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FRANCE AS AN ALLY.

M. Fallières, the President of the French Republic, has just been making a visit of ceremony to King Edward VII., and indirectly to the people of England, who have indeed shown great enthusiasm in receiving him with all the honors due to a most distinguished and honored visitor. An immense crowd surrounded the station and cheered him as he bade farewell to the English people. He would, however, be much mistaken if he imagined that the manifestation was an endorsement of the anti-Christian policy of the French Government during recent years, for the people of England are still at heart a religious people, notwithstanding the undeniable fact that many even among the clergy both of the Church of England and of the Non-conformists, have wandered into the paths of Agnosticism and theoretical Rationalism during the last few years; for these devious ways have not been trodden as yet, at least by the great bulk of the people who recognize now that the Catholic Church is to-day the great bulwark against irreligion and the worship of pounds, shillings and pence. The true secret of the demonstration in honor of M. Fallières is, therefore, the fact that in case of future complications arising on the continent of Europe between other powers and Great Britain, the need is felt of having staunch friends whose interests are reconcilable with those of the British Empire, and who will work in unison with it for the attainment of their common purposes.

Germany has grown to be a gigantic power in Europe, and no matter how the interests and ulterior designs of France, Russia and Britain may be concealed under the polished forms of diplomatic language, these powers cannot get over their fear that the overgrown giant of the continent may seek occasion to encroach upon the interests of the other powers both commercially and politically, and they desire therefore to establish some bond between them which will be sufficient to protect them against such encroachments. It is to promote this object that so much enthusiasm has been manifested in M. Fallières' reception; and as the public generally are more absorbed in contriving to assure secular than religious advantages, it is not very surprising that they should make a great effort to ingratiate themselves with the President, and through him with the people of France. This accounts fully for the enthusiasm shown in the reception of the representative of that nation, the Christian instincts of the English people being for the nonce left in the background.

The telegraphic news-caterers inform us that the President's visit has excited great interest in both England and France, and the opinion has been freely expressed by the press in both countries that though the recently signed articles of agreement between England, France, and Russia do not amount to an actual alliance, they approach very nearly thereto, constituting a most cordial entente and friendship which is almost equivalent to an alliance.

It is stated in the most recent cablegrams from Paris and Berlin, that the new cordiality between the three powers, Great Britain, France and Russia, has caused considerable alarm in Germany, the more especially as it is half expected that Italy may be drawn into this semi-alliance, owing to her well-known friendliness with France. Yet it is remarked that the entente between these powers is not aggressive, but is formed with a view to perpetuation of peace throughout Europe, and therefore no power need fear its results. On the other hand, the Paris Temps and other French journals, point out that an alliance strictly speaking cannot grow out of the present situation, owing to the fact that Great Britain has practically no army which can be sent to aid any designs which might be entertained by the parties to the present compact.

The French, at least, have little reason to belittle the power of the other nations concerned in the treaty, inasmuch as France herself is inherently the weakest of the three powers concerned, for ever since she has

succeeded in quarrelling with the Church, she has been growing weaker from year to year in comparison with her neighbors. Statistics compiled within a few years from the legal abolition of religious schools showed that in the Department of the Seine the number of youthful delinquents who were State secular school pupils, and have been convicted of crimes, was nearly three times as great in proportion to their number, as pupils of the Christian Brothers and other religious teachers; and matters are still growing worse. The atheistic French Government did not take warning from this fact, but continued in their downward path till morality was almost suppressed in their country by the strong arm of the law. But God cannot be defied with impunity, and from year to year the case is becoming worse. The destruction of the laws which make marriage a sacred institution have had the effect which might have been expected, and at this moment the country is fast going to destruction. Their exists no longer the intense affection with which in former ages even a pagan mother spoke of her husband and family:

"Yet while my Hector still survives
I see
My father, mother, brethren, all in
thee."

