

tinium" passed by, the people fell on their knees, to adore what they believed to be the "Corpus Dei." Now, this year, the procession consisted but of the priests—a very great number they are, it is true—a few laity, deputed by some charitable corporations, the municipal body, and some high officers of the Government. Nobody else joined it. Even the number of spectators was comparatively small, remaining far behind what I had expected, and the greater part of them were country people,—those poor ignorants that never come into a school, in order that they may the more believe all that the priest tells them. I did not see any one bending his knees before the Sanctissimum, except a company soldiers, who at the word of command fell on their knees and took off their hats, as they would have executed any other command. Among the people I saw even some that did not take off their hats, and nobody took the least notice of this, which would formerly have been considered a great crime.—Some Italian ladies, near whom I was standing, made some very irreverent jestings about the archbishop and his gorgeous pomp. Now, I was truly astonished to see this indifference on the part of the people, about what is to be considered to be the highest feast of the Roman Church; and I dare say, a people that show so little respect for the holy things of their church, are preparing, if not to leave her, at least to reform her.—However, I will not deny, that on many days I have seen the churches well thronged with people, especially from the country; they still believe that their presence at a religious ceremony must convey some benefit to them.

A startling proof of this decline of the Roman faith in Piedmont, is related in a newspaper. It seems that there the people are far in advance of the hesitating Government. I shall relate it in the words of the correspondent. "On the 9th of June, the cathedral of Novara was the scene of a great scandal; which, although its consequences were not so sad as those in the Santa Croce church at Florence,* is not the less deplorable. On that day, several thousand children, with their parents and relations, were come to Novara, to be confirmed in the cathedral. In order to prevent confusion, the bishop had ordered the doors to be shut. After having confirmed a great number of children, Monsignore, being tired, wanted to repose a little. But on the instigation of their parents and relations, who wanted to go home, all the children rose, a great tumult broke out, and they attempted to retain the bishop in order that he should continue his functions. Monsignore refusing to do so, the children began fearfully to cry, the parents threw about the benches, and all kinds of church ornaments, and the tumult did not cease till a troop of soldiers appeared, and the chief authors were taken prisoners." This is, indeed, as the correspondent remarks, a very deplorable event. But whose is the fault? Is it not with those who, instead of imbuing the hearts with religious sentiments, by the preaching of the word of God, through the agency of the Holy Ghost, transformed the Christian religion into a mere outward compound of ceremonies. The correspondent goes on adding some reflections. He says, "that formerly the Italian character distinguished itself by a deep respect for religious and Divine service, and that their service was so very long and solemn, and accompanied by Divine blessings, that the sober Protestant service could not please them." We will not dispute with him about this remark; there are many others, and Romanists too, that contradict him. We will only observe, that notwithstanding the sobriety and bareness of the Protestant service, Italy would also have become, at least partly, a Protestant country, had not the combined power of the popes and princes driven from the country the most noble and enlightened of its inhabitants, and incarcerated and slaughtered a great many of the Protestants, and by these acts of detestable violence filled the hearts of the people with fear and anxiety.—"Now things seemed to be altered by the example of the higher classes, although we will not believe that the baleful prophecy of P. Ventura, of a schism arising between the Italians and the head of their church, is about to be fulfilled.—And who, now-a-days, go to church? Women. Of men, but a scanty number, and among those few there are a great many who dare hiss at the priest, whenever he uses the pulpit for passionate political discourses. Formerly, any one who would have but thought of such a thing, would have trembled from head to foot. Who would have dared formerly to throw stones after the priest, to chase him to his lodgings, and to persecute him on the way with abusive words?" Such are the remarks and complaints of a true Romanist, and they seem to be important enough to be registered. The facts he alludes to are, indeed, very deplorable; but it is only the more needful that the Gospel be preached to this people, to keep it back from the brink of unbelief and atheism.—*Eran. Chris.*

RUSSIA.

UKASES AFFECTING THE JEWS—RESULTS TO BE ANTICIPATED.

The Jews in the Russian empire have been, for some time past, thrown into consternation by a succession of ukases, which, as they can scarcely be expected to tempt their entrance into the Greek Church, must almost necessarily ensure their adoption of the sole remaining alternative, departure for ever from the Imperial territory. Many a rich rabbi has already contrived (despite all the dexterously interposed police hindrances) to convey himself and his treasures across the frontier, and thereby screened

* Where, on the anniversary of the battle of Curtatone, an affray arose between the people that would religiously commemorate the event, and the gendarmes, in consequence of which there were some slain and many wounded.

himself from the impoverishing fine imposed on all those who permit their wives (in accordance with almost immemorial custom) to cut off their hair on the nuptial day. One would suppose the discovering of the Jewish matrons' tresses must be a matter little affecting the welfare of Russia, or its empire! But the mandate is peremptory: the locks shall not be shorn! And as the Jewish matrons will not consent to retain a maidenly ornament, they must even prepare to quit the land of their birth, and seek refuge in countries (and, happily, they will be easily found) where a well filled purse makes amends for an empty as well as a bare pate!

