



A Morning in the Vatican Grottoes.

(P. L. Connellan, Rome Correspondent Dublin Freeman's Journal.)

On the octave of the feast of St. Peter, a numerous crowd of Romans and a few strangers—mostly Americans—gathered near the high altar in St. Peter's. On the arrival of Commendatore Marucci, the entrance to the narrow marble stair leading down to the Vatican Grottoes, or crypts, was opened, and one by one the people descended into the electric light-illuminated subterranean chapels and corridors and crypts. In a tiny, richly-adorned chapel, almost immediately over the tomb of the Apostle, Mass was celebrated. On its conclusion, Commendatore Marucci, followed by the crowd, proceeded to that portion of the Grottoes known as the "Grotto Vecchie," or Old Grottoes, and there he delivered a most interesting account of the historical evidences from the earliest centuries regarding the existence of the tomb of St. Peter in Rome.

The lecture of the learned professor was absorbing and convincing. To those who were satisfied with the statement of the case, other attractions were found within reach. If one wandered about on his own account amidst these sepulchres, he might study them at his leisure by the brilliant electric light. A few years ago it was different; and, indeed, for a long time no visitors—not even Romans—were allowed to enter these Grottoes, except in the rarest cases. Information had been received by Leo XIII. from the London detective force that the Anarchists were considering the blowing up of these Grottoes, and the consequent destruction of St. Peter's as a feature of their programme.

In the olden days, however, the impressions made upon the visitor who all alone—accompanied only by a boy bearing a waxen torch, wandered into these corridors and chapels, were extremely vivid. This is the most venerable of all the Catacombs of Rome, that city so rich in graves. The very coolness of the place suggested the icy breath of death. By the trembling light of the flickering torch you read pages of ancient history, as it were by flashes of lightning, which were imprinted on the mind like the views seen in the intervals of a thunder storm. The silence that pervaded the place added to the solemnity of the scene; for the sounds and rumors of the outward world are as rare here as a ray of sunshine. Sometimes indeed the chants of the clergy in the upper church and the sounds of the organ and the choir are heard faintly, as if they came from a distant world.

And here to-day as you tread on the fragments of porphyry and rare marbles that probably constituted the original pavement of the old church of St. Peter founded by Constantine the Great in the first half of the 4th century, you feel that the spot is one associated with great memories. Whatever else has changed in the world during the sixteen centuries that have elapsed since then, as you look down on these slabs, now set rather loosely, you feel that they at least are in much the same position in which they were originally placed.

No city in the world, it has been said, is so much of a graveyard as Rome is. For miles before you reach it, on every high road, the shapeless ruins of tombs to her great men line the route on each side. The names borne by these battered and weather-beaten mounds of stone and brick are occasionally of world-wide fame, and are known even to the modern tourist; while the names attached to others remain in your memory as subjects of future investigation.

It is in the churches, however, that you read the names of men and women known throughout the length and breadth of Christendom. The Church of St. Peter has a celebrity that is universal, for here is the tomb of the Fisherman of Galilee the bearer of the Keys, to whom the Lord committed the care of the whole Church. Of his successors in the See of Rome, it is asserted that no less than 180 were buried in St.

Peter's; but, as a modern writer puts it, a large number of their tombs perished during the rebuilding of the church in the 16th century. Those that remain in the crypts of the Vatican are the tombs of Pontiffs interred here before that great event; since that time the majority of Popes have been buried in the new church.

Some of the tombs here are of strange forms. The most noticeable are constructed of huge masses of red porphyry with a top like a hooded wagon. The carving on these, from the adamant nature of the stone, is very limited. Others are of still more ancient date, being the sarcophagi of the early Christian period—of the 4th or 6th century—taken from the Catacombs or from primitive churches, and adapted to their new purpose. This great structure of red porphyry, with the bas-reliefs of masks and wreaths on the side is the tomb of Adrian IV., Nicholas Breakspear the solitary Englishman who sat in St. Peter's Chair, the son of very poor parents, who, in his early years, was a servant in the Monastery of the Canons of St. Ruf Avignon, and afterwards became a religious and Abbott of the same monastery. The sarcophagus bears no inscription.

