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Notes.

WE shall publish next week the full text of the Pastoral of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland, to which, in the circumstances of the hour, great interest attaches. It commences by strongly urging upon the Irish Executive the duty of taking timely precautions against the impending famine, and affirms the reality of the danger. The Pastoral then proceeds to impress upon the faithful the binding force of the Papal Rescript against the Plan of Campaign and Boycotting. It then goes on to recapitulate and reaffirm the instructions promulgated two years ago by the Bishops, and the exposition of the Decree published by the Archbishop of Dublin. It repeats the warning then given against the use of irreverent language towards the Pope or the Holy See, and reminds the people that on questions of morals the Pontiff has "an inalienable and Divine right to speak with authority." That is all. But it is none the less effective or significant for its studied and wise moderation. The Pastoral finishes with words of sympathy for the evicted tenants, and a protest, in the name of justice and humanity, against further evictions at such a time as the present.

THE Sovereign Pontiff in his latest Encyclical Letter to the Clergy and people of Italy, to which we briefly referred last week, urges upon people and clergy alike the need of doing everything in their power to maintain the faith in Italy against the assaults of its enemies. "No means" the Encyclical reads, "must be neglected that is in your power. All the resources of speech, every expedient in action, all the immense treasures of help and grace which the Church places in your hands, must be made use of, for the formation of a learned clergy, for the Christian education of youth, for the extirpation of evil doctrines, for the defense of Catholic truths, and for the maintenance of the Christian character and spirit of family life."

To this end the Sovereign Pontiff exhorts the greater

sustainment and encouragement of the Catholic press; and his words are not less true of Italy in this respect than of English-speaking countries. "Moreover," we read, "seeing that the chief instrument employed by our enemies is the press, which in great part receives from them its inspiration and support, it is important that Catholics should oppose the evil press by a press that is good, for the defense of truth, out of love for religion and to uphold the rights of the Church. While the Catholic press is occupied in laying bare the perfidious designs of the sects, in helping and seconding the action of the sacred pastors, and in defending and promoting Catholic works, it is the duty of the faithful efficaciously to support this press—both by refusing or ceasing to favour in any way the evil press; and also directly, by concurring, as far as each one can, in helping it to live and thrive; and in this matter we think that hitherto enough has not been done in Italy."

BEFORE everything else it is necessary, the Pontiff says, that the people should be instructed as to the true state of things in Italy with regard to religion, the essentially religious character of the conflict in Italy against the Pontiff, and the real object constantly aimed at, so that they may see by the evidence of facts the many ways in which their religion is conspired against. What the Masonic programme aims at realizing in Italy the Holy Father describes in these words:

"The action of the sects is at present directed to attain the following objects, according to the votes and resolutions passed in their most important assemblies—votes and resolutions inspired throughout by a deadly hatred of the Church: The abolition in the schools of every kind of religious instruction, and the founding of institutions in which even girls are to be withdrawn from all clerical influence, whatever it may be; because the State, which ought to be absolutely atheistic, has the inalienable right and duty to form the heart and the spirit of its citizens, and no school should exist apart from its inspiration and control. The rigorous application of all laws now in force which aim at securing the absolute independence of civil society from clerical influence. The strict observance of laws suppressing religious corporations and the employment of means to make them effectual. The regulation of all ecclesiastical property, starting from the principle that its ownership belongs to the State, and its administration to the civil power. The exclusion of every Catholic or clerical element from all public administrations, from charities, hospitals and schools, from the councils which govern the destinies of the country, from academical and other unions, from companies, committees and families—an exclusion from everything, everywhere, and forever. Instead, the Masonic influence is to make itself felt in all the circumstances of social life, and to become master and controller of everything. Hereby the way will be smoothed toward the abolition of the Papacy; and Rome, which in the past was the centre of universal Theocracy, will in the future be the centre of universal secularization, whence the Magna Charta of human liberty is to be proclaimed in the face of the whole world."

Such, the Sovereign Pontiff adds, are the authentic declarations, aspirations, and resolutions of Freemasons or of their assemblies.