

The Catholic Record.

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Catholic Record.

London, Sat., August 23rd, 1890.

"ERROR AND SUPERSTITION."

The Presbyterian General Assembly of Ireland held its session recently, and, as was to be expected, it did not adjourn without having its usual fling at Roman Catholicism. The Moderator, Rev. Wm. Park, of Belfast, in his closing address, said:

"As we stand and look out upon the coming half century, two great foes face us in these lands. The one is Roman Catholicism, the other is Agnosticism in its various forms. I believe the latter is likely to prove in the future the more formidable foe."

Continuing, he acknowledges that in Germany, the United States, and Canada, the Catholic Church is strong, and also in many other lands, and he complains that especially in the countries named she is fighting for political power and social influence. He adds that the present Pope is a "wise and far seeing man," and that people need not wonder if under his guidance, and that of such men as Cardinal Manning, she will try to put herself at the head of some of the great popular movements of the day.

In Ireland, Mr. Park says, the Church is strong and compact, and Presbyterianism has much to do "before the fortress of error and superstition shall fall." Yet he considers that they have much to encourage them in the contest. He has hope that as the people of Ireland think and read more for themselves the power of the priesthood will be shaken; and even that it has been shaken by the political agitation which has been going on in the country. As a result thereof, he says, "our colporteurs find access and a welcome everywhere."

We have been long accustomed to read these annual solemn pronouncements that the day of doom of the Catholic Church is at hand in one country or another, yet in every case the prophets have been disappointed. It was confidently predicted a few years ago that the iron hand of Bismarck would crush finally the Church in Germany. Old Catholicism—so called—was to supersede the Pope. Yet to day we find Old Catholicism dead, Prince Bismarck retired from active politics, short of the power, if he had still the will, to persecute. Even his journey to Canossa did not save him from this fate; but the Catholic Church in Germany is more active and vigorous and compact than ever, while the Kaiser himself shows the deepest respect and reverence both for the Church and its supreme head. In Canada and the United States also, the other two countries named by Rev. Moderator Park, the Church is also more vigorous than ever before, notwithstanding the violent assaults which have been made upon her by Know-Nothings and fanatics of every shade. It certainly cannot be said that the spread of education has crippled her in these countries. We can, therefore, afford to smile at his predictions that the decay of the Catholic religion in Ireland will come from the diffusion of education, whereas the result has been so different in every other country. We can readily divine that the good reception given to Presbyterian colporteurs is purely imaginary.

It is not necessary for us to refute Mr. Park's statements that it is the aim of the Church to secure political power. It is a notorious fact that in the three countries he has named she has kept aloof from political squabbles, though she has never ceased to claim her liberty of action, when that liberty was endangered.

But, on the other hand, is it not true that Mr. Park's Irish Presbyterian Church has meddled unduly in politics? Had we not last year a declaration from that body hostile to the granting of Home Rule to Ireland? Did not the General Assembly thus take sides with the oppressors of the Irish people for fear they would lose their own political influence? But we shall not dwell upon the politico-religious part of the Moderator's address. We wish to say a word upon the effrontery with which malcontents generally speak of the Catholic Church as a system of "error and superstition."

As regards superstition we well under-

stand that the Presbyterian Moderator means to insinuate that many practices of the Catholic Church are superstitious, such as the use of the sign of the cross and holy water, the respect shown to relics of the saints of God and other sacred objects, but there is not one of these practices which has not its counterpart in or the approbation of Holy Scripture. St. Paul proclaims that he glories in the cross of Christ. (Gal. vi. 14) The relic of the dead body of Jesus is honored by Joseph of Arimathea, and by the holy women who went to the tomb to anoint it with sweet spices. (St. Matt. xxvii. 19, 20; St. Mark, xvi. 1.) God also excites respect even for the handkerchiefs and aprons which had touched the body of St. Paul by miraculous cures wrought through them. (Acts xix. 12) Holy water is ordered to be used in the sacred ceremonies of the old law. (Num. v. 17; xiv. 9, etc.) And among sacred objects, the greatest reverence was enforced towards the ark of God, and the holy ground on which Joshua and Moses stood. (1 Kl. or Samuel, v. 9; 1 Par. or Chron. xlii. 9, 10; Ex. iii. 5; Josh. v. 26.) These practices of the Catholic Church are incentives to devotion.