The French Pagans kill their children before or after birth, and even if they do allow them to live, the facilities they have given themselves by law to break up the family have operated most disastrously. According to the statistical tables of the last few years, a century ago the birth rate of France was 1,007,800. This was gradually reduced during the last 30 years till during the last seven years it was diminished at the average rate of 12,000 per annum, in spite of the endeavor of the Government to increase the population by the artificial method of giving bonuses to those who should have three or more children in their families. But at last the crisis has come. In 1907 the number of births was 33,000 less than in 1906, there being 774,000, while the deaths reached 793,000, or 19,000 in excess. The number of divorces has already increased alarmingly under the new laws making marriage a merely civil contract which is automatically dissolved after a short period of separation of husband and wife. For 1907, there was very nearly one divorce to every three marriages. It is no wonder the population should decrease rapidly, so that Dr. Jacques Bertillon, the chief statistician of Paris, recently declared that while all the neighboring countries are increasing in population, France's population has come to a standstill—yes, not merely has it reached a standstill, but already the tide has commenced its ebb. The Paris Temps can no longer afford to laugh at England for not having an army to put at the disposal of her allies, for she has at least a growing population, both Great Britain and Germany having within a few years surpassed in this respect the nation which has gone mad in its Atheism. God is patient, and can wait long for the day of retribution, but the end must come at last, or as the Pagan classic author says:

"Whom the Gods wish to destroy,
they first make mad."

MARRIAGE QUESTIONS.

We are glad to meet such communications as that of "Subscriber" in our last and also that of "A Reader" which for want of space we must hold over to next issue. Correspondence of this kind shows that our paper is in touch with its readers, and serves to make it more so. We can assure "A Reader" that there is no danger of contempt or jocularity on our part in treating any questions put to us in good faith and in courteous language. At the same time we request our correspondents to remember that it is easy to put in a single column questions which could not be satisfactorily answered in many times the same space. Hence they must expect at times that our replies will be given in instalments.

Taking up first the communication on Marriage, we proceed to answer its questions in the order given.

1. What is meant by clandestine marriages? No better answer, both to this question and to others that might be asked concerning the attitude of the Church regarding such marriages than the following words of the Catechism of the Council of Trent: "But above all, lest young persons—and youth is a season of extreme weakness and indiscretion—deceived by the false name of marriage, may rush incautiously into the engagements of shameful amours, pastors will very frequently inform them that such marriages as are not contracted in presence of the parish priest, or of some other priest with the leave of the parish priest himself, or of the Ordinary, and before a certain number of witnesses, are to be considered neither true nor valid marriages." From these words it is clear that clandestine or secret marriages are those not contracted in presence of the parish priest or Ordinary, or some priest designated by the parish priest or Ordinary, of one or other of the contracting parties and at least two witnesses.

The object of the Church in insisting on the celebration of marriage in presence of the parish priest or of the contracting parties and at least two witnesses, is clear. The parish priest knows his parishioner, is bound

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by the most solemn obligation to look after that parishioner's welfare, and to see that in so sacred and momentous a step as marriage the laws of God and the Church and the respect due to parents and others are complied with faithfully. Then he is bound to keep a record of all marriages performed by him, so that if any question relating to such marriages should afterwards come up this record can be produced. A glance will show how admirable this law regarding marriage is. It cuts off practically all danger of bigamy and of hasty, illicit, invalid, and ill-assorted unions. It insists that marriage shall be entered into "coram facie Ecclesiae"—"in sight of the Church"—with all the care and surroundings befitting its sacramental dignity. It would, for example, be impossible to have under this discipline such a scandal as figured in our papers within the last week, when a school inspector of one of our Ontario cities and a prominent member of the strongest denomination in point of numbers in this Province, was sent to the penitentiary for a long term of years for bigamy. The minister who assisted at the second marriage ceremony was perfectly satisfied as long as a marriage license was produced. A Catholic priest would be bound to make inquiries which would result in detection. Clandestine marriages are entered into because there are features in the case which will not bear the light. Hence they were condemned and detested by the Church before she proceeded, in the Council of Trent to declare them invalid.

This Council assembled in the year 1545, in the city of Trent in the Tyrol (whence its name) and continued its labors at intervals for 18 years. It dealt with the theological questions raised by the religious revolution known as the "Reformation," and at the same time made vigorous laws against the abuses which were in no small measure responsible for that outbreak. Amongst the abuses which the civil and religious turmoil introduced by the so-called Reformation had increased to a frightful extent was that of clandestine marriages. The sacramental character and indissolubility of Christian marriage, the celibacy of the clergy, the obligation of vows were made the objects of virulent denunciation by Luther and his imitators. Hence marriages were entered into and dissolved, polygamy was permitted, vagabond members of religious communities threw their vows to the winds and sacrilegiously attempted to contract marriage. To strike down enormous abuses and scandals of this kind, the famous decree against clandestine marriages, already given, was passed. Recognizing, however, the difficulties such a decree, however salutary and necessary it was, would cause, on account of the unsettled social and religious conditions which then prevailed in Europe, the Council of Trent provided that it would not go into effect until the thirtieth day after its publication in every parish. The advisability of making this publication was left to the judgment of the ecclesiastical head of every diocese. Hence it was published at once in countries overwhelmingly Catholic. Its publication was not deemed advisable in regions where Protestantism was either in the ascendant or prevailed to a considerable extent. Wherever it was published clandestine marriages were not only detestable and grievously sinful as before, but invalid; wherever it was not published such marriages remained valid, though unlawful and sinful in the highest degree.

