

The Catholic World

BELGIUM

THE FUTURE OF THE CATHOLIC PARTY.

For years there have been predictions that the Catholics of Belgium who have had a majority of representatives in Parliament for the past twenty-seven years would have to give way to the Socialists and the Liberals. The fall of the majority in the course of time from sixty to six, and the recent resignation of the Schollaert Ministry have given renewed confidence to the prophets, and they now foretell that the Catholic supremacy will end with the General Election next May. The assumption is that anti-clericals will be returned for the greater number of the seventeen seats which an automatic redistribution will add to the new Chamber of Representatives. Even in this event the Catholics have no cause to entertain gloomy anticipations. It is fairly certain that their opponents can only succeed by co-operative action, and that is not likely to be permanently very feasible between the Belgian Socialists and the Belgian Liberals. But it is by no means to be taken for granted that the Catholics will not retain a majority. Their representatives have a fine record, and the de Broqueville Ministry have an educational and social programme which must secure for them a great deal of popular sympathy. The Belgian voter is well instructed, and he prefers practical legislation of a progressive character to chimerical schemes, however glittering.

FRANCE

MORE ESTABLISHMENTS TO BE CLOSED.

A correspondent forwards to *L'Officiel* a list of 499 establishments belonging to various religious teaching congregations, of which 128 are to be closed before January 1, 1913, and 317 before July 1, 1914. Another decree orders the closing of 19 such establishments even by September 1 of this year, with 62 schools belonging to religious congregations. So it will be seen that the Minister of the Interior is not idle, in spite of his enforced inaction.

GERMANY

AN OFFENCE AGAINST MILITARY LAW.

Twenty-four years ago, before he had any idea of becoming a priest, a German prelate named Monsignor Wörth left his country and went to Rome without fulfilling his military duties. He lately surrendered himself voluntarily to the Military Court at Treves to expiate his youthful offence against the law. The Court has sentenced him to six months' imprisonment and formal military degradation.

ROME

THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

With deep joy and fervor the people of Rome (writes a correspondent) have celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi. During the day all business houses were closed. Masses were attended from early morning in the various basilicas and churches. In several parts of the city public processions of the Blessed Sacrament were held amid manifestations of the greatest reverence. Of course with each procession a number of Italian gendarmes walked lest Socialist roughs or Masonic hirelings should occasion any disturbance. All, however, passed off in the utmost tranquility.

SPAIN

THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

One of the results of the Spanish Parliamentary Commission on the 'Law of Associations' must be to enlighten the public throughout Spain as to the nature of the debt the country owes the religious Orders.

Representatives of the Dominicans, the Augustinians, the Salesians, the Jesuits, and other religious bodies have given glimpses of what their brethren have done in the past and are doing at present to preserve and extend the nation's influence. Father Miguel del Val told how closely the history of Spain is bound up with that of the Dominicans, and how much Columbus, the discoverer of the New World, was indebted to that Order. Father Martinez gave an account of the many sacrifices which the Spanish Augustinians made for the progress of religion and education not only in Spain but also in the South American republics and in China. So far back as 1575 members of that Order used their good offices to improve the relations between the Spanish Government and the Chinese authorities. Father Fierro assured the Commission that the Salesians in carrying on their social and philanthropic work, avoided politics. They admitted into their houses Republicans, Radicals, Democrats, Liberals, Conservatives, Carlists, Integrists, and others, and respected the opinions of all. In their commercial and technical schools they prepared thousands for useful careers. Father Astrain related how the Spanish Jesuits had held aloft the lamp of learning, and had rendered inestimable services by establishing the world-renowned Meteorological Observatory of Manila and other famous institutions for the promotion of science. Clearly by injuring such benefactors Spain would be pursuing a suicidal course.

THE ASSOCIATIONS BILL.

An agitation has been set on foot in Spain against the Associations Bill, and the Spanish Catholics are showing an appreciation of the value of protests adopted by public assemblages. A great meeting of Catholic representatives has been held in the capital, and the harshest clauses of the Bill have been denounced by some of the best orators of Spain in vigorous language. Speaker after speaker insisted on the necessity of treating the members of the religious Orders with as much tolerance as men who belong to Anarchist clubs and secret societies, and of coming to an understanding with the Holy See before the measure is advanced another stage. If the Spanish Catholics (remarks the *Catholic Times*) defend the Orders in this way, holding meetings in the different centres of population, dissecting the Bill, and bringing home to all classes the injury done to the interests of Spain by the religious strife which the Government is provoking, they will in the end deprive the Premier of the power of doing mischief. When statesmen see that the majority of the people are against their proposals, they quickly alter their plans, and there is no mode of making this impression upon them so effective as that of the public meeting.

UNITED STATES

ORDAINED TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

Five converts from Protestant Episcopalianism were elevated to the priesthood recently in Philadelphia. They are the Rev. Fathers Bowles, Bourne, Gromoll, Hayward, and Hawkes—five splendid men (remarks the *Lamp*), and destined, no doubt, to do a glorious work for God and Holy Church.

GENERAL

IRISH COLLEGE, SALAMANCA.

The Rev. Denis O'Doherty (Elphin) has been appointed Rector of the Irish College, Salamanca, in succession to his brother, the Most Rev. Michael O'Doherty, who has been appointed Bishop of Zamboanga (Philippines).

When coughs and colds and chills abound,
And folks are falling ill all round,
Just try a cure that's well renowned—
Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.
You'll find it's better than you thought,
The very best you ever bought;
Your coughs and colds will come to naught,
I'm very sure.