

The Religious Persecution in France

The 'Croix' of Rheims has just published an amusing story of the first infraction of the law prescribing 'Associations Cultuelles' in France. The Church of St. Clement in Cherbourg—the owners of which date back their title one thousand five hundred years—not having been transferred to an Association, and its use for service being therefore forbidden, Cherbourg's famous police commissioner, M. Ducreux, who deserves to be called 'the sleepless eye' of the new Church law in the north of France, was from the first on the alert. Before dawn of the day on which the law came into force he betook himself to the Church of St. Clement, and was surprised to find quite a sprinkling of the faithful in the dark aisles and pews of the church. Unobserved he joined them, and soon saw the sacristan light the candles, and a priest, preceded by a server, ascend the altar steps to celebrate Mass, as had been the practice on that spot for fifteen hundred years. Eager for the distinction of spying out what probably would be the

First Infraction of the New Law

In the whole of France, M. Ducreux watched the priest moving to and fro in the flickering candle-light. Stealthily he wrote in his note-book the names of the priest, the server, and others present. After Mass he left unobserved to prepare for the prosecution of the priest; but, fearing the parishioners, he put off the arrest. After nightfall he presented himself with some officers at the house of Canon C. Laisney, the parish priest, and demanded an interview. 'Monsieur le Cure,' he began, 'I have conscientiously assisted at Mass to-day.' 'Very good; but what procures me the honor of your visit at this hour?' 'Your Reverence will perhaps conjecture: I have an order for your arrest.' 'Indeed! And why should I be arrested?' 'Because, Monsieur l'Abbe, you said Mass this morning in St. Clement's Church.' 'Are you quite certain?' 'Entirely; I saw you myself. Besides, I have witnesses.' 'If you are entirely certain, Monsieur, proceed. We will discuss the matter later.' Accordingly Canon Laisney was marched to the magistrate's office, M. Ducreux leading the way. There he made his deposition and referred to the witnesses whom he had previously summoned. But the priest suavely

Pleaded 'Not Guilty,'

and quietly handed the magistrate a card bearing the name of Rev. Geo. J. Blatter, of Chicago. 'The worthy commissioner,' he said, 'probably refers to this American priest, who certainly said Mass this morning in St. Clement's. He has embarked on the "America" for New York.' This statement was corroborated by all the witnesses, and the server stated that he had accompanied the stranger in a walk around the town. Tableau: the quietly smiling Canon, the amused witnesses, the frowning magistrate, and the staring and crestfallen Ducreux, so suddenly shorn of his glory. In a few moments, with such officers as he could hastily get together, M. Ducreux rushed to the dock, where the transports were waiting to carry the passengers of the special train to the 'America,' a few miles out in the harbor. The commissioner and his men arrived just in time to see the special emerging into the glare of the dock lights. In vain did they post themselves at the car ends in order to spy out an American priest amongst the several hundred passengers that swarmed out of the train on to the transports. M. Ducreux probably had forgotten to consider that he could not be on a train from Paris if he had said Mass in Cherbourg that morning. Meanwhile, if M. Ducreux had not been so preoccupied, he might easily have recognized the stranger in a gentleman who, wrapped in a Spanish cloak, was all this time leisurely walking up and down the dock, and several times stood wondering at the manoeuvres of the policemen. This was the American priest, who was actually the last passenger to board the transports. M. Ducreux, not finding his quarry, made preparation to head off the 'America' in order to demand the extradition of the Rev. Geo. J. Blatter; but fortunately for himself and the newly constituted 'hierarchy,' he received timely notice to let the matter drop.

The publication of an advertisement in a Catholic paper shows that the advertiser not only desires the patronage of Catholics, but pays them the compliment of seeking it through the medium of their own religious journal. So says an esteemed and wide-awake American contemporary. A word to the wise is sufficient....

A Coconut Palm Grove

When a traveller gets his first sight of a palm grove he does not easily forget it. He sees the trees springing up, as it were, from the water in which their shadows are reflected. Besides being beautiful ornaments to a landscape these palms are among the most useful gifts which Nature has given to the inhabitants of tropical islands. In supplying actual necessities and in the number of useful purposes to which it can be applied, bamboo takes first rank, but the palm comes next. In Ceylon, where the bamboo is not utilised to the extent that it is in Japan, the palm has the pre-eminent position. To many of the people of this island the cocoanut trees are everything and their very lives depend upon them. The tree supplies most of their wants, besides giving them valuable commercial products. In this island there are estimated to be nearly twenty millions of palm trees, and among the poorer classes a man's wealth is estimated by the number of trees he owns. They form the most important asset of his estate, and by will are generally divided among his family. As one of the important traits of the Cingalese is his love of litigation, one can readily see what an important part the palm tree plays in the law cases there. There is a case on record in which the 2,520th part of a grove, containing only ten trees, was the subject of dispute. One of the greatest difficulties which the engineers had to encounter in building a railroad across the island was to determine the ownership of the palm trees. The ramifications of relationships and the fractional claims set up were most difficult to understand and disentangle.

Facts about Japan

In view of the presence in New Zealand waters of several Japanese cruisers, the following facts about the land of the chrysanthemum and its people will be of interest:—

Japan has nearly 50,000,000 people.
The word 'Mikado' signifies something like 'the Sacred Gate' or 'the Sublime Porte.'
The name of the reigning Mikado is Mutsu Hito.
The name of the Empress is O Haru—'spring.'
The name of the Crown Prince is Yoshi Hito.
European dress is worn at all court functions.
Rice is the common food of the common people.
Eightpence a day is now good pay for unskilled labor in Japan. Ten years ago it was threepence.
Japan has few millionaires and practically no multi-millionaires.
Tokio is a hundred years older than St. Petersburg.
The lovely Japanese cherry trees produce no cherries.
Japanese dead are buried in a squatting posture, chin upon knees.
Fujiyama, the volcano that appears in all Japanese pictures, is 11,365 feet high, and 10,000 pilgrims ascend it every year.
The Japanese people, even the poor, travel much in their own country.
Modern Japanese coin and banknotes bear legends in English as well as in Japanese.
It is quite proper, even complimentary, to ask a lady's age in Japan.
The Japanese 'Hello!' at the telephone is 'Moshi moshi,' or 'Ano ne,' with the accent on the 'may.'
Kissing and shaking hands are rarely practised in Japan.

Japanese mothers do not kiss their children, though they may press their lips to the forehead or cheek of a very young baby.

Sewing on buttons is not a wifely duty in Japan—there are no buttons.

Japanese inns furnish fresh tooth-brushes every morning free to every guest. The brush is of wood, shaped like a pencil, and frayed to a tufty brush of fibre at the large end.

All of the food served to a guest at a Japanese banquet and not consumed by him at the time is taken to his home by the servants of his host.

Japanese chopsticks are delivered to the guests in a decorated envelope. The two sticks, already shaped, form one tong-like piece of wood and are broken apart by the guest.

Japan has one of the largest steamship companies in the world, with service to the United States and to England by way of Suez.

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