

GENERAL NEWS.

It should by this time have become a well known fact to the entire world, that the Liberal press of Italy, which is ever obedient to the nod of the gracious Bismarck, periodically puts alarming reports into circulation concerning the Pope's health. The journals in question have repeated the malicious report for the thousand and first time. They have him well or ill according as they receive the intimation from headquarters. As the Italian Liberals have promised to do great things after the death of his Holiness, the reason is obvious why they have the report circulated that he is daily growing much weaker and must ere long succumb to the inevitable fate of mortal man. But the truth is that these calculations are injuring nobody unless the enemies of the august prisoner who continues in spite of them to enjoy the best of health. On the 1st of August, after his usual audiences were over, he went into the gardens of the Vatican, and walked about for a long time never ceasing to chat with those who had the honor of accompanying him. It may also be well to remark that it is excessively hot in Rome just now, and the fear of contracting fever makes all who can embrace the opportunity fly to more congenial climes. So the health of the Holy Father seems to be out of the reach of every evil influence and successfully resists all that would overcome any constitution but his own.—'Catholic Review.'

The Shanghai 'Courier' says: We published a rumor some few days back of a terrible onslaught upon the Catholic Christians in Ning-kuoh Fu, in the Province of Ngan-hwuy, when a crowd of about a thousand soldiers and ruffians under the guidance of officials, burst into a chapel during divine service, and brained numbers of the congregation. This has been since confirmed. Our authority now is a gentleman to whom the horrible details were recounted by one of the French priests. It seems that the men entered the chapel, of course interrupting the service, and demanded of the officiating priest, an Italian gentleman, that he should cease promulgating the doctrines of the T'ien-chu sect. The priest naturally declined to promise anything of the sort, whereupon a scene of indescribable uproar ensued, during which the most frightful outrages occurred. The priest was tortured, and eventually put to death; being hacked to pieces; a little child, whom he had adopted, was torn limb from limb, and the corpse of another Father, who happily for him, died previously, was taken from its coffin and brutally ill-used. The members of the Inland Mission have all left the neighborhood, and the Roman Catholics now have a guard round their house. The origin of this truly diabolical outrage is fixed upon a military mandarin named Wu, who has openly expressed his malignant hatred of the religion of Christ. The priest in charge of the mission proceeded by steamer on the 2nd inst., accompanied by three officials, to Wuhu to institute inquiries. Three other priests are said to be missing. We understand that the Vicomte Brenier de Montmorand, Minister for France, goes up to Nanking, it is said, to see the Viceroy respecting the massacre at Ning-kuoh Fu.

The 'Militär Wochenblatt' publishes some remarks by "a Prussian officer of rank" on the late review of the French troops at Longchamps. The infantry, he says, were in excellent condition. Their clothing and equipment were unexceptional, and by far the greater number were armed with the new Gras rifle. The colors are lighter than those of the German battalions; the imperial eagles are replaced by gilt spikes. The march past was performed with the greatest calmness and precision, and in perfect order. As to the light cavalry, who are now armed with rifles, and have no lances, the writer says they are bad riders, and seem to have little control over their horses. The cuirassiers, on the other hand, are well mounted, imposing in appearance, and very steady and precise in their movements; but their size and weight render them of but little use for pursuing an enemy's troops. In Germany the standard height for heavy cavalry is 1 metre 67 centimetres, to 1 metre 75 centimetres, while there are scarcely any French cuirassiers who are not at least 1 metre 80 centimetres in height. Both of the brigades of artillery which were present at the review were armed for the most part with the new cast-steel breechloader, according to the Laibitolle system; a few batteries still had the Keffaye bronze breechloader. The horses of the artillery were good, and the various movements were performed with great precision.

The Serbian correspondent of the 'Evenement,' after relating how he was turned out of the camp at Alexinatz by order of Prince Milan, describes a double execution which he witnessed. A soldier who had deserted his post and a gipsy woman accused of being a spy were ordered to be shot. The soldier demanded that he might be executed musket in hand, and his request was granted; he walked quietly up to a large tree and leaned his back against it. The firing party took up its position at ten paces distant, and were about to level their arms when the condemned stretched out his hand and cried, "Michel Branicovanowitch, forget not that you promised my sister a silver chain." "I remember, and will keep my word," answered the man in the firing party. "Thank you. Render me also another service, and cut my throat before I am buried." "It shall be done." The officer gave the command to fire, and Joblinowitch fell, but only wounded. A man stepped forward to finish him, but he cried, "Not that one—Michel." And Michel Branicovanowitch approached and blew out the wounded man's brains. Then came the turn of the zingara, whom the soldiers hung to the branch of a tree. She never uttered a word while the preparations were being made, and merely followed the movements of the executioner with her glittering eyes.

A despatch from St. Paul, Minn., dated July 28, says: "Clouds of grasshoppers invest the north-western, western, and south-western borders of this State. The damage done by these pests is incalculable. Hundreds of industrious hard-working settlers have lost their all by this scourge, and have nothing left to live upon. Reports to the 'Pioneer Press' indicate that a great part of the

region west of, and including Jackson County, to Eastern Dakota, and south through Western Iowa, is covered with devouring hosts, and the entire crops of this region are being swept away, and many of the discouraged settlers are temporarily leaving their homes in that region."

