



## CURRENT COMMENT

A striking example of the continuity of the Catholic Church is given in an event which took place recently in the diocese of Plymouth, England. After a lapse of exactly 365 years (Feb. 24th, 1538—Feb. 24th, 1903) since the suppression of the last Abbot of Buckfast, the first abbot of the revived order, was installed on the 24th of February last. From the (Plymouth) Western Weekly News we get this bit of interesting history about the ancient abbey: "The Abbey of Buckfast is of very ancient foundation, and its early history is lost. It appears in 'Domesday' as Bucfestre, and therefore existed before the Conquest. It is believed to have had unbroken descent from Saxon times until it was despoiled in the reign of Henry VIII. Originally the monks were of the order of St. Benedict, but in 1148 it became Cistercian, how or why seems very uncertain, except that in that age the Papal authority was largely supplanting that of the diocesan bishops in the religious houses, and the Cistercians were under the direct control of the Pope. In these early centuries, however, the monks were very industrious, and were the chief manufacturers and traders of the neighborhood. In 1236 they were admitted to the Guild Merchant of Totnes. Nearly a century later it is recorded that Abbot Philip obtained a grant of a weekly market at Buckfastleigh and of a yearly fair at Brent. In April, 1297, the Abbey had the honor of a visit from Edward I. Worth says that the Abbey produced no notable men unless we except William Slade, a Devonshire man, who became the head of the house in 1413. He is described as not only a scholar and a theologian, but an artist, and zealously discharged his duties. The last abbot was Gilbert Doune, or Downe, who was appointed in 1535, the very time when all the smaller monasteries were being suppressed, and Downe had held the office barely three years when he considered it politic or expedient to surrender the monastery into the hands of the King's commissioners. The Abbey and the adjacent lands were then granted to Sir Thomas Dennis. After passing through various hands the Abbey fell into decay, and a factory and other houses were erected out of its ruins. In 1882 the site of the old Abbey, with the ground immediately surrounding it, was purchased on behalf of the community of Benedictine Monks, who were then recently expelled from France. By them the modern house on the site was taken down, the foundations of the old buildings were unearthed, and a new Abbey has been erected on the site. A four-storied tower at the west angle, known as the Abbots' Tower, is the only part of the old building which remains."

The Right Rev. Boniface Natter, O.S.B., has been chosen first Abbot of the restored community. The ceremony of blessing an abbot is similar to that of the consecration of a Bishop, except that the chrism is not used. The new abbot took the oath to be true to the Church and the Sovereign Pontiff, and to preserve intact the possessions and privileges of the order; and replied to certain questions of the Bishop as to his willingness to observe the rules of the order, to govern justly and to live holy, and to use the property and means of the monastery for the benefit of the poor and of strangers. The offertory included a cheque for £1,000.

Father Joseph McSorley, C.S.P., contributes to the pages of the Catholic World Magazine for March an article of more than usual value on the spiritual perception of the soul in the things that relate to God. The article is of immense practical utility—of guidance and of consolation. We give but a short selection from it: "In the secular branches of knowledge called science and art, progress is insured the moment men learn that their defects are remediable. It remains to be proven that they will display similar energy in regard to matters spiritual. One fears lest those who are striving so diligently to perfect their powers of observation and appreciation, may be less enthusiastic about the corresponding development of spiritual sense and religious feeling; or, to take another point of view, lest cultured minds—even if Catholic—that have been trained to fine mental accuracy may be content to remain very dull indeed, with regard to things of divine import. The varying lessons of the liturgy may continue to pass unheeded; Prayer and Gospel and Introit with their heart-stirring messages of resistless inspiration may remain unfamiliar still; the majestic harmonies in which during long centuries the Church has chanted forth to God the strains of human plaint and human praise may swell and sink unnoticed. Perfect methods of training will possibly obtain for generations before attention will be turned to the spiritual aspect of life's opportunities. Only the few will know the suggestive symbolism of rite and ceremony; only the few will remember the history of God's saints; only the few will thrill with a sense of the deep meaning of the Morning Sacrifice—although in very truth a vigilant soul might mount heavenward upon these steps like the visioned angels upon Jacob's ladder. But the 'blind' never see the rays of glory that are streaming in through sanctuary pane; nor watch the flickering altar-light rise, and fall as it sighs out its life there in the dusk so near to God; nor read the divine romance writ on the faces beside the entrance of the dim confessional; nor feel hot tears well up as the white-robed little ones pass by on their way to learn for the first time how truly and tenderly Jesus Christ has loved them."

