

FOUR

The Catholic Record

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See, and bestows upon foreign ecclesiastics in Rome the personal rights of Italian citizens.

Article 11 places diplomats accredited to the Holy See and Papal diplomats while in Italy on the same footing as diplomats accredited to the Quirinal.

Article 12 provides for the free transmission in Italy of all Papal telegrams and correspondence both with Bishops and foreign Governments and sanctions the establishment, at the expense of the Italian State, of a Papal telegraph office served by Papal officials in communication with the Italian postal and telegraph system.

Article 13 exempts all ecclesiastical seminaries, academies, colleges and schools for the education of priests in the city of Rome from all interference on the part of the Italian Government.

The Pope, however, did not accept that bill and immediately protested against the position in which he had been placed by Italy. He asserted that he had been placed in a condition of subjection by a hostile power. It was both the right and the duty of the Pope to assume this attitude, the Bill of Guarantees having been a one-sided act of the Italian Government, in which the Holy See had no voice whatsoever.

It was an internal law of the Italian State and therefore implied an act of sovereignty towards the Pope, considered as a subject of the State itself. Finally the bill did not admit that the Pope had an independent sovereignty of his own, but allowed him sovereign honors only as a privilege granted to him in view of his office as Head of the Church. Neither were his sovereignty and ownership over the Apostolic palaces in which he had confined himself recognized, but only the use of the same as granted him by the Italian State. The Government according to its own statements regarded the Pope as its tenant or guest, and the palaces and gardens occupied by him as a freehold which would revert to the State on his abandonment of them.

For all these reasons Pius IX. made public protest in an encyclical letter dated May 15, 1871, also in a circular to those governments with which he was officially connected as well as in a circular from Cardinal Antonelli, his Secretary of State, of the same month and year. Since then all the Popes that succeeded him on the pontifical throne have maintained the same attitude. The bill has always been rejected, the annual grant of 3,500,000 lire has never been accepted, and the Pope still considers himself a prisoner and never leaves the palace of the Vatican. In a number of public acts all the pontiffs from 1870 till today, Pius IX., Leo XIII., Pius X., and Benedict XV., have protested against the strange situation of the Head of Christendom. Such protests were couched in terms more or less emphatic according to circumstances, but substantially identical.

It is not because today the relations between the Quirinal and the Vatican are such as demand immediate readjustment on account of their threatening character that the prospects of reconciliation are being discussed. It is rather because a sympathetic mind has been brought about by various influences. The War taught the Italians some great and salutary lessons. It revealed to them the respect and honor in which the Holy Father is held by all nations, as is proven by the desire of foreign powers, in ever increasing numbers to have accredited ministers at the Vatican.

Thus when the French ambassador, the latest to arrive in Rome, had presented his credentials, the Messaggero published a note which said that nearly all the great powers were represented diplomatically at the Holy See and that the only absentee was Italy, in spite of the fact that she had interests that were no less important than those of the other States in a centre of international influence as important as the Vatican. The journal concluded by expressing the hope that Italy would take example of France and endeavor to effect a reconciliation with the Papacy; all the more so as she had emerged from the War sufficiently mature to confront a problem of this magnitude.

This note of the democratic newspaper caused the subject to be taken up by all the Italian press, nationalist, liberal, radical, and even socialist. And it was treated with an entirely new tone, full of respect and deference towards the Church.

With very few exceptions it was generally recognized that the Pope has a right to sovereignty and independence, that the Bill of Guarantees is insufficient, and that it is necessary to give the Pope a real and effective sovereignty even if only on a few square yards of territory.

It is most gratifying to note this changed attitude on the part of Italy. Though the different Holy Fathers have shown a disposition to arrange a suitable adjustment, Italy has hitherto contemptuously spurned their overtures. Thus, Pius X. practically invited the Quirinal to arrange a conference. He also removed the inhibition on Catholics to take part in the National elections and to be elected Deputies, provided they voted for no law the execution of which would prove to be detrimental to the Church. Pope Benedict XV., in 1914, went further: He encouraged the formation of a Catholic party, the Partito Popolare, and permitted its members to hold portfolios in the Civil Government, as they have now for a year and more. In these circumstances it is not strange that anti-clericalism as a disturbing, political force, should have subsided. There is no plank in the platform of the Popular Party for the restoration of temporal power, just as there was no response made by Pope Benedict, when the German Allies offered it to him: It has been intimated in many ways that the present Pope would be satisfied with the acknowledged principle of temporality, if he could not obtain its actuality.

As to the practical means by which it is considered possible to come to an understanding about the Roman Question, the Pope alone may judge what is or is not sufficient to guarantee his true and visible sovereignty, liberty and independence. At the present moment the only conclusion which may be made and which is a cause of joy to Catholics throughout the world is that Italian public opinion has made great progress in coming to regard in a proper light the rightful position of the Vicar of Christ.

THE IRISH PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

Whether independence is compatible with Dominion status, is a debatable question and one which the Irish Parliament might think fit to submit to the decision of the people. A renunciation of the republic in name, might not be too dear a price to pay for Irish unity. It is a significant fact that true Dominion status has not been rejected by the Irish leaders. As the Manchester Guardian points out, "why should Mr. De Valera have contended so strongly as he did, in the statement he went out of his way to make to the press, that the Dominion Home Rule offered by the Prime Minister was not the genuine article, if the genuine article itself had no interest for him? Why again, has he all through insisted on the need of guarantees, unless the thing to be guaranteed had a real value for him?"

But first Dominion status must be offered. Up to the present it has not been offered. The conditions imposed by Mr. Lloyd George's Government as essential to any settlement, are incompatible with Dominion status, properly so called. Lloyd George may succeed in bluffing the British public that he has offered Ireland Dominion status. He may even meet with a certain success in influencing the opinion of superficial minds in foreign countries. But he cannot persuade the Irish people that he is delivering the goods by merely labelling it so.

Ireland has now the opportunity, cry Mr. Lloyd George and his chorus in the press, of joining as a free people, the greatest association of peoples in the world. They profess to be amazed that so attractive a proposition should be so coldly received.

But as President De Valera points out in one of his letters to the British Prime Minister, these propositions are by no means an invitation to Ireland to enter into a "free and willing partnership" with the free nations of the British Commonwealth. "They were an invitation to Ireland to enter in a guise and under conditions which determine a status definitely inferior to that of these free States. Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, are all guaranteed against the domination of the major State,

not only by the acknowledged constitutional rights which give them equality of status with Great Britain and absolute freedom from the control of the British Parliament and Government, but by the thousands of miles that separate them from Great Britain. Ireland would have the guarantees neither of distance nor of right. The conditions sought to be imposed would divide her into two artificial States, each destructive of the other's influence in any common council, and both subject to the military, naval, and economic control of the British Government."

The Irish leaders are not going to be tricked by scheming politicians and deprived of their birthright, neither are they going to allow themselves to be influenced by British press propaganda. Thus in an interview accorded recently in Dublin Mr. De Valera emphasized these facts. He said:

"It seems that it is a grievous political sin these days to keep one's eye open. Plain common-sense is sneered at as rhetoric and logic."

"The British Imperial salesmen trying to sell Ireland a second-rate political Maigargin are very angry because we do not accept the 'butter' label they have put on and believe all the advertising stuff they have had printed about it."

"Ireland wants butter, and the Irish people will not be deceived into thinking they have got it until they have it actually delivered."

"The British Press asks—have we a will to peace? Yes, we have, and an ar