

THE VATICAN COUNCIL.

Personal Reminiscences of Cardinal Gibbons.

Cardinal Gibbons has a highly interesting article in the April issue of the North American Review on "Personal Reminiscences of the Vatican Council." The article in part is as follows: I happened to be the youngest Bishop that attended the council of the Vatican, and while my youth and inexperience imposed on me a discreet silence among my elders, I do not remember to have missed a single session and was an active listener at all the debates.

When the council was convened in Rome, Dec. 8, 1869, the Catholic Bishops of Christendom, resident and titular, amounted to 1,200. At an early stage of the council the number of prelates in attendance was 737. Europe was represented by 514 prelates, North and South America by 113, Asia by 83, Africa by 14 and Oceania by 13 Bishops.

Every continent, every island of importance, every nation on the face of the globe except Russia, was represented by its hierarchy. The Bishops kneeling together around the altar in the council chamber could exclaim with truth in the language of the Apocalypse: "Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, to God in Thy blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

No prelates attracted more general attention than the venerable patriarchs and Bishops of the East. The Orientals came from the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, the cradle of the human family; from the banks of the Jordan, the cradle of Christianity, and from the banks of the Nile, the home of the oldest historical civilization. They came from Chaldea, from the lands of the Medes, Persians and Abyssinians, from Moses, built near the site of ancient Nineveh, and from Bagdad, founded not far from the ruins of Babylon. They assembled from Damascus and Mount Libanus, and from

THE HOLY LAND, sanctified by the footprints of our Blessed Redeemer. What a spectacle they presented, what reverence they excited! Unchangeable as the hills and valleys of their native soil, they wore the same turban, and the same pale and thoughtful countenances which their fathers wore in the days of John the Baptist, and they exhibited the same simplicity of manners that Abraham did nearly 4000 years ago, when he fed his flocks in the valley of Mambré and gave hospitality to angels.

The Vatican council incidentally affords us a most striking and gratifying evidence of the growth of our language among the nations of the earth the three last centuries and of the corresponding expansion of the Catholic religion throughout the English-speaking world. We can form a just estimate of this increase by comparing the number of English speaking Bishops who attended the Vatican council with the number of the same tongue at the Council of Trent, which assembled 350 years ago.

At the Council of Trent the whole continent of America was without a single representative, having been discovered only fifty years before. Oceania was then a terra incognita. There was no Bishop from Scotland. England sent one prelate and Ireland three to that council, consequently there were only four English-speaking representatives at the Tridentine synod.

At the Vatican council there was an English episcopate numbering upwards of 120 members. Prelates SPEAKING OUR TONGUE assembled in Rome from England, Ireland and Scotland, from the United States and Canada, from Oceania, the East Indies and Africa. Daniel Webster, in a speech in the United States Senate, speaks of England as a "power which has dotted the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum beat following the sun and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England."

We may not less confidently affirm that wherever floats the British flag, wherever the English language is spoken, there also is raised aloft the banner of salvation, and there, too, is announced in our familiar and noble tongue the gospel of peace and reconciliation. And I venture the prediction that at the next ecumenical council, if held within fifty years, the representatives of the English language will equal, if they do not surpass in numbers, those of any other tongue.

In every deliberative body, both civil and religious, there is always found a select number who come to the front and are conspicuous among their compeers by their acquired reputation, their ability or their eloquence. The Vatican council was no exception to this rule. Among the prelates who took a prominent part in the debates, I will single out a few who impressed me as recognized leaders in the assembly, though I may say in passing that there were present many silent Solons, like the venerable Archbishop McCloskey, New York, and the present Bishop of Buffalo, whose voice was not heard in the council hall, but whose influence was felt in the committees.

council and yet it hardly exceeded an hour, which is evidence of the usual brevity of the speeches.

The question is commonly put in America: "How long did he speak?" In Europe they ask: "What did he say?" Cardinal Manning's discourse was a most logical and persuasive argument, and, like all his utterances, was entirely free from rhetorical ornament and from any efforts to arouse the feelings or emotions. It was a scriptural and historical treatise, appealing solely to the intellects and honest convictions of the hearers.

Ireland had a distinguished representative in the person of Archbishop Leahy of Cashel, who was perhaps the most graceful orator among the English-speaking prelates. His reply to Cardinal Prince Schwarzenberg on the infallibility debate was a masterpiece of sound reasoning and of charming declamation tinged with a delicate flavor of Irish wit.

