

come to nothing. It, nevertheless, seems unworthy of a great nation like the Americans to set up a claim that they have no intention of pressing. The claim has been very definitely made in the President's late message, in which, for instance, hope is expressed "that before the opening of another sealing season some arrangement may be effected which will assure to the United States a property right, derived from Russia, which was not disregarded by any nation for more than eighty years preceding the outbreak of the existing trouble." But we are told the matter is all an electioneering trick. The Republicans, it would seem, are anxious to make capital for the presidential election now coming closer—the more anxious, perhaps, since the late victory of the Democrats. Hence, it seems desirable to them to tickle the Irish voter, and how can they do this more effectively than by making a pretence of flouting England? Such, we are told, is the true secret of the Behring Sea dispute. We do not know that this view of the case flatters the dignity of mankind in general. There is the American Government—that of one of the greatest nations of the world, stooping to unworthy tricks and false pretences. There is the British Government, occupying at least as high a place, and possibly claiming a much higher one, but still submitting to be flouted, and, if not entering into the spirit of the fun—nay, winking slyly at the flouter—falling in with the necessities of the case, and setting all its diplomatic engines and some of its war-ships in motion. There is the Canadian Government taking the matter seriously, and, all for nothing, putting itself much about. And there is the Irish voter, too big a fool to occupy so important a post. His disposition affects two mighty Governments, and yet he is stupid enough to be bamboozled by a mere transparent feint of hostility. Still the Irish emigrant is in some degree avenged. The British lion is placed in a humiliating position, and obliged to show his teeth and growl while he knows that he is being baited, as it were, with the shadow of a straw and to please a despised enemy. What room there is in all this for a proper maintenance of dignity it is difficult to see. Each of the parties concerned occupies a somewhat foolish position. If this, indeed, be the true explanation of the dispute the situation brings ridicule on every one connected with it. Is it the true explanation?—for that is the question.

THE "Light of Asia" appears not incapable of suffering eclipse. That, for example, is a very SPOTS IN THE SUNBEAM, suggestive report that comes from China relative to the massacre of Christians at places named respectively Ta-tsin and Ma-pao-chang. The massacre was the work of Buddhists, and followed immediately on a celebration of one of their religious festivals. Viewed in this connection the movement towards Buddhism now making progress in Europe becomes a grave consideration. We are told that not only is that modification of the creed known as Theosophism gaining ground there, but that Buddhists properly so-called may be met among the natives of France, and even among those of England. But if we may judge of Buddhist principles, as we probably may, from what they apparently produce among a population thoroughly imbued with them, and to whom they have descended from their forefathers, the spread of the creed in Europe can hardly add to the peace and comfort of society. Indeed we may doubt if it will, after all, be found to contrast very favourably with Christianity in any of its forms—much less to outshine them all as a system promotive of brotherly love and the elevation of mankind. But how strange it seems to point to the depths of China for a warning, in the persecution of Christian converts there, against a creed that has been introduced into Europe as superior to the Gospel of Christ. Is not some possibility discernible of the evils that are to presage the approaching end of the world?

Roman Notes.

THE Feast of the Purity of the Blessed Virgin was made, this year, an occasion of special rejoicing at the country house of the Irish College. At night the house was brilliantly illuminated, and a grand display of fireworks took place. The spectacle formed a feature in the landscape for miles around. Among the visitors entertained on the occasion by Mgr. Kirby were the Bishops of Tivoli, Terracina, Etna, and Achonry. It is announced, meantime, that the Pope has ordered the erection, at a cost of one million francs, of a new Irish College in Rome.

Signor Crispi has threatened with the terrors of the penal code those members of the clergy and laity of Naples who took part in the protest against the late outrage offered to two convents. The condition of freedom can be understood under which provision is made for the punishment of those who complain of a bad law, or of the manner in which it is administered. It may be questioned whether even under the reign of the much-abused King "Bomba" any worse instance could be cited. We all know what the effects of giving a dog a bad name are. On the other hand, to give a dog a good name may be found equally fit to serve a purpose. At least this appears to be a lesson taught by much that takes place in connection with the much-vaunted liberty of the period.

