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London, Saturday, Dec. 14, 1895.

THE QUESTION OF REUNION.

The Pope's letter addressed to the English people in behalf of Christian reunion has not ceased even yet to have replies sent to it from various quarters, from clergymen as individual

There is therefore no room for any compromise of doctrine which would be acceptable to Protestant sects generally, and in fact no scheme has been proposed among them whereby harmony could be attained by making such a compromise.

An incident has occurred at Grindelwald which at first sight might appear to contradict our view of the situation. Our readers will remember that a considerable number of prominent Protestant ministers of various denominations have been accustomed to meet annually at this Swiss town, which affords them a convenient opportunity of assembling in conference while they enjoy a pleasant vacation in visiting the mountain scenery of Switzerland. The object of this annual meeting is to confer on the subject of Christian unity, and to concert measures whereby it may be brought about.

The Holy Father's address to the English people was one of the subjects with which such a conference would be naturally expected to deal, and it was in fact discussed at the last meeting of the conference, and a letter has been forwarded to the Pope in reply to his appeal for unity. The document is signed by eighteen Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Baptist and Methodist members of the Conference.

This document is in several respects a very strange one. The signers declare that "We lament the present divided state of Christendom, and with your Holiness we pray continually for the visible unity of the Catholic and Apostolic Church." Again, toward the close, the reply expresses the hope that "the Triune God in His great power and mercy may overrule all things to the end that the visible unity of His Church may at length be fully manifested according to His purpose."

It is acknowledged, therefore, that in the purpose of the Almighty that the Church of Christ on earth should be visibly one. This is surely a natural inference from it that there is in the Church some means instituted by God for the preservation of unity, some bond of union and supreme authority which ought to be respected; and yet another clause of the letter declares that the teachings of history show that "existing divisions arose in defence of vital elements of Apostolic Christianity and Scriptural truth." It is thus in one breath acknowledged that God instituted His Church to be one, and in the next, that man has the right to rend that unity, instead of being under obligation to submit to the authority residing in the Church to restrain dissensions, an authority instituted by God Himself.

But the most curious feature of this document is the method it suggests for attaining unity. It states: "We are persuaded that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the only possible centre of Christian unity, and that the indwelling spirit of the Father and the Son in every Christian heart not only constitutes a spiritual unity which man can neither create nor destroy, but furnishes the conditions of that manifested unity for which our Blessed Lord prayed."

Never was there made a more desperate attempt than this to travel by land and water at the same time. The divine purpose of maintaining a visible unity of the Church is declared, yet we are told that the only bond of unity which can be recognized is the invisible indwelling spirit in every Christian heart, subject to the invisible head of the Church! This is evidently but an apology, and a very lame one, for the divided state of the sects, and for which no remedy is applicable as long as sects are to be retained and adhered to; and very coolly the Grindelwalders propose that there shall be a unity, but a unity which shall preserve sectarianism with all its diversities and eccentricities. Here is the proposition in their own words:

"We believe that unity must be attained, not by the absorption of Christians in any one communion of the divided Catholic Church, but by such a union as will conserve all the elements of Christian truth and practice which in the Providence of God the various Christian communions have severally exhibited and defended."

We have heard very much of late in the way of objection to "absorption" of one sect by another in the event of a union being effected by any two denominations; but hitherto these objections have been uttered by individuals, and not by any body professing to have a representative character. The Grindelwald conference is, we believe, the first to put it on record that the only unity which is possible or desirable among Christians is one which will

RELIGION IN RUSSIA.

The Russian Schismatical clergy appear to have been stirred up of late with somewhat of a missionary spirit, and through Siberia, where there are no churches, and where owing to the sparseness of the population, a number of railway cars have been fitted up with all the appurtenances of a Greek church or chapel, and these cars are taken along with the railway trains and left at the stations along the route so that Mass may be celebrated and the sacraments administered to the people from time to time. These cars or churches on wheels are also sometimes drawn to villages or centres of population at a considerable distance from the railway stations, and the people are given such instruction in religion as is usual in the Greek Church. In this way thousands of people are now reached more or less efficiently who have never, or at least very seldom, hitherto had an opportunity to attend the Orthodox service. One or two priests are in attendance in each car, and the religious spirit is infused into many who have been only nominally members of the Church.

