

General Intelligence.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN RUSSIA.

The persecution, says the *Journal des Debats* in a recent number, against the Polish Catholics continued with greater barbarity than ever. The following report we borrow chiefly from the *Univers* :—

“ On the 23d instant the Polish refugees in Paris attended a funeral service, celebrated in the church of St. Roch, in honour of the 47 nuns who were recently martyred in the town of Witebesk, with a refinement of cruelty that one would refuse to credit, had not witnesses in every respect worthy of belief attested the fact. This convent has been established from time immemorial near the town of Minsk, and the inmates fulfilled, among the people, the same duty as our Sisters of Charity. They instructed the children, provided for the widows and aged, and assisted the poor by the fruit of their labours. They had unfortunately for chaplain a priest called Michlewicz, one of those creatures whom tyrannical governments invariably select to fill the chief offices of the church. This wretch, having become bishop, apostatised, and wished to involve in his guilt the Sisterhood. After besetting them in every kind of way, and vainly resorting to promises, persuasions, and threats, perceiving that he could not obtain his object, he determined to punish by severity. During the night, by his orders, Cossacks surrounded the convent, seized the nuns with the most revolting brutality, bound them with cords, and conducted them thus to Witebesk nearly 20 leagues from Minsk, compelling them to walk the entire distance. At this place they were confined to a convent of schismatical nuns, in the capacity of servants, or more properly speaking as slaves. Those who are unacquainted with the profound ignorance, dissolute morals, and ardent fanaticism of these Greek nuns can form some idea of the dreadful treatment which the Basilian sisters were compelled to endure. Forced to perform the most vile offices, supplied with a quantity of black bread scarcely sufficient to support nature, each of them moreover received regularly every Friday 50 lashes, so that their extenuated bodies were covered with wounds and sores, yet they showed even more courage under these trying circumstances than their enemies exhibited ferocity. Encouraging each other to suffer patiently for the glory of God, they persevered in the Catholic religion. The anger of the apostate Suinayko increased. He caused these holy and self-devoted creatures to be ironed and sent to the galleys. Their nourishment had latterly consisted of half a salt herring daily, with a small measure of water. This diet was now changed to half a pound of black bread,

with the same quantity of water, and thus, whilst suffering from hunger and thirst they were compelled to act as labourers to the masons employed in constructing the episcopal palace. Several of them were driven into the river up to their necks, and from time to time plunged under the water, because they persisted in refusing to apostatize; others condemned to labour in mines, were placed where the danger was most imminent, and were in many instances killed; finally eight of them had their eyes torn out. Their faith surmounted these severe trials, not one of them gave way, though thirty of them sunk under their sufferings. Among the seventeen who yet survived after the death, or rather after the triumph of these thirty martyrs, three only possessed sufficient strength to avail themselves of an occasion which presented of escaping their unmerited punishment. The schismatic nuns who guarded them having become insensible from inebriety, after one of the orgies consequent upon certain of their fetes, they were enabled to climb over the door of their prison, and thus escape unobserved. It was not without regret that they abandoned their companions, and renounced the glory of dying with them, but they hoped to their faith and to their country; moreover, it was made expedient that Europe should be made acquainted with what had transpired. After encountering a thousand dangers and hardships they succeeded in entering Austria, and one of them, the venerable superior, is actually at present in Paris. It is this lady from whom we have gained the above facts, and we also take from the Polish journal the *Trois Mai*.”

“ These facts appear startling,” observes the *Journal des Debats*, “ but, unfortunately, when Russian policy is concerned, everything is credible. The Emperor is resolved to bring all his subjects to the orthodox Greek Church. The autocrat will not tolerate any religion in his European states except his own. All resistance is treated as rebellion. We will not, however, call upon Europe to join in a crusade against the Emperor of Russia, and we have no desire to see return again the time when God’s creatures cut each other’s throats in the name of religion. We would wish to see the spirit of tolerance which has triumphed in civilised countries, take the place of those odious excesses. To go back to the period when Catholic armies destroyed by fire and sword the Christian sectarians of Alby appears to us a bad means of preventing the persecutions arising from Russian policy and orthodoxy.”

DEATH OF THE REV. MR. KIER.

Death has inflicted upon the Catholics of Waterford a heavy and awful calamity. It has deprived religion of one of her brightest orna-