

**CENTER-SHOTS AT ROME: A
SERIES OF LECTURES
ON CATHOLICISM
(STENOGRAPHICALLY
REPORTED)**

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A Series of Lectures on Catholicism
(*Stenographically Reported*)

BY
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Author of "The Pledge in Sermon"



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PREFACE

When the series of lectures, now referred to as "The Columbus Campaign," was announced, nothing more than a neighborhood interest was anticipated.

But when on Sunday evening, Jan. 11, 1914, all the available rooms of the Broad Street Church of Christ had to be thrown into one auditorium, and an audience of fifteen hundred people faced the astonished pastor, he realized, with a staggering suddenness, that he had "a situation" on his hands.

The audiences began assembling as early as five o'clock, and long before the regular hour for service the house was packed. All stairways, vestibules, galleries and Sunday-school classrooms were filled with standing people; people stood, elbow to elbow, around all walls; the pulpit, choir and communion lofts were filled; and the aisles were so con-

gested that the city fire department issued a command calling attention to the law on the subject of public safety. And still the people who wished to hear could not be accommodated; the doorkeepers estimated that one night as many were turned away as secured entrance. The worst blizzards of the winter held two of the meetings in their grasp, but the interest did not abate. The people were "wrought up," and storms could neither blow down nor freeze up their enthusiasm. For seven consecutive Sunday evenings they came from all over the city and the surrounding towns. New Lexington—sixty miles away—had representatives at all the meetings save the first.

The campaign naturally met with Roman opposition. Catholic reporters were on hand, three at a clip. They sat together and put forth no effort to conceal their mission. The day following the first lecture, a committee with a typewritten copy waited upon one of the trustees of the church, stated that the lectures were being stenographically

reported, that the names of all the men in the church were tabulated and under consideration, and demanded that the officers of the church should discontinue the series. It is also known that Catholics attended the meetings in large numbers, and the presence of several priests was likewise reported. Quite frequently, people "talked out loud," and such expressions as "He's lying," and "He's doing this for money," were heard, here and there, in the building.

As the campaign progressed, many unexpected things occurred. The mails brought letters of encouragement and letters of criticism, periodicals, tracts and all sorts of literature on both sides of the Catholic question. The telephone was busy from early morning until late at night—conveying information, advice, threats, neighborhood gossip, and offers of assistance. Business men neglected their offices and went in quest of local "thunder" for the speaker. Affidavits were secured and information of every description was furnished—much of which was not used, owing to the fact

that it was of such a character it could not be referred to in public. Some of the affidavits had to be ignored for the same reason. When the lecture on the "Auricular Confession" was delivered, there was a miniature confessional-box—about three feet wide and two feet high—on a table in the pulpit. It had been placed there by an ex-Catholic.

But nothing was more surprising than an opposition from Protestant sources. Protestants of the ultra-æsthetic type—including a few preachers—were reported to have referred to the meetings, and especially the speaker, in a way that was anything but complimentary. "Sensationalism," "a love of notoriety," and "a nine days' wonder," are samples of the terms and phrases that slipped from the tongues of Protestant critics and sped through the city. One man, well known in the city and at the head of a Protestant church, was reported to have prophesied that the antipapal lectures would ruin the Broad Street Church of Christ. The threats

and letters from Rome were amusing. But not so with the Protestant arrows—they left a sting.

But is such a campaign a "nine days' wonder"? Does it amount to anything, after all? And what is the effect upon the church that conducts it? These are relevant questions.

It has now been five weeks since the delivery of the last lecture. And in this short time an organization which prophesies a reconstruction of the political situation in Columbus has been effected. This organization is already large and strong, and the fact that it is rapidly enlisting business and professional men, and the most representative of the sturdy laboring classes, proves that it is not a growth of the mushroom kind. The campaign did not create the sentiment which evolved this movement. But its influence upon the city made the movement immediately possible upon an energetic and a widespread scale.

So far as the church is concerned, all are agreed that it is better known than ever before in its history. It has