

The Catholic World

CHINA

PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH.

The latest Catholic census for China shows a total Catholic population of 1,529,924. Last year this figure was stated as 1,451,258. The increase is, therefore, 78,666. In reality it is even more, because some of the Vicariates Apostolic there kept the figures of 1912, or even those of 1911 and 1910. The increase would be something like 52 per 1000. The Chinese Catholics have 51 bishops, 1422 European and 746 Chinese priests to minister to them. The catechumens are now registered in 13 missions. The total of the remaining Vicariates is 438,098.

FRANCE

ACTS OF HEROISM.

That the French nuns' heroism is not confined to their own country was eloquently demonstrated by the distinguished Academician, M. Maurice Donnay, when, on December 18, he presided at the annual meeting where the 'Prix de Vertu' are distributed. These prizes were founded, more than a century ago, by M. de Montyon, to reward acts of courage and devotedness. This year, the most important prizes were awarded to nuns, and there was a striking similarity between the acts of heroism recorded by M. Maurice Donnay in his remarkable report and those now performed daily by the nursing Sisters in the French provinces that are devastated by the enemy. A prize of 10,000 francs was awarded to the Sisters of Charity at Salonica for their devotedness during the Balkan war. At Uskub, in October, 1912, they lodged, fed, clothed, comforted, and nursed thousands of refugees who came to them in a pitiable condition. According to the varying fortunes of war, their charity went out without distinction to the Turks, the Greeks, the Serbians, and the Bulgarians; their houses were open to all. Catholics, Protestants, Mahometans, and schismatics, of whatever nation, were made welcome by these large-hearted women, if they needed assistance. The fiercest fighters became as children in their hands; the most fanatical Mussulmans forgot their hatred of Christians in presence of the white 'carmettes'; more than one declared that the Sister, whose gentle ministrations soothed his pain, was loved by him 'as a mother.' A prize of 6000 francs was awarded to another Congregation of women, which possesses thirty-one houses in Turkey, Asia Minor, and Bulgaria. The 'Oblates de l'Assomption,' to give them their official name, are a branch of the Order of the Assumption, founded sixty years ago by Pere d'Alzou: they devote themselves, in a special manner, to the Eastern missions. In 1912 they went through the siege of Adrianople, and M. Maurice Donnay quoted passages from the journal that one of the nuns kept during the siege. The Sisters who wished to leave the town before it was invested were encouraged to do so by their Superiors, but, says the journal, 'no one among us wishes to desert her post at the hour of danger.' The siege began on October 26. Soon shells fell thickly round the convent, where the nuns had established an ambulance, and for weeks this continued without the Sisters' courage, activity, and good humor lessening. The annalist owns that the whizzing of the shells sometimes distracted their attention during Mass, but 'no one moved.' Only prayers were said with more fervor than usual. An English physician, Dr. Haigh, who was their neighbor during these tragic weeks, commented upon their cheerfulness, and M. Donnay remarks how cheerfulness and activity often go together.

ROME

THE HOLY FATHER AND THE PRESS

The Holy Father has paid a special compliment to the London *Daily Chronicle*, and incidentally to the

press in general, by departing from custom and addressing to it a message for publication. In response to a request by the editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, Cardinal Gasparri, Secretary of State to his Holiness, cabled:— 'The Pope, who is the father of all the faithful alike, weeps over the war, and, being unable to stop it, is doing all in his power to lighten its grievous consequences for the unhappy prisoners and their desolated families. Meanwhile, he uplifts his fervent prayers to the Common Redeemer, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, to the end that He may inspire in the Governments of the belligerent nations feelings of Christian charity that will at last put an end to this frightful war which is desolating humanity. The press of every land ought to give its mighty support to this holy mission of peace.'

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS.

The Irish Christian Brothers conduct a large and successful school in the Prati (writes a Rome correspondent). Some time since the Apollinare School was transferred to the new buildings at St. John Lateran, and, as there was no school in the neighborhood of the Prati, where many ecclesiastical Communities are situated, it was earnestly requested by the authorities in Rome that the Brothers should supply the tuition and accommodation. Already in charge of their own large educational establishment, it was no easy matter to meet the demand; nevertheless, so earnest was the desire of the ecclesiastical authorities, and so apparent the need of a secondary school, that the Brothers undertook the heavy responsibility. Hence the pressure on their former ample and comfortable school premises. Now, not an inch of the building is unoccupied; in fact, further accommodation must soon be provided. In the struggle for Christian education they have lost their once spacious and well-adapted hall for displays, which has been turned into classrooms; so, for any large function, such as meetings, prize-distributions, and school concerts, they must have recourse to a hall in the neighborhood belonging to the Church of S. Gioacchino. It was in this hall on Sunday, December 13, that Cardinal Giustini presided over the distribution of prizes to the fortunate students attending the evening classes for foreign languages conducted by the Brothers at Via Rasella and Via Pompeo Magno. Be it noted that these Irish Brothers teach from eight in the morning until four in the evening, and turn out a few hours later to coach young Italians in the various European languages. To these evening classes come professional men, clerks, young officials of the army, and not a few who have adopted literature for their profession. To the number of five hundred they come, and about the proficiency of the pupils and the worth of the teaching no one who was present at the distribution of prizes could have the shadow of a doubt.

UNITED STATES

THE CHURCH IN NEW ENGLAND.

The New England States, according to the table furnished by a census official at Washington, may now be regarded as the stronghold of Catholicity in the United States. In Massachusetts, 355 persons in every thousand of the total population were reported in 1906 as members of the Catholic Church; in Rhode Island 400; in Connecticut, 298; New Hampshire, 277; New York, 278: some of these proportions are double those shown sixteen years before. The Protestant communicants per 1000 of the State mentioned, number but 148 in Massachusetts, 131 in Rhode Island, 195 in Connecticut, 149 in New Hampshire, and 150 in New York; and practically all show a decline per 1000 of total population from 1890 to 1906.

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