Among the ingenious devices of the day is to be reckoned a pamphlet, written in French, but published at Southwark, in England, and which has been forwarded by an anonymous author to many of the higher ecclesiastical and to the Catholic newspapers of Rome. The pamphlet professes to give a full and true account of the encounter between the Bishop of Limerick and Mr. John Dillon. It, however, out-Herods Herod, as the saying is, and makes a violent attack on the National movement in all its branches. Ecclesiastics of even as exalted rank as that of the Archbishop of Dublin come under its lash, and the National Press also receives a castigation. The Dublin *Frieman* is particularly singled out, and very sharply dealt with. It is especially blamed for mingling religion with the crime of patriotism. Its publication for example, of a eulogium of Cardinal Newman, and, at the same time, one of John Boyle O'Reilly, who is denounced as a Fenian traitor, is severely censured. Virulent hatred of Ireland, in short, is rank in every line of it; and, although anonymously published, its origin is not difficult to guess. To do the Bishop of Limerick justice, no one believes he had anything whatever to do with it. The publication, moreover, has fallen flat at Rome, and the authors have earned but a scanty reward for their malevolence.

Mr. Gladstone's attitude towards the Holy See is his weak point. His late utterances on the subject have been sharply criticised by the Catholic press of Italy. The papers ridicule him, and justly so, for blaming Lord Salisbury for doing what he himself had done without scruple. If anything, Lord Salisbury's overtures to the Vatican were more honourable than those that Mr. Gladstone quite certainly made. What, however, Catholic journalists remark as particularly fatuous, is Mr. Gladstone's confident manner of speaking of the Temporal Power as having finally passed away. How so acute and experienced a statesman can make so egregious and so palpable an error, baffles their understanding. They find it hardly possible to accredit him with sincerity. But has not every man his weak spot, some people might call it his monomania? Mr. Gladstone's views regarding the Papacy are his.

A project is now mooted to crown the works of impiety at Rome by erecting a statue to the Saviour bearing the inscription "To the Man Christ," and to serve as a monument of the overthrow of Christianity. This will be to descend even below the level of the heathen who of old were the masters of the city. It is asserted that one of their emperors erected a statue of Christ, and gave it a place equal to those of his gods. But in the Rome of to-day the statue will hold a rank not higher than that of the apostate Friar of Nola, beside which it is to stand. A society, also has been established, under the title of the Redeemer, to inculcate the doctrine of the red revolution. Can the eyes of Christian people who take side against the Pope with his oppressors and spoilers really remain blind to the nature of what is going on? The origin, at least, of the fog that obscures their sight, can hardly be doubtful to those who believe in the existence of the devil and do not partake of their prejudices.

The Holy Father has expressed a strong desire that the third centenary of St. Louis of Gonzaga, now approaching, should be celebrated with special devotion by the young. His Holiness has addressed a letter to the Society of Catholic Youth commending the steps taken by them in the matter. "It is well," he writes, "to pay extraordinary homage to the sanctity of Louis; it is still better that such homage should be rendered by the young generations, for, amidst the perils and temptations of youth, where can virtue find a better support than in the example and protection of this young man, this marvel of innocence? It is with this view that Benedict XIII., Our predecessor, proposed to studious youth that they should in a special manner have recourse to his aid, and should keep him before them as a model for imitation."

An absurd rumour was spread abroad to the effect that a visit recently paid to Rome by the Princess Helene d'Orléans, a daughter of the Comte de Paris, had for its object to obtain from the Pope a dispensation to marry the elder son of the Prince of Wales, with the understanding that, while pretending conformity to the Protestant creed, she should remain in secret a Catholic. An offering of Peter's Pence, brought by the Princess from her Father, was said to be a bribe offered to obtain the desired permission. It is idle to contradict, for Catholic readers, a report which no Catholic could possibly believe to be true. Not even the members of the House of Orleans, complainant though they maybe, could think of such an accommodation as that.

The Pope has consented to receive, in September or October, a pilgrimage of French workmen, for which preparations have already been commenced, under the direction of Cardinal Langénieux, Archbishop of Rheims. Such demonstrations as this form a relief in the disturbed conditions of the labour world, and especially give room for hope that the way to a true solution of the burning question is perceived at least by large and influential bodies of those most nearly concerned in it. A settlement based on religion—the only true settlement—in France could not fail to exercise a wholesome influence throughout the world.

The Pope has appointed a commission, formed of capable men, chosen for the purpose from several countries, to inquire into the social conditions of the day. The results must prove of great importance, and will doubtless throw light on much that is now misunderstood, or perhaps even totally unsuspected.

The Parliamentary elections recently held have resulted in a victory for the Government—that is to say, for Signor Crispi. The significance of the matter, however, is modified by the fact that, not only did the Catholics of the country, in obedience to the Pope's reiterated command, abstain from voting, but the Mazzinian Republicans, professing their disgust at the manner in which Parliamentary