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ITALY AND THE POPE.

According to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a telegram from Rome states that there is some prospect of a peace between the Italian king and the Pope. It is said that Crispi's Private Secretary paid a visit to, and had a long conference with Cardinal Rampolla, opening negotiations which it is hoped may bring about some settlement of the existing difficulties. It was after this visit that the Pope appointed an Apostolic prefect at Massowah, Africa, the centre of the Italian territory on the dark continent. King Humbert has also approved and sealed the Pontifical decree appointing Cardinal Sarto to the Patriarchate of Venice. These are the first mutual acts on the part of King and Pope which could be interpreted as any evidence of a coming reconciliation between the ecclesiastical and royal authority; and the visit of the Secretary was the first visit of a civil official to the Vatican since the occupation of Rome by the Italian forces in 1870.

Another act of the Government which points in the same direction is the high eulogium passed by Signor Crispi on the Cardinal-Archbishop of Naples in the Premier's speech in that city. He expressed the hope that Church and State will act in harmony in the suppression of Anarchism, the common foe of all authority, civil and spiritual. The presence of the Cardinal on the occasion is regarded as a sign that both king and Pope are desirous of coming to an amicable arrangement.

It is no easy task to foresee what may happen in the future in any case; but the more so in regard to a matter which depends upon so many contingencies as a reconciliation between the Holy Father, whose cause is that of justice and right, and the robber Government which has despoiled him of the Patrimony of the Church; and we shall not pretend to be able to tell what the future may bring forth in the present case. It does not seem to us possible, however, that there can be any final settlement unless there should be on the part of the Italian and other Governments a complete recognition of the Pope's sovereign authority in Rome and a satisfactory guarantee given that he shall be free from any interference of Italian officials in Rome, and sufficient territory around the city to enable him to have free communications with all nations.

This would be but a small reparation for the indignities which have been heaped upon the Holy Father since the Italian occupation of Rome; and every Catholic, and even every Protestant, Government should feel desirous that such a state of affairs should be re-established.

The Providence of God arranged that Rome, where the See of Peter was fixed, and which was the centre of unity for the Catholic world, should become the Patrimony of the Church as soon as the authority of the Church became so widely extended that the independence of the Pope became necessary for the exercise of his universal spiritual jurisdiction. This occurred, so early as about A. D. 728. Kings Pepin and Charlemagne did not establish, but only confirmed and extended, the Pope's temporal jurisdiction, because they recognized its necessity. Since that time the Pope's government has passed through many vicissitudes; but always to be restored again to stability.

It cannot reasonably be denied that the spiritual government of two hundred and fifty millions of souls, under every form of Government, requires the greatest possible discretion. But it needs something more than discretion. It needs to be beyond even the suspicion of being controlled by any temporal sovereign.

Hitherto, certainly, the Italian Government has shown no disposition to grant any concession which would re-establish the Holy Father's independence. It has waged a relentless war

against religion ever since the occupation of Rome in 1870, even to the abolition of religious teaching in the schools.

This course of the Government has had the result which might naturally have been expected; for though the clergy of Italy kept up zealously a system of religious education, the exclusion of God from the schools and anti-Christian teaching, have had the effect of raising the crop of Anarchists, the existence of which Signor Crispi now professes to regret.

The assassin of President Carnot and the attempting assassins of Premiers Dupuy, and Crispi himself, are the fruit of this anti-Christian policy which has been followed by the rulers of both France and Italy. It is, perhaps, a sign of returning sense to the rulers of Italy that Signor Crispi has even gone so far as to express the hope that Church and State will work together for the common good.

It is only a few weeks since it was made manifest that the Government had not learned wisdom from the sad condition of affairs for which it is responsible. This occurred when Signor Bovio, the dramatist, announced the production of a sacrilegious play entitled "Christ at the Feast of Purim." This drama represents Christ as one of the characters amid the riotous mob of the Jewish Saturnalia, with all the accessories of the modern Vaudeville style of drama.

This of itself should be enough to make the Government prohibit its production; but in spite of all that common decency would prescribe, the play is tolerated, and the journals which support the infidel character of the Government are unanimous in upholding Signor Bovio and the theatre managers who have produced the blasphemous concern.

