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ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

There is much interest excited in certain circles in the life of St. Francis of Assisi. He is talked of in magazine articles, and were not his principles too clearly laid down one might find some faddist setting up a popular shrine in his honor. But it is significant, and withal consoling, to find some honor left in the heart of the century for the gentle beggar-saint of long ago. There is a certain air of romance about his career, an unreality it might seem to those whose thoughts never soar above stocks and real estate; but we cannot long study his life without becoming aware of the principle that made him, passionate as he was, an angel of patience and of mortification, and that rendered his tender heart a very source of love and commiseration for others, and stern and unpitiable to himself. How strange he would appear, with ascetic face and doctrine, in this fast age; and yet we believe that one such man who would dare to be true to principle could do good that years of vice would be powerless to destroy. What we need is men whose lives mirror forth the doctrine they enunciate; not indeed men who, theoretically, are haters of vanity and yet are too visibly enslaved to it; or men who, crying vengeance on earthly pleasure, shrink back from mortification and self-denial as from an unhallowed phantom. St. Francis was a very jewel of consistency. What he preached he practised. He exhorted all to beware of the insidious poison of sensuality, and he himself showed them what weapons to use against the powers of darkness.

The period in which he lived was well adapted for the reception of his principles. It was a time when men were imbued with that strong, earnest faith that made them touch, with their very hands, the land beyond the grave. Religion permeated their every thought and deed. "It was," says an author, "a powerful factor in their lives. They might be guilty of great excesses; indeed their's was an age of excesses; but sooner or later remorse overcame them, and their atonement was as generous as their sins were enormous. Religion was abused, but its beneficial effects continued to be manifest; vice was flagrant, but it never lost the sense of shame; men were cruel, but their cruelty was followed by sincere regrets; misfortunes were frequent and signal, but they were accepted with resignation or with the hope of retrieval, or men gloried in them on account of the cause in which they suffered."

Such was the age that witnessed the career of Francis. The story of his life reads like some wondrous fairy tale. He was of a warm and generous nature, and the inhabitants of his native town knew him as a gay, rollicking young man, eager for pleasure, but never so much as to forget the claims of the indigent. And so his life ran on until he decided to embrace the profession of arms. Accordingly he started for Italy to take service under the standard of Cauthier de Brienne. He was taken ill, and records tell us how he heard the voice of God bidding him to return to his native soil. It may be but a story, written down by some pious monk, but certain it is that Francis, at that stage of his life, saw there was more serious work to be done than the attending of parties of pleasure. Then follows a series of strange episodes which, doubtless, seem to our cold and calculating temperaments the flowering of misguided enthusiasm, but which were well understood and appreciated by the warm, faith-loving people among whom his lot was cast. How strange to read in the old chronicles how Francis went forth from his father's house, claiming no father but the God above him, and how in a short time he formed the nucleus of the great order that was to bear his name and to bring to nations sitting in the

darkness of death the glad message of Christianity.

Renunciation was his watchword. The words of the Master were ever present to his mind: "Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet stores; and as ye go, preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." This he exemplified in his own person. Poor and humble, he wished his disciples to be also lovers of the same virtues. In 1219 five thousand brethren were enrolled under the banner of St. Francis, and so strictly did he adhere to his principles that he would never tolerate, either in himself or his spiritual children, the slightest unfaithfulness to them. An instance of this will suffice. During the absence of Francis a sumptuous building was erected as a convent for the Brothers Minor. The gentle saint was astounded when he was told that it was the abiding place of his brethren, and he forthwith commanded them to leave the house. Remonstrance was useless. Christ's poor they should ever be.

