

The Church Times.

HALIFAX, SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 1866.

REGENERATION OF ITALY—PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.*

THE massacre of St. Bartholomew did not effectually crush the Protestant religion in France. The Huguenots increased thereafter, in spite of the revocation of edicts and various kinds of proscription, and when the French revolution turned the tables upon the persecuting creed, and the goddess of reason superseded the Roman Catholic religion, the Protestant faith still survived. There was still a remnant which had not bowed the knee to Baal, or kissed his lips—and the seed sown in blood increased and multiplied, and is in our day a goodly tree, branching over the kingdom, and millions of the population repose under its shade, and exercise an influence upon the government corresponding to their numbers and intelligence. Protestantism has been the test with Napoleon of the sincerity and liberality of Rome. It has been the policy of the latter in pursuit of her objects to place him before the world as the humble and devoted servant of the Church, ready in all things to do her bidding, whereas in reality, like a skilful physician he has been soothing the moody humour while feeling the pulse of insanity, in order that at the critical time he may be able to check the violence of its disorder. To believe any thing else would be unjust to his character, as well as to the force of that public opinion by which he is supported. His own ideas, often expressed, are in favour of the fullest extension of religious liberty, and all his experiences must tend to corroborate them,—his predilections, his friends, the great French party by whom he has acquired his illustrious position, are all in favour of and pledged to its exercise. The nation has received it as an inheritance from the revolution, as an escape from papal tyranny, and the atheistical philosophy which grew out of it. Two revolutions since have shown the estimation in which the French people hold their charter of rights, and ought to be a caution to Pope and prince how they venture upon its infringement. The Bourbons linking themselves with the ancient associations, attempted its outworks, and are a banished race. We heartily rejoice that Napoleon has not tempted his fate by following their example, that the national principle so unequivocally established has been so far respected and upheld. Nay he could not if he would, obey the behests of the Papacy,—but it is our belief that he never had the least intention of making himself subservient to its policy. There can be not the least doubt that it is in his power, even now, if it suite either his own interests or the interests of his kingdom, to deal with Rome as Rome has shown him she would deal with the Huguenots of the nineteenth century—that in point of fact she is sustained by his forbearance in France, as much as she is sustained by his army in the ancient capital though the modern abomination, of the world.

Many have thought that the Emperor Napoleon, in the treatment which the Protestants of some parts of France have lately experienced, has shown a disposition to sacrifice them to the Papal aggression upon their rights. The case cannot fairly be so considered. His countenance of Romish ceremonies and superstitions has been cited against him, in proof of this disposition. It is strictly no proof. While the Romanists professed and acted in a tolerant spirit, and eschewed coercion, he could have no objection to interfering with their propagandist attempts.—Their fetes and spectacles might pass for what they were worth, they were fair capital, and they were as fairly entitled to all the legitimate profit to be derived from them. It was natural enough if it suited either his personal belief or his policy, that he should countenance the dogma of the immaculate conception—or that the blessed Virgin should be installed as the protectress of his fleet, and be honored with a state room in his cabins. The title of the eldest son of the Church, might be deemed a fair equivalent for this subservience, which amounts to nothing after all. So long as the honors imposed no duties and might be dispensed and reciprocated with a few high sounding phrases, there was no harm done.—These things might all be reconciled with the general fact, that the Roman Catholic is still the national religion of France, and that he is not the master or director of its ceremonies. Had private influences been content with achievements like these, there would have been no ground for interposition in behalf of the national principle, and it might have long indulged in the fond notion that it was again gaining upon the minds of the people. But when did it ever forego a good opportunity of oppression

when the question was between its own creed and protestant toleration?

The case assumed in consequence quite a different aspect, when the established religion ventured to urge the operation of coercive laws against the free exercise of Protestant worship in France—when the Huguenots were again prohibited from worshipping God according to his conscience, and like his forefathers was driven to the mountain and forest to exercise his faith. A partial persecution of Protestantism has been carried on under color of law for the last four years—churches have been closed, and the rites and ceremonies of religion have been performed sometimes by stealth, often by connivance of government officials, who appear in many instances to have been acting thus by authority, or taking it upon themselves because the "King's command was grievous." Enough was done to put the Government upon its trial before the nation—enough to show that the spirit of the old Huguenot heroes was not extinct in their descendants—enough to prove that the nature of Rome was the same in France where toleration would be a necessity, as in Austria where it would be a virtue, as in Italy, as everywhere where it asserts itself. They who deemed the prey already within their grasp, and that at length they had moulded the Emperor to their will, have been met by a mind as astute as their own, and by a discomfiture of their machinations, which while it exposes their policy to the world will go far to make its further exercise harmless. The French nation will have seen that no obligation can prevent the intermeddling of Rome with constitutional freedom, that the greater favor that is shown towards her makes it more imperative to take measures to prevent her encroachments on public liberty.

It gives to the character of Napoleon an additional lustre, that being placed above the law, he has used his power in behalf of the religious freedom of his subjects oppressed under color of law. It does not detract from this merit, that England and Prussia may have interposed their good offices for the amelioration of the condition of the French Protestants. Altho' we are persuaded that no representations of theirs could change the internal policy of the French government, the interference is not without its value in connection with the discussion of the Italian question at the Paris Conference.—We see in all these things no proof of the growth of the Papacy either in France, in Italy, or in Austria—but on the contrary, a hastening on of the final conflict with the man of sin, and of the time when religion without superstition shall prevail upon the earth, and Gospel light be in every dwelling, and Gospel liberty in every heart.

MR. CRAMPTON'S DISMISSAL.

