

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.

The statement that Archbishop Feehan, of Chicago, and Cardinal Gibbons are engaged in an investigation of the nature and objects of the Clan-na-Gael, and will shortly make a report on the subject to the Holy See for the purpose of determining whether the organization is one of the secret societies condemned by the Church, is in all probability not without some foundation. The point will, we presume, be determined in the light of the principles laid down concerning secret societies in the decisions of the late Plenary Council of Baltimore. "There is one characteristic," the Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of the Council states, "which is always a strong presumption against a society, and that is secrecy," and when, therefore, associations veil themselves in secrecy and darkness the presumption it states is against them. The Pastoral further states that any organization that binds its members to a promise of blind obedience to obey whatever orders, lawful or unlawful, that may emanate from its authorities, puts itself outside the limits of approval, and to be a member of it is to be excluded from the membership of the Catholic Church. These are the rules laid down by the Council as the principles for the guidance of all Catholics in their relations with societies.

There can be no doubt, a well informed Catholic paper of Chicago states, that some very sincere and upright men have belonged to the Clan-na-Gael, and that there are well meaning men who believe that a judicious weeding out is all that is needed to make the organization pure and patriotic. But the point such men would do well to ask themselves is how the fact is to be explained that the active and prominent leaders of the society have either ceased to be Catholics in all except the name, or have become unbelievers, hostile to the church and religion.

The question of the conformity or non conformity of the organization with the rules of the church does not appear to have been a consideration over which the ringleaders permitted themselves to be concerned one way or the other. One of the old "triangle" that manipulated the organization,

said in a public speech some years ago: "If the Catholic Church should stand in the way of Ireland's liberty, she must go down. We will march on to liberty even over the prostrate form of the Church." And another member of the executive, Mr. Luke Dillon, was able to put the same sentiment in a milder way. "If the Catholic Church were to condemn the Clan-na-Gael, we would consider the sentence as of no more value than the paper it was written on." That is to say they would treat it with contempt. And that edifying Catholic paper, the *Catholic Union* of Buffalo, apotheosizes this gentleman, and applauds him as a "fearless and impassioned" fellow!

The Prince of Wales is taking the lead in a movement to commemorate the life and labours of the heroic and saintly Father Damien, and in a way which is likely to result in the accomplishment of what would, no doubt, have been nearest the heart of the devoted priest could he have been consulted, — the amelioration of the lot of the unfortunate creatures to whom his life was consecrated. An influential committee is in course of formation, and the Prince has not only signified his willingness to act as president, but has named several noblemen and gentlemen whom he would wish to have associated with him in the work. The committee is to be entirely undenominational, and already includes such names in the religious world as His Eminence Cardinal Manning, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Principal Fairbairn, the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, the Bishop of London, and the Rt. Rev. Dr. Vaughan, Bishop of Salford. From the political world Mr. Gladstone and Mr. John Morley are found side by side with Lord Hartington and Lord Randolph Churchill; and there are representatives of the professions and the services, a goodly array, as is proper, of medical men being invited to lend their aid to the movement. It is proposed that the memorial should take a three fold form. The committee contemplate the erection of a monument to Father Damien at Molokai, where his remains are interred, and will construct a leper ward in London attached to the Hospital for Diseases of the Skin. The third form of the memorial suggested is a full and complete inquiry, by a commission, into the question of leprosy in India. It will probably be necessary to send a commission to India in order to discover the steps that should be taken to alleviate, and, if possible, eradicate, the disease, and this the committee propose as one of the objects to be kept in view.

The union in the common band of charity, of elements so widely various and so influential, is an indication of how profoundly the story of Father Damien's life of self-sacrifice and of heroism, has evoked the world's sympathies. "The nobleness of Father Damien's career," says a Protestant contemporary, "is in fact evidenced by nothing more clearly than by the way in which it extorts a unanimity of applause from the most antagonistic camps. It is one of the happiest influences of a good life that differences seem to be obliterated in its presence. Here we see the almost Utopian spectacle of Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Nonconformist joining together in cordial desire to mark their high appreciation of a self-sacrificing Christian act. For a moment we are allowed to contemplate the enormous force which Christendom could wield if it were united, unfortunately it is only for a moment that such a glimpse can be caught, but it is one of the best among the incidental results of Father Damien's efforts that we have been enabled, for however short a time, to observe the touch of nature that makes all churches kin."