

FRANCE—The Future

According to the Rome correspondent of the London 'Times' the Holy Father is preparing to send to the Bishops of France practical instructions tending to bring about unity of action in the conduct of Catholics, based on a clear, precise system in order to ensure uniform tactics. If there is to be separation between Church and State, his Holiness the Pope wishes that it should be complete and absolute, so that the Church may recover its freedom towards the State as soon as the pact has been dissolved. Were the Bishops and priests, in order to rent churches and reside in episcopal palaces and presbyteries, still obliged to have recourse to the Government, that would be according to the Holy Father, worse servitude than before. In other words, his Holiness is taking measures to defeat the plans of men whose intention it is to do all that lies in them to extinguish Christianity in France. The Pontiff is well aware that though they try to rivet fetters on the Church when abolishing the Concordat their efforts will prove vain, for if the clergy are completely independent of the Government they cannot permanently be deprived of freedom.

ROME—Death of a London Priest

Father Monselle, of the Pious Society of Missions, died suddenly in Rome on November 19. He was a Londoner by birth, and about 45 years of age.

Reception of an Irish Prelate

The Holy Father received the Archbishop of Tuam in private audience on November 19. His Grace presented the Pontiff with a Peter's Pence offering of £600 from the archdiocese. In thanking the Most Rev. Dr. Healy, the Pope referred in warm terms to the generosity of the Irish people and their fidelity to the faith.

The Holy See and France

At the secret Consistory held about the middle of November, the Holy Father delivered an Allocution in which he referred at length to the situation in France. He repudiated as a calumny the charge that the Holy See had not respected the Concordat. On the contrary, it was the French Government which had failed to respect that free exercise of religion which was guaranteed by Article 1 of the Concordat. His Holiness had not spoken of the matter previously because he feared this might produce aggravation of the troubles, but now the violation of the rights of the Church and the dignity of the Holy See called for a public protest. That protest would be made without any feeling of bitterness, and with the most fatherly affection for the French nation. He could not hope there would be any early change in the situation in France. He had even reason to fear the final catastrophe at no distant date. The Holy See had given evidence that the profession of Christianity could be in complete accord with a Republican form of Government. But events, however painful, would find the Holy See neither unprepared nor fearful, for He had confidence in God, Who had conquered the world.

A Request that was Not Granted

The Rome correspondent of the New York 'Free-man's Journal' relates, in a recent letter, an incident calculated to increase, in all democratic countries, the popularity of Pius X. The Pope, it appears, lately appointed to the archdiocese of Palermo, hitherto presided over by a prelate of noble birth, Monsignor Lualdi, who is of humble extraction. The archdiocese of Lucca being vacant, and its aristocratic people probably fearing that they too might receive a plebeian prelate, a delegation was sent to Rome to request the Holy Father not to depart from tradition, but to send them as usual a noble ecclesiastic. The members of the delegation, it is safe to predict, will think twice before repeating their action. They stated their case, and received this answer from 'the people's Pope': 'You have come here to tell me that a bishop born from the ranks of the people is not fitted for you. Have you considered that your petition is a mark of insult and contumely toward me? Do you mean that if I were sent as Archbishop of Lucca, that you would not accept me because I am sprung from the people? And do you consider that the See of Lucca demand to have an aristocrat for a pastor, when the Universal Church is content to have the son of a peasant? Your mission here is a misguided one. Return home and accept obediently the bishop whom the Vicar of Christ will select for you.' Needless to add, the Lucca party did not take long thereafter in coming to the conclusion that they would do well to consider the incident closed.

SCOTLAND—A Presentation

Rev. Father Ghezzi, S.J., who recently took the B.A. degree at Dublin University, has been appointed to a professorship in St. Aloysius' College, Southern India. He has just been the recipient of a presentation from the Italian Catholics of Edinburgh.

An Adverse Decision

The decision (writes an Edinburgh correspondent) given in the Second Division of the High Court re £40,000 bequeathed by the late Marquis of Bute for the erection of churches in Oban and Whithorn, has given no little surprise, as an adverse decision had been recently given in the First Division Court. The Bishops in the two dioceses—in which the churches were ordered by the late Marquis to be erected—could not see their way to carry out all the decrees of the late Marquis with the sum stated. They desired that the money be left to accumulate until a sufficient sum for the erection of the churches and the maintenance of the clergy was assured, but the present Marquis held that if the Bishops did not accept the terms of his father's will, the money should be given back to the estate. The judges have, as stated, decided in favor of the young Marquis.

A Protestant Theologian on Papal Toleration.

Under the head of 'Considerations of Catholicism by a Protestant Theologian' in the 'Sacred Heart Review,' the Rev. Dr. Starbuck meets the ancient and popular Protestant objection that the Catholic Church is intolerant of religious liberty. He asks, Is any Christian a friend of unrestricted religious liberty? He adds for himself, he thinks not, and then proceeds to show why.

The Thugs of India were votaries of Kali, the goddess of murder. In honor of Kali every grown man of the sect was bound to strangle some one (not being a Thug) as often as he prudently could. Therefore when the British authority punished Thuggism with death, it restricted religious liberty. It does not avail to say, that here crime was punished, not religion. What we rightly call crime was the heart of religion. A Thug would have gone with a despairing conscience if he had not within a certain time strangled some one in honor of his goddess. To forbid this act of devotion was to forbid the religion, which accordingly has become extinct.

Dr. Starbuck then passes to the suppression of the worship of Venus. All Christians will allow that it was a virtuous act to abolish this hideous survival of heathenism, though it involved restriction of religious liberty. Similarly the obscenities of the Hindu temples under British rule are tolerated only because it would be suicidal to attempt to abolish them in present circumstances. The same is true of other religious customs and forms of worship found in the heathenish sections of the Empire. When these can be safely done away with they will be, though it be a palpable restriction of religious liberty to do so.

To come nearer home, if we set aside the harmless little sect of monogamous Mormons, polygamy is of the very essence of Mormonism. It is as vital to it as murder was to Thuggism. I have little doubt that we shall yet be compelled to root it out by the sword, as slavery was rooted out, and it is more than doubtful whether we can do this effectively without abolishing Mormonism itself, and punishing the maintenance of its organisation. What will be the good of cutting down the poisonous shoot if we leave behind the poisonous root?

'We all agree, then, that a religion may be so essentially evil to the Christian consciousness, that it is the duty of a Christian State to suppress it within its bounds. So far the Papacy and Protestantism agree. Both allow, 'Religious liberty should not be unrestricted.' Dr. Starbuck explains the position of the Catholic Church against the coercion of non-Christians. The Inquisition would never command a Jew or Saracen to be converted. It declared him free of the jurisdiction of the Church. 'The Holy See could not dispute the civil right of Ferdinand and Isabella to offer the Jews the alternative of baptism or exile, but it displeased the sovereigns by its evident dissatisfaction with their act, and by opening an asylum to the banished Jews, as it had long been accustomed to do in like cases.'

Luther was for burning down the synagogues 'with pitch and hell-fire,' for banishing the Rabbis, first plundering them of their books, even their Hebrew Bibles, and if the other Jews remained obstinate in refusing Baptism, for banishing them too; but I believe he did not propose taking away their children. The Pope and Protestants, then, may be viewed as agreeing that non-Christians ought not to be deprived of their children. So far both parties seem to concur as to the restrictions and as to the extensions of religious liberty.

The 'Protestant Theologian' concludes with these words: 'An energetic assertion of the right of the Jews to practise their worship unmolested, under pain