Most of the points raised by "Subscriber" are dealt with in this article. What remains will be cleared up in our next issue.

JUVENILE CRIME.

One of the saddest features of our police court record is the alarming increase of juvenile crime. A few days ago two boys were arraigned in the Toronto police court for, and found guilty of, breaking into railway cars—a crime committed only by daring and hardened offenders. Some five days afterwards three young girls appeared in the dock on a charge of vagrancy and another youthful maiden was shown to be an expert pick-pocket. This development demands serious and immediate consideration—investigation of cause and application of remedy.

The cause, we have no doubt, will be found in the home. Parents who have no sense of responsibility—parents who permit their children to come and go when and where they like and with whom they like—are the fruitful source of juvenile crime particularly as of crime in general. An effective remedy for this disregard of

the most solemn obligations on the part of parents is to make them responsible for the offences of the children under their charge. Railroad and other corporations are made liable for injuries incurred through the criminal negligence or malice of their employees. It is their duty to see that the public gets a safe and reliable service, and when this is not given they are mulcted heavily. Is there not a much stronger reason why society should hold parents responsible for the misdeeds of the children under their charge and punish disregard of the most sacred of all responsibility by a heavy fine or in default, by imprisonment? If parents acknowledge that their children have got beyond their control, they confess their unfitness and ought to invoke the arm of the civil power. And in this regard it is time to consider the action of some States in the neighboring republic in which no person is allowed to undertake parental responsibility unless physical and social fitness be shown. Looming up behind all this, however, is the great question of moral training which religion alone is able to impart. Physical and social and all other tests are but weak and isolated barriers against human wickedness. They need the support and concentration given by that strong moral sense which definite religious training alone can impart. Thus day by day the developments of modern society bring out more clearly the wisdom of the Catholic Church in her stand on the necessity of definite religious education for the welfare even of the present.

PLAYGROUNDS FOR THE CHILDREN.

The necessity, or at least the desirability, of playgrounds for the children living within the limits of our city, does not seem to have come with as much force to those amongst us who have the concern of our Catholic children at heart, as it has to the interested ones among the non-Catholic part of the population. That the question has come home to a portion of Toronto's citizens is proven by the workings of the Evangelia Settlement situated in the eastern part of the city and in process of development during the past six years. The idea of playgrounds has received an impetus and some advertising from the late visit of Mrs. Humphrey Ward, who chose it as the subject of one of her addresses. The idea of recognized play-centres for children has found favor and some financial support in the congested parts of London, England, also in New York and a few lesser cities. In Toronto the subject has for some time had the attention of a few, yet so far as we know the Evangelia Settlement is the most flourishing evidence of any practical results being established amongst us. The matter has been taken up by Mr. Kelso, whose work along general lines amongst the little ones has probably awakened his sympathies in a way greater than those of the ordinary citizen, and recently we read that he has been successful in procuring from the city specified plots and provision for supervised playgrounds.

As yet no keen necessity has arisen to bring the matter forcibly before us. It is more provision for the future than present need that actuates movements in the direction under discussion. At the same time there are in the older parts of Toronto, districts in which a supervised playground might prove a boon beyond compare. Teachers are undoubtedly best suited for the position of supervisor, but there are probably few of those of our schools who could undertake the work. Amongst the older girls and youths who have left school might be found some of proper temperament and equipment who for a small salary would take charge, and see that play was conducted in an orderly manner, and that nothing unseemly was introduced. Volunteer assistants would probably follow. The subject is worthy of thought. Thought begets thought and interest aroused to the proper pitch would certainly evolve plans that would tend to the present and future betterment of the children.

THE ANNUAL ORANGE DELIRIUM.

