

THE POPE AND ITALIAN CATHOLICS

AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT

Some weeks ago the cable messages announced the publication of a new Encyclical dealing with the action of Italian Catholics in the public life of the country. It is a lengthy document and is addressed in Italian to the Bishops of Italy. It indicates a turning-point in the activity of Catholics in every part of the country.

The Holy Father begins by stating that it gives him much pleasure to address words of consolation and encouragement to the faithful in Italy—all the more so because he had previously found himself compelled to condemn undisciplined tendencies which threatened to seriously damage the Catholic cause. The Pope then defines Catholic action as the effort to renew all things in Christ, to promote Christian culture, and to fight anti-Christian civilisation by all legitimate means. Thus understood, Catholic action is, he says, peculiarly the affair of the Catholic laity. This help the Church has at all times accepted from her children, but in different forms, according to the needs of the times. Not everything that was useful in other times is useful and opportune to-day. The Church has clearly shown during long centuries and in all cases a wonderful capacity for adapting itself to changing circumstances. His Holiness then sets forth the conditions which must be fulfilled in order that Catholic action may really be effective.

Above all things, men expect from a Catholic character and manly virtue. Next the works to which Catholics devote themselves must correspond with the requirements of society to-day, must be so adapted to promote the

Moral and Material Interests

of the people and the proletariat that they will be readily understood and welcomed, whilst at the same time the zeal of the leaders is stimulated through the excellent fruits to be secured. The difficult problems of modern life demand prompt and sure social solution, and Catholics must find out what the solution is and make it operative with the aid of an energetic, tactful, intelligent, well-organised propaganda directly calculated to meet opposition. The most earnest demand of Leo XIII. in the Encyclical "Rerum Novarum" was the practical solution of the social question on the ground of Christian principles. For this object there must be perfect unity amongst Catholics. Here the Pope recommends the German Catholic Volksverein, or People's Association, and the Unione delle Opere Economiche. Catholic action must be made effective by all those practical means which the advance of sociology, experience and the conditions of social and public life suggest.

The civil rights which the present Constitution of the State give to all, Catholics as well as others, must be preserved. Those rights are of different kinds. They even raise the question of taking a direct share in the political life of the country by means of representation in Parliament. Weighty reasons dissuade his Holiness from abandoning the rules laid down by his predecessors, Pius IX. and Leo XIII., of blessed memory, by which the participation of Catholics in

The Parliamentary Elections

is forbidden in Italy. But other equally weighty reasons concerned with the highest interests of society, which must be safeguarded at any cost, may bring it about that in special cases the rules referred to will be dispensed with, especially when Catholics are convinced that such a dispensation is absolutely necessary for the salvation of souls and the highest interests of the Church.

His Holiness then advises the Catholics to prepare themselves for public life and form electoral associations and other organisations having for their aim the welfare of the people. He recommends the holding of meetings, and declares that in the work that is to be done, whilst due freedom is to be allowed, the advice and leadership of the Bishops is necessary. As to the priests, they must be above parties, and must be careful not to compromise their person and dignity. They are therefore to take no part in the political and social organisations except after mature reflection and with the assent of their Bishops.

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Home Rule Demonstration in Sydney

As we were briefly informed by cable message at the time, a great mass meeting, to bid farewell to Mr. W. K. Redmond, M.P., and to inaugurate the Home Rule Tribute from Australia, was held in the Town Hall, Sydney, on Friday evening, July 28. The Town Hall, which can accommodate between five and six thousand persons, was crowded shortly after seven o'clock, although the meeting was announced for eight. Not to disappoint the late arrivals an overflow meeting was held in the extensive basement of the hall, which was presided over by Archbishop Kelly, and was addressed by Mr. Redmond, Sir William Manning, and others.

At a few minutes to eight (says the 'Freeman's Journal') His Eminence the Cardinal, Mr. Redmond, M.P., Archbishop Kelly, and others appeared on the platform, and were accorded a rousing welcome. Scarcely was his Eminence seated with Mr. Redmond on his right, than the tall figure of Mr. Andrew Mack strode briskly to the front of the stage. The house rose to him as one man and cheered. They cheered an Irish cheer that shook the building. Bowing towards the chair, Mr. Mack acknowledged the welcome with a sweep of his right arm, and as soon as the last echo of the plaudits had died away, his voice burst forth into the strains of 'The minstrel boy.'

Lieutenant-Colonel Frechill, one of the hon. secretaries of the Home Rule Tribute, read an apology for absence from Mr. Allen Taylor, Lord Mayor of Sydney, who had promised to preside. A serious business matter had unexpectedly called Mr. Taylor out of town for some days. He expressed his deep regrets at being unable to take the chair and hoped the committee would not be inconvenienced. The duties of chairman, in consequence, fell upon his Eminence Cardinal Moran. Some time was swallowed in reading subscriptions, and the speechmaking was prolonged until past eleven o'clock.

Correspondence.

The correspondence was of interest. There was a letter from Colonel J. H. P. Murray, Chief Judicial Officer of British New Guinea. He enclosed £5. The next letter was from the Hon. J. A. Toke, Auckland, enclosing a subscription. 'It is worth reading, every word of it,' declared the hon. secretary, when he came to a letter from the corresponding secretary of the Hibernian A. C. Benefit Society (Mr. J. L. Sutton). It enclosed £100 as a first instalment from the Hibernians of Victoria. The Hon. A. J. Thynne, M.L.C., wrote from Brisbane that Queensland would do her full share towards the Tribute. Senator Keating was unable to come from Melbourne because the Senate business detained him. Dr. O'Donnell wrote for the United Irish League of Melbourne. There was a tremendous outburst of applause as the apology of Mr. J. C. Watson, M.H.R., leader of the Federal Labor Party, was read. The accomplishment of Home Rule would, he said, greatly assist the harmonious consolidation of the Empire. His Lordship Dr. Gallagher, Bishop of Goulburn, wrote a cordial letter of encouragement to the old cause. Mr. Octavius C. Beale, President of the Combined Australian Chambers of Manufactures, wrote upholding the principle of Home Rule for Ireland and Scotland as the best means of restoring the people to the land and reviving the manufacturing prosperity of the towns. The Bishop of Maitland (Dr. Murray) wrote that he could not understand how any Australian would deny to Ireland the right of Home Rule. Bishop Delany said there were very few Australians who were not in entire sympathy with Home Rule. Bishop O'Connor (Armidale) regretted his inability to be present. He gladly urged the indisputable right of Ireland to self-government, and enclosed £10.

The Speeches.

The opening words of his Eminence lifted the Irish question above the level of party politics or sectional contention. He pointed to the words of the greatest statesman of the Victorian era in support of the restoration of self-government to Ireland, of which she was robbed by a corrupt and unrepresentative legislature which formed a Union based upon crime. He showed that the deeds forming part of the price by which that corrupt Union was purchased were still preserved in the archives of the land. These deeds which gave landed title to the traitors are still preserved, the equivalent of the Judas silver. They are part of the enormous price paid for the majority that carried the Union in the corrupt Irish Parliament which was not a Parliament in any representative sense, seeing that no Catholic could enter it, nor many incorruptible Protestants for that matter. In beautiful language his Eminence set forth the undying attachment of Erin to her lost liberty.