



## A Frenchman on France.

Very Rev. Gilbert François, Superior-General of the Congregation of Holy Cross, one of the great Religious communities whose French property has been confiscated by the government of France, was seen a few days ago at his residence at Notre Dame University. Before asked what he thought of Cardinal Gibbons' statement concerning conditions in France, Father François said:

"I think very highly of it, so much so that I have personally written to His Eminence, thanking him for his lively interest and sympathy. His statement is a luminous, solid, and impartial document; more than that, it is a great act of justice inspired by a noble heart."

To his interviewer's query as to about how many Catholics there are in France, the Superior General replied:

"Apart from about two millions who belong to other religions, or no religion, all Frenchmen style themselves Catholics. I should divide them into three categories: good practical Catholics; indifferent ones, and those who, while still wearing the Catholic name, are the declared enemies of the Church. The members of the first class are fervent, active, generous. I should place their number at twelve millions. Those in the second category form the most compact mass. They number, I should think, about twenty-two millions. They are not hostile to religion, but have either put aside religious practices altogether, or occupy themselves therewith only on the more solemn occasions of life. The third class is made up of the remaining two millions of France's population. I have styled them the enemies of the Church, but there are degrees in their enmity. Of real, out and out, thorough-going, active enemies of religion, French probably holds not more than a million."

"But, Reverend Father, if, as you say, the great majority of French Catholics, although indifferent, are not hostile to religion, how comes it that they elect a hostile Chamber of Deputies? Did not the French people by an overwhelming vote at the last elections endorse the anti-religious Government?"

"Endorse the Government, yes; though not specially as an anti-religious Government. By an overwhelming majority, no; on the contrary, a change of some twenty-three thousand votes in a total of ten or eleven millions would have reversed the representation in the chamber. As to your main question, the minority of whom I spoke a moment ago, dominated more and more at each change of ministry by its most violent members, has been in power in France for the past thirty years. Its dogma or creed is a pseudo-neutrality in religion, but in reality a pronounced hostility not merely to Catholicism, but to all religion and even to the very idea of God. It bolsters itself up by a whole army of functionaries whom it multiplies at its pleasure, who exert a wide influence, and who are devoted to the Government, their employer. The prefects and sub-prefects in the departments, the judges of the courts, the mayors in most of the communes, the teachers in the schools, are all active propagators of the governmental policy. With so many and so effective auxiliaries in a country where centralization has been carried to the extreme that marks it in France, it is comparatively easy to manipulate the elections in favor of the party in power and to win at the polls a majority more or less sincere."

Cardinal Gibbons speaks, Father François, of the Government's absolute disregard of the property rights of the Church. As head of a religious congregation whose Mother House was in France, have you any personal knowledge of such disregard?"

"Indeed I have, and very saddening knowledge. All the property owned by our Congregation in France, ours by every legitimate title, has either been sold, or is on the point of being sold, by order of the Government. And not one cent of compensation are we to receive

for this iniquitous spoliation. We have still one establishment at Angers in which are grouped the aged members of our Congregation, veterans in the cause of education; but they are exposed to the risk of being thrown into the streets from one day to another, without the slightest consideration for their advanced age or their long service in the schools."

"But, Father, were not the people, the municipal councils, etc., of the different cities and towns that were the seats of the religious communities—were they not willing and even anxious that the communities should be suppressed or expelled?"

"No, they were not. The French people have much to answer for, but indifference and supineness are their worst crimes. It is quite true to say that the people have not desired what has taken place. They protested against the laicization of the hospitals. They deplored the removal of the crucifix. 'Tis not the people who have wished, or wish now, the separation of Church and State. A petition against the separation, signed by from two to three millions, was presented to the Chamber and the Senate: and was utterly disregarded. The municipal councils, officially consulted a few years ago, voted by a large majority for the retention of the schools and the religious. As far as my own Congregation of Holy Cross is concerned, we had twenty-two establishments in France, and in the case of twenty-one of the twenty-two, the municipal councils advised our being retained. And so it was as regards the other congregations."

"Can you inform me just why French Catholics are being persecuted? Is it true that they are opposed to the republican form of government?"

"It is not, emphatically not. French Catholics as a body have not been inimical to the republic as a form of government. There is not one serious basis for any such calumny. They accepted the Republic willingly, and, moreover, they are disposed to support and love it, but on condition, it goes without saying, that they be permitted to live and to develop with the fullest freedom compatible with justice. Why are they persecuted, you ask. Because they are Catholics, because their faith is the great obstacle to the negotiations and the projects of the atheists. They are persecuted because they were becoming powerful, and their influence was gradually widening its sphere in the army, the navy, the schools, and the press; because their churches were being multiplied everywhere. The Assumptionist Fathers had established at Paris and in the departments a great system of Catholic journals. A few words of appeal to their readers brought within a few days the sum of 300,000 francs for the completion of the dome of the Montmartre Basilica. Such a movement was too beautiful—it was thought necessary to stop it."

