The Pittsburgh Gazette.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1861.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

The *Bulletin* of last week contains an article on Christmas, under the title of "The Approaching Solemnity," which shows the features of this feast in connection with the services of the Roman Catholic Church, not generally known. It is regarded as one of the greatest festivals of the whole year, and it is the only one in which, according to the present discipline of the Church, each priest is permitted to celebrate three Masses, first, as a pious author observes, to give thanks to the adorable Trinity who cooperated in the Incarnation of the Redeemer, and second, to celebrate the three births of Jesus Christ. His eternal birth in the bosom of His Eternal Father, His temporal birth in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Mother, and His spiritual birth in the hearts of the Christian by the operation of Divine Grace. Formerly the first Mass was celebrated at midnight, the second at daybreak, and the third at daybreak; hours which have also a mystical meaning, suggested by the feast itself. For as the world sat in darkness at the birth of Christ, so the first Mass is said at that part of the night when the darkness is greatest, and as light was about to dawn on the Gentiles by the coming of the Redeemer; the second Mass is offered at the time when the light of day begins to be perceptible, and since Christ is the light which dispels the darkness of sin and ignorance, and enlighteneth every man that cometh in the world; the third Mass is said at that hour when the world is emerging from darkness, is illuminated by the first rays of the rising sun. To avoid the inconveniences and unseasonableness of the hour for the first Mass, the churches are not opened now until five o'clock. The writer then groups together the interesting particulars connected with the Incarnation of the Saviour, and brings out prominently the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, on what is styled the "Immaculate Conception," which has provoked so much controversy among theologians. We quote: "* * * the first and last of her sex in whom maternal duty and immaculate purity are so miraculously blended; her, who, by an unparalleled privilege, has become a mother without ceasing to be a virgin. The paper closes with an appeal in behalf of the orphans for a liberal collection to meet the increased cost of living.

—It appears, from an article in the New York *Express*, that the discussion from time to time, relative to the date of Christ's birth, has elected no less than one hundred and thirty-six different opinions, concerning the year; and, as regards the day, it has been placed by Christian sects, and by commentators, in every month of the year. The observance of the event among Christians in this country, especially the Anglican and Latin Churches, is to revere the day celebrated, the 25th of December.

—The *Methodist* says the High Church Episcopalians declare themselves highly gratified with the results of the Christian Unity Society, which aims at bringing on a union between the Anglican, Roman and Oriental communions. Communications approving the movement had been received from Northern Italy, Mexico and Iceland.

—Notwithstanding the great wealth of the Church of England, starving curates are abundant. The following is an illustration, found among the advertisements in the London *Record*: "A clergyman, with a large family, in *difficulty and distress*, seeks aid from those more blessed with this world's goods. A few *postage stamps*, or *parcels of old clothing*, thankfully received."

—The N. Y. *Observer* says the whole number of Protestant missionaries in China is *ninety-five*, and the number of church members not far from 2,800. Nearly one third of these are found in Amoy, and the villages around that city.

—An Imperial decree has been issued, by which certain Convents in Poland. In pursuance of this decree seventy-one Monasteries and four Convents have been closed, for not possessing the requisite number of inmates.

—The annual catalogue of the New York Union Theological Seminary, just out, shows the number of students in attendance to be 102. It is stated 640 young men have been educated for the ministry in that institution.

—A clergyman in Springfield, Mass., at the close of a sermon, from the text—"I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil," denounced rattling, in the severest terms, at Fairs.

—An effort is being made to establish an up-town prayer meeting in New York city, on the plan of the Fulton street meeting.

Exiled to the South.

The Alexandria *Journal* of the 27th inst. says: Rev. R. W. Wheat, a former merchant here, and Rev. J. Packard, former Rector of Christ Church Parish, are, by order of the War Department, to be sent through the lines to-morrow. Both mentioned some time since the fact of these gentlemen having left the city and visited Washington without the aid of a pass, in defiance of military authority, and returning thereto. Their cases were referred to the War Department by Provost Marshal General Doubleday, South of the Potomac, with the recommendation that they be sent through the lines, they having refused to subscribe to the oath. To-day Col. Wells received an order from the War Department approving his recommendation, and ordering that they be sent through the lines via Fairfax Courthouse. They leave on the ten o'clock train to-morrow morning. They are both, we understand, very much opposed to taking a "foreign tour," and deem themselves very much persecuted in not being permitted to set at defiance our Government and its law, and at the same time remain under its protection."

Death of a Dwarf in Paris.

The death of a celebrity, a dwarf in Paris, the French counterpart of the American Tom Thumb, is recorded. In his 36th year he was placed in the establishment of the Duchess of Orleans, the mother of the citizen king, and was small at that age that he passed for an infant. Notwithstanding the stormy period of the first revolution, secret dispatches were sent by him, which thus reached without suspicion, the imprisoned members of the Royal Family of France. To the day of his death this dwarf, Richebourg, received a pension from the Orleans family of 5,000 francs a year, equivalent to $190 of our money. During the last thirty years he has lived in the same house, in the Faubourg St. Germain. Unlike Tom Thumb, he had a horror to appear in public, and for nearly a half lifetime has never crossed the threshold of his own door. Not the least remarkable feature in the career of this creature is the fact he lived to be ninety-two years of age.—*Foreign paper.*

A Portland house has invented a new, ingenious, and extremely bold swindle. A horse-car was standing near the Grand Trunk Railroad station, on Tuesday evening, waiting for its time, when a fellow stepped on the rear platform, rang the bell and started the car and collected the fares of the passengers in the coolest possible manner, seemingly doubting that he was the regular conductor. When the fares were all paid, he stepped off and was seen no more. The car was overtaken shortly after by the Simon Pure conductor, who was in the station when it started, witnessed his unauthorized departure with genuine amazement, and immediately started in pursuit.

Cause of Quarrels.

Some time since, a Mr. Ingersoll, of Ohio, married a young lady who had been married before, and who had a living husband. The husband, hearing of the second marriage, came on and claimed his wife, and she left her second husband and went with her first husband. The second husband then sued the first husband for the lady, and the case was decided in favor of the second husband. The first husband then sued the second husband for the lady, and the case was decided in favor of the