From an interesting historical sketch of the old Cathedral of St. Louis, in the 'Times' of the 6th inst., we clip the following valuable statistics of the Catholic institutions of that city:—"There are to-day, in St. Louis, thirty-four parish churches, twenty-seven parish schools, five Catholic hospitals, six convents, three Catholic colleges, seven Catholic orphan asylums, and three female protectories and reformatories. There are about sixty-seven secular priests, and forty-five priests belonging to Orders, all actively at work. There are thirteen female religious Orders, each, according to its institute, doing the work of God. There are twenty-four Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, numbering eleven hundred active members, and distributing each year, in systematic and judicious charity, fully twenty thousand dollars. And there is a Catholic population of one hundred and fifty thousand, at least. There is not a form of human misery, not an ill that flesh is heir to, that does not find relief in the Catholic Church of St. Louis. The orphan, the sick, the deaf, the dumb, the insane, the fallen woman, the widow, helpless infancy and helpless old age—for all these there is health and comfort, and more than friendship (for the love of Christ) in the religious Orders of St. Louis.

Three hundred and fifteen Mennonite immigrants comprising sixty-seven families and fourteen other persons, arrived in New York on Saturday, from Southern Russia, en route to Kansas. They were under the charge of a Roman Catholic student (Mr. Baltzer), and supervised by Mr. Joseph Keable, of the Catholic Union.

The splendid fox covert of Ballyadams, one of the very best in the Queen's County, has just been consumed by fire. On the night of the occurrence the county was illuminated for a considerable distance round, and people were under the impression that some atmospheric phenomenon was occurring. When the police of Ballylinan police station got intimation of the fact, Constable Loughnane and six men hurried to the spot. They would not get any assistance from the people of the neighborhood, but setting to work themselves with a hearty goodwill they succeeded at length, but not until the greater portion of the night was spent in quenching the flames. This covert was from twelve to fourteen acres in extent, about five of which were totally destroyed. It is true that some land in the neighborhood belonging to persons named Foleys and Devoys was being burned for what is called "beating," and the police were informed that early on the night of the fire a furze-bush immediately adjoining the covert was seen on fire; but for all that the impression is abroad that the burning was a malicious one, and this from the fact that a large number of foxes were known to be in the covert, who dealt a good deal of harm and destruction amongst the fowl of the neighboring farmers, and for which they did not consider themselves at all sufficiently remunerated by the Queen's County Hunt. From whatever cause occurring, the destruction of this covert will be a severe blow to the hunting of this portion of the Queen's County, as it was always looked upon as a "sure find," and was certainly one of the best within the limits of the county.—'Weekly Freeman.'

The Chateau d'Arenenberg, in Switzerland, the property of the Empress Eugénie, who has resided there during the summer months for the last few years, is in danger, the action of the waters of Lake Constance upon the ground upon which it stands having caused several landslips. Part of the terrace has been carried away, and large fissures have been observed in the walls of the chapel and other parts of the building.

For many years an old chest, supposed to contain valueless papers, has been standing in the Town Hall at Bantzen, in the Tyrol. It was opened the other day, and several beautiful silver drinking cups with the dates 1672, 1684, 1732, some silver spoons, and a gold ring were found.

A correspondent writes from Bundoran that the Fairy Bridges are the greatest things in the way of curiosities to be seen. Beyond the Fairy Bridges is Finner Strand, stretching about two miles to the river which connects Ballyshannon with the sea, and at the mouth of which is a "bar." Behind this strand stretches hill beyond hill of sand in seeming unending succession, and among which may be gathered quantities of shells. Leaving the town in the opposite direction we walk round the coast, through meadows, with a good number of residences strewn along. We come to where kelp is manufactured from sea weed by drying and burning. A good number of persons are thus employed. Next we come to something resembling part of an old castle, but which is a little square edifice (built by a priest, I was informed), without a door or opening in the sides except a small chink like a cow-house ventilator and containing some figures apparently sculptured out of the native rock. A little further on is the salmon wherry of Bundrouse, which is paying remarkably well. Behind the town, and apparently pretty near it, runs a range of hills of the mountain class, with overhanging peaks resembling the waves of the sea before breaking. Wonderful improvements have been made in the town in the way of building.

In 1844 there were in France 41,619 secular priests, and 25,000 female religious. According to the last census (1871) there were in France, in that year, 52,148 secular priests and 84,300 females in religious communities, being an increase of 10,519 of the former and 59,300 of the latter. The total number of religious of both sexes in France is: Secular priests, 52,148; Regulars, 13,102; females in religious communities, 84,300; making a total of 149,550. Surely, in this exhibit we can recognise the work of God, who has promised that against the Church the gates of hell should never prevail. Notwithstanding all the Church has suffered in France during this period, we see that she has prospered.