

Catholic World

CATHOLIC PROSPECTS IN RUSSIA.

Although the actual state of religion in Russia could scarcely be worse, the prospects of Catholicism in that country are better to-day than they have been for 1000 years (says *America*). This fact has been made clear by two recent pronouncements made by Archbishop de Ropp, the Metropolitan of all Russia, and Archbishop Szeptycki, the Uniate Metropolitan of the Ukraine. Their views have the greater weight because the former is the representative of the Latin rite and the latter the representative of the Greco-Ruthenian rite. Both are agreed that the vast populations of Russia are ripe for conversion, and that if the necessary means of evangelisation can be procured, very large numbers of people may enter the Catholic Church.

The great bar to conversions has been removed by the collapse of the Russian Empire. The Orthodox Church, which was the creature of the State, and has long been recognised as devoid of deep spiritual power, ceased to be a powerful agency in the life of Russians, with the revolution of 1917. Catholicism under the old regime was persecuted, and the fact that loyal citizenship and membership in the Orthodox Church were held to be practically synonymous made conversions extremely difficult. Under the despotism of the Czars the Slavs were forcibly held in schism. The temporary Government of 1917 swept away the favored position of the Orthodox Church and gave autonomy to the Catholic Church. Bolshevism completed the ruin of the State religion. Seeing in the national Church the chief support of Czarism, the new leaders attacked the representatives of official orthodoxy with unrestrained fury. These representatives, apathetic and without strong faith, as a result of their hatred of Catholicism, were powerless to defend themselves, and the people, accustomed to see their Church defended by the State, gave them no assistance, especially as they identified to a certain extent the bishops and clergy in general with their ancient oppressors. The consequence has been that the Orthodox Church is profoundly disorganised, and the hold it had on the people in all probability will never be regained. The people have recovered to a certain degree from the fascination of the false promises of the Bolsheviks, but it is unlikely that the Orthodox clergy, which is markedly materialistic, will be able to reassert over them any strong religious influence. Some of their priests have little or no faith, and others of them have strong leanings towards reunion with Rome. The mass of the people, like the clergy, are divided into those who are deeply saturated with materialism and those who have inclinations towards Catholicism. This materialism, however, appears to be one of practise rather than of solid intellectual conviction, and Mgr. Szeptycki declares that the Slavic peoples, originally Catholic, are still Catholic at heart, and that, with their 150,000,000 souls, they offer a magnificent field for apostolic zeal. Both he and Mgr. de Ropp cherish the dream of reunion between the Church of the East and the West. They are not altogether agreed as to whether the Slavic rite alone or the Slavic and Latin rites existing side by side are the best means of conversion, but they both believe that the time is propitious for organising a great missionary effort.

FRANCE AND THE VATICAN

After a rupture of seventeen years diplomatic relations between France and the Holy See were completely renewed when Mgr. Cerretti, the Papal Nuncio to France, presented his credentials to President Millerand at Rambouillet.

The new Nuncio, who was accompanied by the Cardinal-Archbishop of Paris and the members of his suite, spoke of the Pope's great happiness at the renewal of diplomatic relations, and declared that the Holy See to-day more than ever desired to co-operate in the welfare of the peoples.

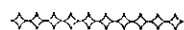
In replying to the Nuncio's address President Millerand said that under the new regime of the separation of

Church and State, there could be just the same co-operation as under the old regime in all the matters where the interests of France met those of the Catholic Church.

The selection by the Pope of Mgr. Cerretti for this important post is understood to imply that the Vatican looks upon the resumption of relations with France as of more than ordinary import. The high position filled by Mgr. Cerretti at the Vatican corresponded in what in secular statecraft would be known as the Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Thus the Pope chose the ablest and most experienced of his diplomats to represent the Holy See in Paris.

With France and the Vatican reconciled affairs in the East take on a different aspect, and its influence cannot be overlooked in future settlements of problems now acute and pressing in Syria and Palestine, where neither France nor the Vatican are satisfied with present conditions.

It is impossible to think of a better choice than Mgr. Cerretti for the high post of Papal Nuncio in France, particularly as in many instances both French and British interests converge. The Nuncio's eight years at Washington and his subsequent career as Apostolic Delegate to Australasia have given him not only a command of the English language, but also an intimate knowledge of the attitude of the English-speaking peoples.



ARCHBISHOP MANNIX IN JAPAN.

Of the crowd of interesting details in the papers of the great home-coming not the least interesting is Dr. Mannix's "impressions of the tour" in the North Pacific as given to an *Advocate* interviewer. After speaking of his visit to Lourdes and its "miraculous happenings," and then of the excellence of the Japanese boat on which he made the voyage, his Grace continued:

"I spent 10 or 12 days in Japan. I got out at Kobe and went overland to Kyoto and Tokio, and thence on to Meanzota. I spent nearly a week there, and greatly enjoyed the surroundings. The hotel where I stayed is kept by Japanese Catholics, who make their guests happy and very comfortable. In no part of the world have I found a more comfortable hotel. We celebrated Mass in the hotel every morning, and some of the village people attended and availed themselves of the opportunity to receive Holy Communion.

"I was greatly interested in what I saw in China and Japan. I regretted very much that I was not able to visit the Irish Mission to China, which is going ahead by leaps and bounds. The future of the Church in China appears to be very bright. I hope that the Irish Mission will not be confined to China, but that it will ultimately extend to Japan. If this be done, I am confident that good work will be done in Japan.

"At Nagasaki we boarded the Nikko Maru and we saw much to interest us at Hong Kong, which I regard as one of the most beautiful places in the world. It has a magnificent harbor, and the scenic surroundings are unsurpassed. At Manila we met Archbishop O'Doherty and four other bishops, and were warmly welcomed. The Bishop of Zamboanga joined us on the boat at Manila, and came with us on the last lap of the journey.

"The courtesy that a visitor to Japan receives is remarkable. I was much struck with the industry of the people. When one sees what takes place in the fields and factories in China and Japan it is possible to get an idea of how a small country can support such a large population as is in Japan. Any Australian who has time and opportunity may spend a profitable holiday by visiting China and Japan.

"At Tokio I saw the sister of Terence MacSweeney, who is one of an Order of Sisters. I had the privilege of celebrating Mass at the Convent of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Tokio. Several Australian Sisters are in this convent. I visited the Japanese school, where the children are educated on Japanese lines."

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