

The Catholic World

ENGLAND.—Catholic Truth Society

The annual meeting of the Catholic Truth Society of England was held recently at the Archbishop's House, Westminster, the Right Rev. Dr. Stanley presiding. Mr. Britten, hon. secretary, read the report for the year, showing that numerous books and pamphlets had been issued in various cheap forms. The report expressed regret that subscriptions to the free distribution fund had last year been very small. It would seem that Catholics did not recognise the necessity for this work. In view of the extraordinary activity of the various Protestant organisations in distributing anti-Catholic literature this was to be regretted. The cordial understanding existing between the parent society and the Truth Societies of Ireland and Scotland continued. These societies showed considerable activity, especially that for Ireland, which had been received with enthusiasm by the people. This year's conference would be held at Liverpool in the first week of July. In connection with the statement as to the expenses incurred in legal suits, the report stated that numerous letters of thanks had been received by the Society for exposures it had made of various people, and also for its pamphlet on 'Maria Monk.' Mr Stanfield, treasurer, presented his accounts for the year. He said he was disappointed by the miserably small sum devoted to the free distribution fund. The amount the Society carried forward this year was considerably less than the previous year. The Society was in great need of funds. The statements showed that the receipts were £3629 for the year, while the expenditure was £3812.

Westminster Cathedral

The interior decoration of the new Westminster Cathedral (says the London 'Monitor') has been begun in earnest, although it will be years before the gaunt walls and bare roof of the building are covered, as they one day will be, with costly marble and brilliant mosaic work. The decorations of the side chapels are at present receiving attention, and it is computed that in about three months' time the mosaic work of the chapel of the Holy Souls will be finished, whilst similar work in the chapel of SS. Gregory and Augustine (the funds for which have been given by Lord Brampton) is proceeding apace. Mr. G. Bridge, the well-known mosaic artist, has been entrusted with the work, and he is employing a staff of English lady-artists, specially trained in this class of work. About twenty-five are at present busy all day in the cathedral, and one can just catch a glimpse of them, clad in long holland overalls, perched on scaffolding erected round the chapel roofs, doing their work by the aid of candle-light. The work calls for great nicety. The colors are given to the girls in slabs about the size of a breakfast-plate, and they themselves have to chip them into the tiny pieces required for the work, these pieces being fastened in with a kind of putty which has to be put on the wall by hand. Each girl is given a colored cartoon of the portion allotted to her, which is pasted up on the wall near by, and from which she works. Some of the workers, by the way, are quite young girls. The cartoons in the chapel of SS. Gregory and Augustine will represent events in the life of those two saints. The next chapel on which operations are to be commenced is the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, the marble work in which is now being finished. The new pulpit, by Medici, of Rome, has just being placed on the nave floor; it is of white statuary marble, beautifully inlaid with mosaic work.

FRANCE.—Benedictines Leaving

A Reuter's telegram from Paris on April 19 says:—The Benedictines of Kerbenec, near La Rouches, have for some days past been dismantling the abbey which has to be completely vacated in a few days. They are going to Wales, where a nobleman has placed a special establishment at their disposal.

An Exciting Scene

There was an exciting scene on Sunday, April 19, in the Cathedral at Nancy. Mgr. Turinaz, in an address to the crowded congregation, informed them that he had selected the Abbe Ravenez, a secularised Jesuit, to preach on the Sundays in May. By so doing he wished to protest against the monstrous abuse of power shown by the Government. The remarks of the prelate were greeted with loud cheers and cries of 'Vive l'evêque de la Frontière,' a tribute to the patriotism of Monsignor Turinaz.

Policy of the Government

A Paris correspondent, telegraphing under date April 20, says:—A session of the Councils General was opened throughout France to-day resolutions for and against the Government's policy regarding the religious congregations being adopted by various bodies. The Archbishop of Lyons and the Bishop of Nantes have written the Premier that they cannot interfere immediately with the celebration of religious services in unauthorised places, or prevent the priests connected therewith from preaching. Several demonstrations in connection with the dissolution of the congregations occurred to-day.