But the Rev. Moderator should not forget that it was the Presbyterian Kirk which commenced in Scotland the work of systematically burning poor creatures whom they thought proper to call witches, whose only crime was that they were poor and miserable, and from the Presbyterians of Scotland and England, this practice was transplanted to America, where also under Presbyterian auspices—in fact under authority of the Church—the same practice was continued, especially in Massachusetts. Does not all this look like Presbyterian "error and superstition?"

Without changing the author's words, let us here abridge from Mr. Locky's "Rationalism in Europe" what that learned writer says of the Presbyterian treatment of so called witches during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

"There was one country, (Scotland) in which the ministers succeeded in moulding alike the character and habits of the nation, and in disseminating their harsh and gloomy tenets through every section of society. Never was a mental servitude more complete, and never was tyranny maintained with more inexorable barbarity. . . . They maintained their ascendancy over the popular mind by a system of religious terrorism which we can now barely conceive. Their teaching created the superstition of witchcraft. . . . Eagerly, passionately, with a thirst for blood that knew no mercy, with a zeal that never tired, they accomplished their task. Assembled in solemn synod, the Presbytery in 1603 enjoined every minister with two of the elders of his parish, to form an inquisition and to question all the parishioners, upon oath, as to their knowledge of witches. When a woman had fallen under suspicion, the minister from the pulpit denounced her by name, exhorted his parishioners to give evidence against her, and prohibited any one from sheltering her. The witch cases seem to have fallen almost entirely into the hands of the Presbyterian clergy. They were the leading commissioners. Before them the confessions were taken. They were the witnesses or the directors of tortures by which those confessions were elicited."

"And when we read the nature of these tortures which were worthy of an Oriental imagination, when we remember that they were inflicted on old, on feeble, on half-doting women, it is difficult to repress a feeling of the deepest abhorrence for those men who caused and encouraged them."

Down to 1722 these barbarities were continued without abatement, and as late as 1773 "the Presbyterian divines passed a resolution declaring their full belief in witchcraft, and deploring the scepticism that was general." They were evidently anxious to continue to immerse their hands in the blood of the innocent, but they were restrained by the universal disgust which their Moloch-like superstitions had engendered in the minds of the public. This was what the people of Scotland gained by establishing Presbyterianism in lieu of the Catholic religion. As Mr. Locky says:

"The contemplation of such scenes as these is one of the most painful duties that can devolve upon the historian, but it is one from which he must not shrink if he would form a just estimate of the past. Scotch witchcraft was but the result of Scotch Puritanism, and it faithfully reflected the character of its parent."

It is true these things have ceased. But that Presbyterianism is still a system of error is evident enough from the fact that its creed is now in process of reconstruction—from the fact that it is acknowledged by Rev. Philip Schaff, and other prominent divines of the Church, that its ministers now neither preach nor believe the doctrines of the Westminster Confession, though they have not had the courage as yet to substitute a new creed for the old.

It is farcical, under such circumstances, for a Presbyterian, of all men in the world, to speak of the Catholic Church as a system of "error and superstition."

The quarrel and papooses of the celebrated Apache chief Geronimo have been baptized into the Catholic Church at Mount Vernon. The sponsors were prominent citizens of the place. The Rev. H. O'Grady administered the sacrament of regeneration. A large number of Apache Indians were in attendance in full war dress and paint.

METHODIST WIRE PULLERS.

"The Manchester Guardian says that great dissatisfaction is expressed in Wesleyan ministerial circles at the manner in which the lists have been made up of the representatives to attend the forthcoming Methodist Ecumenical Council. It is notorious that among many of the elected representatives, both clerical and lay, official influence and personal canvass had to do with their election. Several of the more prominent Wesleyans, who did not stoop to such practices, have failed to obtain a sufficient number of votes, and thus American Methodism will be deprived of their presence at what promises to be one of the most important ecumenical conferences held in modern times."

