

an act of so religious a character be obtained from a body avowedly inimical to religion? The task surely was a difficult one, but timidity was not one of the failings of Mgr. Guibert. In his sublime audacity of faith, he boldly appealed to the Assembly to approve the work and aid in its furtherance. His appeal had the desired effect, and in July 1874, the National Assembly declared the projected temple to be a work of public utility, and authorized the Archbishop of Paris to secure the necessary site, even by way of expropriation. It is a fact pleasing to recall, that it was Marshall MacMahon who, as President of the French Republic, attached his signature to this law of such supreme moment for the work of the national vow. But new sources of trouble now arose. The immense size and weight of the proposed edifice would demand a solidity of foundation that the light sandy soil of Montmartre was unable to afford, and besides, it was feared that the galleries of the ancient limestone quarry which undermined the hill, might extend even beneath the chosen site. At considerable expense of time and money, holes were pierced to a sufficient depth to prove conclusively that the site lay beyond the limits of the quarry. To overcome the other difficulty, it was proposed to sink shafts through the sandy surface to the hard bed beneath, and then to fill these pits with masonry, upon which would repose the walls and columns of the church. This would necessitate the tremendous work of constructing beneath the building 83 pillars of stone, each 16 feet in diameter, and extending into the earth a distance of over 100 feet. It meant the removal of a mountain of sand, to be replaced by a mountain of stone. Many cried out against the project and demanded that the committee should build elsewhere. But Mgr. Guibert was firm. Montmartre was the site *par excellence* and Montmartre it would be. Yet he himself was frightened at the enormous expenditure that this mere preparatory work would entail, and for fifteen days he refused his consent to the great outlay, hoping against hope that some other plan could be devised. At length, however, he gave out the contract and the work of building the foundations began in June 1876. In the meantime it was found

necessary to erect a temporary chapel to meet the requirements of the daily increasing number of pilgrims. The chapel was completed within a few months and placed under the direction of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, of which body Archbishop Guibert was himself a member.

But another storm was brewing. For some time the liberal press had teemed with violent articles against the work of the National Vow, and their clamors were so successful that in 1880, the Municipal Council of Paris petitioned the Assembly to cancel the law of 1873, recognizing the national character of the work, and aiding the furtherance of its projects. Thanks again to the tact and diplomacy of Mgr. Guibert, the efforts of these enemies of religion had no effect beyond drawing from the Assembly a second expression of entire sympathy with the Cardinal and a second approbation of his plans.

In 1886, Cardinal Guibert was called to his reward. It was a terrible blow to the promoters of the National Vow, for the venerable prelate had been the very soul of the movement. He it was that had borne the brunt of the battle for their sacred cause, and to him was the credit due that the enterprise had successfully passed through the dangers which had beset it from the very moment of its conception. And now when his firm hand and indomitable energy were required to bring all to a happy issue, he was called from their midst. Fortunately he left his unfinished task in the hands of another self. Mgr. Richard has carried on the work bequeathed to him by his saintly predecessor, with an energy and success truly admirable, and under his administration the temple of the Sacred Heart has risen with wonderful rapidity. At the present moment the church is nearly completed, and it is confidently hoped that the solemn consecration will not be delayed beyond 1896.

As may be seen from the engraving in the present number of the Owl, the Basilica possesses a style peculiarly its own. It cannot be called Roman, nor is it Byzantine, though the cupolas surrounding the edifice give it a somewhat Oriental appearance. It is Romano-byzantine, if you will, yet this does not sum up all its striking features. It is a grand, majestic, original conception of a master architect,