In addition to this, the means of propagating the orthodox faith by the violent suppression of other religions is not neglected. Mussulmen, who are numerous in the empire, are generally left to enjoy and practice their peculiar belief with very little interference from the Government. Their number is about 9,000,000 of whom about 3,000,000 are in European Russia and Siberia, the majority being in Central Asia, and 2,000,000 in Caucasia. There are also nearly 600,000 Pagans, most of whom are Buddhists.

The Protestant population amounts to about 2,000,000. These are mostly Lutherans, originally from Germany, and they are the nucleus of the pro-German party of the empire.

The Catholics are mostly in Poland, where they number 4,500,000. In the rest of the empire there are about 3,000,000 Catholics, some of whom use the Latin, and others one of the Oriental liturgies, chiefly the Lithuanian or the Ruthenian. Those who use the Oriental liturgies are known by the name Uniate, or the United Greeks, and the Gregorian Armenians.

The Jews have been subjected at various times to persecution, and this persecution was carried to great extremity under the late Czar, but the motive of it seemed to be more political than religious. It appears to have arisen partly from the supposition that their proclivities were toward Germany, and partly from the conviction that in their greed for the accumulation of wealth, they oppressed the rural population, especially in their character as money-lenders. Their persecution has abated under the present Czar.

Among the Protestant sects, the inoffensive Mennonites twenty years ago claimed a population of 40,000, chiefly in the southern part of European Russia. These emigrated on a large scale to the United States and Canada, not on account of religious persecution, but because the military laws were changed. They are not allowed by their religious belief to serve in the army, and up to that time they were legally exempted from military duty. But the large armaments which the European powers now find it needful to maintain caused the Government to abolish the exemption, and as a consequence the Mennonites made a general exodus from the country.

Outside of the religious beliefs we have enumerated there is a large number of sects not conforming to the Russian Church, of which they are offshoots.

Persecution extends to some of these sects, especially to the Raskolniks, who are very numerous, though it is impossible to ascertain their number, as the Government ignores their existence, and refuses even to estimate them in the official census. The chief reason for which they are persecuted is because of their frequent and stolid resistance to the general policy of the Government.

The Catholics and Protestants have both been subjected to severe persecution on religious grounds, as it has long been the policy of the Government to oblige all to acknowledge the Czar as the religious, as well as the secular, head of the Empire.

A recent cable despatch states that the Polish Catholics are now complaining of persecution because the priests were ordered to read in their churches in the Russian language the announcement of the recent birth of the Princess Olga, and that they have ap-

SECRET SOCIETIES.

The Rev. Peter Rosen, of Heidelberg, Minnesota, has taken occasion from the recent condemnation of secret societies by the Pope, to issue a pamphlet on secret societies, in which he sets forth the reasons why Catholics cannot consistently be members of such associations, chiefly because they are religious organizations, and that the religion they teach is "a revival of Neoplatonism and the old Alexandrian syncretism which sprung up in the third century of our era as the rival of the Christian Church."

These words are said especially of the Odd Fellows. We are aware that Freemasonry, which is a society of much greater age than the Odd Fellows, and which has a history most varied, has a record which connects it directly with efforts to overturn Christianity, but it does not follow that all associations, even those which somewhat distantly, though too closely, imitate Freemasonry, have the same designs in view.

A recent decree of the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII., has condemned Odd Fellowship, the Knights of Pythias, and similar societies, and we can entertain no doubt of the justice of this decree. The doctrines of the Catholic Church show that all oaths not taken in "justice, judgment, and truth" are unlawful, and on this ground the oaths taken by Odd Fellows and the Knights of Pythias are highly objectionable. They are against justice, because under pretence of fraternity they oblige those who become members of these societies to set their brotherhood above the law by making them conceal crime when their brethren are the perpetrators. Their oaths lack judgment, because the members of the society submit themselves to obey mandates which may be evil, and which experience proves to have been often evil.

Truth, too, is violated by these oaths because, directly or indirectly, the members bind themselves to a species of battledore and shuttlecock game with truth whenever the interests of these societies is at stake in examinations before the public authorities.

We have no desire to defend these societies against the condemnation of the Holy See. There is plenty of reason in their nature and their manner of procedure to merit condemnation, and to show why Catholics should not become members of them, but we cannot give our approval to the invention of fanciful reasons why they should be condemned.

Father Rosen's book contains much useful and valuable information in regard to the condemned societies of which it treats, and gives good reasons why Catholics should not join them; yet it appears to us that through excess of zeal he makes them responsible for the perpetration of evils they have never contemplated.

