

The True Witness



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THE NEW CENTURY.

By Our Curbstone Observer.

This year, considering that it was an exceptional New Year, I noticed a remarkable falling off in the old-time "calls," possibly "coffee" is responsible for much of it. However, it is evident that the customs of the former years are being gradually crushed by the electric pressure of our progress; some of them are to be regretted, others are just as well with the centuries that are dead; I am not going to moralize, much less be very lengthy in these few observations. It is a season when people like a little of every good thing going, but they do not want an overdose of any one of them in particular. What most attracted my attention was the form of the New Year's greetings. "A Happy New Year;" "many happy returns," were as usual the salutation and reply; but, as a rule, each one had something to add concerning the "new century"—and the most general observation was to the effect that none of us are likely to be present when the next century dawns.

To my mind this is about the most powerful and practical sermon—if properly understood—that could be preached. In fact, each one, on that occasion, delivered, without thinking of it, a regular sermon, and each one equally heard one—without, in all probability, paying any attention to it. What an overwhelming reflection! I actually believe that were we to dwell too much upon its awe-inspiring truth, the majority of us would go mad. It is well that the world is so busy, that men are not allowed by circumstances to pause sufficiently long to become entirely absorbed in any one great conception. Campbell never wrote anything more true and more beautiful than his "Pleasures of Hope;" right was he that "Distance lends enchantment to the view." No matter how depressed we may feel, Hope ever springs up in the bosom and sheds an illuminating ray upon the veiled avenues of the future. In youth we live in hopeful anticipation of long years of life and happiness; sometimes that hope is realized, often it is shattered. In middle life we look onward to a vigorous old age and while common sense and experience teach us that this hope is much more likely to fail us than to become a reality, still we cling to it, and are contented. And when "age comes on with its winter," we still hope on; we seem to feel that the term of our career should be like the horizon that ever recedes as we advance. But end there must be some time or other; sooner or later—and probably sooner!

I have observed that even the most unimaginative of men live principally on the imagination. Perpetually building up castles in the air that the hand of reality knocks to pieces, they go on from year to year, never, for a moment, reflecting upon the precipice along whose brink they walk. It is only when we come down to cold and mathematical calculation that the fearful truth arises like the "Phantom of the Threshold" that the genius of Bulwer so graphically describes. The twentieth century began the other day; its last hour shall ring, in all human probability not one of us will be in the land of the living. But if that were all, we could console ourselves with the thought that one hundred years is a long time, and that we will have ample occasion to enjoy this life. However, unfortunately this general conception is only the shadow of that which each of us may entertain. The man of thirty to-day cannot expect to see 1970; the man of forty can scarcely expect to see 1950—the mid-century; the man of sixty is certain to be in the silence of the church yard when 1940 dawns; the man of seventy may fairly calculate that 1930 will find his place vacant. And so on we might go, until we reach to monogenarian whose hours may be counted.

Here then is the reflection suggested to me by the birth of a century; I will suppose that I am president of a company, and that as such I sign a lease, which is to expire in 1950. Will that lease be renewed at the expiration of that term? I cannot say. All I know is that when that term is reached, if our company still exists, another president will have to sign a new lease, or renew this one. As far as I am concerned I will then have spent a number of years in the cemetery; my very appearance will be forgotten; the signature I now give will be unrecognized by any one interested; and my name, itself, will have no significance, will awaken no memories, will be an empty sound—and still half the century will scarcely be over.

These are sombre observations, you may say; if so it is the situation you must blame and not me. I cannot help it if this is the first, last and only century that I will ever see come into existence. I would be very glad to be writing paragraphs for the "True Witness" in the year 2000; but, while the "True Witness" may still flourish at that time, and be a forty-eight page daily, still I will not be around to enjoy its prosperity or contribute to its success.

RELIGIOUS NOTES AND COMMENTS.