The tabbis will speedily be followed by the rich corn merchants of Israelitish descent; for the recent ukase, which prohibits their dealing in brandy, either "en gros or en detail," strikes at the root of their Russian property. Lastly, the ukase which commands those parts of carcases which Jews cannot eat, to be buried, on the presumption that what is not fit for Jewish, must be unwholesome for Christian consumption, will occasion such an erroneous rise in the price of butcher's meat, in every Israelitish commune, as must necessitate emigration on a large scale.

The removal, *en masse*, of so much wealth and industry, will no doubt open the eyes of the Czar to the impolicy of these, in point of fact, persecuting edicts; but as, like all autocrats, Nicholas never suffers his law to be altered, it is to be feared some inextricable web of chicanery and espionage will be resorted to, in order to retain the Jews in the empire, and thus secure a golden mine (more productive than that of Potosi, and much less expensive to work,) in the never ceasing fines to which these unjust and arbitrary enforcements must give daily occasion.

The effect of these multiplied annoyances, which operate with almost equal force on the domestic, commercial, and religious relations of Jewish life, may perhaps confirm an opinion, very generally held on the Continent, respecting the return of the Israelitish nation to Palestine, viz., that it will take place most prominently from Russia. And although the preparation of "the way of the Kings of the East" has hitherto been conceived of, as implying a friendly aid, the result may be equally attained by a compulsory as by a voluntary emigration; and their restoration to Canaan may be as much facilitated by a forcible ejection from Russia, as their first entrance was by being "driven forth of Egypt;" nor are the personal and family hardships attending the latter likely to be much inferior to those which marked the former expulsion. It is, at all events, a new phase in the sufferings of this remarkable and long-tried race, and it may be that the God of Abraham, who is wonderful in counsel and mighty in working, hath designs of mercy in this darkly threatening cloud, which shall yet descend in blessings on the heads of the wanderers! —*Eran. Chris.*

SWEDEN.

ITS ECCLESIASTICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION.

There is, perhaps, no other Protestant country in which the Established Church is so powerful as in Sweden. It is not simply connected with the State, but forms an integral part of it, and exerts an influence in the general affairs of the kingdom, which is, perhaps, without parallel. The house of the bishops and clergy is one of the constituent parts of the Legislature, and possesses power similar to those of the other three houses of the nobles, burghesses and peasants. Its concurrence is necessary to the enactment or alteration of any law, ecclesiastical or civil. When a bishop is to be appointed, the clergy of the diocese elect three persons, from whom the king nominates one to the vacant see. And in appointments to most of the benefices and offices of the church, the clergy exercise a similar degree of power. The king has a negative voice on the resolutions of the diet, and the right to introduce measures for their consideration. For 250 years it has been the law of Sweden, that any Swedish subject who changed his creed, and left the Established Church, should be banished from the country. The sentences of the ecclesiastical courts are required to be executed by the civil authorities; and on the other hand, in many instances, the punishment of civil offences is carried into effect by the church.

When malefactors (for example) have been for a time imprisoned and kept on bread and water, and are not to be incarcerated for some years, as is the case for great offences, and when they have been flogged, the last punishment is called *kyrkeplikt* (church-penance,) and is inflicted in the following manner:—The malefactor is brought from prison to the church of the parish where the crime was committed; and then, at Divine service, on a Sunday appointed by the judge, he sits on an elevated stool in the middle aisle of the church, in sight of the whole congregation, all through the service, guarded by a soldier, who stands at his side all the time with a drawn sword, or some other such weapon. Sometimes it happens that several criminals are sitting thus at the same time. "I once saw (says our informant) eight at one time sitting in the dome church of Gottenburgh, with as many soldiers, with their hats on, and drawn swords, parading alongside of them." When the minister has finished the service, but before the people are dismissed, he walks up to the criminal, who now is by law considered penitent, and speaks to him to the following effect:—"Dost thou, N. N., acknowledge that thou hast sinned against God and grieved his church? Dost thou now sincerely repent and promise to forsake thy sins?" The criminal is compelled to answer "Yes," whether he is penitent or not. But some will not be compelled to answer, unless it be "No;" else they are silent. This, however, does not stop the priest from pronouncing over him the absolution, which is done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.