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THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE LOWER PROVINCES.

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THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

The grand conflict of ages is still going on as vigorously as ever. The Pope is extending for all power, secular as well as religious. His agents are everywhere active, stirring up trouble wherever they can. Germany is kept in disquiet through the seditious intrigues of the Ultramontanists; the Government, sustained by a vast majority of the people, is pursuing its course of repression. There is no "persecution" in Germany; the Government simply restrains Ultramontanists from carrying out their programme, which would, if successful, involve the ruin of the country. Prussia is the Ultramontane stronghold in Germany; and there the population is almost equally divided. The Old Catholics are making steady and satisfactory progress. They are becoming more distinctively evangelical; still in this direction there is much to be advanced.

In Belgium there have been cruel riots, stirred up by Ultramontane priests. The country, as our readers know, is almost entirely Roman Catholic, but the population is divided into Liberals and Ultramontanians, the latter desire the extermination of the former, and are doing all in their power to secure that end. What led to the recent riot was the refusal of some students to kneel themselves before the "host." The Government has shown firmness and justice in dealing with these disturbances. It gives Belgian matters importance in that country is made the base of Ultramontane operations against Holland, Germany and Switzerland.

In France the struggle for religious liberty is still going on—the Roman Catholic ecclesiastics always in stern opposition. The Government still refuses permission to the Lutheran Church to establish a college in Paris. Pilgrimages are the rage. Tens of thousands flock to the shrines of fictitious saints. The "Sacred Heart" is the dominant superstition of the day, and it has extended to all Popish lands.

It is much the same in Italy—dominant superstition—far extending Atheism—pilgrimages and follies on the one hand—scoffs and sneers on the other. The Pope is still held by his followers to be a "Prisoner," though there is no excuse for the statement. Sicily and Naples have long been tormented by brigands who were too strong for the law and who were encouraged by the Pope. An honest effort is now being put forth by the Government to suppress these vagabonds. Mission work in Italy is meeting with most encouraging success. Recently the Lord Mayor of Florence presided at the examination of the Free Church Schools, distributed prizes, and spoke highly of the work of the missionaries.

An event occurred on the 17th June well worth noting and remembering; it marked a stage in the downward course of the Church of Rome towards the bottomless abyss of superstition and error. The whole Church throughout the world was then consecrated to the "Sacred Heart," and the worship of the "Sacred Heart" is now obligatory. Heretofore the month of June was devoted to the "sacred name of Jesus;" henceforth it is to be devoted to the "Sacred Heart."