

THE PRESBYTERIAN.

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ALMOST directly arising out of the present war is the certainty that Rome will be taken possession of by the Italians and become the capital of United Italy. As we write that event has not yet taken place, but that it will be accomplished even before we go to press can scarcely admit of a doubt. Every indication clearly points in this direction: the restlessness of the Romans; the movements of the secret societies, the inability of the Italian Government to restrain the manifestations of popular feeling; even the vague, indefinite, general impression that the temporal power of the Pope is doomed; a feeling like that which gives warning of the approach of a thunder storm before its portents are visible to the eye, lead to this belief. For years the aspirations of the most enlightened Italians have been towards a United Italy with Rome as its capital. Beaten down, suppressed, and seemingly trodden out, these aspirations have never wholly died. The present Pope himself in his celebrated manifesto, in which he advocated a federation of all the Italian States with Rome at its head, fanned into a flame the spark that had been well nigh extinguished, and Pio Nino was hailed as the patriot priest, and his name became the rallying cry of a nation. The Revolution of 1848 swept away these hopes, a reaction set in, and the liberal Pio Nino almost at one step as it might seem, became the very type of the mediæval priest, full of superstition and eager to add new dogmas to the errors which had already grown up around the Romish Church, and which have so concealed the central truths of Christianity on which it professes to be founded, that the Virgin Mary assumes the foremost place in the Romish system of mythology, in which the three Persons of the Godhead become but subsidiaries to the Exalted Queen of Heaven, to whom they are subject in the eyes and hearts of the mass of the worshippers.

Of the blasphemous doctrine of the Immaculate Conception it is needless now to speak. As compared with the recent achievement of the same Pope it is harmless enough—mischievous as it undoubtedly is in its effects. A more daring blasphemy, the declaration of the Infallibility of the Pope was the next step, carried out, there can be no doubt, and the vote secured under the influence of the Jesuits, who have by playing on the vanity of the Pope, and by trusting to his well-known obstinacy of mind and tenacity of purpose, been enabled to obtain for themselves important privileges, and could safely undertake the task of canvassing for votes, knowing that his mind once fixed, the chief of the Romish Church would yield to no arguments, however convincing, but remain immovable and, however foolish his course might be, convinced that he was infallible. The Œcumenical Council was called, (as appropriate a title by the way as that of Catholic applied to the Church of Rome exclusively) and a small portion of the Bishops, nearly all creatures of the Court of Rome, voted in support of the monstrous doctrines that an Italian priest was possessed of attributes equal to those of God himself—that he could not err—that however absurd his decisions they were final, irrevocable, irreversible. We need not stop to argue now the folly (we say nothing of the impiety) of the pretension. By the decision all doubts were to be set at rest; a secure haven for disquieted, restless souls was to be provided; a full and competent authority was to be found, and henceforth the one only Church was to draw into its bosom the erring sheep who had been seduced by the arguments of their own vain reason. All warnings were vain. The arguments of the assembled Bishops, who were opposed to the dogma as proposed for adoption, were disregarded. The flatteries of the Jesuits and the subserviency of those who relied for advancement on the degree of favour in which