A Loyal Clergy

One of the accusations (says the 'Catholic Times') constantly levelled against the French priests by anti-clericals is that they are not loyal to the Republic. This, if we may believe the President, is not universally true. On his passage through Marseilles, while en route

for Algeria, M. Loubet received the Bishop of the diocese and a body of clergy, who presented their homage to the head of the Republic. Monsignor Andrieu, in addressing the President, pointed out that the political attitude of the Marseilles clergy was irreproachable, and that, like the Church, they always respected the established powers. The holders of authority, he said in the words of St. Paul, were ministers of God unto good, and after an allusion to the President's felicitations to the Pope on the occasion of the Holy Father's Jubilee, wished him cordially a pleasant and successful voyage. M. Loubet, in his reply, said the Church had a mission of peace, fraternity, and reconciliation, and that when, as in the diocese of Marseilles, she acquitted herself of that mission, she had a right to the respect and support of all good citizens. But he said nothing about the persecution which, over the whole of France, is driving forth peaceful monks and nuns. Nor was the subject even touched during the interview. Such an omission seems strange to us who live in a land where the Church is free, but doubtless our Continental brethren know their own business best.

Unpopular Decrees

Whilst a great many French Catholics look with apathy on the tyrannical acts of the Government in its treatment of the religious Congregations, it is evident that popular opinion is being roused in many places, and that sooner or later the bulk of the nation will find out the true character of the men who are now at the head of public affairs. Our Home exchanges report that the members of the religious Orders which have been dissolved were cheered at Havre by a crowd of two thousand persons. At Tarascon, where an official attempted to set his seal upon the doors of the Abbey of Frigolet, belonging to an unauthorised Congregation, the crowds prevented him and stoned his carriage. A demonstration took place at Le Mans outside the Capuchin Convent. The crowd cried 'Vive la Liberté,' 'Vivent les Capucins.' Twenty arrests were made by the police. The refusal of the Franciscans at Nîmes to permit seals to be affixed to the doors of their monastery led to a demonstration in their favor. The gendarmes and police intervened, and many arrests were made.

A Serious Accusation

The charge against M. Edour Combes, the son of the French Premier, of having offered to secure the authorisation of the monks of the Grande Chartreuse if they paid him a bribe of £40,000, may possibly have very serious consequences for the present intolerant Ministry in France. M. Besson, the editor of 'Le Petit Dauphinois,' who made the accusation, is a man held in the very highest esteem in Grenoble, so much so that he is enjoying the moral support of leading citizens strongly opposed to him in politics. It was open to the Premier, who is of course incriminated by M. Besson's accusation, to have had that gentleman indicted before the Assizes, where the accusation would have been inquired into and decided upon by a jury of twelve men. Instead of taking that course, however, M. Combes, when forced by M. Besson's repeated accusations to take notice of them, ordered an inquiry by an examining magistrate, Valles, who, in addition to being absolutely dependent upon the Premier for the continuance of his employment, is also under grave suspicion of having been an intermediary in a similar transaction himself. Needless to say, these disclosures have created a very great feeling of uneasiness in France, where the accusation is freely made by the opponents of the present Administration that it is kept in office by a system of bribery and corruption more widespread and audacious than has ever before been attempted. M. Besson has now very properly refused to give any testimony before a tainted tribunal, and has demanded that he be indicted before the Judge of Assize, and the truth or falsity of his charges determined by a jury of his fellow-citizens. The odious policy of M. Combes towards the Church was bound, in any case, to bring a powerful reaction, and it would be retributive justice in its most poetic form if it was precipitated in this manner.

ROME.—Appointment

Rev. Father Schuller (a German) has been elected Vicar-General of the Franciscan Order, in succession to Rev. Father David Fleming, who has been appointed secretary to the Pope's Biblical Commission set up in January last to inquire into the scope of Biblical exegesis.

Stonyhurst Association

Mr. Justice Walton, on behalf of the Stonyhurst Association, and Mr. Robert Colley, head student of Stonyhurst College, were recently received in special private audience by the Holy Father, and presented to him a magnificently illuminated address in book form, signed by all the community and students of the college. Leo XIII. made many inquiries about the college, and gave to all connected with it a very special blessing.

Ordinations

At the general ordination at St. John Lateran's on Holy Saturday the following students of the Scots College, Rome, were raised to the priesthood: The Rev. John Roger, the Rev. Patrick Lov, the Rev. Patrick Keenan, of the diocese of Aberdeen; the Rev. John Nicholas Murphy, of the diocese of Galloway; the Rev. Thomas Gillon, of the diocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh; and the Rev. James Kelly, of the diocese of Glasgow. The first five, with two others previously ordained, return to Scotland in June. Father Kelly remains another year in Rome.