

THE SECOND PLENARY SYNOD OF MAYNOOTH.

In the January number of the "American Catholic Quarterly Review," appears a most able and touching article, from the pen of the Rev. M. O'Riordan, D.D. D.C.L., of Limerick, on the subject of "The Second Plenary Synod of Maynooth." Not one paragraph of this instructive contribution should be neglected; but, its length, naturally prevents us from reproducing it in full. There are, however, a few pages that we cannot refrain from giving to our readers—both on account of the historical information that they contain and the evidence of Ireland's fidelity to the Faith that they present.

limited by the ideals of Irish faith. Better work may come from abroad and in exceptional cases it would be insular narrowness to set it aside. But in general our churches should be the homes and the shrines of a sacred art which we call our own. The art of every people had to pass through a process of development. Every best begins at its worst; and if we wait till we are at our best we shall keep waiting forever. Cimabue and Giotto came before Fra Angelico, and if these had been disregarded for Greek models Italy to-day would present the absurdity of a naturalistic Christian art as represented by Titian and Benvenuto Cellini instead of the noble productions of the pre-Raphaelite painters; and the influence of those two schools of artists have been as divergent and far-reaching as have been literature created by Dante and Petrarch on the one hand and by Boccaccio on the other.

lity. The Rosary was the only form of public devotion which the people had always performed, and they have clung to it with a devoted fidelity which is not to be found elsewhere in Christendom. In some country places the people assemble in the chapel before Mass on Sunday where some pious and intelligent man of the parish "gives out" the Rosary, and the others join in. There is hardly a Catholic family in Ireland in which the Rosary is not recited every night during Lent and Advent, and in most of them throughout the entire year. The Association of the Holy Family, introduced a few years ago by the Holy Father, has marked a great revival of the Rosary devotion in Ireland.

we cannot allow the following splendid historical summary to pass unnoticed. With it we leave Rev. Dr. O'Riordan's grand paper, to those who have the advantage and privilege of reading the full text in the "Review." He says:— "During the reign of Henry VIII. about 1,000 educational institutions were destroyed in Ireland. Out of confiscated Catholic property and public money were founded: The Parish School Act in 1537, Diocesan Free Schools in 1570, Trinity College in 1591, Royal Free Schools in 1605, Erasmus Smith Schools in 1609, The Blue Coat Schools in 1672 with the purpose of making the Irish Protestant in faith and English in sympathy. By the 7th of William and Mary all Papists were prohibited from teaching school under heavy penalties; and the children who went abroad for education as well as the parent who sent him forth all their belongings. Henceforth arose the "hedge-schools."

tion the Synod will probably have little to say that has not been said already in 1850 and 1875. For, in this the Government has done little or nothing. They have an intermediate system by which Catholic youth are prepared for and encouraged to aspire to a university training, whilst they deny a university where the Catholic youth may go for it with safety to their faith.

ment, both times with overwhelming majorities. This proves not only the superficial and trivial character of the so-called representatives of the nation, but also confirmed the long existing suspicion that a conspiracy to overthrow the Saracco Ministry had been organized by Signor Sonnino. The latter, however, played his cards too openly, and by revealing his motives and his boundless ambition, found himself isolated, and lost the game just at the moment when he considered his triumph as assured. After making the necessary arrangements, Sonnino will in all probability lose the race for power to his rival, Signor Giolitti, who is a great favorite of the present King and has already been called to the Quirinal. The two most likely candidates for the Premiership are generally considered Signor Giolitti and Signor Villa, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, who has in that capacity given proof of great tact and energy, without estranging the sympathies of any party. After Sonnino's blundering generalship, the Conservatives have lost all chance of forming a Government, and it is certain that the task of reconstituting the Cabinet will be confided to the Liberals.

BIGOTRY SCORED

It would seem that prejudice and bigotry amongst politicians down by the sea are unfortunately too remarkable; but, sad to say, the same evil spirits haunt almost every part of the Dominion. A very able and pointed article from The Freeman on this subject, has just come under our notice. Leaving aside the local issues referred to in the opening of that article, especially concerning the city of St. John, and some of its magistrates, we will reproduce the same and timely remarks of a more general kind. The writer says:— "Manifestations of intolerance are becoming the rule rather than the exception. The weak and narrow-minded bigot has possession of our civic, provincial and federal chambers. In every little hamlet where a municipal body meets, some extremist airs his views. He poses as a man with a grievance against his neighbor, simply because that neighbor is born of a different faith. The fact is forgotten that though of a different religious belief, the citizen that is abhorred is entitled to the same respect, the same courteous treatment, and the same privilege as the more favored citizen, whose only claim to worth is an accident of birth.

Before the churches and their emblems were confiscated a priest was present at the churchyard to perform the burial service at the grave. Then the churches and the churchyard passed under the control of the parson, and Catholic burial service was prohibited. The people served the difficulty by taking some of the earth from the grave, often by the priest; they then take and scatter it on the grave before the coffin is lowered down into it; so that in spite of the law and without the aid of spiritual life, if the body of the deceased would be laid to rest in consecrated clay. That custom is kept up to the present day.

