

Shall We Have a Catholic Congress in St. Louis

(New York Freeman's Journal.)

Have you ever taken up the thought dealing with the immense forces, activities and energies at work necessitating in the great body of our Catholic people? What direction the currents of thought are taking and the influences determining their course? How the energies of this great body of people are being expended, and what is being done to properly direct these forces so as to accomplish the best possible results?

A conservative estimate places the Catholic population of the United States at not less than ten millions of people. Whether or not we bear the fact in mind, it is, nevertheless, true that all the immeasurable forces represented by this great number are being expended unceasingly just like the mighty power which flows without intermission over Niagara's precipice.

Are these forces being put to good use or are they going to waste, and if losses are being suffered, what are the causes that contribute to them?

Catholics have been in the habit of regarding themselves as rather inert particles of one great body, instead of individual units each a living, active organism, moved by individual wants, desires and ambitions. To attempt to check or arrest the contending forces which these wants, desires and ambitions represent would be as futile a task as to attempt to stay the tides of the ocean.

The question: How to properly direct all the energies involved? should therefore be the thought to engage attention, and each individual must meet this question intelligently and honestly, or else the force which he or she may represent will be negative instead of positive.

The progress of humanity is determined by the progress of the individual and those influences which lead the individual to best improve his condition are the influences which produce progress.

One of the most successful Catholic movements to grapple with these problems has been the Catholic Congresses of Germany, which were inaugurated half a century ago.

Few Catholics in America are aware that one of the most important events in the modern history of the Church in Europe are the meetings of these Congresses.

The social and revolutionary commotions of the 40's in Germany led to the inauguration of these assemblies, which have exerted a most powerful influence on the religious life of the people, and to which may be traced a great part of the substantial good which has been accomplished during all these years.

The first Congress was held at Malines in 1848, and these have been held annually ever since. Congresses have been held at Salzburg, Cologne, Breslau, Freiburg, Frankfurt, Munich, Aix-la-Chapelle, Bochum, Ratisbon, Coblenz, Berlin, Mannheim. During the first fifteen years they had quite a struggle, owing to the inexperience of the German people in parliamentary affairs and to the absence of support from the nobles and upper classes on the one hand and from the professors of the German universities on the other.

The attendance was fitful, and at no time exceeded 1,500 during this period. In 1863 the first Belgium Congress was held at Malines. This was organized by one of the largest minded

and most public spirited of men, M. Edouard Duquetiaux, and marked out a new era in the history of congresses. More than 4,000 were in attendance and embraced all the Belgian bishops and most of the illustrious men of Belgium. It was international in character. Cardinal Wiseman and other eminent men were present from England, Mgr. Doppaumont and Count de Montalembert from France, Bishop Lynch and others from America, and representatives from Ireland, Spain, Italy, Hungary, South America and Africa.

The Germans set by Belgium, and at their Congress, held at Wurzburg in 1864, fully 7,000 were present, and since then the Congresses have grown steadily in numbers and influence. The flower of the German people have been brought together at these conventions. Ample opportunity was offered to men of the most profound learning and to men with the greatest talent for leadership, prominent among whom was the renowned Windthorst.

At Mannheim, in 1902, 100,000 people came to the city to witness the pageants incident to the Congress, and thousands came as delegates. The great hall, with a capacity of 10,000, was insufficient to accommodate those who wished to listen to the addresses, and numbers were unable to gain admission. At Cologne, in August, 1903, the "General Assembly of German Catholics" was the culmination of Catholic Congresses. It outshone all its predecessors. Twelve thousand delegates attended its deliberations, representatives of the numerous political, religious and social works, of German Catholic activity.

The Belgium Congresses inaugurated in 1863 were always held at Malines, and for several years were most potent factors in Belgium public affairs. They, however, soon lost their strictly lay character, and coupled with the greater attractions, growth and activity of the German Congresses, and for minor reasons they ceased to convene, and none have been held in recent years. Through the influence of the German conventions religious education was quickened, innumerable associations and guilds were organized throughout the empire, and every phase of Catholic life immensely benefited.