PRIEST IN CONFESSIONAL.—At the mission for women in Baltimore one of the priests was on the line of St. Francis de Sales and there was a large gravitation to him in the confessional, says a correspondent in the "Catholic Columbian." The other was more austere in the pulpit—probably having the sterner duty to perform—but sweet and tender in the confessional, if the women had only known it. Two Jesuit Fathers had active charge of the men. One was a young, stout man, with a beautifully white and symmetric forehead, and a most determined and emphatic manner, full of sincerity and precision. The companion priest was an older man resembling what we associate with the hermitage, a spiritual veteran who has emerged from many a fiery trial into a gentle serenity, but most pathetic eloquence when discoursing on the things of God, anon terrible and consoling, as the discipline rose from the portrayal of hell to the delights of heaven. I think the men made no marked difference in seeking absolution from these Fathers, as the women did in their work.

PRINCESS TO BE A NUN.—Princess Cleopatra, the third and youngest daughter of King Leopold of Belgium, will soon enter the convent. This she has desired to do for two

years past, but was deterred by the protests of her father. The Princess is said to be a charming person.

BIRTH FOR FATHER CHIDWICK.—Father J. P. Chidwick, who was chaplain of the battleship Maine when she was blown up in the harbor of Havana, has been assigned to the cruiser New York. It is understood that Rear-Admiral Rogers, whose flagship the New York is to be, made a special request that Father Chidwick be assigned to his ship.

SALOONS OPEN ON SUNDAY.—The Very Rev. Dean McNulty made a tour of the saloons of Patterson, N. J., on Sunday last, after Mass, and found a number of them selling liquor. It is expected that he will make complaints against some of them to-morrow.

POPE AND CENTENARIAN.—One of the many picturesque and interesting incidents, says a Protestant newspaper, of the Holy Year was the recent reception by Leo XIII. of Donna Carolina Tanturelli, an aged lady from Perugia, who attained her hundred and first year early in January last. On account of her great age the Pontiff granted her a private audience. Much to his surprise, Donna Carolina reminded him that they first met in her late husband's

house in 1850, "fifty years ago," and, added she, "We were neither of us very young then." The Pope, who is only nine years her junior, was greatly amused.

CONVERTS ORGANIZE.—An organization composed of a number of men and women of New York city and vicinity who have been converted from Protestantism to the Roman Catholic faith has just been formed in that city. The organization was effected when twenty-two recent converts met at the Church of the Paulist Fathers to informally discuss the suggestion which had been made by several of the most prominent ones, looking to the establishment of some sort of an association wherein those who had given up their former religious connections might find mutual benefit.

The object of the organization is to give the members an accurate knowledge of the Catholic religion and to stimulate them to the regular practice of its duties; to propagate the Catholic faith by personal example and social intercourse; by the establishment of Catholic libraries, by the circulation and distribution of Catholic literature and the support of non-Catholic mission work for the bringing of other Protestants into the fold; to foster fraternal relations among converts and to assist those who have made sacrifices for the faith.

CATHOLIC SAILORS.—The Sailors' Catholic Club, Charlestown, is the latest enterprise undertaken by the charitable bureau of the Catholic Alumni Sodality of that district. The superintendent will be Albert G. Ayres, who has conducted a similar establishment in Montreal.

A PROTESTANT ON CATHOLIC PIETY IN IRELAND.

An Irish Protestant, writing from his native land to the editor of the "Church Times," laments the fact that the Protestant Church in Ireland shows up not merely badly, but almost ludicrously when compared with the Catholic Church in Ireland. His words are so fraught with interest that we cannot refrain from putting them before our readers. He says:—