One of the most charming traits of his character was his love for the brute creation. Stories about this are numberless, and we may not condemn them as wholly legendary. He called the ass his brother, and the birds and bees his sisters. He saw God in everything. We may not wonder then if he always spoke well and truthfully, and if men of every degree sat at his feet learning to be meek and humble of heart. We may not question his powerful influence for good. His very example was sufficient to fix all hearts on the pursuit of heavenly things. Enthusiasts we may deem his followers, but it takes enthusiasm to infuse new blood into a decaying world. And so he went his way—the gentle saint, preaching penance, denouncing abuses, defending the weak and oppressed, urging, with all the inflexibility of a Savonarola—but without his fanaticism—the cause of Christ. He was indeed a reformer, but one who had learned his mission from Him who long years ago went about the hills and valleys of Judea doing good. His unwearied zeal never flagged, and to the hour of his death he never proved recreant to the principle that had impelled him to give up home and kindred and to recognize no paternity save that of God the Father.

"As his life was drawing to its close," writes St. Bonaventure, "began to suffer from so many infirmities that there was scarcely one of his members but was tormented by increased pain and suffering. Nevertheless he did not lose courage, but jested in his quaint way with his pangs, calling them my sisters." He gave his last instructions to his brethren, and as he gave thanks to God for his suffering, his gentle, guileless spirit was freed from its prison. His followers did not forget him, and we see them perpetuating his memory in noble and unselfish deeds.

It is consoling then to hear the votaries of modern progress speak of St. Francis of Assisi. We may not assign the reason, but, perchance, wearied of shams, of the glittering and empty generalities of the leaders of modern thought, they turn them for comfort to the gentle saint who said nothing but what he practiced. The pure flame of his life may be for them a beacon light guiding them over the arid waste of agnosticism.

Francis knew well man's destiny, for why did he put on the vesture of humiliation and of poverty. He knew it as well as he knew that he existed. What a contrast between him and the incoherent babblers who venture to explain the "breath of God still moving in us." They tell us oftentimes what to do, but the "How" is the mystery they cannot solve.

The seer of Chelsea, Carlyle, says that man's destiny is to make some nook of God's creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier; more blessed, less accursed. But again the question arises, How?

Well might they say, these blind philosophers,

"My will is bondsman to the dark
I sit within a hellish bark."

Wanderers they are, finding now and then a fragment of truth, but inadequate to satisfy the wants of their being.

Francis of Assisi, as all ardent nature, was a poet. His soul was attuned to all the beautiful melody of nature, and if, as some critics assert, poetry is but the setting of noble thoughts in harmonious diction, he was a poet in the highest sense of the

term. He is not indeed versed in the technicalities of metre, but this is the resort of mediocrity. He has left on record a hymn entitled, "The Song of the Creatures," which, though short, contains, says Ozanam, "his whole soul—his fraternal love for creatures, the charity which impels a man, so humble and gentle, to interfere in public quarrels, and that infinite love, which, after having sought God in nature and served Him in the person of suffering humanity, desires nothing more than to find Him in death."

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S ANTI-HOME RULE SPEECH.

Mr. Chamberlain, the leader of the Liberal-Unionist party in the British House of Commons, was entertained a few days ago at a banquet at Liverpool, given by the members of his party, if party it can be called, now that it is so completely merged into the Tory ranks, and has adopted all the principles of the Tories.

It was at one time the boast of Mr. Chamberlain and his adherents that they were willing and anxious to further reforms in the interest of the people. Even the principle of Irish self-rule was one of the panaceas which Mr. Chamberlain declared himself anxious to see applied to make Ireland prosperous and happy; and he formulated several schemes for the purpose, none of which were, indeed, quite satisfactory, but all of which were an acknowledgment that a large and generous measure of reform is necessary in order to remedy the evils under which Ireland is oppressed. This makes it truly pitiful to find him now in the front rank of Ireland's oppressors, congratulating the country that by his own desertion of the Liberal party, together with his followers, every important measure of justice to Ireland has been thwarted, not indeed for want of support in the House of Commons, but through the encouragement given to the Lords to put an obstacle to the carrying out of the pronounced will of the British people.

Mr. Chamberlain opens his speech by declaring that the alliance between his followers and the Tories is complete: this amounts to an acknowledgment that the so-styled Liberal-Unionists are completely merged now into the Tory party; and have adopted all the retrogressive measures of the Tories. He declares that their alienation from the Liberals is so complete that the differences between them cannot possibly be bridged over.

