

The Catholic Weekly Review.

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CANADA

Reddite quæ sunt Cæsaris, Cæsari; et quæ sunt Dei, Deo.—Matt 22: 21.

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Notes.

It is a pleasure to learn that the American Catholic University intends to confer degrees only upon those who earn them, either in the ordinary course of the class room, or, in the case of those whose education has been acquired in other precincts, after a special examination. We agree with the *Catholic Review* of New York that this decision should be accepted as final by all respectable educational institutions. "It would have been the first stain," says that journal, "upon the American Catholic University had it consented to any other procedure in respect of degrees. No transparent folly has more effectually brought colleges and universities into deserved derision than the practice of dubbing Doctor of this and that, individuals notoriously lacking the qualifications or attainments the nominal degree represented. The practice has been general. Nearly every class of institutions has been tainted by it. Some resort to it in bold sheer advertising of their obscure existence. It is one of their ways of making themselves known."

Mr. JAMES BRYCE in his work "The American Commonwealth," tells of one of these Western "Universities." He was travelling in the far West. Chattering in a railroad tram with a fellow passenger he heard the latter say something about "our university." Mr. Bryce naturally asked how numerous were the faculties, how large was the staff, "Well," replied the cautious Mr. Johnson, "it is not so large at present as I hope it will be. Our university is young; at present the staff consists of Mrs. Johnson and myself."

"Some institutions," says our New York contemporary, "some Catholic ones among them, have made it a rule to confer honorary degrees at every commencement; and the category of their Bachelors of Science who have never learned a principle of physics or can define a syllogism is larger than their staff. As for A.M.'s and LL.D.'s, the country is full of them; and some of them never read a law, national or international, canon, statutory, or Justinian, Napoleonic or any other. In many cases the recipient of these dubious dubbings have been petty politicians making thrift of their supposed connection with religion and letters, and as bold hypocrites in the one as they are charlatans in the other." Honorary degrees, adds our contemporary, have long since ceased to honour either conferrer or recipient; since they fall too freely on the heads of the just and the unjust.

Two incidents of recent occurrence in Italy, the one in Rome, the other in Perugia, will help to illustrate to the reader the nature of the assaults upon the rights of the Church and religion, of the anti-clerical party in Italy; and the justice of the Sovereign Pontiff's indictment of the Italian Government which will be found elsewhere in this issue.

Holy Week was signalled in Rome by the expulsion of religious. Since 1694 the parent house of the Capuchin Fathers has stood beside the Church of the Conception on the Piazza Barberini, and the convent which they occupied was given to them by Cardinal Antonio Barberini, brother of Pope Urban VIII. In 1873 the Italian Government took possession of all the premises with the exception of the convent, which they deferred seizing until a change should take place in the generalship of the Order. Having chosen a new General this year, the Fathers recently received from the Government an ultimatum ordering them to quit the convent. The new General took no notice of the document, and forthwith the demolition of the convent commenced. Yielding to violence, the Capuchins then departed from their time-honoured retreat. The General has been installed in a new House near the Church of St. Nicholas of Tolentine.

Thirty long years have elapsed since Perugia, together with the second instalment of the States of the Church, was taken away from the Pope by General Cialdini, more commonly known as "the Butcher," and added to the dominions of Victor Emmanuel. There was a famous convent of the Benedictine Order at Perugia, and the Government Commissioner, Marchese di Pepoli, decreed that as soon as all the religious except two had died the convent and all its possessions, worth £200,000, should become the property of the State. It was, of course, decreed at the same time that no novices were to be received, so that the convent must die out. The fatal moment arrived a few days ago, and what took place is thus related by the Italian Catholic papers:

"No sooner had the death of the abbot, who was the last denizen, but two, of the convent, become known than the Government commissioner entered the building and laid hold of everything. The body of the abbot had not yet become cold when this was done. Hitherto, the convent supported a large number of poor and invalids, who are now left to destitution and starvation; hence the fearful distress that reigns at Perugia."

But we have not yet heard the last of these proceedings. The Government had, according to the laws of their own making, a right to take the property of the convent as it existed at the time of the Pepoli decree in 1860; they have no earthly right to confiscate the property that accrued to it since 1860, either through private donations or in the shape of the labour of the inmates. The two surviving members of the Order have taken legal proceedings against the Government upon this head, and the result of this action can scarcely be doubted.