

# TALKS TO SOCIETY MEN.



One of our most esteemed Catholic contemporaries—"The Sacred Heart Review"—has recently indicated a great lack in the methods of our various Catholic societies. The principal lack pointed out is unity of aim. There is an immense amount of truth in the contentions of the writer of that article. He says that our Catholic organizations should all be Catholic Truth Societies. However, they may differ as to other aims and objects. This is something upon which they should agree. And the article proceeds to explain in this way:—

"Foresters, Knights of Columbus, Catholic Knights of America, Ibernians, and all the rest, when are you going to combine for the defence of the Church whose teaching and practice are so often misstated or attacked day by day through ignorance or malice in nearly every secular newspaper in the country? When are you going to unite in an aggressive campaign of education against that ignorance of the truth and the beauty of the Church, which prevails to-day so widely not only among Protestants, but even in our ranks? When are you going to insist upon higher ideals of living among your members, so that the Church's teaching may be more fully exemplified by them? When are you going to forget whatever differences may divide you, and become as one solid phalanx in spreading abroad among your non-Catholic fellow citizens who hate or fear or misunderstand the Church, the light of knowledge and of truth?"

This isolation of each of our societies is only too apparent, and has been the fruitful source of countless failures that otherwise might easily have been successes. In other

words, there is an absence of mutual agreement, of entire understanding, of inter-dependence, and of emulation. Each organization, to place it mildly, is so absorbed in its own immediate necessities, requirements, aims, and ambitions, that it can find no time to consult with any other association on questions of general interest, the consequence is that, while each one yields a small fraction of influence, there is no concentration of that influence, no transforming of it into a power. We will not go as far as to say that petty jealousies and ungenerous rivalries have as yet made their appearance in this country; but if our societies continue much longer in their estrangements, such will certainly creep in, and eventually do as much injury to the Catholic cause here, as they have done in the United States.

When there is question of a St. Patrick's Day parade, we find delegates from each organization meeting to consult and to draw plans for the celebration. Why could not such delegates, or others, be appointed permanent, for each year, and have regular meetings every three or four months? At such general meetings, or congresses of the societies, all matters of a nature to affect Irish Catholics in general could be reviewed and discussed, and, on the return of the delegates to their respective societies, the results of such deliberations could be placed before them and made the basis of action in many minor affairs. This would our societies have a unity of purpose; and while each one would pursue its own aims after its own methods, the aggregate influence of them all would have a tremendous effect upon the future of our people in Canada.

# HEROIC SISTER AND PUPIL.



It is sometimes given us to record scenes that harrow the soul even of the reader, so sad, so pathetic, so noble, so beautiful are they to contemplate. The account of the recent burning of the St. Lawrence O'Toole's parish school, in St. Louis, furnishes one of these tragic and astounding pictures, the effects of which are felt even by those who merely hear or read the bare recital. In that fearful conflagration, two precious lives were lost.

The victims were Sister Stanislaus, of the Order of St. Joseph, and a pupil, Mary Foley, ten years of age. They were in the south wing on the third floor of the building, and when they discovered that the building was on fire they were imprisoned by a wall of smoke that no one could penetrate. Brave men, including Father Brennan, the parish priest, were trying to rescue them, but each time they found the suffocating smoke a barrier impassable, and the Sister and her pupil, despairing of escape, fell at the foot of a little altar upon which there was a crucifix, and there about fifteen minutes later two firemen who had climbed up a ladder from the alley found them embraced in death. But life was not yet extinct. Both the nun and her child pupil breathed feebly. One of the firemen picked up the nun, and by means of a rope lowered her to the ground. The other fireman picked up the girl and held her head out of the window, away from the stifling smoke, until the nun's body had been lowered. Then he took out the child. They were still alive, and both were hurriedly carried to the Pius Hos-

pital, where three physicians, by means of artificial respiration, endeavored to save them, but the Sister died within five minutes and Mary Foley, the child, died fifteen minutes later. There was not a bruise nor a burn on either of their bodies. They died of suffocation.

We will not attempt to depict the agony of the little girl's mother, nor the undemonstrative grief of the sister's, over the remains of the heroic nun; no more will we recall the tears shed by Archbishop Kain, as he gazed upon that heartrending spectacle. The brave pastor, Father Brennan, who had performed wonderful feats, of valor and devotedness, when questioned, said:—

"It was the most terrible experience of my life, and I hope God will spare me from another. The little child and the poor Sister were found clasped in each other's arms, showing that the Sister thought of the little one's safety ere she did her own. A noble death, even if she failed in her attempt to save the child's life."

