

ROME LETTER

(From our own correspondent.)

January 4.

THE DISCIPLINE OF A NATION.

We have often heard foreigners express themselves in terms of disapprobation as to the want of order and discipline among the Italian people. But the critics fail to realise they are dealing with a people who are artists by nature and, consequently, not the cold machines of some other countries. The manner in which Italy has handled the situation, difficult and delicate, in which the War of Nations placed her, enhances her reputation ten-fold for firmness and clear-headedness. To get her into the *milieu* at any cost seemed one of the great objects in life for half the governments in Europe. But her leaders quietly took the reins in their hand, and replied that war or peace would be a matter for themselves alone. They would look to the interests of their own land, and the cajolery of the belligerents would have no influence on Italy's policy. And thus we have seen a splendid example of the discipline of a nation.

The Catholics of Milan have had to vindicate their good name for patriotism against those who would besmear it. When the hour comes, if it ever comes, they declare themselves quite ready to go into battle and support at all sacrifices the interests of their country.

THE FRENCH PROTECTORATE IN THE EAST.

For ten days or so many have been asking the question: Have we seen the end these days of the French Protectorate in the East? For many years the Pope and the Sultan have transacted their affairs through the medium of the French Ambassador in Constantinople, and this through an Apostolic Delegate resides permanently on the Bosphorus. And in virtue of the protectorate of Catholics of all nations in the East many privileges fell to the lot of France throughout the Orient, which otherwise should have been directed into other channels. Has all this now ended by the direct transaction of business between the Sultan and the Apostolic Delegate? Archbishop Dole's audience with Mahomet V. without the intervention of the French representative would, some argue, point to this. However, I feel inclined to say this conclusion is a little bit too premature. In the present unsettled state of the world Benedict XV. would do nothing that might prejudice the Holy See in the eyes of France or of any other Power. We must never confound the people of France with the clique that brought about the separation of Church and State. So alive to all this are French Catholics that *La Croix* says: 'What above all else is deplorable in this affair is that France, having no representative at the Vatican, cannot, in such grave circumstances, treat with it on the subject of events in Turkey and other places. It is for us a deplorable situation for which our Government must take all the responsibility.'

THE NAME OF MARY IN ITALY.

To the Catholic it is pleasant to see that, notwithstanding all the political upheavals and the injury done by them to Catholicism in Italy, the favorite name given to Italian female infants is that borne by the Blessed Virgin. High and low, rich and poor, it is all the same: each family wishes one of its daughters to bear the name, Maria. And the fact that the daughter born last week to Victor Emmanuel III. and Queen Helena, has been given Maria as the first of a list of names, shows the Quirinal to be no exception to all the great Houses of Italy. In the House of Savoy the name of Maria has been always popular. A Maria of Savoy, born in 1646, was consort of King Charles VI., King of Portugal; another Maria of Savoy, daughter of Victor Amedeus II., King of Piedmont, was born in 1685. One of the latest of the royal houses to bear the name is Queen Maria Pia, aunt of the present King of Italy.

NOTES.

By the death of Father Francis Alessandroni, O.P., the International College of the Dominicans, Rome, has lost one of its ablest professors.

Mgr. O'Riordan, Rector of the Irish College, returned to Rome last week from Ireland, where he had been since he accompanied Cardinal Logue homewards after the election of Benedict XV. Mgr. O'Riordan's health was not of the best during part of his long stay in Ireland.

Rev. P. E. Magennis, O.C.C., sails from Italy for the United States on the 24th inst., his term of office as Definitor General of the Calced Carmelites being terminated.

H.A.C.B. SOCIETY

(Paper read by District Deputy Bro. P.D. Hoskins, B.S., at the Annual District Meeting, Auckland.)

At the invitation of our worthy and respected District President (Bro. D. Flynn), I will endeavor to place before the members some of my ideas for the advancement of the Hibernian Society. The society has now been established in New Zealand for about 45 years. It was founded on the Victorian constitution and rules. It was an excellent constitution, and reflected the greatest credit on the framers. Time soon passes and brings in its wake a new order of things, rendering it necessary to amend and improve our rules and constitution to meet the new conditions. I am afraid, however, that we in New Zealand have not yet improved our society to the extent that we should have to meet the changed conditions of the times. You will naturally ask me to state the grounds of my assertions, what proof have I that this has been neglected in the past, and, if there has been neglect, what steps do I suggest to place the society on a better basis. This I will endeavor to do. The first proof is very easily forthcoming when we look at our present rule book. Compare it with the rule book of the early days. Have there been many improvements effected? Take any of the amendments carried at the triennial movable meetings, and note if anything of great importance has been added to the rules? Has any improvement been made in the rules to make the society more attractive to the Catholic population of New Zealand? To my knowledge very little has been done. We have spent too much energy and time in framing rules for the division of funds in the event of secession, and in discussing the burning question, 'Whether it is in the best interests of the society to change the headquarters from Auckland to Wellington,' instead of trying to discuss business that would help to make our society more attractive. The rule book itself is a production which requires immediate revision. It is a most difficult matter to follow the rules, whilst the indexing is bad. A rules-revising committee should, in my opinion, be set up without delay to go thoroughly into the matter, and bring out a publication that will be a credit to the society, and a boon to the officers and members.

Another most important matter which requires immediate attention is the manner in which the working-up of new branches is arranged. Practically no effort is made by the society to form new branches; either the people concerned or the priest in charge of the parish have to take the initiative. Nothing appears to be done to advertise the society in those districts where there are no branches, or approach the priests in charge. Treating the society as a business concern, we must push it, as it is a very unbusiness-like policy to expect new members when no efforts are made to secure them. We should appeal to the hierarchy, who are without exception with the movement, to place before their clergy their wishes to further the society, and at the same time the executive should arrange for preliminary meetings in those districts where there are no branches, so that the advantages and benefits of the society might be explained by some one deputed to do so. I am quite confident if something like this were arranged, it

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