

vitiation to come and stay in his home. The police officer called upon them to disperse, because even there they constituted an 'unlawful association.' If a member of an Order had brought a dowry into the common stock, he had an action at law against the liquidator—that is, the Government—for its recovery. If any member had no means of support, he had a right to some meagre dole from the proceeds of the sale. It is not hard to appreciate the irony of the position when the Government first despoils you of every shilling, then casts you adrift to that extent that you no longer have even the support of your former fellow-religious, and then tells you that you may institute legal proceedings. But, in fact, it would be futile to do so, even if they were able. The liquidators are mostly legal members of the Ministerial side of the House, and up to the present have been so hard worked that the sale of the properties has not realised enough to cover their bills of costs. More than a year and a-half ago advances from the Treasury to the amount of £230,000 had to be made for those legal costs. I believe that up to this moment, after from three to four years' operations, the liquidation of hardly a single establishment has resulted in any aid to the State or to the former owners. It is now seen that the valuation set on the property of the religious Orders

Was Outrageous and Exaggerated

for political ends. And properties are sacrificed in the sale. You will come across cases in which they are sold at an eighth of their real value, and at a twentieth of the value once put on them by the Government. A property at Treguier—worth £16,000—was knocked down for £2,000. At Limoges a convent was sold for 5,320 francs; the law costs ran up to 5,307, leaving a net balance for somebody of 13 francs! One reads of questions to the Minister, calling attention to the utter destitution of the ex-religious, and asking why they do not receive some pittance from the sale of their former property. The invariable reply is that so far no money is available. He sends a circular to the liquidators, telling them to hurry up, but they know well they need not. Even that violent anti-Catholic sheet, the 'Action,' jeers at the fiasco. 'The liquidators,' it says, 'are receiving considerable remittances. It is they alone who so far have reaped the clearest gain from the operations resulting from the Law of July 1, 1901; and it is only natural that they should do everything they can to draw out their pleasure as long as possible.'

The Separation Law.

Nothing succeeds like success. Early in 1904 M. Combes and his friends had resolved on the utter extinction of education by religious; 'the serried majority' would not fail to see them through. So they felt that they might and ought at once face the final act in the drama, the rupture of diplomatic relations with Rome and the utter spoliation of the Church. The important thing at first was to put the Pope in a difficulty. Nothing was easier. The King of Italy was invited to Paris, which was quite proper, and arrangements made for a return visit by President Loubet, which would have been equally proper were it to any place in Italy but Rome. Rome, however, was just the one place intended. We Catholics, of whatever nation, have the deepest interest in the perfect independence of our spiritual sovereign. Pius VII. was imprisoned by Bonaparte because he refused to close his ports against nations—including England—then at war with France; the Pope was at war with no nation, and desired to remain at peace with all. The despot imprisoned him for not becoming his partisan. The Pope's territorial independence is the one great safeguard of his untrammelled administration. Under a world-empire the conditions would be different; in a Christendom of independent nationalities he must be the subject of none. Hence, in protesting against the usurpation of his capital he is really fighting our common battle. If he withdrew even tacitly that protest, he would thereby acquiesce in subjection, which would most certainly have most serious consequences. In 1904 the French nation was represented at the Vatican by an Ambassador, the Pope at Paris by his Nuncio. Both Powers were closely related by the Concordat. In virtue of that agreement the President claimed the right, as the Catholic Head of the French Republic, to nominate persons for vacant sees, and several other rights and privileges besides. Now, since 1870 the most striking form of Papal protest against the usurpation of the House of Savoy has consisted in the Pope's refusal to abide by the visit of any Catholic ruler to the representative of that usurpation in Rome itself. To show the necessity of such an attitude, let me quote the words of the London 'Daily News' a year after President Loubet's visit, when a false report got abroad to

the effect that the Emperor of Austria was likewise about to come to Rome. 'This means,' said the Nonconformist organ, 'that the Papacy for good and all abandons its claims to the ancient temporal sovereignty of the Church; it means that the Pope accepts the fait accompli of thirty-five years ago of the consolidation of the Kingdom of Italy with Rome—the Rome of the Popes—as its capital.'—(May 5, 1905.) You will see that the Pope could not but protest against the affront which President Loubet's visit implied; for it was more than a personal matter; it would have compromised the imprescriptible rights of the Holy See had it been suffered to pass off in silence. Still, it was not the Pope's wish to embitter relations which were already but too painful. He merely lodged through his representatives a formal protest with the various Powers, including France. The matter got into the Press. This was not done with the consent or connivance of the Vatican. France—M. Combes's France—worked itself into a paroxysm of national indignation. M. Nisard, the Ambassador to the Vatican, was instructed to call for an explanation. That old gentleman was told by Cardinal Merry del Val that he should have a full explanation in half an hour if he put his demand in writing; but for some reason known but to himself he did not. He was directed to return on an indefinite leave of absence, and it was now clear that more must follow.

M. Combes Had Another Trump

besides the President's Roman visit, which he played with little regard to the rules of the game. Vacancies in French sees were filled according to the terms of the Concordat, the President nominating suitable persons, whom the Holy See then canonically instituted. Such joint action in a matter of so grave a nature presupposed, of course, that President and Pope were at one as to the fitness of the subjects proposed. Now, the Pope is bound to be morally certain that persons so appointed are fit for the episcopal office. This is an obligation of which he could not divest himself, even if he would. And generally he had little difficulty in approving of the subjects nominated ever till M. Combes came on the scene. He took care here again to put the Pope in a difficulty. His Holiness was unable to accept at least one or two nominations. M. Combes would not budge, and in course of time a dozen sees were still vacant, M. Combes insisting that none should be appointed unless all his selections were approved. Finally a letter sent by the Nuncio to the Bishop of Dijon, requesting that prelate to desist from conferring orders on candidates for the priesthood until certain troubles were cleared up, brought M. Combes to the full measure of his wrath. The Nuncio was handed his passport, and diplomatic relations were suspended. This was in the middle of 1904.

A Parliamentary Commission was hard at work preparing a bill of separation, and matters might have come to a head a little earlier than they did but for M. Villeneuve's sudden exposure of General Andre's spy system. That individual, on succeeding the Marquis de Gallifet as Minister of War, obtained from Parliament the abolition of the Promotion Board—a military but non-political body, which until then examined into the merits of the various officers and decided their promotion. Andre transferred this power to the political head of the army. He had now been using it for four years, and it was well known that promotion under the new system went far less on the score of professional desert than political complexion. But it was one thing to be certain of what was going on; it was quite another thing to be able to show it up. This was what M. Villeneuve did in Parliament. He came armed with hundreds of documents which showed that the War Office was becoming

An Annexe of that Masonic Head Centre;

that the Minister, through his secretary, requested the Grand Orient to give him information as to the behaviour of his officers all over France; and it came out clear as noonday that a system of spying unheard of till then was practised by the occult power of which he was a mere tool. If an officer went to Mass, even if his wife did, if his children attended a Catholic school, his name was entered on the black list. He was not for promotion. I need not go further into a subject which is too recent to be yet forgotten. Even Masonic members of the Chamber were, or affected to be, stunned. Andre escaped formal censure for the moment, but the blow had gone home. The Grand Orient was wroth at the temporary faint-heartedness of its creatures in the Chamber, and issued a manifesto, which for audacity is unique. It boldly admitted the spying, and attempted its justification. 'Brother Bidegain,'