If the so-called Methodist Ecumenical Council proves to be anything better than a mutual admiration society it will be a new departure from the usual mode of procedure of Protestant synods. Pan-Anglican synods and Pan-Presbyterian conferences have been held in various cities, both in England and the United States, and what have been the results? No special doctrine has been defined, no steps taken to insure closer union among the varying and divergent branches, no form of worship agreed upon, no ceremonial of administering the sacraments adopted and made imperative, nor, in fact, has anything been decided as to the necessity of baptism or of any other sacrament or ordinance. One would fancy that every Church organization ought to adopt some regulation about securing validity in the sacrament of matrimony, or about safe-guarding the character and innocence of young people who rush all too hastily into the bonds "that never can be broken except by the death of husband or wife." The Protestant clergyman is still permitted to marry people who bring him a license, without making searching inquiry into the antecedents of the man or the woman. He is not even obliged to ask the man (if he be a stranger) whether he is free to marry or not, nor does he insist upon a certificate from the civil or ecclesiastical authorities under whom the previous and greater part of his (the groom's) life was spent. Why does the parson throw all the responsibility upon the issuer of licenses and not first satisfy his own conscience that the man who asks him to bless and ratify his marriage is a free agent and in no way connected by affinity or consanguinity with the person of his choice? No Catholic priest is allowed by the laws of the Church to bless or witness the marriage of people unless they are members of his Church, and unless they have their dwelling, or, at least, a *quasi domicilia*, in the parish over which he presides. At the last Anglican synod, held in Montreal, it was decided not to molest clergymen who in every preside at the marriage ceremony of a divorced man or woman. The resolution, calling for prohibition in such cases, was left over until the next meeting of the chapter of Bishops, which will take place three years hence. Will any of those difficulties be settled or even approached at the coming Methodist Ecumenical Council? Or will the elected representatives, both lay and clerical, adopt any measures toward the discouragement, if not the condemnation, of secret societies, which are fast undermining the bulwarks of the Church itself? According to late statistics, the number of lodges in every American town and city trebles, in some places, quadruples, the number of churches. And it has been ascertained beyond doubt that when competition occurs, on the same evening, between lodge and church, that the lodge is crowded while the church has empty benches. Certainly there is ample field and much call for energetic work in the Methodist Ecumenical Council if it only has the courage to grapple with the difficulties that stand in the way of religion "pure and undefiled." In other matters the Methodist clerical body displays any amount of pluck and determination, especially when a general advance is made against Jesuit Fathers or Catholic Separate schools, or when a call is made for prohibition or for the strict observance of the Sabbath. It seems passing strange and altogether inexplicable that the same body should stand impotent and without a voice of protest in those essentials which lie at the foundation of society, as in the case of marriage, or at the very base of the Church fabric, as in the case of the lodges. If the Church cannot take measures for its own preservation, or adopt some stringent rule to prevent unhappy marriages and abolish divorce and save society—if it feels that it has no authority to direct consciences and enact binding laws—where is the use or the purpose of its holding provincial synods or playing at Ecumenical Councils?

It has been decided to erect a new Catholic church on Locke street south, Hamilton, which will be in charge of Rev. Father Hahn. The new church on the corner of Platon and Mary streets will be ready for use about December 1st. It will be in charge of Rev. Father O'Sullivan.

The Rev. Father Kelly, secretary to His Grace the Archbishop of Kingston, has returned from a visit to the old country.

SIGNOR CRISPI AND THE CHURCH.

Premier Crispi has warned the Italian missionaries in China that they must look to Italy for protection in that country, and not to France, as they have done in the past. It would be well if Signor Crispi were actually to afford protection to missionaries both abroad and at home, but his treatment of the clergy, and especially of the religious orders, gives poor promise of protection to them in any quarter, and his late injunction seems rather to imply that Italian missionaries abroad are to be left to the tender mercies of hostile heathens. The power of France is respected in China, and French protection made the missionaries secure, though the French policy at home was hostile to the Church. Abroad, France, even under the present government, insisted that the rights of French citizens should be respected, but it would appear that Crispi in his jealousy of French influence would rather see the citizenship of his own countrymen disrespected than allow it to be protected by France.

