

Protestantism in France.

An inquiry into French Protestantism (says a writer in an English secular review is met at the threshold by this singular paradox, that while the Protestant spirit has taken possession of France, Protestantism as a form of church life is declining. On the one hand, its influence so increases that Protestants are to be found in all sorts of positions of authority and power, far out of proportion to their estimated numerical strength; on the other hand its temples are empty of worshippers and the number of members, in both its confessions, diminishes with ominous rapidity.

France is governed by the combined authority of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, whose members, taken together, number 880: 100 are said to be Protestants, 70 or 80 of whom are in the Chamber of Deputies. As the population of France is over 38,000,000, if the Protestant Deputies were solely the representatives of their co-religionists, the Protestant population of France ought to be at least 5,000,000, whereas it is only 650,000, and that is a computation twenty years old, the probability being that it is now nearer 600,000. According to this the political influence of Protestantism in France is nearly seven and a half times as great as might be expected from the actual number of its professed adherents.

The Sisters of Charity.

Very few Catholics (says the 'Montreal True Witness') devote a few moments to a study of the monumental work—both spiritual and temporal—performed by our nuns. The 'Catholic Sentinel,' Portland, a Belgian paper, published an article on the Sisters of Charity, in which it was stated that this community had in round numbers 2700 houses scattered all over the world. A correspondent of the paper thought this number exaggerated, and he requested the editor to state whereon he based his information. The answer was not long forthcoming. It is an interesting one, as it gives palpable proof of the immense work done by the Church in the domain of charity. According to the official record of the community there are not 2700 houses—hospitals, asylums, orphanages—managed by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, but exactly 2785. There are as many convents, to be sure—too many for those people who dread the pernicious influence of the Church of Rome, but not enough for the sick, the orphans, the aged, who find under the convent's roof shelter, help and consolation. France and Algeria count 1073 houses; England has 45; Austria, 239; Belgium, 45; Spain and its colonies have 440; Greece has three; Italy, 515; Poland, 69; Portugal, 8; Prussia, 39; Switzerland, 7; Turkey, 23; Egypt, 7; the United States and China, 13; Persia, 3; Syria, 12; Canada, 100. Central America has 19, Brazil, 29; Chili, 24; Colombia, 14; Ecuador, 18; La Plata, 21; Peru, 19.

In these 2785 houses there are 31,000 Sisters. Who can realise the amount of good done by that army of gentle women trained for the battle against disease, poverty, and crime? Who that is Catholic does not glory to belong to a Church that fosters the devotion represented by these thousands? Who that has a heart does not feel grateful for the treasures of charity that God has placed in woman's soul?

At this season everybody is liable to Coughs and Colds. Avoid all danger by taking TUSSICURA.

Libelling a Priest.

The following cable message appeared in Friday's daily papers:— 'The religious paper the 'Rock' has been mulcted in £300 damages for describing Father Bernard Vaughan as an outlaw, a Jesuit, and a member of a seditious Order.'

Some time ago the 'Rochester and Chatham News' accused Father Vaughan of having taken a sham 'Jesuit Oath,' with the result that the newspaper was sued for libel. An apology was tendered, and the action was withdrawn. The following was the editorial apology: 'In our issue of July 6 we published a letter under the heading of "The Attack on the King," in which the writer, who signed himself "Loyal Protestant," asserted that Father Vaughan, brother of Cardinal Vaughan, had taken the "Jesuit Oath," which was quoted at length. One of the sentences ran: "I do renounce and disown my allegiance as due to any heretical king, prince, or State-named Protestant, or obedience to any of their inferior magistrates or officers, etc." A few days after the publication of this letter, Messrs. Witham, Roskell, Munster, and Weld of 1, Gray's Inn Square, W.C., solicitors to the Rev. Bernard Vaughan, commenced an action for libel against us. We applied to the 'Loyal Protestant' to furnish us with the evidence upon which he had made such a definite and emphatic statement, and our correspondent was then obliged to admit that he could procure none. He had seen the so-called "Jesuit Oath" in print somewhere, and assumed and took it for granted that, as the Rev. Father Bernard Vaughan is a member of the Society of Jesus, "he must have taken that oath." We then went carefully into the matter of the "Jesuit Oath" ourselves, and having come to the conclusion that the statement of "Loyal Protestant" is absolutely unfounded, and that the Jesuits take no such oath as that alleged, we felt in honor bound to express our regret that we had inadvertently allowed any such fraudulent imputation upon the loyalty and good faith of the Rev. Bernard Vaughan to appear in the columns of the 'News.' Messrs. Witham, Roskell, Munster, and Weld, on behalf of the Rev. Bernard Vaughan, have accepted this explanation, and have acceded to our request to withdraw the action. This is fortunate for "Loyal Protestant" as well as for ourselves. In putting forward ridiculous inferences as positive facts, our correspondent abused the hospitality of our columns, and forfeited all claim to be sheltered from the consequences of his own act." It is evident that the "Rock" had also accused the Rev. Father Vaughan of taking the sham oath, and hence the action.

The Bravest are the Tenderest.

Charles V., Emperor of Germany, was one of the ablest kings and bravest soldiers that ever lived. When danger threatened his country or his people, he was ready to face it; he knew no fear. One day in camp he was told that a swallow was building her nest upon his tent. He gave orders that it should not be disturbed. So the pretty nest, with its dainty, soft lining, was finished, and soon the mother-bird was sitting on her pearly-white eggs. But before the young birds were hatched, the army had to break camp. The tents were all struck except the Emperor's. He said: 'Let it stand. I can get another shelter, but she can not for this brood. She trusted me for a home: I will not fail her.' Surely the bravest are the tenderest.

A Wrong Number.

No doubt many persons have wondered why the hour four is represented on a watch or a clock dial by IIII. instead of IV. A watchmaker who knows the history of the custom says it goes back to 1370. The first clock which kept anything like accurate time was made by a certain Henry Vick, in 1370. It was made to the order of Charles V. of France, who, it will be remembered, was called 'The Wise.' It is pretty evident, though, that Charles was not as wise as he liked to imagine. When Vick brought the clock to him, he looked closely at it, and then frowned. 'You have got the figures on the dial wrong,' he said. 'I think not, your Majesty,' answered Vick. 'Yes; that four should be four ones.' 'You are wrong, your Majesty.' 'I am never wrong!' thundered the king. 'Take it away and correct the mistake.' Vick did as he was commanded, and so to-day we have IIII. when we should have IV.

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