News arrived by telegraph last Saturday evening that Mr. Crampton, the British Minister at Washington, had been dismissed by the United States Government. This result was not entirely unexpected, although sober minded persons hardly contemplated that such an extreme measure would be resorted to after the ample satisfaction afforded by Great Britain in the dispute in which he was said to be implicated. All the Consuls in places where any encouragement has been given to the Foreign enlistment, have also been dismissed. President Pierce it is said, has taken this course with a view to engage public feeling more certainly in his favour at the Presidential election. There is no doubt that a war with England, whatever injury it may inflict eventually upon the United States, will be popular with a large party there, and the internal relations of that country not being at present very satisfactory, it may have been deemed good policy by the administration which has approached to its verge, rather to risk outward discomfiture that might conciliate parties at home, than internal confusion, to which the Union is rapidly hastening by the conflicting policy of its various interests. The greatest care will no doubt be necessary to prevent a disruption of our peaceful relations with the United States. Indeed we can hardly form any idea as to the course the British Government will pursue. We are however in this dependency ready for every emergency, and can hold our own against any attempt that the whole power of neighbour Jonathan can make upon us. We have the best possible position also for warlike aggression, and when the time comes, if unhappily it should come, will no doubt make the best use of it.

The *Lady Le Ma. Kahn*, steamer, has been engaged for the season to transport the mails and carry passengers between Pictou and Prince Edward Island. A steam conveyance between the two governments is a necessity that ought to be provided for, irrespective of private enterprise. The precarious nature of the communication between Nova Scotia and P. E. Island, dependent as it has been upon private enterprise, is disgraceful to both of them.

SYNODS.

"Presbyterians will naturally look forward to the annual meeting of their highest Church Courts with the liveliest interest. Though these assemblies are convened without the beat of drum or the booming of guns, or any outward circumstances to attract the vulgar gaze, the important matters with which they have to deal should secure the attention and the earnest prayers of those who are represented in them, and for whom they deliberate and legislate. It is theirs, solemnly and calmly to discuss and decide matters that concern the spiritual and eternal interests of many souls. The plain gentlemen in plain black cloth, sitting in a plain wooden building, speaking plainly, and doing everything plainly, have about them more of genuine moral grandeur than congresses or parliaments where, with all their pomp and glitter, worldly ambition, selfishness, and all the baser feelings and passions of the human heart, rule supreme.

The highest Court of the Free Church will meet, as most of our readers may know, on the 12th of June. This promises to be, in many respects, a meeting of special importance. It is therefore hoped and earnestly to be desired that every minister of that Church, and every elder who has a commission, will be in the proper place in due time. Nothing scarcely can be more ruinous than a small attendance at Church Courts. It indicates a heartlessness, a carelessness and deadness, that ill becomes the members of a living working Church, the devoted servants of an all-seeing, over-living Redeemer. When properly commissioned it is as much your bounden duty to attend a Church Court, as it is to attend the services of the sanctuary on the Lord's Day, or to perform any other secular or religious duty. We write thus only "to put you in remembrance."—*Presbyterian Witness*.

The *Presbyterian Witness* is not singular in claiming for the annual meeting of Presbyterian Synods, the liveliest interest amongst the respective divisions of that Church in whose behalf they are called. Methodists and Baptists likewise, hail these occasions as times of refreshing, and full of interest to their denominations, in which all diversities of opinions are heard, all doubts solved, and a course of action decided upon for another year, by the conjoint wisdom of their wisest minds. Yet in these bodies, if we mistake not, the clerical order has by far the greatest weight, and whatever deference may be paid to the wishes of the laity, we believe these are chiefly communicated and enforced through the Ministers. In these respects the distinction is much in favour of the free action of an Episcopal Synod, which is ensured by the equal balance of power between the orders of Bishops, or enforce no measure, of which the others disapprove, or either of them. As we believe Episcopacy to be the proper form of Church order and authority, so we believe that this form of Church Government by Bishop, Clergy and Laity, is much nearer to the apostolic mode than any other; and we are sure that if Presbyterians can rejoice in this mode of ecclesiastical supervision, Episcopalians will have much more reason to do so in theirs, and if any difference of opinion that may now prevail, on whatever cause arising, with reference to its merits, will soon vanish before its working, which cannot be beneficial to all the interests of the Church throughout the Diocese.

The Bazaar at Dartmouth on Wednesday, June 4, in aid of the School connected with Christ Church, was eminently successful, and all classes and creeds lent a helping hand to the object. The Commander of the noble Steamship *Himalaya* lent a variety of National Flags for the occasion, which were tastefully displayed around the building. The whole affair did credit to the projectors, and to those who assisted the undertaking. The best proof of the public appreciation of the attempt is in the amount realized by the sales, which was about £110, free of all expenses.

The Steamship *Himalaya*, Commander Priest, arrived here on Monday last, in 16 days from Malta, bringing two Regiments, the 62nd and 63rd, (1400 strong) who were direct from the Crimea. They disembarked at 4 o'clock the same afternoon, and headed by the excellent band of the 76th Regt., were marched to their quarters at South Barracks and the Citadel, which places had been vacated by the 76th Regt. for their accommodation. The appearance of these heroes of so many battles, was calculated to excite in the minds of spectators a deep interest in them, and the Medals with which most all were decorated told of scenes they had witnessed unparalleled in the annals of history.

Monday, 9th June, is advertised as a public holiday. There is to be, we understand, a review in the morning, and at half-past two the Masonic Body will proceed to lay the Corner Stone of the Lunatic Asylum on the Dartmouth side of the harbor.

(* Concluded from last week.)