The prospect that Italy will be at all anxious for the protection of the Italian missionaries may be judged from its present treatment of the priesthood and the orders, whose liberty of exercising the most sacred functions of religion, notwithstanding the solemn engagement of the Government through the act of guarantees that the Holy Father should have full liberty in his government of the Church. The nature of the liberty accorded the Holy Father may be judged also from the utterances of Italian journals whenever the Pope is named by them. An instance of this is to be found in their comments on the recent ride which the Pope took, passing by the door of the Mint. It will be remembered that it was said that the Pope had passed from his own territory of the Vatican to Italian territory and had been saluted by the Italian sentinel there stationed; but this has been shown to be false. The fact is now ascertained that there is a passage from the Belvedere Court to the Vatican gardens, the key of which is kept by one of the Pope's Swiss Guards and is closed regularly at night by a Swiss Guard. The painful position of the Pope may be understood from the fact that during the day the Italian sentinel is supposed by the Government authorities to keep watch over the passage, though it is recognized even yet as part of the Pope's territory. It was by this passage that the Pope passed, but he was not recognized by the soldier, nor saluted.

Speaking of this event the *Riforma*, which is Crispi's special organ, insists that it is Italian territory and that all the Vatican itself is Italian territory. As it is understood that the *Riforma* is inspired by Signor Crispi to utter such insults against the Pope whenever occasion requires, it may be seen that the Government has no intention to recognize even the slight liberties which have been guaranteed to him.

The distance traversed by the Pope over the small passage in question was only a couple of yards, yet he is not left in peaceful possession of it. There will evidently be no peaceful possession of the palace he occupies until the powers whose voice will be respected interfere to place him in his proper position as an independent sovereign. It is to be expected that the force of circumstances will before long demand this interference on a matter which concerns every power, not only in Europe, but in the whole world.

UNDESIRABLE SETTLERS.

The Mormons have made considerable progress in their missionary work in several foreign countries, but only in those in which Protestantism is strong. In New Zealand there are said to be 3,000; 500 of whom are converts of the past year. In Switzerland there is a strong popular movement against them, many thousands of workmen having signed petitions to the Federal Council for their expulsion, and it is believed that the Council will accede to the petitioners' request. The system has many followers in Zurich, Geneva and other large towns. In the Canadian North-West, also, desperate efforts are being made to strengthen the organization by obtaining incorporation. The object of this seems to be to attain a foothold similar to that which the Mormons have so long held in Utah, where their people have been compelled to deed their property, both real estate and stock, to the Church, which thus hopes to have full control of their souls and bodies. Mormons have already twenty thousand acres of land in Southern Alberta, besides the homesteads they have acquired from Government. It is surely time that Canadians should be on the alert to prevent the pernicious system from attaining such a position that it may defy the Government of Canada, as it did for so long a time that of the United States.

The Dominion Government, it is true, gave them no encouragement when two years ago a delegation from Lee's Creek visited Ottawa, but they are not dis-

posed to give up their attempt to establish themselves, and they are now making determined efforts to do so.

In Illinois there is another imposture which has obtained a large number of followers who claim that they have established a heaven on earth. Their colony is situated near Rockford, and they acknowledge for their head George Schweinfurth, whom they proclaim to be "the Christ" returned to earth. They are different from the Mormons inasmuch as they live on the free love plan, while the Mormons are polygamous. They resemble the Mormons, however, inasmuch as both systems uproot the very foundation on which the social compact is founded.

The fact that there have been recently several children born in the Rockwood Heaven, the parentage of two of whom is attributed to Schweinfurth, has created great excitement among the people of the neighborhood, who will not endure this indiscriminate cohabitation any longer. They have, therefore, determined that they shall be driven out, and, as they fear that the uncertainty of the law will not effect their purpose by legal means, they threaten to establish a Whitecap association, and to have recourse to tarring and feathering.