While at first the German Government met the movement in the most hostile spirit, which slowly changed to mere official recognition, the Emperor is now glad to telegraph his personal assurances that he esteems his Catholic subjects as among his best subjects.

It is quite safe to say that American Catholics give as little heed to the movements going on outside the Church in the United States as they do to the movement in Europe just described. Cardinal Gibbons has said: "I have had for a long time at heart a desire to see the laity and the clergy come more closely together. I think that in some respects they have been too far and too wide apart."

It may serve the purposes of this article to call attention to a few of the more important gatherings of clergy and laity outside the Catholic Church.

In 1881 thirty-five young people met at Portland, Me., and organized the first "Society of Christian Endeavor." This movement was taken up with enthusiasm throughout the country, and its present membership numbers more than 3,500,000. Its annual conventions are attended by enormous crowds of people, and it has been a most potent factor in developing the religious interests of the Evangelical churches. Its next

convention will be held at Baltimore during the summer.

The "Epworth League" was organized in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1889, to do for the Methodists that which the Christian Endeavor Societies were doing for the Evangelicals. Its present membership exceeds 2,000,000. In addition there is an Epworth League of the Methodist Church South, which was organized at Memphis in 1891, and which has a membership of over 300,000. The "Baptist Young People's Union of America" was organized in Philadelphia in 1891, and has a membership of over 500,000 at the present time. There is the "Brotherhood of St. Andrew," with 2,000 chapters, founded by the Episcopalians at Chicago in 1883; the "Young Men's Christian Associations," whose work is well known and other organizations of lesser importance.

The annual conventions of these various bodies are largely attended and are productive of great good. The meetings of the various Missionary Boards are always well attended, and one of the most notable congresses ever held in this country was the "Ecumenical Missionary Conference on Foreign Missions" held in Carnegie Hall and neighboring churches on April 21 to May 1, 1900.

A Catholic Congress would strengthen every present Catholic organization and develop a Catholic public spirit which would put new life into every Catholic interest. If little Belgium, in 1863, could astonish the Catholic world by its first Congress, why should not the Catholics of America in 1904 inaugurate a new standard for subsequent world congresses to be measured by?

Of course the timid and the critical will raise their usual objections. They have succeeded in strangling nearly every good movement and they will try to do the same now. The Archbishop of St. Paul described these people well when he said: "The conservatism which wishes to be ever safe is dry rot. Pay no attention to criticism; there is never a lack of it. It usually comes from men who are do-nothings, and who rejoice if failure follows action, so that they may have a justification for their own idleness."

The St. Louis Exposition will be one vast educational object lesson from which the casual observer may gather more information than from many times the cost of time and money spent in travel. But all its utilities and beauties and glories are but the concrete embodiment of ideas that existed in the minds of men all the world over. Therefore the culminating educative feature of the Exposition will be the congresses, national and international.

The Exposition management cordially invite all organizations to meet in St. Louis during the Exposition period from April 30 to December 1, and will furnish halls and meeting places free of expense. David P. Francis, president of the Board of Management, in a recent letter said: "We have secured 276 national and international conventions to be held in the city of St. Louis during the year 1904. We have arranged 396 special events and celebrations to occur within the period from April 30th to December 1st, on the World's Fair Grounds. The number of conventions will exceed 300, and special events are being added to at every meeting of our Executive Committee."

The management has planned a "Congress of Arts and Sciences," to be conducted under its auspices, and has appropriated the liberal sum of \$200,000 for this purpose. Prof. Hugo Munsterberg, of Harvard University, is the author of the plan to be followed. "The objects of the Congress are to discuss and set forth

the unity and mutual relations of the sciences, to review their historical growth, to develop their fundamental principles, and to promote mutual sympathy and co-operative effort among specialists engaged in different fields of research.

