

answer to the one, and the recent International Scientific Congress at Fribourg, was referred to as furnishing a complete refutation of the other. We are glad to notice that the significance of the Fribourg Congress in this direction has been fully realised by some, at least, of the leading secular journals both at Home and in the colonies. The *Wellington Evening Post*, for example—to speak only of journals nearer home—in its issue of the 19th inst., has a very interesting article on "The Church and Progress," in which this aspect of the Fribourg Congress is frankly and fully recognised. The writer has evidently very much more sympathy with science than with theology, but this does not prevent him from being not only just, but even generous to the position of the Catholic Church. The article thus summarises the history of this periodic Congress:—

'Briefly, the facts laid bare to the eyes of the world are as follows: Nine years ago the late Monsignor D'Hulst, of Paris, summoned a congress of the representative thinkers of the Roman Catholic communion for an open declaration of their opinions and convictions on the great problems of science and politics, and Biblical criticism. That the effect was neither transitory nor shallow is clearly evidenced in the fact that the congress thus unostentatiously initiated has since been held triennially, and the last, held some weeks ago at Fribourg in Switzerland, emphatically shows, if unreserved audacity and boldness of utterance count for anything, that high-water mark has been touched, and that a movement is now in flood which will inevitably achieve results that it is impossible at present to measure in the polity of the Roman Catholic Church.' After referring to the well-known views of Dr. Zahn and other advanced thinkers the article continues: "Some of the members from France stood up and fought the dictum of universal suffrage, but they were hopelessly and ignominiously beaten by a large and demonstrative majority. 'In fact,' says the correspondent of the *London Daily Chronicle*, 'the younger clergy of all nations, and the lay contingents from Belgium, Germany, and the English-speaking countries, were all of one mind that the anti-popular thunders of the French ecclesiastics, and their helpless fear of the people,' were not only absurd, but were a grave danger to the whole future of Catholicism.' It was accepted 'that the people themselves make the Government, and that all persons chosen for the time being to administer that Government derive all their power from the people, and are answerable to them.' And finally, it was declared that the two bases of the Catholic Church were freedom and authority, and that in the struggles of the present it would be the mission of the northern peoples to reconcile them, alike in science and in society." The writer concludes with the following tribute—written in a spirit of fairness which is only too rarely manifested in the columns of our colonial dailies—to the amazing vitality of the Catholic Church. "It will thus be seen what an amazing gulf there is between the halting opinions of the great sections of the Protestant Churches and the particular communion which now advances with banners unfurled to the front ranks of scientific and social and religious progress. We think it would be difficult to name a prelate or dignitary of the English Establishment who would dare to declare or accept the doctrine of scientific evolution without imperilling his ecclesiastical position, and we need only mention the persistent antagonism of the English bishops to every movement in the direction of extending popular rights as a sufficient contrast to the startling advance which now animates the minds of the great Roman Establishment. The history of this Church for more than a thousand years has been marked by a policy that has been as successful as it has been remarkable. Time after time she has seemed to sink almost to death under the fierce pressure of external circumstances, but time after time she has buoyantly risen into complete newness of life; and it may be that the development we have referred to is simply a later and stronger proof of her vitality and her ability to regain her ascendancy as the dominant spiritual influence and power in history. It would seem, however, that the famous dictum of Lord Macaulay that the Roman Church will still exist in undiminished vigour when the New Zealander shall sketch the ruins of St. Paul's from a broken arch of London Bridge was no mere literary flourish, and the phase she is now entering upon may help to confirm the historical vision of the great reviewer."

ODDS AND
ENDS.

IN a very interesting performance at Domrémy, the career of Joan of Arc is made the subject of a theatrical representation in the spirit of the old Mystery Plays, or of the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau. Acted by the neighbouring peasants in the open air, near the cottage where the Maid was born, and close to the fields and woods which were the scene of her visions, this simple rustic drama attracts visitors from all parts of France, and is called by the Paris press the popular national drama. The "Mystery of Joan of Arc," as it is entitled, written in very simple dialogue, and divided into eight scenes in which the principal events in the life of the heroine are portrayed, is performed by 300 peasant-actors with such earnestness and pathos as to hold the audience enthralled, and to charm even the critics who had come to scoff. The initiative in