Home Rule for Ireland is declared by Mr. Chamberlain to be a measure most dangerous to the unity of the British Empire. This does not consort well with his admission, soon after, that twelve or thirteen years ago he was "inclined to give some measure of trust to the Irish people, who are a generous people when left to themselves."

His excuse for having veered from his former opinions regarding the amount of trust to be put in the people of Ireland is a most flimsy one. He says:

"I never would put any trust at all in the agitators who in recent years, and by methods which are known to all of you, have obtained so baneful an influence over the majority of their countrymen."

During the last twelve or thirteen years the Irish people have not changed materially their views in regard to what is necessary for the prosperity of their country, except that they are more willing now to put some reliance on the good will of the English and Scotch people towards Ireland than they have ever been before. This fact of a growing confidence between the two nationalities ought rather to increase the willingness of the British people to do justice to Ireland; but Mr. Chamberlain makes it a pretext for withholding that justice now, which twelve or thirteen years ago, according to his own admission, he was willing to grant.

Before the Liberals adopted the policy of conciliation towards Ireland, it was the settled conviction of the Irish people, that England would never pay sufficient attention to Irish demands, even to know what Ireland needed to ensure the prosperity of the country. It is not surprising that under such circumstances there should have been a strong physical force party in Ireland—a party believing that the only way to obtain redress of grievances was by making themselves feared, and by a practical declaration of war against England.

It is true that a resort to physical force as the remedy for a nation's grievances ought not to be adopted outside of the case of extreme necessity; but the day is past when any one can seriously maintain that a nation

under grievous oppression is bound to submit inertly. The welfare of the people is now universally admitted to be the end which every government should have in view, and when that end is totally and continuously kept out of view, a nation is justified in seeking a remedy by force. It was this conviction which made the physical force party in Ireland so strong; but the promise of the Liberals to make Home Rule a part of the Liberal platform, and the generous support given to that policy by the people of England, Wales and Scotland, convinced the Irish that their condition would soon be ameliorated by constitutional methods, and from that time the physical force party practically ceased to exist. If Mr. Chamberlain's present policy is to become once more the policy of the English people, the natural result will be the resuscitation of this physical force party, and this will be a much greater danger to the unity of the British Empire than would be the concession of Home Rule, which Mr. Chamberlain speaks of as a danger of unspeakable magnitude. The people of the two kingdoms can never become really united in heart if all the advantages are to be on one side. The pretence put forward by Mr. Chamberlain, that Ireland has committed the advocacy of its cause to a band of agitators, is but a silly fallacy. As a matter of course the advocates of any serious reform must be agitators in some sense. They must agitate until the reform they seek be secured; and in this sense they are undoubtedly agitators; but such agitation is no dishonor or discredit to the Irish Nationalist party. It is merely a proof that they are in earnest in advocating the cause of their country. But the Irish Nationalists in Parliament, for honesty of purpose as well as for their ability in debate, will compare favorably with the members of any of the other nationalities who compose the House of Commons. They are no more agitators than is Mr. Chamberlain himself, who spends so much time in agitating the country to rally it to the support of the Tories.

The Liberal-Unionist leader appeals to the differences of opinion which exist among the Irish members to prove that if they had Home Rule they would be unable to govern their own country. He says:

"They cannot complain if I take them at their own estimate; and if I want to know what Irish leaders of to-day are, I have only to ask themselves. . . . They have been for some time more anxious and interested in the work of painting each other's portraits, than they have been in securing Home Rule or anything else. They have painted their portraits so black that, really, if one could suppose there was any exaggeration at all about them, one would think the Irish leaders, one and all, were not only unfit for our confidence, but almost unfit for human existence."