Here you are attracted by a tiny fragment of marble set into the wall and surrounded by the long epitaph of Pope Boniface II., who reigned from A.D. 530 to 532. This, indeed, is early enough for ordinary seekers. The marble fragment of the original inscription, containing one word and a date, dovetails admirably with the rest of the inscription painted around it. Naturally one feels surprised at what might at first sight appear a difficult reconstruction of an epitaph. The difficulty disappears when you learn that the original epitaph was copied in the seventh century, and again in the eighth century, by two pilgrims who came to Rome and beheld it intact in its original site. The copying of epitaphs in the Catacombs and in the churches of Rome was one of the duties which these early travellers imposed upon themselves; and though the period in which they lived has been frequently described as the darkest of the Dark Ages, nevertheless these were capable of copying accurately whole series of long Latin inscriptions—an achievement to which many a modern tourist is unequal. And thus when the long-enduring marble was broken into fragments that were scattered here and there, the parchment copy made by the pious pilgrim enlightened the scholars of a later age; and when the tiny fragment of the old marble inscription was brought to light, its place in the reconstructed epitaph painted on the wall was not difficult to find.

A very interesting fragment of a document is the first part of the donation made by the Countess Matilda of Tuscany to the Holy See, which is carved in marble. The text is known to scholars and has been published. This Royal and generous benefactress to the Church of Rome after having already—in the Pontificate of St. Gregory VII (1073-1085)—given all her possessions to the Holy See, reserving only the usufruct to herself, desired that an authentic copy of the transfer of the deed should be drawn up. It is probable that during her lifetime a copy of this was engraved on marble and placed near the tomb of St. Peter. The fragments embedded in the wall here belong to the upper part of this copy. Pope Urban VIII. desired, through gratitude to the memory of this great woman, that her remains should be transferred from her grave in Mantua and brought to the Vatican, where they were entombed in 1635. The tomb, surmounted by the noble marble statue of a queen-like woman, in the right nave near to the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, is the monument which that Pontiff raised to the "Great Countess."

Away in the distance near the end of this crypt there is a heavy con-

struction of masonry made in the form of a huge sarcophagus, and upon it, within a circle, is the inscription: "OTTO . SECUNDVS . IMPERATOR . AVGVSTVS," with a cross preceding and following these words. The grave of this Emperor, who had not attained his 30th year when death overtook him, was in the "atrium," or court, before St. Peter's, and was richly adorned. His remains were transferred here at the building of the present church. Among the adornments of his tomb, which have been dispersed, was the grand mosaic representing the Saviour between the Apostles Peter and Paul, and which is now to be seen at the foot of the great staircase leading to the Christian Museum of the Lateran. In this mosaic St. Paul is on the right hand of the Saviour, and St. Peter on the left; but Christ has His arm around the shoulders of St. Peter, and the Apostle holds three keys instead of the two with which he is usually seen. I cannot recall any other example of St. Peter with three keys in all the Christian art with which I am acquainted; it is unusual if it is not unique.

The tombs of the last members of the Stuart race are here: James III., Charles Edward, and Henry. In the church above there stands the monument which Canova carved, "and at the charge, I believe," writes Lanciani, "of the house of Hanover." It bears the inscription: "To James III., son of James II., King of Great Britain; to Charles Edward and Henry, Dean of the Sacred College, sons of James III., the last of the Royal House of Stuart." When Prince Charles Edward, the "Bonnie Prince Charlie" of Jacobite song and romance, died, his brother Henry, Cardinal Duke of York, had a medal coined on which he assumed the title of Henry IX., King of Great Britain, etc. Henry VIII., was a theologian, and as a reward for his theological ability received from the Pope the title of Defender of the Faith. It would be a strange sight to have seen the next Henry casting off the Cardinal's robes to don the royal mantle!

The voice of Marucci is heard faintly in the distance, but there are still other attractions here which claim attention. The thought comes to one how little remains here of what once adorned the church which Constantine built. The destruction of that church was indeed necessary, for the foundations of the left wall were giving away, built as they were on the walls of the Circus of Caligula, in which Nero held his nightly orgies illuminated by the burning of Christians. But in the taking down of the old building sufficient respect was not paid to the numerous memorials and monuments it contained. Lanciani tells us that the Popes were occasionally buried in pagan sarcophagi, or bath basins, cut in precious marbles; their bodies were wrapped in rich robes, and they wore the "ring of the fisherman" on the forefinger. It is certain nowadays that the ring of the fisherman is broken on the death of the Pope, and a new one made for his successor, whatever may have been the custom in the fifteenth century and earlier.

But the other parts of his story is probably too true. Innocent VIII. (1484-1492), he says, "was folded in an embroidered Persian cloth"; Marcellus II. wore a golden mitre; Adrian IV., Breakspear, is described as an undersized man, wearing slippers of Turkish make, and a ring with a large emerald. Callixtus III. and Alexander VI., both of the Borgia family, have been twice disturbed in their common grave, the first time by Sixtus V., when he removed the obelisk from the Circus to the Piazza; the second by Paul V., on Saturday, January 30th, 1610, when their bodies were removed to the Spanish Church of Monserrat, with the help of the Marquis of Billena, Ambassador of Philip III., and of Cardinal Capata. Grimaldi's Diary of the events of the time contains many strange stories of the recklessness of the workmen in the removal of monuments.