But all has not been serene with the producers of the play. It was first brought out in Naples, and Cardinal Sanfelice, the Archbishop of Naples, uttered the note of warning to his people not to countenance it. There is some hope for Italy in the fact that this denunciation had its effect, and the play had scarcely any audience in any of the large cities. It has been repeated in Florence and several other cities, but in every case with the similar result that it has been a financial failure.

Every Italian Bishop in whose diocese it was produced condemned it, and expiatory services have been held to make some atonement to God for the blasphemy. These expiatory services have been attended by thousands, while the play itself had scarcely an audience at all. At Carrara the money was returned to the seven people who were at the theatre to see it, and there was no representation. At Marsa, the first audience was very small, and the second smaller still. At Pianezza only 320 francs, 804, were received at the door.

The play has no literary merit, and the only recommendation it has is the impudence of its blasphemy. It happened only recently in France that a play in which Mahomet, the mule-driver of Mecca, was introduced, was prohibited by the authorities, because it gave offence to the Sultan of Turkey, who asked that it should be stopped. Yet the Italian Government has allowed the production of a dramatic representation which is offensive not only to Catholics, but to all Christians.

It is to be hoped that the recent utterances of Signor Crispi indicate that a new state of affairs is to be inaugurated, and some respect to be shown by the Government to the religious wants of the people, who, it is understood, will not much longer submit to atheistic rule. The Premier's words at Naples are remarkably plain as indicating the new departure. He said:

"Society is passing at the present moment through a grievous crisis. Never more than to-day did we feel the want of seeing the two authorities, civil and religious, marching with one accord to lead the people in the way of justice and charity. From the darkest abysses have risen an infamous sect which writes on its flag, 'No God, no master.' United to-day in common recognition of a memorable period, let us form in closely-pressed ranks to combat this monster, inscribing upon our flag, the motto, 'Our God, our King and our country.' Yes, let us raise aloft our flag adorned with this sacred device, displaying it to the people as a sign of salvation, 'in hoc signo vinces.'"

The Irish Bishops at their recent meeting adopted a resolution expressing horror at the dreadful crime which has resulted in the death of President Carnot, and tendering to the generous people of France an expression of keen sorrow, and to Madame Carnot and her family respectful sympathy.

A SCOFFER AGAINST MIRACLES.

In an article which appeared in the *Toronto Saturday Night* of the 8th inst., concerning a recent miracle which is reported to have been wrought in Quebec at the tomb of, and through the intercession of, Monseigneur Laval, a scoffing writer is allowed to put before the public the following piece of impertinence:

"It is impossible for one not educated in the thradom of such notions to believe in the miraculous powers vested show even the *scantest* respect for this in the bones of dead humanity. That illness exists at all must be set down, in the minds of those who have faith, as a fatal reproach to the Roman Catholic brotherhoods, which, by their own showing, could produce relics enough to drive all sickness from the earth. Professing to work miracles, they are very chary about it. Of course it all depends upon the point of view, and I suppose we would eat ants if we lived in the part of the world where such is the practice, but it would surely be better to abandon the faith in miracle-working bones, than to wait until it is laughed out of countenance, as it is sure eventually to be."

In a similar flippant way this writer speaks of the many miracles which are said to have occurred at the shrine of St. Anne of Beaupre.

It is almost needless to say to our readers that this species of scoffing reference to "the bones of dead humanity," and to the Roman Catholic brotherhoods, which do not miraculously "drive all sickness from the earth," is but a poor imitation of Bob Ingersoll's scornful allusions to Christian truth in any form, and especially of the flippancy with which the noted infidel speaks of the miracles which are recorded in the Gospel. Such reading matter as this is calculated to produce a generation of infidels, and it is not surprising that there should be so many scoffers when such feeble wit is read with avidity by hundreds of thoughtless persons. Is it *Saturday Night's* mission to propagate infidelity?

"Mack," the writer who signs this article, states that "the Catholic brotherhoods" profess to be able to drive all sickness from the earth by means of relics, or bones of dead humanity. Before making such an assertion, he should have found some evidence that such is the case. Such evidence he has not produced; and we venture to say that he cannot produce a title of evidence that his statement is truthful, or that any Catholic brotherhood has made such a claim.