"And now, Father François, what do you think will be the outcome of this conflict, regarding France generally, and the French Church in particular?"

"There has been within the past three decades such a change in the traditional French spirit, such a compression and depression of character, such an accumulation of abuses of all kinds, such impiety and profanations, such an oppressive burden of taxation, such disunion among the different classes of society, that an immense upheaval appears to me inevitable. As for the Church in France, the present conflict will assuredly bring into the open treasures of faith and virtue. France's bishops are plots, valiant and scholarly, closely united among themselves and indissolubly attached to the Holy See. They are at the head of a clergy possessing the most sterling qualities. These are good troops, well commanded, and they will eventually be victorious. The religious future of my native land is to my mind assured; for France in the very depths of her soul is too thoroughly Catholic ever to be lost to God, or to God's vicar, the White King of the Vatican."

## France Still Harasses the Church

The French Chamber of Deputies on Friday passed a new religious measure, amending the law of 1905, and harshening its terms. The measure was received with enthusiasm in the Chamber and the bill was rapidly voted with the majority of 418 against 166. The supporters of the Cabinet consider that the enactment of this legislation will greatly strengthen the position of the present ministry for the continuance of the struggle with the Vatican. The measure is uncompromising in tone and contains several drastic provisions.

A note has been sent by the Vatican to all the papal representatives abroad, protesting against the course of the French Government.

Cardinal Merry del Val particularly requested the Prussian, Russian and Monaco ministers to communicate the contents to the various governments not having representatives at the Vatican.

Great Britain was the only country besides Italy to which no communication was made, not having a representative at the Vatican or a Vatican agent in London.

Mgr. Falconio, the apostolic delegate in the United States, and Mgr. Agius, the Papal delegate in the Philippines, although not accredited to the United States or Philippine governments, have been entrusted to unofficially communicate the note to the authorities at Washington and Manila. The note says:

The French law of 1905 conferred on the cultural associations rights which not only belong exclusively to the ecclesiastical authorities in the practice of worship and in possessing and administering ecclesiastical property, but the same associations were placed under the jurisdiction of the lay authorities. The Pontiff could not approve of such associations without being lax in his duty as head of the Church and without trampling upon the fundamental domestic principles of the Church.

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## An Irish Ambassador.

Mr. James Bryce, chief secretary for Ireland, has been appointed ambassador at Washington by the British government to succeed Sir Mortimer Durand.

It is understood that Mr. Bryce is the first British cabinet officer to resign to accept a diplomatic appointment, and his acceptance of the post at Washington indicates the importance he attaches to its duties.

Perhaps no man living in foreign lands knows the American people—their aspirations, their history and their possibilities—so well as does Mr. Bryce, who possesses a peculiar talent for the philosophy of history. Mr. Bryce is "an Irishman born." He is a native of Belfast, and is in his 69th year. His early education was secured in Glasgow, but he studied later at Trinity college in his native land, and graduated with honors at Oxford in 1862. He has from the first been a notable man. Even in his college days he won scholarships and prizes for which hundreds of others strove in vain, and in his mature years he provided his friends with no disappointments. His great work, and the one which earned him fame in America, is "The American Commonwealth."

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## Archbishop Bruchesi's Pastoral Letter.

The following letter from the Archbishop of Montreal was read in several of the city churches on Sunday last.

"A year has passed since we began our campaign against intemperance, and the results are of a nature to rejoice the heart. We must, however, not cease our efforts. We must show everywhere the same zeal. Busy yourselves especially, dear co-workers, with young people and children, as this is the surest way to prepare for the future a sober people. It is on this subject in particular that I repeat with St. Paul to Timothy: 'Preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.' Kindly advise your parishioners to abstain from intoxicating liquors and to offer none on the occasion of New Year's visits.

"In presence of the grave events which are taking place to-day in Europe, it is your duty to pray for the Sovereign Pontiff, and for poor France. There is, in the hearts of certain men, an incomprehensible hatred against Christ and His Church. These men, in the name of liberty, become tyrants and commit veritable acts of barbarism. Blinded by the evil spirit, they have declared war to the death against the Church, which has been the glory and happiness of their own country in past ages. Other persecutors have, however, vainly tried to do what the present persecutors are attempting, and the latter will not be more successful than the former. The Church, as a matter of fact, will have once more to close their coffins.

"The Church may suffer, but, always serene and confident, she awaits the realization of those promises made by her Divine Founder. It becomes us, therefore, to hasten by our fervent supplications the hour of her glorious victory.

