLE ADMONITION.

"Bredren," said the bicycle parson, "guide youah spiritual bikes in dis yere wo'ld so that you all won't scorch in the nex'."

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