Another timely article in the same magazine is that on the Jubilee of Leo XIII: "We might use the word 'world' without limitation whatsoever; for if there be one fact more remarkable than any other connected with Leo XIII the Thirteenth's reign and character, it is the universal respect and admiration in which he is held. During the twenty-five years that he has sat upon the throne of Peter there is not a serious thinker, a religious man, a social reformer, an earnest student, a ruler of peoples who has not, either in body or in spirit, made pilgrimage to his throne. Leo handled the problems before him with the skill of a Hildebrand, and his continued years have but given additional evidence of his power and ability as an interpreter of events and a ruler of hearts. He has, first of all, shown that the Church of Christ is independent of human government or human forms of government. Its welfare is not necessarily one with either monarchism or republicanism. Leo XIII. has been foreign to no country, and has been the friend and supporter of every legitimate form of government. But he has gone further, and positively advised those who opposed their legal government at home to support it heart and soul, and make it work for the welfare of the church. He has championed the rights of the state;

and fearlessly against the same state has he stood for the rights of the individual and of the people. Liberty and authority, one impossible without the other, in perfect sympathy are to work out the perfection of the individual and of the nation. Leo XIII. has done a greater work still. He has proved to the world, which obstinately refused to believe it, that Catholicity is an intellectual religion; not alone intellectual, but that the speculative reason, dwelling upon the positive, revealed truths, may find more than ample exercise for every one of its powers. Science has prospered under his encouragement, but he has always shown that science—restricted to the material and the sensible—is but a narrowing of the scope of human reason and a debasing of the soul."

Many of the leading thinkers of the day, Catholic and non-Catholic, pay their tribute to Leo XIII. in the pages of the March number of the Catholic World Magazine. Among them are Dr. Kerby of the Catholic University, Carroll D. Wright, President Schurman, Lyman Abbott. Dr. Kerby thus writes of Leo's work in the field of sociology: "Officially, Leo XIII. has taught a harmonious Christian social philosophy in recorded conversations, allocutions, and letters—which philosophy meets the problems of modern life directly and, one may say, adequately. The culmination of Leo's teaching is found in 'Rerum Novarum,' the Magna Charta of laborers. In it is synthesized, confirmed, and taught, as in a code, the Catholic reform thought that had become vital in Germany, Switzerland, France and Austria, as well as his own personal convictions. All in Catholic thought and action before the encyclical leads to it; all subsequent, proceeds from it. The great activity in thought and organization for the past twelve years may justly be called the fruit of that encyclical. When the wisest and best in modern nations shall have reached a satisfying readjustment of thought and life, the principles of that adjustment will not be unlike those elaborated in the teaching of our Holy Father. The nations may recoil from his leadership; they shall yet accept his teaching or fail to meet the problem of our civilization."

### His Grace's Anniversary



Last week was one of congratulations and festivity at the Bishop's Palace, St. Boniface. The occasion was the 8th anniversary of the consecration of Mgr. Langevin, which occurred on Thursday, Mar. 18th. The celebration commenced with a "Scientific Evening" given on Wednesday under the auspices of the Jesuit Fathers of St. Boniface College. The programme consisted of an address to His Grace, musical renderings, and scholarly discourses on such subjects as fire, animals, sound, and wireless telegraphy. At

10 o'clock on Thursday Mass was celebrated by His Grace, and a powerful sermon preached by Rev. Father Lietrand, C.S.S.R. After Mass a dinner partaken of by over fifty priests was served at the palace on Wednesday evening. On Thursday evening a very pleasing entertainment was given at the convent of The Holy Names, St. Boniface. The joyous occasion ended on Friday evening with an edifying entertainment at St. Mary's Academy, Winnipeg.

Adelard Langevin, son of F. Theophile Langevin and Maria Pomela Racicot, sister of Mgr. Racicot, Vicar General of Montreal, was born on 23rd of August, 1855, at St. Isidor, P.Q. His first studies were made at the parish school of St. Isidor. In 1867 he went to the college conducted by the Sulpiciens at Montreal. After having studied there for eight years, he occupied a professorship of Latin for two years in the same college. In 1881 he entered the Congregation of Oblates and was ordained in 1882. From 1882 to 1885 he acted as missionary priest at St. Peter's church, Montreal. From 1885 to 1893 he lectured in Theology at the Ottawa University. In 1893 he came to Winnipeg as pastor of St. Mary's church. About a year and a half later he was consecrated Archbishop of St. Boniface, which sacred office he has graced during the last eight years.