It is admitted all round that the Church of Ireland is not "a joyful mother of children;" she has quality, but not quantity; she does not attract the bulk of the population. To understand the reasons for this one must know Irish history thoroughly, not superficially. But as a matter of common sense, look at the matter thus. In a fair-sized Irish country town, what do you find? You find the Roman Catholic Church with a daily morning service—the Mass at 8 o'clock regularly; you find a convent of nuns, a sufficient staff of clergy, a well-equipped and organized staff of workers all round. Look at the other side of the picture: the Irish Church with a mere handful of people; two Sunday services of necessity scantily attended; as a rule, no week-day services; the fabric locked like a jail. How does all this strike the ordinary thoughtful Roman Catholic? He reflects on his religious privileges, his daily worship, the church always open for private prayer; the religious community, in addition to the secular clergy, always in evidence, engaged in perpetual devotion and works of charity. He hears the Angelus bell twice a day. He is constantly reminded of his religious duties and privileges in one way or other. He has a great respect for many or most of his Protestant neighbors, but their form of worship does not attract him, it is too infrequent, too cold, too bare. He is aware that they dare not have a cross on or behind the altar, and this shocks him. He knows they never go to confession, and that gives him another pang. He has no desire to change his form of religion, which has outlived Queen Elizabeth in Ireland, Oliver Cromwell, William III., and the penal laws of some hundred and fifty years' duration; to hold to it is with him a matter of national sentiment as well as of religious duty. It is better to realize all this.

The writer strongly exhorts the leaders of Protestantism in Ireland to live a fuller life, to abandon the negotiations on which they have subsisted for the last three hundred years, to give up the barren controversies which have imparted no

healthy warmth, and to strive to make a new departure on Catholic lines, as these lines are understood by English Ritualists. We fear this well-meant advice will scarcely be entertained by the worthy thick-skinned Protestants of the Emerald Isle. Of all hopeless, lifeless systems Irish Protestantism seems to us to be the most moribund and decayed.—London Universe.

TAXATION OF CHURCHES

On this subject the New York "Sunday Democrat" remarks:—

The efforts of infidels and secularists to tax all church property show an insensate hatred of religion. Those who advocate this measure from sheer hostility to Christianity would accomplish nothing in the way of gratifying their spite, even if they did succeed in imposing whatever burden the taxation of churches might impose on Christians. For churches would still be maintained, be the expense small or great, and Christian worship still continue.

If the sword, the stake and the hangman's rope could not in past times prevent Christians from holding fast to the truth and confessing their faith in the face of torture and death, no pecuniary burdens that the enemies of Christianity can now impose will deter Christians from acting as Christians have acted in all ages since Christ came into the world and established His Church.

And, as all the persecution waged against Christianity only serves to disseminate it more widely, to take root more firmly, and in the end to multiply the number of true disciples, so the petty malignity of taxing churches—whose influence for good upon public or private morality, and in promoting whatever is pure and true and amiable among men, cannot be concealed—would not fail to drive over to the side of Christ and His Church many who are now indifferent or lukewarm.

A GOOD EXAMPLE.—The following generous action of a wealthy Catholic is recorded in one of our exchanges:—

With a big white apron tied around his waist John D. Crimmins, the millionaire contractor, of New York, on Christmas Day, acted as the host to the 300 inmates of the Home for Aged Persons, conducted by the Little Sisters of the Poor. It has been Mr. Crimmins' custom for the last four years to give a Christmas treat to the institution. There was plenty of turkey, chicken, roast beef and eatables. Mr. Crimmins' three sons and four daughters aided him in waiting on the tables. Mr. Crimmins was greeted on every side with "God bless you" when the dinner came to an end, and the three cheers which were proposed for him were given with all the strength the feeble voices could muster.

THREE CENTURIES were spanned by the lives of more than a score of men and women in the United States this week. Twenty and more of the aged ones were reported well. A canvass made by telegraph by a New York newspaper, revealed this fact. It showed that there were more centenarians of Irish birth than of any other.

These centenarians are well over the hundred mark of the years. Mrs. Mary McDonald takes the lead, being 129 years. Documentary evidence and their own stories leave no room for doubt as to the authenticity of the figures. There are many who are more than ten years over the one hundred mark, and those who are only 101 years old are the children of the company.