For this and similar reasons the Vatican Grottoes are now a sort of museum, filled with the fragments that have survived many disasters. Here on one wall you have an inscription of Pope Damasus, who

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Pope's Encyclical Condemns Separation.

Message to the Clergy of France Made Public.

The text of the Pope's long-expected encyclical to the archbishops and bishops of France concerning their future conduct in view of the enactment of the law providing for the separation of Church and State appeared in the *Osservatore Romano* on Tuesday. It refers to the previous encyclical condemning the general principals of the law, and says the time has now arrived to indicate what should be done to defend and preserve religion in France.

"We deferred our decision," the document continues, "owing to the importance of this grave question and particularly through a charitable feeling for the great service your nation has rendered to the Church. Having heretofore condemned this iniquitous law, we examined with the greatest care its articles to see if they permitted the organization of religious life in France without jeopardizing the sacred principles of the Church."

After approving the recommendations of the French hierarchy disapproving of the law, the encyclical says:

"Therefore concerning cultural associations such as the law prescribes we decree absolutely that they cannot be formed without a violation of the sacred rights which are the life itself of the Church. Putting aside, therefore, these associations which our conscience forbids us to approve, it is opportune to examine if some other kind of organization, both legal and canonical, can avert the threatened dangers of the Church."

The encyclical then examines at some length the old forms of organization.

The Pope says that nothing causes him greater agony than the eventualities menacing the Church in France, and, therefore, he hopes to find some other kind of association not endangering divine rights, adding:

"But as this hope fails us and the law remains as it is we declare it is not permissible to try these other kind of associations so long as they do not establish in the most legal and most positive way that the divine constitution of the Church, the immutable rights of the Roman Pontiff, and the bishops, and their authority over the temporal welfare of the Church, particularly the sacred edifices, will be irrevocably protected by such associations. We cannot wish otherwise without betraying our sacred charge and producing the ruin of the Church in France."

The document urges the bishops to adopt all means within the law to organize their forces, assuring them of the papal co-operation and support.

"It is not difficult," the encyclical says, "to foresee the retributions which the enemies of the Church will make against our present decree. They will seek to persuade the people that we do not seek the salvation of the Church, but that the form of republic in France is odious to us. We denounce with indignation such insinuations as false. The makers of this law have not sought separation but oppression. While affirming their desire for peace they have made atrocious war against religion. They hurl a brand of the most vehement discord, thus arraying one citizen against another, to the great detriment of public welfare. We have supported patiently injustice after injustice through love of the French nation and are finally asked to overstep the last limits of our apostolic duty, and we declare our inability to overstep them. Let the responsibility rest with those whose hatred has gone to such extremes."

The Pope counsels against seditious or violent actions and says firmness will give better results than violence. United action, he says, can be learned from those who have imposed the stigma of this criminal law upon the nation.

In conclusion the encyclical says:—"In the hour of hard trial for France if all unite in defending the supreme interests of the country the

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such as Abbey's Salt does the work and leaves no after unpleasant effect.

25c. and 60c. bottle.

Be Careful

Take no medicine, pills or purgatives that will rack the bowels and finally cause constipation, the result of which may be most disastrous for you. A gentle purgative has a salutary effect.

salvation of the Church is far from desperate. On the contrary, it is to be hoped that her dignity will be raised to its former prosperous height."

The document was signed August 1.

TOTAL ABSTINENCE

Pius X. hopes that Catholicism will stand for sobriety

A general convention of the members of the Catholic Union of Total Abstinence of America was held at Providence, R.I., last week, under the presidency of Bishop Canevin, of Pittsburg. This society has a membership of 100,000, and 800 delegates were present at the meeting.

The basis of the Association is total abstinence, and every member must bind himself to abstain from alcohol in every shape and form.

In his opening address the president of the convention read a letter from Pope Pius X. expressing the hope that the Catholic religion will become pre-eminently the religion of sobriety, and granting indulgences to all those who become members of the association. In his concluding remarks the Pope says: "It is our hope that by granting such numerous favors, not only the bishops, priests and members of religious orders, but also the rest of the faithful will make the resolution to show proof of their devotion to the union and become members thereof."

