

'No joy so great but runneth to an end,
No hap so haud but may in fine amend'.

Persecutors pass and persecution dies, and the Church lives on and sees the end of them all. And as the chemist knows how to distil a healing dew from the root of the deadly aconite, so does God know how to draw good out of intended evil. Even persecution (says the Prince de Broglie) has its uses, for it passes through the crucible the courage and the virtues of individuals and of peoples. It has been known to give a spinal column even to the physical coward.

Everything seems to show that the Church in France is facing the latest phase of the atheistic persecution with high hope and courage. Oppression is no new experience to the church in France. 'The attitude of the Government in France throughout the whole of the nineteenth century', said Cardinal Moran recently to a 'Catholic Press' interviewer, 'has been one of tyranny and oppression. It may seem strange to us that a Bishop would not be allowed to publish a pastoral letter without submitting it to the Prefect of Police. That is French law. You know that the Penal Laws in Ireland prohibited either the clergy or the people to meet in any numbers without the sanction of the Government, and the reply of the Irish was that they met in the mountains and on the hillsides to carry out their religious exercises. They were heedless of any sword of persecution that might be hanging over them, and persistently refused to abide by any regulations of the Government in this direction.' 'Of course,' added his Eminence, 'we don't exactly know the relations of the people and Government in France, where they have been accustomed to look to the State for everything. One of the results of the persecution of the Irish during three hundred years is that we look to the Government for nothing. In matters of religion we are quite independent. Religion is our guide, and I think in our present position in Australia we are both able to and are willing to protect our own. These are the principles I would apply in France. . . Perhaps it seems very inconsistent to our view of things that before adopting any particular course of action in France they write and ask what Rome would advise them to do. Well, if such difficulties arose here in the Commonwealth or in Ireland we would not trouble Rome at all. We would settle them ourselves. It is not a duty that would devolve upon Rome. It is ours, and we would discharge it in the best possible way. . . In such matters those who are opposed to Home Rule assert that it would mean Rome Rule. We know nothing of that kind of thing. We are determined to rule by common sense, duty, and religion, and do not throw the burden upon Rome, for we are confident that if we abide by those principles we shall always have the fullest approval of the authorities in the centre of Christendom when the case comes before them.'

In the opinion of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Sydney the cessation of Government subsidies will result in a closer union of the clergy and their congregations in France. 'The real hope of religion', said he, 'as the world is situated nowadays, is the union of the priests and people, and I think the system by which the clergy have to rely on the religious spirit of the people even for their subsistence is the most desirable and the one that ensures the happiest results to both parties.'

And thus out of evil will come forth good—out of the lion's mouth honey. And as to the regime of atheistic persecution, 'this also shall pass away.' During the French Revolution, in the days of the Constituent Assembly, the French bishops and fifty thousand of their clergy refused to take an oath which their

consciences rejected. They went calmly to prison, exile, or death. We look to the French clergy to-day to display in the home-land the magnificent devotion which makes them such noble martyrs upon the foreign mission-field. As to the closing of the churches, we doubt that any Government is strong enough for that, especially among the sturdy Catholic population of Brittany and the Auvergne. 'There are in France,' said the Bishop of Bayonne some months ago, '64,000 churches. Priests and people have only to continue to use them as in the past. There are not in France 64,000 regiments to compel respect for the sequestrators, the breaking of the seals, and to close 64,000 churches every Sunday. A decree ordering the closing of the churches would be inapplicable, simply because it would lack practical sanction.'

CIRCULAR LETTER

BY THE BISHOP OF AUCKLAND

Bishop's House,
Ponsonby, Auckland,
December 17, 1906.

Rev. Father—and his parishioners,

Every happiness and joy attend you all at Christmas and during the new year. While our prayers at this holy time must be for peace on earth to men of good will, our thoughts will carry us to Rome, and remind us of the sorrows of our Holy Father occasioned by the trials of the Church in France. The newspapers give us such scant information, and the editors readily uphold any story against the Church. While sounding the praises of the authors of this persecution, they give honor to those men who have declared that their determination is to try and dechristianise their country, and who, under the mask of Equality and Liberty, are striving to stifle the consciences of their people. That they may succeed for a time is not unlikely, but that they will root out the Faith is as impossible as in days of old, when the barge of Peter was seen to be tossed in the midst of the most tempestuous waves, and when to all appearance it was in danger of shipwreck. Jesus Christ is the Helmsman who will guide her in all her ways and bring her safely out of danger. As it has been in the past so it will be in the future, for 'O Holy Roman Church, City of our strength, behold us thy children assembled in spirit within thy walls, around the tomb of the Fisherman, the Prince of the Apostles, whose sacred relics protect thee from their earthly shrine, and whose unchanging teaching enlightens thee from heaven. Yet, O City of Strength, it is by the Saviour, Who is coming, that thou art strong. He is thy wall, for it is He that encircles, with his tender mercy, all thy children; He is thy bulwark, for it is by Him that thou art invincible, and all the powers of hell are powerless to prevail against thee. Open wide thy gates, that all nations may enter thee; for thou art mistress of holiness and the guardian of truth. May the old error, which sets itself against the faith, soon disappear, and peace reign over the whole fold: O Holy Roman Church, thou hast forever put thy trust in the Lord; and He, faithful to His promise, has humbled before thee the haughty ones that defied thee, and the proud cities that were against thee. Where are now the Caesars, who boasted that they had drowned thee in thine own blood? Where the Emperors, who would ravish the inviolate virginity of thy faith? Where the Heretics, who, during the past centuries of thine existence, have assailed every article of thy teaching, and denied what they listed? Where the ungrateful Princes, who would fain make a slave of thee, who had made them what they were? Where that Empire of Mahomet, which has so many times raged against thee, for that thou, the defenceless State, didst arrest the pride of its conquests? Where the Reformers, who were bent on giving the world a Christianity, in which thou wast to have no part? Where the modern Sophists, in whose philosophy thou wast set down as a system that had been tried, and was a failure, and is now a ruin? And those Kings who are acting the tyrant over thee, and those people that will have liberty independently and at the risk of truth—where will they be in another hundred years? Gone and forgotten as the noisy anger of a torrent; while thou, O holy Church of Rome, built on the immovable rock, wilt be as calm,

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