"Learning of what is taking place in other countries, and happy in the liberties enjoyed in our own, let us, therefore, thank the Lord, who watches over and protects us, and let us double our zeal to conserve, strong in the midst of our people, that faith which our fathers left us. Let us strive to this great end by our acts, our words and the holiness of our life. This is the wish which I form for you, dear co-workers for the faithful, and which I ask God to grant on the eve of the New Year."

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DIED. McDONOUGH—Accidentally killed at Victory, Damon's Crossing, Vermont, Dec. 7th, George, McDonough, aged 20 years and 7 mos., dearly beloved son of James and Mary McDonough, residents of St. Marguerite's, Co. Dorchester, P.Q. McDONOUGH—Accidentally killed at Victory, Damon's Crossing, Vermont, Dec. 7th, William McDonough, aged 21 years and 11 mos., dearly beloved son of James and Mary McDonough, residents of St. Marguerite's, Co. Dorchester, P.Q.

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## Canon Mulcahy's appeal to the Irish Party.

The following letter has been addressed by Canon Mulcahy to Mr. John Redmond, M.P.:

My dear Mr. Redmond,—Allow me to appeal once more to the Party you lead on behalf of our schools. You are their only friends. Mr. Birrell's Bill destroyed half of them, and crippled beyond recognition the remainder. The Lords' amendments (as far as I understand them), which serve the Church of England schools, simply ruin the Catholic character of ours. They have surrendered the citadel. The parents' committee can only nominate; it cannot appoint. Its nominations need not be accepted: they can be referred back again and again and again, and finally rejected. Of course, the total ruin will not come all at once; but the germ is there. To convince hostile local authorities, say, of unfairness, would be opening an oyster with a rolling pin. All our nuns and best teachers can be gradually banished from the schools, under this amended clause, by a process of elimination, and educationally disfranchised. Liberals and Conservatives can demand and yield to any extent that suits them politically on this matter among themselves. We can't. We are bound by cast-iron principles. And so, by all the rumors of compromise in the air, we shall be left by the parties we hoped might befriend us. At this hour of the day it seems a counsel of despair to ask you to advocate separate treatment for our schools, even though it be on starvation lines. Educationally, as well as ontologically, existence is better than non-existence. I could not see this before; I see it now. I know it is a forlorn as well as a belated hope; but yourself and your comrades have led many forlorn hopes in your career, and not without considerable success. You never had a holier or a more sacred cause to stake your all on. Ireland can wait. Waiting is nothing new to her. Unfortunately we cannot. Any rational forecast of the Bill in its final form in our present circumstances of the Bill makes it impossible for us to hope that it will not ultimately mean the destruction of the Catholic character of our schools in the near or distant future. God help us. Do what you can.

Yours most gratefully,  
PATRICK CANON MULCAHY.

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## A New Year Reflection.

What is to be the subject matter of some of my resolutions for the year of grace just begun? Am I not going to be clean of thought and of life in the coming year? Is not care necessary if I would accomplish this? I know that I am surrounded on all sides by numerous antagonists to cleanness of thought. I must, therefore, be on my guard. While I must be in and of and mingle with the world in the pursuit of my legitimate avocation, I am going to keep the inner chamber of my heart for myself; sweet and garnished and ever ready for the guest. Surely there could be no finer resolution than that.

Are our ideals as high as they were five or ten years ago? Am I, the individual, content to strive for a less exalted ideal now than formerly? If so, I have retrograded and here is matter for serious examination and subsequent resolutions. Am I striving as a citizen to do my civic duty? Is my personal conduct as a citizen constructive or destructive? Am I helping by co-operation with others to bring the commonwealth nearer to the ideal condition which we all know it ought to have? Or am I, on the other hand, by my selfishness and perhaps disregard of probity, putting affairs back instead of advancing them?

Reputation is my character of such a reputation that my neighbors and my church can point with pride to me? Is my word my bond, or do my neighbors regard my bond or do more value than my mere word? My character is precisely what I make it, and if it is a source of pleasure to me, I have myself to thank alone. If, on the other hand, even without the finger of scorn being actually pointed at me, if my townsmen cast suspicious glances at my transactions, if my credit, according to my station, is not good, then again I have myself, and myself only, to blame.

In my New Year's review I should bear in mind my moral responsibility to others. No man lives to himself alone. The greatest misanthrope, or the most secluded hermit is the centre of a large sphere of influence, whose circumference is constantly widening. Do I realize that my responsibility is in exact proportion to my influence? If by my own careless conduct the latter is not so good as it might be, then I shall be held accountable. If, on the other hand, I know and feel that my influence is good in the commonwealth, then I can look my neighbor in the eye and confidently ask God's blessing on me and mine. —The True Voice.

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