

THE HOLY FATHER AND THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

THE SUPERIOR-GENERAL RECEIVED IN AUDIENCE

Early in February Rev. Brother Whitty, Superior-General of the Irish Christian Brothers, visited Rome, and with Brother Costen, the Superior in Rome, was received in audience by the Holy Father. His Holiness (says the Rome correspondent of the *Catholic Press*, writing under date February 29) has now done him the further honor of sending him a long autograph letter, treating of the work of the institution. Education is one of the means of assisting religion on which Pius X. sets the greatest store; it is wonderful how from the Vatican he manages to keep au courant with the different phases of the problem as it affects Catholics all over the world; and in the long audience which he accorded to the General of the Christian Brothers he not only showed the keenest interest in and appreciation of their work, but entered fully into the different characteristics of the different countries. The extraordinary development of the Christian Brothers' schools in Australia was touched on, and the Holy Father, if not exactly an expert in the details of the work in the far continent, fully grasped and appreciated the value of the success accomplished.

The Irish Brothers' School in Rome.

His letter to the General picks out, with the accuracy to which we are accustomed, the points in which the Christian Brothers excel, and the points to which most attention must be paid. 'We fully understand,' he writes, 'that it induces vastly to the well-being of the Church and State that both should be enriched and adorned with an abundance of well-conducted citizens.' That is a point on which the Brothers' school in Rome has hopelessly confounded the enemies of religion, who try to make out that every Italian boy brought up in a Church school is taught to be an enemy of his country. They find that the Brothers teach their boys to be good Catholics, and good citizens, too; and they find also that the product of the Marcantonio Colonna Institute, as the school is called, is a better behaved, better disciplined, better taught, and in every way a more desirable article than that turned out by the socialism-tinged, godless Roman public school.

There is an old story that will bear retelling with regard to the foundation of the Brothers' school in Rome. It was opposed tooth and nail by a Freemason who lived in the neighborhood where the Brothers had secured a site. He claimed, and threatened to prove in the law courts, that under the law of Italy they were not at liberty to found an institute, buy land, or, indeed, exist at all. The Brothers had taken counsel's opinion, and went calmly on their way. A short time ago their good Freemason neighbor came round to ask Brother Costen to take his boy, as it was common knowledge that the inmates of the Marcantonio Institute got not only the best teaching, but the best moral training to be had in Rome. And the boy was taken.

The Pope's Advice.

'Let it be your first care,' the Holy Father's letter says farther on, 'that your training colleges and preparatory novitiates be in a flourishing condition. . . . These same institutions we earnestly recommend to all worthy persons . . . and concludes with the Apostolic Blessing. Australia knows what the Christian Brothers have done, and are doing out there. Here in Rome their school has grown till it is as full as it can hold; and the Brothers occupy their spare time (though no one knows how they make it) in a night school, where they teach, and in many cases probably rescue, 500 young Romans.

The following is a copy of the Autograph Letter of his Holiness the Pope to the Superior-General:—
To Our Beloved Son, James Calasactius Whitty, Superior-General of the Irish Religious Institute of Christian Brothers.

PIUS X. POPE.

Beloved Son, Health and Apostolic Benediction.

The diligence with which it has so long devoted itself to the fitting education of the young is in truth the most exalted merit of the religious community over which you rule. For Our part, We extol, beloved son, this charity of yours, which in Christian fashion centres itself in the children, whom We have ever before Our eyes. For We fully understand that it conduces vastly to the well-being of the Church and State, that both should be enriched and adorned with an abundance of well-conducted citizens. In this age especially, when in public schools we see children being so educated that, when the instruction imparted is not designedly saturated with error, no teaching of Christian morals is imparted, be assured that you are doing much for the eternal salvation of all those whom you are training not only in letters, but in Christian morals. The precepts of religion properly and seasonably inculcated, are as so many good seeds, which, sown even in those who are afterwards led astray by untoward passions, rarely fail sooner or later to bear fruit.

Therefore, beloved son, We exhort you and the members of your institute to persevere zealously in a work excellently begun. Indeed, a plentiful harvest presents itself to your gaze, since so many stumbling-blocks are almost everywhere thrown in the way of children. Let it be your first care, however, that your training colleges and preparatory novitiates be in a flourishing condition, having a multitude of young conspicuous for virtue and learning, from whom the ranks of the Brothers may in the future be recruited.

But since the cause which you champion is of such immense importance that it should appeal to all who are imbued with love of religion and fatherland, these same institutions we earnestly recommend to all worthy persons, and especially to the Bishops, to parish priests, and to heads of families, whom it singularly behoves to lead the way in assisting you.

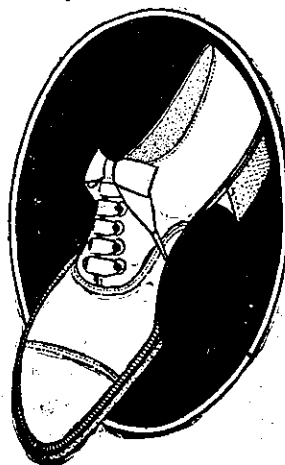
That these desires may be realised, We implore for you the Divine assistance; and, as a testimony of Our benevolence, to you, beloved son, to the religious entrusted to your care, and, in fine, to all the youths who avail themselves of your instruction, We most lovingly in the Lord impart the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at Rome at St. Peter's on the 20th February, 1912, in the ninth year of Our Pontificate.

PIUS X. POPE.

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