"As a result of the deliberations of the Administrative Board and Organizing Committee during the spring of 1903, the field of science was divided into seven divisions and twenty-four departments, which in turn were subdivided into one hundred and twenty-seven sections. The divisional and departmental addresses will be delivered by Americans and will be a contribution of American scholarship to the scientific literature of the world. The addresses in the 127 sections will be divided between the European specialists and American specialists." The sessions of the Congress will be held during the week of September 19th to 26th, and the various addresses will be published at the close of the exposition.

This series of congresses will not be complete without a great Catholic Congress, and although it will not require but a fraction of the thousands of dollars which will be expended on the "Congress of Arts and Sciences," it ought to be the most imposing and most majestic of them all. M. J. HARRON.

RELIGION IN FRANCE AND CHINA

A Correspondent writes:

Tyranny continues in France, and the only consolation offered to those suffering from it is to find that even some of the "blois" are turning, and that they are beginning to accuse the renegade now ruling the country of "Caesarism." A man of the majority actually wrote this in the "Sicel" the other day; but M. Jules Delafosse, an able writer, affirms in the "Gaulois" that the Emperor Napoleon III. when it was once the fashion to compare to Tiberius, was a much maligned ruler, and that it would be more correct to say that France is now under the sway of a cannibal king, rather than under that of an imitator of the last Napoleon. "The man now ruling France," says M. Delafosse, "has the mentality, the temperament, 'perhaps' from Germanic, the temper of a black-faced tyrant. There are negro chiefs around Lake Tchad who govern their people according to the principles and the methods of M. Combes. He is of that family. He has all their rudimentary despotism, their susceptible vanity, their impatient intolerance, and their murderous arbitrariness. Rendered a monomaniac by the interested servility of his majority, he has come to the conclusion that the only way to rule is to make that everybody who does not think and talk like himself is a traitor."

It is refreshing to find that this man has been found out as a treacherous tyrant by non-Catholics in America, and as the most blood-stained murderer of liberty who has been known in ages in any country. The men of the Terror at least acted openly and aboveboard. M. Combes often goes to work in an underhand manner, and his sinister cynicism while he does evil is unprecedented; yet this is the Minister whom some English Press correspondents, toadying for his patronage, hold up to the British public as a strong statesman. The latest report of prosecution comes from the unfortunate island of Brittany, which made the bravest stand against the emergency troops and crows of M. Combes, and is now paying the penalty of opposition to the tyrant. The secular as well as the religious clergy and the nuns are being struck at. The Bishop of Quimper has been informed by M. Combes that all the suppressions of stipends of priests in the diocese are maintained. Furthermore, seven other names of parish priests and curates have been added to the Government black list. Why? Simply because the priests who have been black-listed have been preaching and teaching in the Breton language. Their crime is "emploi abusif du Breton." In all, ninety-eight Breton priests are now deprived of the beggarly pound a week, or less, which the Government does out to them.

The English correspondents who back M. Combes and his satellites for the purpose of obtaining his recognition, and who are ready to act as his hirelings, do not say anything about this latest phase of persecution. The punishment by slow starvation of a group of rebellious Breton priests does not, of course, matter to the busy men of the British Press, who have got to cultivate French official connections and to "give satisfaction" to their influential employers. The iniquity of the edict against the Breton ecclesiastics is specially tyrannical and vindictive, for as the "Figaro" a purely fashionable boulevard newspaper points out, the people in the parishes struck at know no French at all. This bit of malignity fits well with the tyrant's recent edict ordering the removal of religious pictures from the Courts of Justice. The strongest protest against that has been made by the eloquent Bishop of Orleans, Mgr. Touchet, who, preaching recently in his cathedral, said: "I know only two countries in the world where so cowardly, so sinister a decree of expulsion could be promulgated against our Redeemer. In Germany, the Emperor is a devout Christian, in Italy the King at least respects the faith of his subjects, in England the Christians predominate, in America the greatest toleration is allowed, in Japan Christian churches are arising everywhere, and in Turkey the Sultan protects Catholics. The two countries, then, to which I refer are, first, China, the country of porcelain idols, and let us speak now, France, the country of St. Louis and of Joan of Arc—the country of liberty, justice, fraternity. I have sought excuses for comparing France to China, but I cannot find any. The Bishop was applauded by his auditors, whom he could not repress in the holy place. He was applauded afterwards in the streets, and in the evening all the clergy of Orleans formally congratulated him for having made the strongest and the most eloquent protest against the persecutions that has been heard since M. Combes began his campaign against the Church. The Comte de Lanzy was eloquent in his denunciation of those who would not repress in words those of the Bishop of Orleans, who, if he were not a man of peace, would be able by his words to cause all the Catholics of France to raise against the tyrant.

