

Antipodes the Australian Catholics have been recognising the value of the organisation at their Catholic Congress and resolving to plant branches in every district throughout the colonies. North of the Tweed recruits are coming in to the society in large numbers and with fervid enthusiasm. And last, but not least, Ireland is showing that in supporting this excellent instrument of Catholic progress it is determined to take a leading place. The funds are in a satisfactory condition and the society seems to be in the position of the Macedonian victor who sighed for new worlds to conquer.

Treatment of Voluntary Schools.—On the occasion of laying the foundation stone of a school at Blackley the Bishop of Salford declared that the voluntary schools were treated with an injustice which was scandalous. The Catholic bishops, however, were not prepared to accept any scheme of redress which involved popular control of Catholic schools, and to get over the difficulty of local control they recommended that the whole cost of the maintenance of public elementary schools should be drawn from the Imperial Exchequer.

The last English Pilgrimage.—His Eminence Cardinal Vaughan and the Duke of Norfolk were to accompany the Catholic Union pilgrimage to Rome, which was to leave England for the Eternal City a few days before Christmas.

The Italian Church, London.—The congregation of St. Peter's Italian Church, Hatton Garden, have decided to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by the approaching silver jubilee of Father Bannin's elevation to the priesthood to make him a presentation (the first ever made to him) in recognition of his twenty years' work as a priest in their midst. For the past seventeen years he has been rector of the church.

ITALY.—The Catholic Congress and the Labor Questions.—The Italian Catholic Congress held in Rome under the auspices of the Holy See devoted a part of its deliberations to Labor questions, and a series of resolutions having a very practical bearing on the subject were adopted. At the previous Congress, which took place at Ferrara, diocesan committees were directed to undertake investigations into the relations between employers and employed, and by the delegates who met in Rome they were urged to continue their labours with increasing earnestness and diligence. The clergy were recommended, in accordance with the advice of the Sovereign Pontiff, to band the workers together in associations and to make these bodies the principal parochial organisations. The establishment of journals specially intended for the toilers was advocated. Meanwhile the editors of existing Catholic papers were asked to pay special attention to labor problems, to deal in their columns with articles designed to alienate the working classes from religion, and to show how great is the solicitude of the Church for the toilers' welfare. From this it is manifest that the authorities in Rome not only have firm faith in the workers, but are resolved to do everything possible for the betterment of their condition.

ROME.—Closing of the Holy Door.—A cable message received last week stated that on Christmas Eve the Holy Father performed the ceremony of closing the Holy Door, which had been opened on December 24, 1899. The ceremony was witnessed by 40,000 persons. Writing with reference to the opening of the Holy Door on December 24, 1899, a Rome correspondent, said:—The important ceremony of proclaiming the Holy Year was performed at 11 o'clock this morning by the Pope in St. Peter's Church, in the presence of an immense congregation, including many pilgrims from England and the United States. Preceded by a long procession of ecclesiastical dignitaries the Pope was carried in his *sedes gestatoria* to the great door of St. Peter's, which had not been opened since the last ceremony of that kind, performed in the year 1825. His Holiness descended from the chair and was presented with a small golden hammer by Cardinal Vannutelli, and struck the door with it, at the same time uttering the words, 'Open the gates of justice to me that I may celebrate the name of the Lord.' A second and third summons followed, each preceded by blows of the golden hammer. The door was then thrown open and the Pope entered the Cathedral, followed by his attendant dignitaries. His Holiness walked to the Chapel of Piety and passed to that of the Holy Sacrament, where he re-entered the *sedes gestatoria* and was carried to his throne in front of St. Peter's Chair, and solemnly blessed the congregation. His Holiness was present at the ceremony in 1825, when he was 15 years of age.

The Congress of Franciscan Tertiaries.—According to the *Franciscan Annals*, which gives a full account of the Congress of Franciscan Tertiaries in Rome, the French Tertiaries present numbered 3000, the Germans 2000, the Spaniards 1000, and the English contingent over 100. In an article on 'Notable Franciscan Figures' at the Congress, Mrs. Crawford says that after the president probably the most heavy share in the work of the Congress fell upon Father David Fleming, O.F.M.

SCOTLAND.—The See of Dunkeld.—The Canons of the Chapter of Dunkeld met recently to select their nominations for the vacant bishopric. The names of Monsignor Fraser, Rome; Canon Smith, Stirling; and Canon MacFarlane, Rutherglen, are mentioned in connection with the vacancy.

Presentation to a Priest.—The Rev. Father McConnochie, lately transferred from St. Mirin's, Paisley, to Carluke, has been presented with an affectionate address and a purse of sovereigns by the faithful of St. Mirin's as an appreciative token of their sincere regard and heartfelt love for him. The address dwelt in touching terms on the edification of his saintly life, his kindness, charity, and consideration for the poor, and his prompt attention to the sick. It also made special allusion to the critical time when the parish was deprived of the services of two brother priests who were stricken down the with fever, then prevalent in the town; and how cheerfully, generously, and unselfishly Father McConnochie had striven to overtake the increased work which in consequence of the fever had devolved to a great extent upon him.

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