There is a word in the English language, as short as the name Mack, by which those who are designated who bear false witness against their neighbors, and that is the word which should have been chosen by the writer in question as his now very descriptive *nom de plume*.

But though Catholic brotherhoods make not this claim, it is a remarkable fact that there is a mass of evidence that cannot be disregarded, to the effect that miracles have been wrought, by the power of God, whereby the sick have been restored to health through the instrumentality of certain relics of saints. To cite words of Holy Scripture bearing upon this matter, those who have been at the shrine of St. Anne, and those who have witnessed what has happened at the tomb of Monseigneur Laval, tell us that "the blind see, the lame walk" (St. Matt. xi. 5), or that other diseases or infirmities have been cured, as a mark of divine favor to those who piously prayed for relief through the intercession of those who when living were undoubtedly the friends and saints of God, of whom Holy Scripture says:

"But to me, thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honorable: their principality is exceedingly strengthened." (Ps. 138.)

It is not the first time that God has manifested His power of working miracles through the bones of dead humanity, or other relics of saints.

We are told in 4 Kings, iv. (Protestant Bible, 2 Kings), that Eliseus, the prophet, raised from the dead the child of a certain Sunamite woman, by placing his mouth on the child's mouth, his eyes on the child's eyes, and his hands on the child's hands. Afterwards, when the prophet was dead, certain persons who were about to bury a dead man near the tomb, being interrupted by the approach of Moabite rovers, "cast the body into the sepulchre of Eliseus. And when it had touched the bones of Eliseus, the man came to life and stood upon his feet." (4 Kings, xiii., 21.)

Again, we are told that the shadow of St. Peter delivered many from their infirmities. (Acts v. 15.) Handkerchiefs and aprons which had touched the body of St. Paul had the same effect (Acts xix. 12); yet we do not read anywhere that the Apostles of

Christ made any pretence that it was their mission "to drive all sickness from the earth": neither has any Catholic brotherhood done so.

The sneering and irreverent language of "Mack" is just as applicable to these miracles related in Holy Scripture as to those which have occurred at the shrine of St. Anne and the tomb of Mgr. Laval; and such sneers are in fact but the scoffings of Tom Paine and Col. Ingersoll, reproduced in the columns of *Saturday Night*. However, if it be true that Almighty God has deigned to reward the faith of prayerful and pious visitants to the tombs of the illustrious and saintly first Bishop of Quebec, and to the Beaupre shrine, wherein reposes a relic from the arm of St. Anne, the grandmother of Our Lord, it behooves us not to ridicule the Divine manifestation. To do so would be blasphemous and sacrilegious.

That miracles have been wrought at the shrine of St. Anne is so well attested that they can scarcely be called into question, but it is not necessary to go into details regarding them here.

A miracle has been recently reported to have occurred at the tomb of Mgr. Laval. Concerning this we only know what has been published in the papers, and there seems to be truth in the testimony to the effect that the event really happened. But none of these miracles are of Catholic faith, that we should be bound to believe them, nor does the truth of Catholic faith or doctrine depend in any way upon them. They are to be examined as any other fact which is asserted to have occurred. If they are attested by credible witnesses, a reasonable man cannot refuse to believe them. If the evidence is insufficient, no credit is to be attached to the narration, and there is an end to the matter. But the facts are not to be refuted by Mack's profane scurrility; and there is no justification for such language as this, which he uses a little further on:

"The dense fatalism and superstition to be found in parts of Asia keep the world in constant peril of a cholera or black death plague, and any community that teaches the people to trust for health to faith or charms (such as the Protestant Faith Curists of Ontario, and the Roman Catholic bone-kissers of Quebec), is flying in the face of all mankind's experience, and all the facts laid down by science."

This is but a lame rehash of Hume's argument that all miracles are contrary to human experience, and are therefore unworthy of credit. They are not contrary to the experience of those who have witnessed them, and no science can limit the power of God, nor is the operation of that power to be tested by science, since God's will overrules both chemistry and medicine, which are but the results of His will.