Spring, as the vendors of Sarsaparilla well know, is the season of eruptions, fevers and similar manifestations of poison in the system. All seasons of the year are Spring in this respect for the Orange Order, though pustules and delirium seem to be unusually virulent for a few weeks previous to the 12th of July. The tongue of the Order, Dr. Sproule, was very badly coated recently at Midland, Ont. The Doctor, who evidently thrives on doctored tongues and de-

lirious pulses, was terribly disturbed over the aggressions of Rome. Her arrogance and contempt for law and authority (Orangeism is always strongly on the side of law and authority as the police court records of Toronto and Belfast show) sent up the Doctor's temperature to a dangerous height. It seems that "her clergy refuse to appear in court and give evidence as witnesses in civil and criminal suits." No Catholic clergyman refuses to appear in court when cited as a witness, and refuses to answer no questions which are not a violation of the secrecy of the Confessional. To attempt to get him to answer such questions would be a gross violation of the principles of natural justice, held in respect by every civilized or even half-civilized country. British justice demands that the testimony of an accused person must not be used against himself. A confession made by a prisoner is ruled out of court unless he has been previously warned that anything he says will be used against him. We know how strongly public opinion is opposed to attempts of detectives to worm confessions by underhand means. Whilst if a judge were to attempt to make a lawyer answer questions about the revelations made to him in confidence by his client, there would arise an outcry from the whole nation against such an outrage. If the confidence between a prisoner and his counsel is absolutely sacred, how much more so is that between the sinner and his confessor who stands to him in the place of God and to whom he is bound to unburden his soul as he would to Jesus Christ! And yet this is the sacred confidence the foully crusted tongue of the Orange Order demands that the Catholic priest shall violate under the penalty of being denounced as a foe to law and authority.

"Law and authority!" How well these words come from the lips of those who in defiance of law and authority obstructed traffic on the streets of Toronto on the last 12th of July, assaulted the guardians of "law and authority," and put law-abiding citizens to much inconvenience by their illegal proceedings. This proceeding will explain the alleged action of the Mayor of Buckingham, Quebec, in prohibiting an Orange parade in the streets of that town on the 12th of July. We say "alleged" action because any statement made at an Orange gathering should be distrusted unless verified. For ourselves we are willing to see Orange processions flaunt their barbarous mixture of colors and shatter the air with their discordant drumming as long as they offend nothing more than good taste. Very often, however, they go much farther and become a positive menace to the peace and order of the community. This latter development explains the prohibition of their processions in Quebec—a prohibition which we hope will be removed unless in cases in which offensiveness reaches intolerable proportions; for we are firmly convinced that the best remedy against Orangeism is to let its eruptions come out in all their deformity. Decency will, then, keep it at a distance and will use disinfectants as a precaution against its too near approach.

FOR THE GUIDANCE OF SEMINARIES.

It is announced that a work for the guidance of the seminaries of Italy has just been issued. The penetrating eye of His Holiness has gone even to the roots of many things, and amongst the objects which have fallen under his special regard are the ecclesiastical seminaries in the land of his nativity. In order to make the work of those institutions as efficacious as may be expected, he has ordered the compilation of a work in which directions relating to all branches of the training of the schools are outlined. The compilation has been entrusted to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

In the new work strict rules of discipline are laid down. The requirements of the Council of Trent and of the latest Pontifical documents are to be rigidly enforced. The studies preparatory to that of Theology are to be made much more thorough than heretofore, the chief end aimed at being to secure even better equipped workers for the vineyard of the Lord than those of the present.

The objects of His Holiness in thus bringing the seminaries under more rigid discipline are said to be twofold. One to have uniformity in the Italian seminaries, and the other to ensure greater application and attention to those things which make for the highest intelligence in scholarship. The new programme admits of no superficiality and the sterling note is looked for in all that goes, even indirectly, to the formation of those who are to do the work of Christ upon earth. It is only some months since we learned that His Holiness had begun a mild revolution in regard to those institutions. His continuity and directness of purpose are seen in the publication of the laws upon which the new schedule is to be based. This—and similar instances of the energy and comprehensive work of His Holiness must surely amaze those who looked upon Pius X. at his elevation to the Tiara as good and kind, though scarcely clever. The few years of his reign have been productive of movements which have shown His Holiness to have a grasp

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and outlook so comprehensive as to astonish outsiders, though doubtless those responsible for his election to his present high office are in no wise startled by the acumen displayed. The telling work of Pope Pius up to the present is an earnest of much that will be done in the future, provided the wish of the entire Catholic world be granted and he be left for many years to act as the vice-regent of Christ upon earth.

TO CORRESPONDENT.

Enquiries of our Correspondent regarding Scriptural texts, bull-fights, etc., will be attended to in our next issue.