They all have theories of longevity of more or less value. The only rule on which they agree prescribes abundant food and plenty of sleep.

On an average, between 150,000 and 160,000 Italians leave their native land every year to try their fortunes in the United States. Brazil, and the Argentine Republic. This flow of emigration being excessive and unwarranted, the Italian Chamber has just passed a Bill with the object of checking it.

According to recent estimates there are not less than 80,000 lepers in the Philippines. Leprosy, it is said, was introduced in 1633 when the Emperor of Japan sent a ship with 160 lepers to the Philippines.

PERSECUTIONS IN CHINA.

His Eminence Cardinal Vaughan in a recent pastoral letter gives the following harrowing picture of the persecution of Catholics in China. His Eminence says:—

We have received from the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, and from other sources, some details of the sufferings endured by our fellow-Catholics in China. The members of the mystical body of Christ, whether in England, in France, in Italy, in India, or in China, "being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii). They are knit together, in one faith, that they "might be mutually careful one for another. And of one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it" (1 Cor. xii). This is sufficient reason to interest you in the history of the persecution which is still raging in China. The social upheaval in China is mainly and primarily a revolt against Christianity. The ambassadors of the King of Heaven had been maltreated and massacred long before those of earthly Powers were threatened in the historic siege of the Legations. Persecution is, indeed, always latent in China, and in its most recent phase was roused into activity by the encroachments of foreign Powers, notably Russia and Germany, on Chinese territory, by the reactionary policy of the Empress Dowager, and by the encouragement given to secret societies as instruments for combating the reforms promulgated by the reigning Emperor, Kwang-shi. The murder of the two German missionaries in Shantung—made the pretext for seizure by Germany of a Chinese port—shows how well the soil was prepared, even antecedently to these causes, for the more extensive movements that followed. The danger to which Christians in China were likely to be exposed in consequence of foreign aggression was thoroughly realized by those interested in the missions, and was pointed out in a leading article of "Illustrated Catholic Missions," as far back as the number of that journal for May, 1898. The action of Germany in seeking territorial compensation for the murder of missionaries was especially referred to as likely to lead to "the identification in the heathen mind of western religion with western politics." This is literally what has come to pass, rendering the present upheaval doubly formidable as a combination of fanatical fury with political hatred of foreigners.

The earnest outbreak on a large scale was the persecution in East Szechuen, which desolated the missions of that Vicariate Apostolic in the months of September and October, 1898. Here a local brigand placed himself at the head of a movement organized by the secret societies, partly directed against the reigning dynasty and partly against foreigners and Christians. One episode was the destruction of the mission of Long-sheychen, and the cruel martyrdom of eleven Christians. Father Hwang, a native priest, was put to death by the brigand Yu-man-tze, and Father Frey, a priest of the "Missions Etrangères," was only released by the intervention of the authorities after a captivity of many weeks in his hands. Harrowing as were these atrocities, they were far surpassed by those perpetrated in the following year, 1899, characterized by one French missionary, Father Clerc Renaud, of East Kiang-Si, as "unseen terrible." He tells how in the prefecture of Kwang-san-fu two districts had been annihilated, four residences burnt, 200 orphans scattered, and 3,500 Christians plundered of all they possessed. Father Guillaume, of Shin-henn, writes to his Bishop, the Vicar Apostolic of Kwang-tung, that he had been a fugitive since June 27th, owing to a rising of the "Triad," who were burning Catholic and Protestant villages indiscriminately to the cry of "Death to foreigners!" In North Shantung a terrible revolt, headed by the "Big Knives," or Boxers, broke out on November 4th, when 350 Christian villages were wiped out, and numbers of their inhabitants massacred. The heroic catechist, Wan-Kwen-Sie, of Nan-chwan, was martyred on November 5th. On being asked if he was a Christian and bravely answering in the affirmative, both his ears were first cut off, in