Here is a theme for pen of poet, for pencil of artist, for song of bard; here have all an example—set in a framework of fire—of the self-sacrificing heroism of those noble women, whose lives are consecrated to God, and to humanity for the sake of God. Need one pray that their souls may rest in peace? There is no need to pray for the baptised infant that God has taken away in its white robe of innocence; there is no need to pray for the martyr whose soul goes forth crimsoned with the regenerating glow of sanctity.

# IGNORANCE IN CATHOLIC COUNTRIES.



We have been reading a lengthy article, in which the greatest living authority on statistics—Mr. G. Mulhall—is quoted in support of the contention that Catholic countries, all circumstances being equal—are not inferior, educationally or otherwise to Protestant countries. Leaving aside all the introductory remarks, the question of Ireland, Italy, Spain and other smaller countries being brought up, the writer settles beyond dispute, the old argument, still in use amongst ill-informed and very prejudiced Protestants concerning the ignorance propagated by the Church. Having curtailed the greater part of his important statement, we will give the remaining portions to our readers. It is as follows:—

IRELAND.—Though a Catholic country, Ireland is under a Protestant government. England, for nearly 200 years, tried to make the Irish people Protestants. The means they employed were, first, murder; then

robbery, and finally, ignorance. Cromwell consigned all the Irish Catholics "to hell or to Connaught." The penal laws confiscated the property of Catholics and forbade them to own real estate, to take a lease or to possess a horse over the value of \$20. Catholics could not teach under penalty of transportation, and a Catholic parent who sent his child out of the country to be educated was first fined and then outlawed.

These facts are stated by Henry Barnard, LL.D., the first United States commissioner of education, in his Journal of Education, vol. XI., p. 134:

"Until the beginning of this century the Catholics, who constituted four-fifths of the population in Ireland, were not only not permitted to endow, conduct or teach schools, but Catholic parents even were not permitted to educate their children abroad; and it was made an offence, punished by transportation (and if the party returned it was made high treason), in any Catholic to act as

a schoolmaster, or even as a tutor in a private family."

Hence, if the older generation of Irishmen in this country was illiterate the reason was that the English Protestant government made them illiterate. The middle generation was less illiterate because the Irish Catholics were winning back their ancient rights. There will be no illiterates among the new generation, for equality at least in primary education is now gained.

ITALY, the figures for Italy and Portugal are, in the Mulhall tables, 90 and 54. These are the lowest of the countries given. What is the reason? It cannot be then religion because we saw that other Catholic countries compared well with Protestant countries. What, then, is the cause?

In Italy the causes are well known. This has been a disastrous century for the peninsula. The beginning of the century saw it the theatre of Napoleon's wars. The middle of it saw it oppressed by foreign enemies and agitated by domestic revolutions. The end of it sees the nation groaning under a burden of taxation becoming too heavy to bear. When a country is thus distracted, it is not surprising that school attendance should fall off.

Moreover, it must be remembered that Italy is the home of art and culture now as she has been in the past. From her came the impulse which made our modern civilization. Her libraries, her art galleries, her palaces, her churches, draw men from every race and creed and country. They are all the works of her own sons, she owes nothing to outside influences.

In Rome, the city of the popes, there has been a system for free education since 1597. In the '40's, Laing, a Protestant travelling was in Rome. He wrote then:

"In every street in Rome, for instance, there are at short distances public primary schools for the education of the children of the lower and middle classes in the neighborhood. Rome, with a population of 158,678 souls, has 372 public primary schools with 482 teachers and 14,099 children attending them. Has Edinburgh so many public schools for the instruction of those classes? I doubt it. Berlin, with a population about double that of Rome, has only 264 schools."

In 1860, when the population of Rome had reached 220,532, there were 23,905 pupils in the schools, not counting the university students. That the rate was not kept up in the rest of Italy was owing to the political troubles which made all governments insecure. Still it is worthy of remark that with all these drawbacks the number of schools in Italy is still greater than the number of schools in Germany.