We should add here that there is a great difference between the "Protestant Faith Curists of Ontario" and the Catholics who have piously visited the shrines of St. Anne and other saints. These Catholics have not neglected, nor have they been advised by their clergy to neglect, the ordinary methods afforded by medical science to obtain relief. As far as our experience has gone, in nearly every case when shrines of the saints have been visited to obtain relief, the visits were made after all the efforts of medical men had failed to effect a cure, and then relief was asked, and sometimes got, through prayer to God, or the mediation of God's saints.

The Faith Curists, on the contrary, reject the ordinary means which God has appointed for the cure of diseases, and pretend to possess the power of healing by the laying on of hands, or some other inadequate means. Faith Curism is a real superstition; but confidence in God's power, and a reasonable hope for a favor through means of prayer, is not a superstition, but a right reliance on God. The two classes are not to be placed in the same category.

HALF a dozen English excursionists got themselves into trouble on the occasion of the celebration of the festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin at Boulogne. They were arrested and brought before the court charged with interrupting a religious procession. It appears that a procession was passing along the street in honor of the festival, the Bishop of Calais being present in the cavalcade. One man went around in mockery with hat in hand demanding pence for the processionists, and the others were guilty of like indecorous conduct. They were sent to prison in default of bail, but were released at the intercession of friends after they had been two days in durance vile. Perhaps the event will teach them a lesson they need.

MR. GLADSTONE AND THE IRISH PARTY.

The *London Times* and other Tory papers are making, or rather attempting to make, great capital against the Irish Nationalist and Liberal parties, from the discovery that Mr. Gladstone and Lord Tweedmouth recently made large subscriptions to the Irish Parliamentary Fund. Mr. Gladstone's subscription amounted to £100.

It appears to have been in consequence of a circular appealing for help and signed by Messrs. Justin McCarthy and John Dillon that these subscriptions were given, the object being to enable the Irish party to maintain itself in Parliament, and to fight the battle for the Irish cause in their constituencies.

There is nothing specially criminal either in making an appeal to the public for aid towards attaining a political object, or in accepting contributions given for such a purpose; and in the case of the Irish party it is absolutely necessary that there should be such a fund.

There is no indemnity paid to members of the British Parliament as is the case in Canada; hence only wealthy men who can afford to give their whole time, or a great portion of the year, for nothing, can look for a Parliamentary seat, or even bear the expense of an election contest. But the Irishmen who have the confidence of the people are not of the wealthy class who could afford this, and consequently the people of Ireland would be compelled to submit to be represented (or misrepresented) by the rich Earls and Marquises who have been their oppressors, if there were no Parliamentary Fund from which to pay an indemnity to their representatives, and all necessary election expenses.

Even in Canada, where an indemnity is paid without a murmur to members of Parliament, aid is often given from a general Parliamentary fund of the party interested in gaining seats in the House of Commons. Surely there is no criminality in the case, if that is done in Ireland which is done in British colonies; and since there is no crime therein, there is nothing essentially wrong in accepting the contributions of English Liberals to the Irish Fund. Ireland is poor; that is to say, the people generally are poor, having been kept in poverty by bad laws, placed on the statute book for the aggrandizement of titled absentee landlords and wealthy companies of London merchants who have inherited their title to Irish soil chiefly through confiscations of Irish property during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is, therefore, no humiliation to Ireland to accept assistance to enable her to fight the battle for political liberty.

The Executive Committee of the Irish National League of Great Britain have acknowledged that they issued their circular asking in a general way for help, but deny that they sent a copy of it to Mr. Gladstone or any member of the Government. But when the contributions of Mr. Gladstone and Baron Tweedmouth were spontaneously sent to them they could see no reason for a refusal to accept them in the furtherance of a good cause. Mr. Michael Davitt says plainly that he would be glad that other Liberals would follow their example.

There are some even among the Irish National Party who are of opinion that by accepting aid from wealthy British Liberals, the independence of the Irish party is jeopardized. Mr. Healy is reported to be among the number who are of this way of thinking, and it is said that he wishes these contributions to be returned. Mr. Davitt, however, declares that there is no humiliation associated with the acceptance of the money, any more than there is in the receipt and application of funds from any other source.