Archbishop Spalding of Baltimore and Archbishop Kenrick of St. Louis were among the most noteworthy prelates from the United States. Archbishop Spalding was a member of the two most important committees, where he was busily employed. He delivered but one discourse during the council. Archbishop Kenrick spoke Latin with admirable ease and elegance. I observed him day after day reclining in his seat, with half closed eyes, listening attentively to the debates, without taking any notes. And yet so tenacious was his memory that when his turn came

TO ASCEND THE BOSTON he reviewed the speeches of his colleagues with remarkable fidelity and precision without the aid of manuscript or memoranda.

Among the many illustrious French prelates of the council Monsignor Darboy of Paris and Monsignor Dapanolup of Orleans held conspicuous place. Archbishop Darboy was known to enjoy the confidence and to share the sentiments of Emperor Napoleon III. on the leading questions which were discussed in the council. His heroic and untimely death is still remembered by many. At the close of the Franco-Prussian war he was arrested and imprisoned as a hostage by the commune. Mr. Washburn, our minister to France, made strenuous, though fruitless, efforts to save his life. He was cruelly shot in the prison of La Requette in May, 1871, and died with his hand uplifted in benediction, and with a prayer on his lips for his murderers. That the post of Archbishop of Paris is as hazardous as it is exalted may be inferred from the fact that Monsignor Darboy witnessed the assassination of two of his predecessors, Archbishops Affre and Sibour.

Baron von Ketteler, Bishop of Mentz, was as distinguished a champion in the German Empire as Dapanolup was in France. He was a graduate of the University of Goettingen. His face was disfigured by a scar, the result of a duel fought in his university. A statement has been made, which I could not verify, that the duel was fought

WITH PRINCE BISMARCK. He practiced law for some years before he took orders in the Church. In the council Von Ketteler was a decided inopportunist, while in Germany he was an earnest advocate of the independence of the Church from the encroachments of the State. Not less conspicuous in defence of infallibility was Bishop Mar in of Paderborn. Cardinal Prince Schwarzenberg, primate of Bohemia, and Cardinal Simor, primate of Hungary, were the two most influential churchmen of the Austrian Empire. The double title of prince of the realm and prince of the Church which Cardinal Schwarzenberg possessed was still further ennobled by a commanding presence, handsome features and the gift of eloquence. He strongly contended against the opportuneness of the decree of Papal infallibility, and expressed his apprehension that it might result in a schism in Bohemia, a fear, however, which happily was not realized.

There is this striking analogy between the Republic of the Church and the Republic of the United States, that the son of a peasant is eligible to the highest ecclesiastical preferment, including the Papacy itself, just as the humblest citizen of our country may aspire to the Presidency. This truth is forcibly illustrated in the career of Cardinal Simor. Unlike his Bohemian colleague, he sprang from the people, and was proud of recording the fact. He was a member of the Upper House in the Hungarian Parliament, and his experience in that chamber rendered him one of the most ready and effective speakers of the council.

Of the College of Cardinals that attended the council only four survive to day, one of whom is the reigning Pontiff, Leo XIII. Although Cardinal Pecci did not take part in the public debates of the synod, he was one of its most influential members, and the weight of his learning and administrative experience was felt in the committee to which he was appointed. May it not be by a particular design of Providence that he who was to be elected the head and judge of his brethren in 1878 should not have been involved in their disputations in 1870, but should enter into his high office joyfully hailed as the harbinger of peace and concord by prelates of every shade of theological opinion?

THE YEAR 1870

will be ever memorable for two great events, the Vatican council and the Franco-Prussian war. Let us contrast the pacific gathering of Christian prelates with the warlike massing of troops which immediately followed on the continent of Europe. Hosts of

armed men were tramping the fair fields of France. The land was reddened with the best blood of two powerful nations. The sound of their cannon spread terror throughout the country.

Thousands of human victims were sacrificed, and thousands of homes left desolate; and after the lapse of nearly a quarter of a century the fires that were then kindled are still smouldering, and the animosities engendered by the struggle are not yet allayed.