One can readily understand how priests were brought up in such circumstances were glad to get live at all, and did not always encourage sodalities and popular devotions such as we are used to at present. We now think them indispensable elements of spiritual life; if we had lived in Ireland in the days and circumstances of our fathers we must think otherwise. It must not be thought, however, that sodalities were unknown in Ireland till lately. I have in my possession some books of devotion specially compiled for the use of Sodalties of the Blessed Sacrament and other confraternities, printed in Dublin, Cork, Waterford or Limerick, in the early years of the century. I have heard of a poor old woman who died a few years ago at a great age, and who could sing the Latin hymns and recite the Latin psalms of Vespers from memory. She had learnt them in her early days in Limerick. But it is only within the present generation that popular devotions have spread to the masses. There are few parishes in country or town where Sacred Heart Sodalties are not established. Even now the outside world is not aware of the extent to which they have grown. A great many practices of piety go on, and a good deal of spiritual activity is abroad all over the country which outsiders or passing visitors would not have suspected. There are many parishes in country or town where the Church is generally known; not so numerous as elsewhere, because Protestantism in Ireland is a symbol of ascendency, and religious conviction, whilst Catholicism carries with it in their minds the tradition of inferiority and exclusion from the good things which the world has to offer.

Bigotry scored. It is the unwritten law rather than the more favored citizen, whose only claim to worth is an accident of birth. In a great many cases the citizen who is looked down upon and detested by such a bigot is a credit to the community in which he lives. This picture is no figment of the imagination, but a cold, plain, everyday fact. No distorted fancy need be conjured up to bring one to the realization of this truly existing condition of men and matters in this Canada of ours.

It seems a shame and a blot upon our escutcheon that this spirit of bigotry and intolerance should be allowed to prevail. How can we, in fairness, seek to induce immigrants to come to our country in the face of such a religious and racial prejudice. We cannot send emissaries to Ireland, or in fact, to any other land, to seek to bring to our shores the class of immigrants which the country desires to see peopled in our land.

Then dealing with the distress all over Italy, we are treated to this sombre picture:— "Whatever the political shade of the future Government may be, Italians are wearily convinced that it will follow the fate of its predecessors and collapse ignominiously after a few months of useless and empty wrangling at Montecitorio. But while the politicians battle for power and neglect useful legislation in order to satisfy the stimuli of their individual ambition, the country suffers cruelly from the abandonment in which it is left by those who call themselves its representatives, and whose duty it would be to safeguard its interests. The distress in Italy is increasing every day by leaps and bounds, and in some provinces actually borders on famine and starvation. Take, for instance, the unfortunate island of Sardinia. During the last twelve years no fewer than 52,000 evictions for non-payment of taxes were compared to that of the population, shows that one out of every 19 inhabitants was left utterly destitute during that period. The total capacity of the tax-collector's last number of the "Nuova Sardegna" announces that in the first week of the century no fewer than 445 houses or fields were confiscated for taxes varying from a maximum of 25frs. (£1) in only four cases—down to a minimum of one half-penny! The awful misery of the population may be guessed from the fact that in 85 per cent. of these cases the amount to be paid did not exceed one lira, or about ninepence. "Truly," exclaims the "Nuova Sardegna," bitterly, "our Government has inaugurated the twentieth century in a worthy manner! Even in Piedmont and Lombardy, the richest regions in Italy, the distress among the working classes is such that men and women working in the fields from morning till night exposed to the pestilential emanations of the marshy soil, in which they sink up to the knees, are content with a salary of 10 centesimi, 10d., a day. But the most pitiful cry of distress comes just now from the Puglie, or ancient Apulia, hitherto famed for the wealth of its olive groves and for the inexhaustible productiveness of its vineyards. A terrible malady has attacked the olive trees and the vines, rendering them absolutely barren and in some cases completely destroying the plants, so that not only the peasantry, but even the landed gentry, are reduced to the verge of starvation and despair. Instead of practically aiding the population, the Italian Government too much occupied with its own political quarrels, has contented itself with strengthening the garrisons and sending bayonets where the people cry for bread. It will be remembered that the terrible bread riots of 1898, which culminated in the barricades and street fights of Milan, commenced precisely at Minerva Murgie in the Puglie, where the distress of this year has surpassed in intensity even that which gave rise to the terrible revolt of three years ago. It is indeed the case to cry "Caveant Consules" ere it be too late."

NOTES FROM ROME.

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STATE OF ITALY.—Vesuvius was never more menacing than is the political condition of Italy. Eternal rumblings of discontent startle the nation as a foreboding of volcanic activity. It would not be possible to give a more concise idea of the conflicting ambitions of the politicians and of the corresponding misery of the people than in the words of one of the most able correspondents for the Catholic press of England. He thus describes the political situation:— "The fall of the Saracco Ministry has not surprised anybody, as it had long been foreseen, and indeed the only marvel is that it withstood so long the combined attacks of its jealous and ambitious enemies, such as Sonnino, Giolitti and Zanardelli, all anxious to possess themselves once more of power. But the manner of the Ministry's collapse may be considered as unique in the history of Parliamentarism, the Chamber having within the space of a few minutes voted for and against the Gov-

BLESSED SACRAMENT FLAG.

The "Blessed Sacrament Flag" was unfurled recently in front of St. Joseph's Church, Cincinnati, to announce the forty hours' devotion. The flag is of pure white, bearing representation of a monstrance with adoring angels. It is the wish of Archbishop Elder that some outdoor signal of the kind be used to notify strangers of the forty hours' various methods are employed by different churches.

John Daly, Lord Mayor of Limerick, was a passenger aboard the Cunarder Etruria, which arrived at New York on Saturday last. He is on his way to Chicago to attend an Emmet celebration this evening. He will return to New York in time to speak at the Emmet celebration in the Academy of Music on March 10.

Progressive eucbre has supplanted the theatre among many amusement seekers in Greater New York.