

may be alive to the world around, but dead to the Eternal Being, to the Creator Who has first claim on us. The spirit of life that moves within us makes us feel the highest and truest life of man is found in the life of religion. For man is conceived in the image of God Himself, and called to be His son and heir.

'We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.
Life's but a means unto an end; that end,
To those who dwell in Him, He most in them,
Beginning, mean and end to all things, God.'

The elevating grace of the Redeemer confers upon a man completeness of spiritual life. It evokes our spiritual instincts, kindles them into a warm, personal love for Our Saviour; and when, as in the case of the saints, the Spirit of Christ gets room and opportunity to do its work, a noble character is the result—faith joining hands with love, strength with sympathy, courage with tenderness.

A Pioneer of the Potato

France recently celebrated the centenary of Antoine Parmentier, who popularised a vegetable which has since become one of the staple foods of European countries—the humble potato. Parmentier was not only a public benefactor, but a philanthropist with scientific attainments. The potato had already been brought to Europe from Peru in the fifteenth century, but was looked upon, as are many novelties, as something to be not only avoided, but dreaded. A French Cabinet Minister, Turgot, tried to persuade the people of Limoges to make a trial of the new food, but he had little success owing to the rumor that it was poisonous. Although he had potatoes served daily at his own table, nothing could overcome popular prejudice.

Parmentier wrote a treatise setting forth the chemical properties of the food, and planted a considerable area in the plain of Sablon with potatoes. He was already known as the author of a treatise on vegetables, written after the famine of 1769, in which he proved that nutritive starch was contained in plants as well as in grain. His experiments with the potato were watched with curiosity, but when flowers instead of fruit appeared on the plant he was ridiculed and derided. Nothing daunted, Parmentier made a bouquet of the blossoms and presented them to the King, Louis XVI., who forthwith put one in his buttonhole, and promised to taste the vegetable, thereby setting an example to his courtiers. The palace cook then took the matter in hand, and produced a variety of appetising dishes. But it was only after Napoleon that the homely potato began its assured and honorable career, whether as a component of luxurious fare with elaborate adjuncts on the tables of the rich, or as the practical, wholesome food of the poorer classes. It is a fecund product of the kindly earth, giving health and satisfaction to the digger, who turns up on his spade a dozen at a time.

Parmentier was a native of Mont Didier, in Normandy. Born in poor circumstances, and early orphaned, he devoted himself to the care of his widowed mother and younger brothers. At eighteen years of age he was apprenticed to an apothecary, and, as a member of the medical staff of the French army, went through the hardships of the Seven Years' War in Germany. Studious by nature and anxious to improve himself, he worked at Frankfort with the famous physician Meyer. On returning to France he devoted himself to chemical experiments and botany. Had he obtained a following for his theories on the nourishment of the people, the Great Revolution itself might have been averted. It is irrefutable that the chief factor of discontent was famine, and when the corn crops failed there was no substitute. When the monarchy was swept away ignorance and intolerance still main-

tained their hold over Frenchmen. The Republicans were supercilious toward Parmentier's remedy for economic distress. Tobacco and alcohol were more readily accepted by mankind than the beneficent potato.

THE OUTLOOK IN FRANCE

A NEW EPOCH IN ITS RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

It is difficult for foreigners, and even for Frenchmen, to know all the divisions which are represented in the Chamber of Deputies, or to understand the exact difference between Republicans and Moderate Republicans, Liberals, Moderate and Advanced Radicals, Radical Socialists, Socialists, Anti-Militarists, and other groups. But behind these differences, some of which are merely superficial, there is hidden a profound cleavage (writes an 'Anglican Minister' in the *Catholic Times*). G. Hanotaux, *Histoire de la France Contemporaine*, describing the state of things that prevailed in 1871, when Paris had fallen and a new Administration was painfully forming in Bordeaux, remarks that the real division in the country, which seemed bewildered by different factions, was on the question of religion. This is the problem, he says, which has always preoccupied the soul of France. On one hand there is the ancient faith, the submission of most families to the rites of the Catholic Church, the glories of past centuries, when France was 'the soldier of Christ,' St. Louis, Jeanne d'Arc, St. Vincent de Paul; the lesson left by the great masters of thought and of language, Pascal, Bossuet, Chateaubriand; finally a kind of mystical impulse, which in dark hours of sorrow folds the hands of women and of children before the image of the Virgin Mother. On the other hand there is freethought, the laughter of Voltaire, the statements of Auguste Comte, the idea of man building up his morality and his ideals on the precepts of nature and progress.

The Attitude of the Government.

When the Republic was finally established, members of the higher clergy were accused of Royalist or Bonapartist tendencies, and the charge of being lukewarm or even opposed to the Republic, which was brought against the clerical party, determined the action of the Government towards the Church. Gambetta's 'Le Clericalisme Voila l'Ennemi' marked the beginning of the estrangement, which became ever wider and which ended forty years later in the separation of Church and State. It is not necessary to follow the various steps which led to this final measure, or to state the case for both parties, but it is certain that the law which disestablished the Church and dissolved the 'Congregations' was hard on Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods. But the law promoted by the same Government party, which deprived clergymen of all privileges and subjected them to military service, had some very unexpected results.

The Clergy and the War.

Now at the outbreak of war the priests of military age joined the colors and appeared in uniform in the midst of their parishioners. The monks and all the members of the banished Congregations hastened to offer their services to their country, and to take their places like the secular clergy, with the ambulances or in the firing line. The twenty thousand priests, among them three bishops, who were mobilised, soon made their influence felt. It was found that the vicar or cure who had dropped the cassock and donned the haversack and marched and fought like all the rest, became most popular among his comrades. Letters from the front bear daily testimony to his bravery, his cheery good humor, and his devotion to duty. The habit of obedience acquired at a seminary proved an excellent preparation for military service. Soldiers who had looked upon him as a being in a cassock, whose occupation it was to say Mass or sing Vespers before old women, and catechise young children, found out that he was