organising the performance is due to the author of the drama, the Abbé Meignien, curé of the adjacent parish of Mesnil-en-Xantois, who has for 10 years been labouring to put his idea into execution, and to overcome the many obstacles thrown in its way. Failing to receive support from the curé of Domrémy he assembled the peasants of his own parish, narrated to them the story of the Maid, and drilled them in the parts they were to play in enacting it. Backed by the support of the Bishop of the diocese, he was able to raise the necessary funds, and finding on his arrival in Paris in the prosecution of his purpose that the play of "Joan of Arc" was being performed at the Ambigu, he persuaded the manager of that theatre to pay a visit to Mesnil to review his rustic actors. Their docility and intelligence made so great an impression on the Paris manager that he readily consented to provide the scenery and dresses, to supervise the preparation of the theatre, and to direct the performance.

The official lists of distinctions recently published in connection with the Intermediate Examinations (says the *Catholic Times*) show the excellent work done in the Christian Brothers' Schools, North Richmond street, Dublin. The brilliant success of these schools year after year has been truly remarkable, but the results this year have been such as not only to secure the first place among the educational establishments of the country but even to outstrip their hitherto unequalled record of last year with the splendid total of 94 distinctions. These include the gold medal for modern languages in the Junior Grade, 43 new Exhibitions, 9 Retained Exhibitions, 30 book prizes, 3 composition prizes, and 3 commercial prizes. In the Senior Grade, Richmond street has gained one £50 prize, one Retained Exhibition, and one book prize. Of the 34 Exhibitions awarded in Middle Grade eight go to pupils of these schools, five of these being amongst the first 19 students on the Exhibition list. They have also secured in Middle Grade eight Retained Exhibitions, seven book prizes, and two composition prizes in Greek and German. In Junior Grade these schools have carried off 22 Exhibitions, four of these being among the first 13 on the Exhibition list. The gold medal for modern languages was also carried off by a Richmond street pupil. In this grade they have also won three composition prizes in Celtic, German, and French, together with nine book prizes and three commercial prizes. In Preparatory Grade the pupils have gained 12 exhibitions, including first, second, and eighth places in all Ireland, the composition prizes in Celtic and French, and 13 book prizes. Besides the above, Richmond street obtained a very large number of high places in various subjects. In Middle Grade second place in book-keeping, second and fifth places in shorthand, third in German third and fourth in précis writing, and second place in drawing. In Junior Grade, first, second, and third places in German; second, fourth, and fifth in Euclid; third and fourth places in the mathematical group of subjects; fourth and fifth places in Celtic, and first in book-keeping. In Preparatory Grade first in Celtic, second in English, and third in French. The marked success of these schools in mathematics deserves special mention. No fewer than 16 of the students secured the maximum number of marks in these subjects—one in middle grade arithmetic, 10 in junior arithmetic, and five in preparatory algebra. It is also a very pleasing feature to notice how successful these schools have been in the commercial course of the Intermediate. Eight of the pupils obtained commercial certificates and three commercial prizes. Drawing also receives its due share of attention; we find that as many as 114 of the pupils of these schools passed the examination in the various grades in this most useful subject.

A few weeks ago (says the *Madras Catholic Watchman*) an Anglican Chaplain on the Madras Establishment was discussing with a Catholic layman the well-worn topic of Titzel's sale of indulgences. The layman endeavoured to make the Chaplain understand that, although sometimes an alms is one of the conditions of an indulgence, just as fees are one condition of a university degree, yet there are other conditions, such as sincere confession and a good communion; and an indulgence is not granted to every one who gives the alms, any more than a degree is given to every one who pays the fees. The Chaplain said, "But to this day indulgences are sold in the Church of Rome. Now, in Spain, you can buy an indulgence for sixpence in any tobacco-shop." The layman asked what authority he had for this statement and the Chaplain replied that travellers said so. The layman at once wrote to the rector of the Scottish College at Valladolid and asked if the statement were true. He has received the following reply: *Collegio de Escoceses Valladolid, August 27th 1897.* Dear Sir,—In answer to your letter of the 20th July, I am instructed by the rector of this College, Very Rev. David MacDonald, to state that the assertion that indulgences are sold in Spain, openly or privately, in tobacco-shops or in any other place, is entirely false and has no foundation, except ignorance or malice. He has resided in Spain constantly for over thirty years and his word should have more authority than mere hearsay of travellers who neither do nor can specify any name or place where such things are done. I have lived in the heart of Spain for over ten years and I can assure you with the utmost

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