# ROMAN NOTES OF INTEREST.

Rome is not only the centre of Christian unity, but it is the focus to which converge all the interesting lights of the world. Almost every race in the world is represented in the Eternal city. The consequence is, it is the greatest of news in Europe. If you are sufficiently acquainted and have the leisure, you can find out something about nearly everything worth knowing in the world—and you can find it without going beyond the walls of Rome. At present, the

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Holy Year will magnet-like draw hundreds of thousands of pilgrims to Rome, they will come from all quarters. The first batch, consisting of the Ligurians, have returned home; and a Polish pilgrimage of large dimensions, will reach Rome in the early part of May. It will be June, however, before the inflow from all over Europe and from America and the Orient will commence. It is calculated that about one million and a half will visit Rome this year. One of the cardinals estimates the probable number at five millions; but this is out of the question. Were they to tax every mode of conveyance, by land and sea, to its utmost capacity, five millions could not be carried, by the regular routes, to Rome. As it is, there will be no end of sight-seeing and sight-seers, and an inexhaustible store of gossip ammunition will be gathered in the Eternal City this year.

The Empress of China, who has been so liberal in her treatment of Catholic missionaries, has charged Mgr. Favier, vicar-Apostolic of Peking, who is now in Rome, with the pleasant duty of conveying the expression of her sentiments of respect and veneration to the Sovereign Pontiff. His Holiness has been deeply touched by this message, and has given Mgr. Favier a present for the Empress, consisting of a magnificent porcelain vase, made by the artist Ghirri. Whatever effect, great or small, such an exchange of courtesies may have in Rome, it certainly must augur well for the future of catholicity, and of Catholic missionaries in China.

On the 2nd March, Leo XIII. will celebrate his ninetieth birthday. On that occasion the Central Council of the Society of Italian Catholic Youth will have the members of its various branches hold special celebrations in honor of the aged Pontiff. Since the approach of the Pope to his ninetieth year, has been noticed so much in the press and otherwise publicly, it is wonderful how many nonagenarians have cropped up. Nearly one thousand persons, in France alone, have taken steps to show that they are as old, or older than Leo XIII. And this peculiar spirit of rivalry has awakened not a few centenarians into activity. One of the oldest at present conspicuous in Europe is Miss Leonie de Lisle du Flex. She was born in 1798, and is in perfect possession of all her faculties. She remembers her godfather, the Chevalier de Harcourt, who was born in 1714. She has come in contact with a contemporary of Louis XIV. The Pope granted her permission. On the

occasion of her hundredth birthday, to have mass said in her room.

As an evidence of how members of the Catholic priesthood are ever foremost in all the sciences and arts, as well as in the development of all that modern invention has brought to bear upon the improving social condition of the world, we may take from the Catholic press of Italy the following:—

"Don Perosi is maintaining his popularity. His musical skill seems to be winning him increased favour. On Wednesday evening he arrived at Naples preparatory to the production of the 'Resurrection' in the Church of the Gerolomini. He was received at the station by Baron Kandler, and a committee of the Catholic University Society and other gentlemen. Impartial critics have been enthusiastic in praising 'San Pietro,' an oratorio by another clerical composer, Father Hartmann, which has been executed five times in San Carlo al Corso. Father Hartmann is a German, and one of the Franciscans Minor. His work has been called magnificent by more than one competent critic, and it is believed that he has a great future before him."

As I mentioned before, Rome is a great centre of European gossip. It is a kind of reservoir into which all the news of the world is poured to be carefully distributed again to mankind. Paris is so close nowadays, that it can be reached from Rome in a host of ways, and at little expensive of time.

From there we learn that the Rev. Pere Albert Platel, Provincial of the Society of Jesus, breathed his last in Paris on the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus at the residence of the Jesuit Fathers, Rue de Sevres. He was

but sixty-two years of age. He had for seven years ruled the Paris province, displaying singular wisdom and breadth of view. As Master of Novices he had employed the best qualities of his heart and mind in raising up worthy spiritual sons to the great Loyola. His death was that of a saint. The members of the Community were around his bed assisting him with their prayers to the borderland of the other world.

### TO BE PREPARED

For war is the surest way for this nation to maintain peace. That is the opinion of the wisest statesmen. It is equally true that to be prepared for spring is the best way to avoid the peculiar dangers of the season. This is a lesson multitudes are learning, and at this time, when the blood is sure to be loaded with impurities and to be weak and sluggish, the millions begin to take Hood's Sarsaparilla, which purifies, enriches and vitalizes the blood, expels all disease germs, creates a good appetite, gives strength and energy and puts the whole system in a healthy condition, preventing pneumonia, fevers, and other dangerous diseases which are liable to attack a weakened system.

### ST. BRIDGET'S NIGHT REFUGE.

Report for week ending Sunday, 11th February, 1900: Males, 381; females, 26; Irish, 256; French, 86; English, 20; Scotch and other nationalities, 45. Total, 407.

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