All this trifling was received with cheers and laughter. It is to be regretted that there is not more cordiality between the Irish members, but there is no more disagreement between them than there is between members of any other nationality; and Mr. Chamberlain should remember that he was himself dubbed Judas by his own countrymen. If disagreements among Englishmen do not prove that the English people are unfit for self-government, why should disagreements among Irishmen have more force to prove the Irish people to be any less fit for political freedom?

ANARCHY AND THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT.

Italy is reaping the result of the irreligious policy it has pursued for more than a quarter of a century. The Government abolished religious teaching from the Public schools; and notwithstanding that the Church continued to keep up a supply of schools which preserved faith in God and respect for religion, the Government succeeded also in raising a crop of infidels who acknowledge no obligations toward God or man, and Anarchy has among these its recruits of the character of Santo Cesario, the murderer of President Carnot.

It is sad to reflect that such should be the condition of affairs in a Catholic country; but the Government, in its fear lest the people should continue to respect the Pope, and perhaps insist upon it that his temporal authority should be restored so as to secure his independence in governing the Church, resolved to pursue the suicidal policy of abolishing religion; and with a certain class of the people it has succeeded too well. It is now meeting its reward in a constant series of Anarchistic plots against the Government itself, and

the lives of the king, the members of the Cabinet, and prominent citizens. The protectors of the peace of the country come in for a large share of Anarchical hatred, and within the last few days a dangerous plot against the police was discovered at Milan, where an infernal machine was found upon the window-sill of the police barracks, with a lighted fuse attached.

Fortunately the fuse was extinguished before an explosion took place, and no damage was done; but with plots of this character so numerous as they have been of late, it is not to be expected that the police will be always able to counteract the designs of the would-be assassins, and we may reasonably expect that there will be many other plots of the same kind in which the country's protectors will not fare so well as they have done this time. This last effort of these enemies of the human race to destroy life is a fit sequel to that made not long since against Signor Crispi himself and King Humberto. In fact, though Santo Cesario died as a coward when brought to the guillotine, before the time fixed for his execution, and while he was still exhibiting his virulence as an Italian bravo, he did not hesitate to declare that the only thing which had prevented himself from killing Crispi, as well as the Pope and the king, was the fact that he did not dare to go into Italy lest he should be sent to prison, inasmuch as he was a fugitive from justice.

These plots which we have mentioned are not the only ones which the children of a godless system of education have planned lately in Italy; for we now learn that the police have discovered a widely extended conspiracy of Anarchists with branches throughout Italy, for a carnival of crime. This conspiracy has at its head the notorious Anarchist Albani. The police are busy ferriting it out, but though they may be successful in breaking it up for a time, and thus preventing the threatening mischief, it is very likely that they will not succeed so completely as to prevent all the horrors which have been contemplated.

Many arrests have been made in connection with the plot against the lives of the police; but it would have been far better if irreligious education, the primary cause of all these criminal attempts, had not been instituted in the first place by authority of the Government. It is the guilty consciousness of Signor Crispi that such is the cause which made him propose in his celebrated speech at Naples, a community of action on the part of Church and State. The bargain that he wants to make, however, is that the Church shall do everything for the good of the State, while the State shall be free from fulfilling any obligations toward the Church. Such a proposition is too one-sided to be a success.

MR. SATOLLI'S INTENDED VISIT TO QUEBEC.

It has been announced that Mgr. Satolli, the Pope's Delegate to the United States, is about to pay a visit to Canada within a few days. It does not appear, however, that there is any official purpose in the visit, which is to be made merely as a friendly one to the Abbe L. A. Paquet, Professor of Theology in the Laval University of Quebec, who studied in Rome, having Mgr. Satolli as one of his Professors.

On the occasion of the Apostolic Delegate's visit to Quebec, it is arranged, as might have been expected, that he will also pay a visit to His Eminence Mgr. Taschereau, whose health has been much impaired by age and hard work.