To us it appears that Mr. Davitt is right, but we trust that on a matter so trivial, the unity of the Nationalist party will not be imperilled. The cause of Ireland has already been more than sufficiently injured by the unhappy dissensions which divided the Nationalists into two hostile camps. This unhappy division caused the loss of several Irish seats at the last general election, and if there are to be new divisions on trifling matters, it needs but little foresight to see that there will be further losses at the next election.

A despatch from London states that the Parnellite members "are complacently relying upon the disruption of the Irish party on account of the dispute which has arisen," and that their position may be strengthened thereby at the coming elections. It is more to be desired that the dissensions already

existing should be healed than that a further division should take place. We trust that some measures may be taken whereby a united Irish party will take the field when next an appeal will be made to the electorate—an event which cannot be far off under the circumstances in which the Liberal party of Great Britain finds itself, with a hostile House of Lords blocking much-needed legislation.

The *London Times* of the 11th inst. is said to contain a bitter article against the British contributors to the Irish fund. It represents that the fund is kept up by "supporters of the Irish physical force party," and it couples the names of Mr. Gladstone and Baron Tweedmouth with dynamiters in the following style:

"The only consolation is that the publication of the names of the two latest subscribers seems likely to prevent all further contributions for the present from the old subscribers. If Privy Councillors do not shrink from appearing in the same list with dynamiters, the latter will hardly consent to appear with Privy Councillors. Even Irish-American politicians have scruples, and even the Clan-na-Gael has its point of honor."

This language is just what might be expected from a journal which has all along endeavored to class the Irish Nationalist party with assassins; but it will have no effect with reasoning people who remember the sad failure of that journal to make good its former statements to the same effect. The mouthpiece of the forger Pigott cannot expect that its utterances on Irish questions will terrify the Liberals of Great Britain into accepting the policy it lays down on Irish matters, or, indeed, on any other subject.

As far as the Liberal party is concerned, the interest still displayed by Mr. Gladstone and Baron Tweedmouth in the success of the Irish demand for Home Rule is an evidence that the Liberals will not give up the cause of Ireland because they have to meet the opposition of the House of Lords; and there can be no reasonable doubt that the final result will be that all that Ireland demands will be granted, even if the concession be delayed.

ESCAPED NUNS OF A NEW KIND.

It is a somewhat amusing turning of the tables, after all the harrowing tales which have been told to delighted audiences by such dubious characters as Margaret L. Shepherd, Edith O'Gorman, Maria Monk, *et hoc genus omne*, concerning the wickedness of nuns and nunneries, that now the Protestant nuns, who have been only a few years in existence, are having their turn in being "exposed" by parties who seem to have a better foundation for their tales of horror than have had the escaping parties for the stories which have hitherto been told of Catholic institutions. A few weeks ago a person known as the "Peckham Nun" figured in the *London Police Court* in the full dress of a Sister of Mercy, to answer charges brought against her for collecting money under false pretences. She was committed to prison for the offence. She was a nun of the "Order of St. Charles"; but the St. Charles in the case was not the well known saint whom the Catholic Church honors under that name, but "Charles, the martyr king of England," put to death by his Protestant subjects for his alleged tyrannical rule. A Father Superior of the Order of St. Charles, who appeared in connection with this case, was testified by a policeman to be a suspended minister of the Church of England, who had reinstated himself by becoming Prior or Abbot of the religious order in question.

All this shows that in the Church of England there is no authority to prevent any one from assuming a high ecclesiastical authority, provided he or she dubs himself or herself with some high-sounding title, such as these persons assumed. They become monks and nuns, priors and abbots at will, and there is no authority which can restrain them.

But the case of the Peckham nun is not the only instance of the new and unexpected turn which matters have taken. There have been within the last few months complaints of cruel treatment made by several "escaped nuns" against their "Abbeesses," who appear to have acted in the premises just as might be expected from the heads of new-fangled religious orders who, not being amenable to any established authority, would conduct their orders according to their own whims and fancies. Pride is sure to be the predominant feature in the rule of such religious superiors; and it is no wonder that such acts of tyranny as the escaped nuns complain of should be of frequent occurrence; and as