### Persons and Facts

According to recent statistics the progress of the Catholic Church in America has been most satisfactory and encouraging. Up to only a very few years ago the continent of America was classed by statisticians as a Protestant continent, since it was the only one of the five great divisions of the earth that had a majority of Protestants. This last continent is now lost to them, the latest authentic figures being: Catholics 58,000,000, Protestants 57,000,000.

The influx of settlers at Moosejaw is so great that enterprising boarding-house keepers are coining money. The hotel accommodation is altogether insufficient.

The new bells for St. Mary's church, Calgary, are coming from Europe round the world by ship and then from Vancouver eastward. This is the cheaper method.

The Scientific American of a recent number describes the new telescope of the Jesuit college at Montreal, Canada. This telescope, it appears, was built from the designs of Rev. Father Garais, S.J., by the members of the Jesuit college. The spherical mirror of this telescope is in point of size the third in North America, being excelled only by those of the Yerkes and Lick observatories. "No little admiration is due," says our esteemed contemporary, "to the man who has not only designed the whole and constructed the principal parts of so intricate an instrument, but who has moreover with his own hand erected the machinery required for its production. The working gear was prepared under the supervision and according to the directions of Father Garais, who also designed all the parts and furnished the wooden models."

The Bishop of Southwark, England, says an average of six hundred converts are annually gained to the Church in his diocese.

The conversion of Christianity from Mohammedanism and Buddhism last year in all pagan countries is now officially placed at 250,000. Of these, the Catholic Church received 74 per cent.

The Rev. Charles W. Davey, formerly Anglican curate at Marnhull, Dorset, Eng., has been received into the Catholic Church at St. Mary's, Clapham.

All the Methodist clergy in Buffalo attended the services at St. Joseph's Cathedral in honor of Archbishop Quigley prior to his departure for his new field of labor. It was the first time in the history of the city that such a striking manifestation of esteem on the part of the separated brethren had been extended to a Catholic priest or prelate. Special seats were reserved for the ministers, who attended in a body.

### ST. BONIFACE COLLEGE.

On Wednesday evening, the 18th inst., the students of St. Boniface College furnished a highly instructive and most interesting scientific entertainment in honor of His Grace Archbishop Langevin. The hall was crowded to its utmost capacity. The Archbishop upon entering in company with a large number of the clergy was greeted with an excellent orchestral selection, under the direction of Mr. Betournay, Mr. Norbert Bellavance and Mr. Jos. Arsenault then read addresses to His Grace in French and English, after which Mr. A. Beaupre delivered a short prologue to the lectures and experiments that made up the evening's delightful programme. Mr. J. Mondor discussed the theory of combustion, illustrating his explanations with such clear and vivid experiments that even the most uninitiated could not fail to understand and appreciate. At the close of this truly enjoyable lecture Master Maurice Gelley delighted the audience with a song entitled "Little Black Me" in a manner to win the well-merited applause of all.

Then followed a dissertation on zoology with stereopticon views, delivered by A. Laurendeau and N. Bellavance. The facility with which these young gentlemen treated their subject showed a good knowledge of this interesting branch of scientific study. At the fall of the curtain a violin and piano duet, Schubert's Serenade, was pleasingly rendered by Mr. John Tremblay and Rev. Father de Mangaleere.

The theory of sound illustrated by experiments was next discussed by Philippe Beaubien, whose highly successful efforts were not lost upon the distinguished audience. After this number, Henri Manseau sang "Mon Drapeau," which was enthusiastically received.

An explanation of wireless telegraphy was then given by Jos. Arsenault and the principles clearly demonstrated by the use of the wireless instruments.

"Les Ecoles du Bon Dieu et de Monseigneur," sung by the members of St. Cecilia's Music Club, was followed by another selection from the orchestra.

His Grace then rose and after expressing his hearty thanks for the addresses, congratulated those who had helped to make the entertainment such a success, and by his kind words encouraged the students to work faithfully and take advantage of the excellent opportunities offered them in this institution of learning. After the playing of the national anthem all departed with words of praise for the young men who had made the evening so enjoyable.