The council of Bishops assembled in the name and under the invocation of Heaven. They met together, not amid the booming of hostile cannon, but amid hosannas and Te Deums to God. The pursuits of agriculture and commerce were not suspended during their sessions. The decrees they enacted for the welfare of the Christian commonwealth are in full force to-day among 230,000,000 of people, and long after the framers of them shall have passed away they will continue to exercise a salutary influence on generations yet unborn.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The Saturday Review, in a notice of "Carmina Mariana," by Mr. Orby Shipley, has these remarkable words: "It is the peculiar happiness of the English Church that she at least has never varied one jot or tittle in her authoritative utterance from the Catholic doctrine of the theotokos. We have added nothing and we have detracted nothing. We still worship in churches dedicated to Saint Mary the Virgin; we still celebrate her in our calendar, not, as in the case of other saints, by a simple commemoration, but on the anniversary of five different events in her life; we read in our lectionary all the few and striking records of her most amiable personality, and every English Churchman who knows what Churchmanship means speaks of her by the simplest and most gracious appellation, accorded to any being, human or divine, that is, of 'Our Lady.' We leave familiarity and tawdry, fancy titles to others, as we leave to others yet an insolent and irreverent disrespect. For we do not consider the one more appropriate than the other to the Mother of God." The most remarkable feature presented by these words is the simple fact that the Saturday Review considers them acceptable to its readers. And in that light these words bring home to us a feeling of gratification impossible to resist. A great, a stupendous change, has taken place when such words as these are received by the readers of a secular journal in England. The love and honor paid to Our Lady has been the sore point with Protestants; their insults and incomprehensible hatred has been the sore point with us. Shall we say that this line of separation is being blotted out? Certainly these words are an index of a great change, of a great grace poured out over England.

Pleasant as it is to see the evidence of the change, it cannot be denied that these words have another aspect, not so fair to look upon. From the writer's standpoint they are little else but a strategy adapted to the theory of a continuity. In that light they are a cunning action, and the careful words themselves bring this out clearly. They are chosen words aimed at Rome, and they are based on a perversion of facts so ingenious as to amount to sheer impudence. The Church of England, we are told, has never varied from the Catholic doctrine of the theotokos. What can this mean? The Church of England has retained the Apostles Creed and some old churches of Saint Mary the Virgin. That is something, and that is all. If the writer only means this—and he can mean little else—we can only marvel at his shallowness, or ignorance, or impudence. The Church of England has not solemnly denied the Blessed Virgin to be the Mother of God. The Mahometans can say the same. Churchmen worship under the title of St. Mary the Virgin. Mahometans worship in Santa Sophia. A negative principle of this kind can produce no positive argument. Did it stand alone it would mean nothing. There are positive facts, however, proving beyond doubt that the living, surging stream of unceasing blasphemy against the Mother of God, dating from the Reformation, issues from the Established Church, and belongs to her, as to its parent. The Lady Chapels in the old Cathedrals have gone; the words "full of grace" in the English Bible have gone; the "Hail Mary" is gone; the statues of Our Lady have long ago disappeared. By all these things the Church of England has rooted from the people the Catholic doctrine of the theotokos, has frowned upon all the devotions belonging to the doctrine. "We have added nothing and detracted nothing." Much in truth has been detracted, and nothing added when addition was demanded for the defence of those prerogatives which the vulgar and impious scorned. This idle boast of "no change" means sterility and cowardice. The true Church, like the true State, is ever on the alert to detect and condemn error. She makes new laws, new definitions, to meet new errors. What should we say of a State that never legislated for three hundred years? Why, that it was no State. So of a Church. If it is satisfied with the definitions of Ephesus, and the legislation of a thousand years ago, it proves that it is dead and buried also.

The writer goes on to assert that the Church of England keeps five feasts in honor of Our Lady. This is news cer-

tainly. The only feasts in the Prayer Book are the Purification and the Annunciation. To make up the five we must suppose that the writer means Christmas, New Year's Day and the Epiphany. This is not a very straightforward way of reckoning. But he forgets that something considerable has been detracted. Where are the feasts of the Visitation, the Assumption, the Nativity, the Presentation, the Conception? All these are old feasts, and all have been "detracted" by the Church of England. The statement, therefore, that all the few and striking records of the most amiable personality "are read" requires to be understood in its proper light, and then it approaches not very near to the truth.

We leave tawdry titles to others, says, in lofty tones, this worthy critic. Here we have the key to the Protestant mind as regards the Mother of God. No aspiration, no formula can make it realize the true greatness of Mary. Even in striving to exalt her it must end in debasement and insult. A tawdry title is one which is unreal. If Mary is above all our titles, then these titles may be poetical, but they are not tawdry, because they are below, not above the reality. A blow is aimed at Mary's beautiful litany by these words, and we see in that blow the Protestant below the Anglican. The true nature must come out. One present fact alone will prove the hollowness of the boast that the Church of England now defends Mary's honor. The "General Editor" of the Cambridge New Testament for schools and colleges, published in 1885, was the Dean of Peterborough. In the notes to the Gospel of Saint Matthew, the perpetual virginity of Mary is openly and infamously denied. That "general editor" is now Bishop of Worcester. The Council of Ephesus would assuredly have had something to say to him were he a Bishop in those days. But he is a Bishop of the Established Church of England. This makes all the difference. The Saturday Review will please note the fact, and next time explain how a Church which endows and recognizes such a man can be said to have added nothing and detracted nothing as regards the Catholic doctrine of the theotokos.—Liverpool Catholic Times.