The Abbe Paquet several times invited the Delegate to visit him, and it is in consequence of this invitation that the coming visit is to be made. Those, however, who find something of the marvellous in whatever occurs, are busy in trying to discover some other motive in the matter. The *Electeur* asks: "What does all this mean? These dignitaries never travel for pleasure. Their time is too precious." It is then inferred that the Delegate's authority is to be extended to Canada; and the *Toronto Mail*, in its issue of the 10th inst., imagines a number of subjects on which it may be intended by the Holy Father that Mgr. Satolli shall take action, among which are "a movement having in view the protection of the rights of Roman Catholics in the Dominion," and perhaps the taking of some steps "with a view to the reversal of the policy of the western province," Manitoba, on the school question.

It is certainly among the possibilities that the authority of Mgr. Satolli, whose jurisdiction has hitherto been

limited to the United States, may at some time be extended to Canada; but we would be only groping in the dark if we were to speculate upon this subject.

It may well be supposed that within the Church in Canada, which comprises nearly two millions of souls, many questions arise which are of great general importance, and some of which might need to be settled by the direct intervention of the highest available authority in the Church, so that it would not be a matter of surprise if the Delegate's authority were extended to the Dominion. It would, however, be premature to assert that it is to be so extended. The forecasts of the *Mail* and the *Electeur* are also premature.

In 1877 a special delegate was sent by the Holy See in the person of Bishop Conroy, to take cognizance of certain matters which at that time were the cause of considerable turmoil, especially in the Province of Quebec. The *Toronto Mail* of the date already mentioned represents that in a joint Pastoral issued by the Bishops of Quebec, the clergy of that Province were instructed to act upon the doctrine that "the Pope, as Head of the Church, is also head of the State," and that "as he is the Supreme Ruler, the clergy are rulers under him," and as he "has the power to dictate a policy for the State . . . those acting for him can properly exercise it in his name."

It is needless to say that nothing of the kind was ever maintained by the Bishops of Quebec. The story is one of the *Mail's* many fabrications, whenever that journal treats of Catholic subjects. The Pope makes no claim to be the head of the State, and the Bishops of Quebec know this too well to put forward such a claim on his behalf. Nevertheless, it is certain that the State is subject to the law of God, and any legislation which would trench upon the liberty of the Church, or upon good morals, is beyond the authority of the State, whether in Canada or elsewhere. This was the doctrine propounded by St. Peter and the Apostles, when the High-priest and Council of Jerusalem said: "Commanding you we commanded you that you should not teach in this name; and behold you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine; and you have a mind to bring the blood of this man upon us." Acts v. 28.

The Apostolic answer was: "We ought to obey God rather than men." It follows from this that when the State, or which is nearly the same thing in this country, a majority of the people, desire to restrict the liberty of the Church, God is to be obeyed rather than their decree.

It is a favorite game with the *Mail* and with other anti-Catholic journals to misrepresent the doctrine of the Catholic Church on this point; but that doctrine is held equally by probably all the Protestant churches, except that the Anglican Church, which was created by the State, is obliged, reluctantly, to acknowledge in practice the supremacy of the State even in determining doctrinal, as well as disciplinary ecclesiastical matters. There is, however, this difference between the Catholic Church and the Protestant denominations, that the supreme authority in the Catholic Church, being the divinely constituted authority in matters of faith and morals, is able to pronounce definitely where the limits lie which separate from each other the respective spheres of Church and State. The Protestant Churches can only assert that these limits lie in any particular place; but even their own members are not bound to accept the assertion.

It was to maintain this liberty of the Church against the interference of the State that the Scotch Covenanters fought and bled; and in the end they gained their point. The old or established Scotch Kirk, it is true, allowed the authority of the State to be exercised in certain Church matters, such as appointments to benefices and the like; but even this much interference was protested against by a large section of the Church, and the great secession of the free Kirk of Scotland was the result. This schism extended even to Canada, where there was little or no occasion for it, except for the purpose of maintaining the abstract principle that the Church is absolutely free from State interference, because the Confession of Faith declares that

"God alone is the Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship."

The *Mail* and its readers may rest easy in regard to Mgr. Satolli's purpose in coming to Canada, that it is not to establish the authority of the Pope as the supreme civil authority in