In fear of this, Schweinfurth has issued a circular to notify the people. In it he sets forth what he calls the creed and tenets of his faith, the principal feature of which is that it obligates men and women to lead absolutely pure lives. He says in this circular that there is no marrying or giving in marriage by the Church, and that so strict is the discipline, and so great the self-denial among the men that they strictly observe purity.

The latest intelligence is that the people are not satisfied with the explanation, and the probability is that the community will be driven out at all events.

A Protestant minister, Rev. Mr. Condee, has issued a card against the further toleration of the scandal, and, as the district prosecuting attorney says he cannot initiate legal proceedings, Mr. Condee protests against allowing Schweinfurth and the "Heaven" to exist, and calls upon the Knights Templar of the Northern district of Illinois, who meet in Rockford in convocation this week, to preserve the honor of their fair name by assisting to root out the evil.

Under these circumstances Schweinfurth will most probably emigrate, and unless the Dominion Government take steps to show their abhorrence of these dangerous social evils by doing something to repress Mormon polygamy, it is not the most unlikely thing in the world that the "Angelic Community" of Rockford may look upon Canada as a desirable place in which to establish themselves.

CATHOLIC PRESS.

Liverpool Catholic Times.

We commented last week on the extraordinary diversity of types existing among Anglican clergymen, but we never expected to see a single cleric uniting them all in his person. The Anglican Bishop of Christ Church, New Zealand, has, however, performed this remarkable feat. A contemporary truly remarks that the most noteworthy event in connection with the consecration of the new prelate was his description of his own religious opinions. He said that he could best describe himself as "an Evangelical Broad Churchman, holding High Church views, with strong sympathies for those who differed from him." This is very much as if one should describe a horse as being "entirely black, but in great part white; quite colorless, but with a strong dash of all the colors in the rainbow." Possibly the reverend prelate was making fun of the religious convictions of his flock at the expense of his own dignity; or perhaps this is an illustration of the "deeper unity" so loudly praised by Protestants of all denominations.

Ave Maria.

A Baptist preacher in Springfield, Ohio, recently treated his congregation to a reading from "Our Christian Heritage," commending it in enthusiastic terms, and expressing his obligation to Cardinal Gibbons for having "informed his mind and his heart." The *confessors* of our Baptist brother would do well to follow his example. A reading from the New Testament, supplemented by selections from a standard Catholic work, would be a capital programme.

The question of Cardinal Manning's precedence has become a matter for discussion in England. Mr. J. E. C. Bodley, who is referred to as an authority in such matters, has written to the *Morning Post* explaining that, on the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, the place after the royal family given to Cardinal Manning was settled by the Prince of Wales himself. The honor was conferred on the Cardinal "as a personage of princely rank," and also as a tribute to his personal character. The discussion was very unpleasant to Cardinal Manning, who is the most simple and humble of men, and who would gladly surrender his place rather than give offence to any one.

The Conference of the Catholic Truth Society recently held at Birmingham will doubtless have the effect of furthering the interests of Catholicity in England. Many notable papers were read by eminent members. The Right Rev. Bishop of Salford dwelt on the "Conversion of England." The distinguished prelate summarized the history of the Church in that country, and exhorted his hearers not to put all their trust in eloquent discourses and the diffusion of good books. He reminded them that earnest prayer and the example of a

good Christian life are more effective. "The Church," he said, "is represented by Martha and Mary—activity and prayer. The former indeed is commendable and to be assiduously employed, but the latter is 'the one thing necessary'; because the nearer to God, the more pleasing to Him, and therefore the more effectual."

Milwaukee Citizen.

A Presbyterian clergyman at Derry, in Ireland, says that seventy thousand Orangemen are armed to resist Home Rule. Well, seventy thousand Orangemen are not much, and brickbats are not formidable weapons unless convent windows are to be broken. A larger question presents itself in the same connection: Who will furnish the whiskey? If we have read history aright, Belfast mobs do not fight well unless they are furnished with whiskey. They need to be well lubricated or else they pick up cobbles slowly. A great question that has been waiting seven years for settlement will not be greatly disturbed by the bluster of a few thousand Orangemen. Many Irish reforms (in fact all Irish reforms) have progressed in spite of this bluster during the last fifty years. We think Home Rule will get along with as little interruption from this source.