Pope Pius IX. and Sir Harry Verney.

Many interesting anecdotes of the late Sir Harry Verney have been told within the last few days, but one which Mr. Alexander Devine contributes to the Manchester City News will probably be new to most readers. One of Sir Harry's famous exploits was his riding across Argentina, and hereby hangs the tale. One day his attention was drawn to a figure lying on the roadside some miles from Santiago under the shelter of a rude hut of leaves and branches. "Pulling up, he discovered a priest, who turned out to be in a high condition of fever. Verney obtained assistance, had the prostrate man carried to his own rooms, and practically nursed him into convalescence and eventual recovery. After some months of friendly intercourse and companionship, the two separated, and probably never thought to meet again. Many years passed, so many that the majority of men had lived their lives and died, but the two who had met under such circumstances still lived, the one Sir Harry Verney, the other no less a person than Pío Nono, Pope of Rome. Sir Harry Verney, being in Rome subsequently, decided to pay a visit to the man he had befriended so many years before. By-and-by he was face to face with the Pope, and the usual compliments passed. Presently, "the Pontiff bowed as much as to say, 'Our interview is now over.' But so far the talking had been all on one side, and Sir Harry felt that his turn had come. So drawing himself up he said, 'You don't remember me, Holy Father? No, said the Pope, eyeing him curiously 'To which the baronet rejoined 'Do you remember the young English officer who met you on the roadside at Santi ago, over forty years ago? At these words it seemed as if the whole incident recurred to the mind of the Pope, for with a look of undisguised pleasure and cordiality, he rose from his seat and warmly shaking his old companion by the hand, conducted him to his own rooms, where they remained talking and laughing over their odd experiences for nearly two hours."

The official report of the German Reichstag states that one hundred and thirty-nine members of that body are Catholics, of whom ninety-five are members of the Centre or Catholic party. The Poles, Alsations and other Catholics who do not belong to the Centre party are nevertheless a unit in demanding the liberty of the Church and the repeal of the last vestige of the persecuting laws of the Kulturkampf. There is a German P. P. A. in the form of an "Evangelical Union," so-called, but it is powerless to ostracise Catholics.

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Purity of Intention.

Holy intention is to the actions of a man that which the soul is to the body, form to its matter, or the root to the tree or the sun to the world, or the fountain to a river, or the base to a pillar, for without these the body is a dead trunk, the matter is sluggish, the tree is a block, the world is darkness, the river is quickly dry, the pillar rushes into flatness and ruin, and the action is sinful, or unprofitable and vain.

Have a care, that while the altar thus sends up a holy flame, thou does not suffer the birds to come and carry away the sacrifice; that is, let not that which began well, and was intended for God's glory, decline and end in thy own praise, or temporal satisfaction, or sin. If any accident of thee, come to pass, let it not be taken into thy purposes, not at all be made use of: as if by telling a true story, you can do an ill turn to your enemy, by no means do it; but when the temptation is found out, turn all thy enmity upon that.

If any temptation to spoil your purposes happens in a religious duty, do not presently omit the action, but rather strive to rectify your intention and to mortify the temptation. St. Bernard taught us this rule: for when the devil, observing him to preach excellently, and to do much benefit to his hearers, tempted him to vainglory, hoping that the good man, to avoid that, would cease preaching, he gave this answer only: "I neither began for thee, neither for thee will I make an end."

Another Catholic Need.

The evidences that Protestantism, as a religion, has proved a failure, and is becoming more so in this land, are every day multiplying. The Forum of this month contains a remarkable article from a Congregationalist minister, referring to the decadence of the religious spirit in certain sections of the country. Speaking of a scene that will be easily recognized by any person who has lived in a settled American community, this writer says of the ordinary sectarian church services: "The old church on the green is next to deserted. The faded curtains back of the pulpit still flap in the breeze, two or three of the stalls are occupied, the rest are tumbling down, and an excellent young clergyman preaches to a few old people on fair Sundays."

This, of course, indicates that the majority of the younger element of our non-Catholic population is not a church-going one; anyone who has passed through any of our villages or towns on a Sunday cannot fail to have observed the correctness of this description. There is no tendency on the part of sectarian brethren on Sunday toward the church. The real masses of church goers are the Catholics; and still all observing people must admit that when a nation neglects its religious duties its welfare cannot be but endangered.

The Catholic Church has shown her capability of making her adherents a religious people; and that is one reason the more why all who wish for the future welfare of the land should pray for its conversion to Catholicity.

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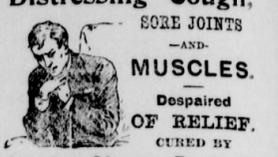
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