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The Irish Chapel in Rome

Altar in San Gioacchino Consecrated by an Irish Bishop—A Study in Celtic Art—Paintings of Irish Saints.

Rome, April 19.—A ceremony of surprising interest to the Irish in Rome was that of yesterday morning, when the altar of the Irish chapel in the Church of San Gioacchino was consecrated by an Irish Bishop. This is an international church, designed to be a suitable offering to the late Pontiff, Leo XIII., on the occasion of his jubilee. It is a magnificent structure, more splendid in color and decoration and lighting than those other churches to which Rome is accustomed. The very richness of its materials invites a corresponding richness and brilliancy of decoration in the chapels that are met with in its aisles and transepts. Several nations have, through their Catholic people, become possessors of chapels, each of which they adorn in their own national style of art, and with pictures of their own national saints.

In one of these chapels, in the left aisle, Ireland has erected still another shrine in the Eternal City. The new chapel is rich in adornment derived from the ancient art of Ireland, which is unique and distinctive. The late Eugene Muntz, who has written so much upon the history of art, considers that Irish ornament is composed of elements borrowed from different anterior styles—the interlacings, meanders, and ornaments from classic art; the spirals, "perle" and the dragons, "perhaps" from Germanic jewellery work. It is no satisfactory method of accounting for the individuality of design in Irish art, to derive it from other lands with a "perhaps" as its reason to be. When imagination supplies the lack of knowledge the outcome is not to be trusted.

In the Irish chapel, dedicated to St. Patrick, in the Church of San Gioacchino, the whole adornment is conceived in a careful study and adaptation of ancient Celtic art. The fresco that rises above and behind the altar is framed in a wide rich border of mosaic designs formed of intertwined dragon-like figures, on a gold background. The effect of this, brilliant in its gold reflex, is most attractive. The frescoes on the side walls of the chapel have similar frames, and thus the harmony and the peculiarly distinct character of the decoration are maintained throughout. On the predella of the altar a newer and more familiar example of decoration is met with in the row of green shamrocks on a gold ground, also wrought in mosaics set in the white marble.

Behind the altar Signor Gagliardi, who has painted many pictures for Ireland, and whose portraits of Irish ecclesiastical dignitaries are to be seen in several parts of Ireland, has painted a group of Irish saints. The background shows a columned court. Draperies enclosing the group of saints hang from the columns, and between the draperies and the architrave a lustreless blue sky is seen. On a high throne, which is overhung with a rich canopy, sits St. Patrick, holding a shamrock in his right hand and the pastoral staff or crozier, in his left. He is a graceful and noble figure. The mitre he wears is low; his full white beard hangs from his shoulders and unites falls upon his breast, and the pallium in a long white band that falls almost to his feet.

On his right, but on a lower level, stands St. Brigid in grey habit, and close to her is St. Dymphna. More towards the foreground are the figures of St. Malachy and St. Laurence. To the left the bishops wearing low mitres, and all the saints distinguished same side, and close to the spectator, by golden haloes. Here on this same side, and close to the spectator, a figure clad in a rich crimson mantle and wearing a golden crown, kneels before St. Patrick. It is Brian Boru—the type of the Christian King and warrior.