London Universe.

May a priest be compelled by a court of law to reveal things which have come to his knowledge in the confessional? The question arose a few days ago in the Assize Court of the Haute Loire Department in France, and Abbe Jeanjean, a priest, of Riottard, in that Department, was fined five francs because he would not complete his evidence by relating what he had been told in the course of confession. The matter will come on, on appeal, before the Supreme Court of France, and speculation is now rife as to the way in which that Court will decide. It will be remembered that during the Tichborne trial one of the clerical witnesses, while declining to state what "the undoubted Roger Tichborne" had told him in the course of confession, readily gave evidence as to what he had not told him, and that negative evidence was of great weight in the event. It would be a strange thing if the Supreme Court of Catholic France were to decide in such a way as to question the immutability which the confessional has enjoyed at all times and in all countries.

Pittsburgh Catholic.

What a missionary outfit is, from England to evangelize the people of Africa, as we learn from the *Catholic Times* of Liverpool, consists as follows: The cargo of the vessel which took out fourteen Protestant missionaries to Kephart, Africa, recently, consisted of 10,000 cases of rum, 11 cases of gin, and 260 tons of gunpowder. Is this one of the glorious results of the "reformation?"

England, with all her greatness, has been a heavy sufferer by the change from Catholic unity to the reformation diversity of religions. How utterly heathen a large class of its people are may be inferred from the statement made by one of the clergymen of the country, the Rev. Benjamin Waugh, who asserts that in England "a thousand children a year are murdered for insurance money." Justice Willis declares: "I cannot but believe that there are there are thousands of mothers in England who would murder their children for half a crown."

The beautiful action of Dr. Burtzell, of New York City, in submitting humbly and gracefully to the decision in his case made at Rome, reminds us, forcibly, of a similar scene in the life of the great Fénélon, Archbishop of Cambrai, in France. He had a controversy on some points of theology with the equally celebrated Bossuet; and an appeal was made to Rome. The Pontiff decided against the Archbishop, and he read his condemnation from his own pulpit—submitting as Dr. Burtzell has done. Conduct like this is a proof of *real greatness*. Men of the stamp of Luther were not equal to the occasion, and, consequently, fell.

Renewed attention is drawn recently by the *N. Y. Sun* to the contrast in the New England States between the families of the old Puritan stock and those of the foreigners, chiefly Catholics. The *Sun's* article shows clearly that the Puritan element is dying out, and this, entirely, from causes that might have been controlled—in fact as the direct result of moral conditions which threaten civilization in any country in which they existed. The fact that Boston's population is more than one-half Catholic is borne out by the children of the Puritans who turned the land. But what would become of New England if the "Foreigner" had not invaded it? According to the *Sun*, the Puritan race will die out utterly within the coming half century.

A GREAT CHARITY.

ART, INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL EXHIBITION IN AID OF THE HÔTEL DIEU HOSPITAL, WINDSOR, ONT.

Everything, so far, goes to show that this exhibition will be a success. To speak only of the art department, the picture gallery will certainly be the finest ever exhibited anywhere in the Dominion of Canada. The number of rare and valuable oil paintings coming from the ancient monasteries and convents of Austria and Germany already foot up to nearly one hundred and fifty, and, before the exhibition opens, there may be more. This grand collection of works of art will, moreover, be increased by the addition of a large number of modern paintings, loaned for the occasion. Persons engaged in any business which demands advertising, and having no exhibits to furnish, will find it to their advantage to contribute framed advertising cards to the exhibition. Such cards to be 3 feet wide and 4 high, the frame included. For the privilege of exhibiting each such card, \$5.00 will be charged. To encourage competition in the advertising line a prize, consisting of a valuable ancient oil painting, will be given for the finest card on exhibition. To each of the two next best cards will be adjudged a fine large oleograph or steel engraving. For further particulars address Rev. J. T. Wagner, P. P. Dunn, Windsor, Ont.