succession, after which he was beheaded. Even greater was the constancy shown by eleven Christians at Kiang-cheng, for they were scourged, torn with pinners, hung up by their hair, and fastened with red-hot chains. Bishop Renaud, again, writing from Che-Kiang, where 14 chapels were destroyed and 1,400 families ruined, tells of the sufferings of three young Christians, one mutilated, blinded, and killed, the second buried alive, and the third, a catechist, named Abel, first mutilated and then slain. Here the missionaries had escaped with difficulty, and the crisis was described as "excessively grave." Terrible as was the year 1899, it was but the prelude to the still greater horrors and more widely spread devastation of 1900.

As yet a certain amount of protection had been afforded to the foreign missionaries, and though fugitives in many places, their lives had been spared. In 1900 all suffered indiscriminately, and bishops, priests, and nuns were called on to lay down their lives and consummate the sacrifice made in spirit from their earliest vocation. The full history of that terrible persecution will only be known on the Last Day, but even the skeleton outlines now before us are sufficient to show that the heroism it called forth has never been surpassed in any age of the Church. The bare statistics available up to date are as follows: In Manchuria, the great northern province confided to the charge of the Paris Society of Foreign Missions, Bishop Giffon, Father Ernest and John Li, a native priest, Sisters Ste. Croix and Albertine, with 300 native Christians were burnt alive in the Cathedral of Mukden on July 3, 1900. At other Manchurian stations the Society has to deplore the loss of Fathers La Rav' Georgeon, and Alex. Hia (a native), Bourgeois and Le Guerec, Viaud, Agais and Bayart, all slaughtered during the course of the same month. In North Pe-chi-li, among the Lazarists of the Metropolitan province, Fathers d'Addosio, Dore, Chavannes, Jarrigues, Peter Nie and Bl. Ly, Andrew Ly and Thomas Pao lost their lives, and with them died Sister Jaurias, at the age of 60, after 45 years of her long life spent in China. Of these, Father Jarrigues and his native colleague, Father Bartholomew Ly, were burnt alive in the conflagration of the Tung-tang or Eastern Church, at the end of June. The same fate overtook Father Dore, while saying Mass in the Si-tang or Western Church, dedicated to Our Lady of Dolours. Father d'Addosio was killed in the streets by Prince Tuan's soldiers, while seeking to make his way to the Pe-Tang or Northern Church; and Fathers Peter Nie, a native Lazarist, Andrew Ly and Thomas Pao, native secular priests, were either burnt or cut down. Father Chavannes died of small-pox during the siege, and Sister Jaurias of the hardships endured in its course. In addition to these victims two Marist brothers, the visitor and the director, while heroically trying to cut the electric wire of a mine intended to blow up the Pe-tang, were killed by the explosion, together with several workmen. In the Jesuit missions of South Pe-chi-li, Fathers Isore, Andlauer, Denn, and Margin have been massacred, with 3,000 native Christians. In South Hunan the death-roll records the names of Bishop Fantosati and Father Gambaro, cruelly tortured on July 6, and of Fathers Cesidius and Stephen, all Franciscans, in Shan-Si, Bishop Grassi and Bishop Fogolia, Fathers Elias and Balat, with seven nuns of the Franciscan Order, perished at different dates. In Mongolia, Bishop Hamer, and Fathers Heirman, Mallet, and Segers, are numbered among the victims of the persecution. Of the number of native Christians slaughtered no estimate is possible. At Mukden 1,000 were beheaded; in Mongolia, many hundreds suffered besides those already enumerated.

Numbers, probably thousands, must have been massacred in Pekin during the siege of the Legations, either in their houses or in the streets; as their cries and shrieks were heard by the besieged Europeans in an awful night of terror, when a whole quarter of the city was ravaged with fire and sword. But even the death-roll, long as it is, gives but a partial idea of the sufferings undergone by these poor people. Throughout the (Continued on Page Five.)