On the left of St. Patrick are seen St. Senigius, St. Jarlath, and St. Malachy; and nearer, corresponding to the king on the opposite side, is a warrior clad in armour, also kneeling. On the steps of the throne stands a vase in which a fire burns:

"The bright lamp that shone in Kildare's holy lane, And burn'd thro' long ages of darkness and storm."

On the left wall of the chapel the fresco represents St. Brendan, showing in the background the land he is said to have been the first European to discover—the verdure of Ireland of America—with its trees and its inhabitants; and a great ship, resembling the Santa Maria of Columbus, sailing gaily over the ocean. One historian of the discovery of America, M. Paul Gaffarel, says it is not in legend only that the memory of the Irish Saint Brendan is preserved; we find the persistent trace of it in the geography of the Middle Ages, and even in contemporary geography.

The opposite walls bears a fresco representing the vision of St. Fursey, in which he beheld the four fires of hell and the threatening multitude of demons. This is the subject represented in the picture of Gagliardi; the flames and the sufferers in them appear so terrible to the saint that he shrinks back from them in terror. He is regarded by several writers as a precursor of Dante, in this vision of the under world, and of the region of the Saints. There are many such precursors of the great Florentine, who have seen visions vague and indistinct as compared with the great visions described by the genius of Dante. Smaller frescoes show St. Donatus, Bishop of Fiesole, near Florence, and St. Columba, in Iona.

The altar, formed of rich and various colored marbles, has in the cen-

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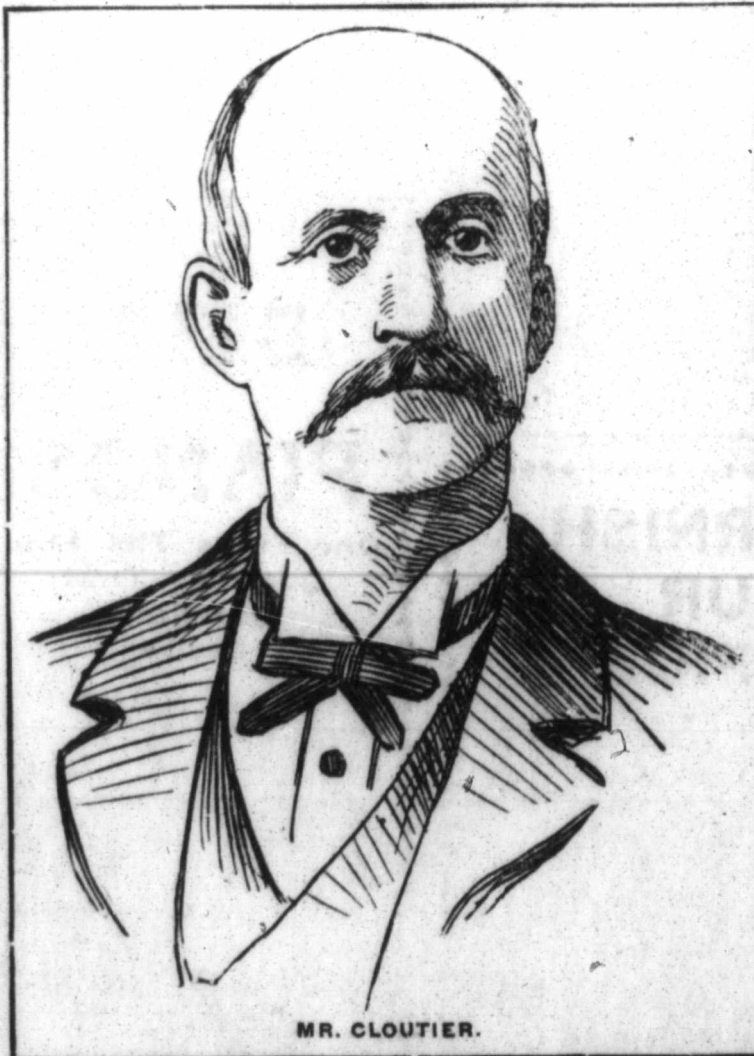
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