There is sufficient to justify the Holy Father in condemning these societies, in the fact of the rash oaths they take, without making them responsible for what is not attributable to them; but at all events, Catholics should not by any means become members of these societies, or encourage them in any way.

SUFFERING ARMENIA.

It is one of the boasts of Christendom that the Christian powers control the world, exercising such an influence over the most barbarous and lawless nations as to bring them within the influence of civilization, and to oblige them to respect civilized usages, in their treatment of the subjects of the humblest of the Christian States.

But do the Christian powers really feel the importance of protecting Christians, or is the boast of their great influence a mere braggadoocio or phantasm? Certainly the events which are now taking place in the city of Constantinople the Great would incline one to the latter opinion.

Years ago the Christian world was shocked by the atrocities in Bulgaria which resulted in the Russo-Turkish war, and led to the practical independence of the Balkan States. The people of the British Empire were not behind hand in denouncing these atrocities, and the outspoken denunciations of the rapacious and murderous rule of the Turk, uttered by Mr. Gladstone, are even now ringing in the ears of the public. British sentiment was undoubtedly roused to a readiness to force the British Government to step in and save the Bulgarians and other Christian peoples under Turkish rule from a repetition of such outrages.

Elsewhere in Europe a similar spirit was aroused, and yet there was no nation except Russia which so felt the horror as to take active measures to stop it. Russia avowedly wished to save the Christians of the Turkish Empire from the repetition of such barbarities, and it succeeded to this extent that the war then carried on resulted in the liberation of the suffering provinces from the savage rule under which they had so long suffered. At the critical moment when it seemed that the Turkish Empire was about to be annihilated, Great Britain sent her war ships to Constantinople, and set an army on the march from India to prevent Russia from completing her work, and so a peace was made which while it secured the autonomy of the suffering provinces and practically deprived Turkey of any sway, nevertheless kept the Sultan on his throne with a nominal sovereignty over them, while the rest of his European and the whole of his Asiatic Empire remained intact.

There were and are, no doubt, strong political reasons why England should not wish Russia to extend her dominion so as to control the Eastern Mediterranean, and she could not permit Russia, single-handed, to arrange the maps of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Yet in the presence of so grave a situation as presents itself before the eyes of the world, there should be chivalrous feeling enough among the powers to make some arrangement mutually satisfactory in order to remedy the terrible evils developed under Moslem rule over Christians.

By the treaty of Berlin which provided for peace, Turkey engaged, in favor of its subjects in all parts of the Empire, Armenia being of course, included, that they should be treated kindly and protected from lawlessness. These promises were only made to be broken, and the atrocities which continued to be practiced culminated in the Moosh massacre, with the history of which our readers are familiar.

There is not the last doubt that the Sultan and his Government are directly responsible for the horrors which have been perpetrated. The evidences of this have been accumulating ever since the International Commission began its investigations into the matter, and the only conclusion to which we can come is that the continued existence of Turkish rule is a reproach to humanity. The Turk should be ousted from Europe, and in Asia he should be placed under strong control, to say the least.

It was a noble thought of Peter the Hermit seven hundred years ago to ask Europe to rescue Jerusalem from the Turks, the purpose being to save the Christians of the country from just such treatment as the Armenians are subjected to to-day, and to give pious pilgrims an opportunity to visit the sacred places where the work of man's redemption was accomplished; and Europe, then entirely Catholic, responded nobly, though there were jealousies among the various powers who combined for the purpose, just such as there are to-day. These jealousies did not prevent them from pursuing their main object, though the task they then undertook was much greater than would the same thing be now. The Crusades lasted one hundred and ninety-five years, but though Jerusalem was for a con-

She is now a Catholic.

On Saturday last Miss Charlotte Frazer, daughter of Dr. Persifor Frazer, the eminent scientist of this city, was received into the Church at St. Joseph's, Willings alley.

The time-worn slander that the Church is opposed to learning finds full and complete refutation in the constant accessions she receives from the educated classes. — Philadelphia Catholic Times.

Considerable time occupied by them.

Nevertheless the sands who took showed the high which they were least served to Islam into Europe a much later period ably have otherw

It is certain that Turks in perpetrating from time to time Christian population be the more easily been repeatedly ersals who did the has been somewhat surely the duty of every civilized like the United positive declaration power, to in of our common b

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