Commenting on the above, the Patrie says: "This communication from the Pope to the Total Abstinence Catholic Union is a manifesto addressed to all the Catholics in the world. The evil must be great to require the head of Catholicity to personally come down into the arena of reform. Religious methods, although perhaps less powerful than formerly, are still the principal arm against abuses and neglect of duty. It rests with the state, that is, the government, and with the citizens who have a right to vote, to join their efforts and the resources and influences at their command with the teachings and counsel of the head of Catholicity."

ST. JOSEPH'S HOME

The month of August opened well for this thriving little institution, as will be seen by the following letter and list of donations:

964 Dorchester St.

Montreal, 31 July, 1906.

Rev. D. J. Holland, C.S.S.R.

Dear Rev. Father,—It is now some time since you opened your St. Joseph's Home, for boys, and you have been laboring since to make it a success, and that in spite of difficulties.

Your work is one which I admire, and which I think will do considerable good. We have, it is true, an orphanage for boys under the care of the Grey Nuns, but they are called upon, at the tender age of twelve, to bid adieu to the good Sisters; these children are surely not ready for the battle of life in which they are called upon to take part. Your work, then, calculated as it is to prepare indigent boys of good will for the world, and enable them to gain an honest livelihood, is a work that I would gladly see prosper and succeed in every way. In order to continue such an undertaking, I quite understand that you need something more than good wishes from those who hear about it. I feel pleased, therefore, to be able to make known to you that the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis desire to give expression to the interest they take in your work by donating towards its

support the sum of \$100, which will be forwarded to you.

That God may inspire others to help you in your noble efforts to continue your work is the earnest prayer of

Yours fraternally,

F. CHRISTOPHER, O.F.M.

Dir. T. O.

Besides the above beautiful gift Father Holland acknowledges with a full heart the following: Mrs. Lan-nert, Brooklyn, N.Y., twenty dollars; Captain Briere, No. 4 Fire Station, Mrs. Flynn, Scranton, Pa.; Mrs. Cameron, Buckingham, P.Q.; Rev. Father O'Meara, five dollars each. The working girls in the raw leaf room of J. M. Fortier's cigar factory through Miss Rose Ward, subscribed five dollars and forty cents for a cot. Mrs. Farrell, Sydney, C.B.; Rev. Father Cullinan, two dollars each; Rev. Father Lietart, Brandon, Man., and Mrs. Cartwright, one dollar each.

Clothing was received from Rev. Father Elliott, Verdun, and Mrs. Cook. Books from Mrs. Kerr and Mrs. T. J. Donovan. Several loads of firewood from Mr. T. Collins and Mr. Wm. McNally; a bureau and washstand from Mrs. Craven, while other friends unknown sent donations in money and kind.

Father Holland took the boys to the Fresh Air Fund picnic last Thursday at Chambly, and together with Miss Brennan, their matron, all spent a most enjoyable day in the grove. In the afternoon with other Catholic picnicers, they paid their homage to Our Lady in her chapel at Chambly Canton by reciting the rosary for their benefactors, for whom a mass will be offered up the first week in September. A rose tree festival is projected for the month of November. The ladies want to get up something new, and this surely will be the newest. A tree placed in the hall will bear roses which will be numbered and bought by those present, and the number will correspond to another placed on articles of all kinds which will be on tables around the hall. Many pretty, useful and valuable articles, which our readers will, no doubt, furnish, besides the handiwork of the lady promoters, will be taken away after the entertainment. But we will describe it more fully later on. In the meantime gifts for the festival will be gladly and thankfully received at the Home, 396 Wellington street.

ANTI-RELIGIOUS FRENZY IN FRANCE

The Mayor of Sainte-Cecile, in France, in the Vaucluse, made a decree to forbid the smallest manifestation of the religious idea in his domains. Hence a perfect avalanche of summonses against the cure. The latest judgment against him of the police court of his canton condemns him to five days imprisonment. Here are the items as given in the judgment of M. Manivet, justice of the peace at Bolleuc: 1. For having, "alone," in front of his church, "in his cassock," "his hat under his arm," called for cheers for the Christ, for Religion, for France, for Liberty ("Vive le Christ," etc.); 24 hours imprisonment. 2. For having, according to custom, accompanied the children to first communion from the chapel of Sainte-Cecile to the parish church, across the little square between them—24 hours. 3. For having, on the Rogation days, proceeded to the rural crosses, reciting his Breviary, his "surplice on his arm"—72 hours. The sworn statement against him added that he "proceeded to the Benediction"; this, however, was untrue, the "sworn" witness not having taken the trouble to follow him across the fields.