

clergy? They were by no means idle. Annoyed themselves by the government in every petty way, many of them seized every opportunity to show their sympathy with the Religious—notably last year, when the Government was persecuting the Assumptionists, the Edists, the Picpus Fathers and the Good Shepherd Sisters. Our readers will recall Cardinal Langenieux's stirring challenge to the Government published in these pages last April. So long as this or that party only of individuals in the Government, attacked the Religious, and so long as it was merely rumored that the Ministers of State meant to limit their rights and functions, it was proper for members of the hierarchy in France to speak in their behalf; but when the question became national, when the Premier announced his programme of persecution against the Religious Orders, no individual Bishop, nor even the whole hierarchy in France, could with propriety make public protest. Since there is a binding compact or treaty, the Concordat, between France and the Holy See, it rests with the Pope, the Head of the Church in France as everywhere else in the world, to tell the Government and the Bishops of the country his mind as to the interests of religion and its citizens. Pope Leo spoke, and spoke quickly, in no uncertain tones, not to his Nuncio directly to the Head of the Republic—as he might have done had the French Cabinet observed the propriety of referring a matter which concerns the Church in France to the one to whom they are bound by solemn treaty—but he wrote to Cardinal Richard of Paris, and through him to the French Bishops; and already fully seventy of the eighty bishops of France—about eight sees are vacant—have publicly expressed their indignation at the anti-religious action of the Government and their sympathy with their threatened auxiliaries, the Congregations.

If Cardinal Langenieux wrote last April, Frenchmen did not take either the Government or their Masonic and socialist supporters seriously, the Holy Father's letter has made them appreciate the disaster threatening them. He wrote "to prevent as far as possible, any irreparable misfortune befalling the Church and France;" he is anxious for society in France as well as for its religion. "The disappearance of these champions of Christian charity would, it is evident, bring on the country an irreparable loss," he warns the French Government that to suppress the Religious at home would be to lose the prestige won for their nation by the labors of their mission aries in their colonies, that it will not do to spare the missionary congregations, since these depend for recruits on the religious who preach and teach; and finally denounces the measure as "an assault on the liberty of the Church, which is in France guaranteed by a solemn treaty, for everything that hinders injures the free exercise of her divine mission."

M. Waldeck Rousseau's speech announcing the intention of the Government to frame a new law of association, which would regulate religious as well as secular congregations was scarcely in circulation when M. Roussea, formerly president of the bar and member of the French Academy, wrote condemning the proposed measure as an attack on the whole priesthood, on the monastic system and to speak plainly "on the very existence of Catholicity and of religion; to put it all in one word, they want to do away with all these things."

At the second session, in which the bill was discussed, M. Viviani, socialist deputy, made, among other plain admissions, these two, that the bill "brings us face to face with the Catholic Church," and that "it is only a skirmish in the series of battles of the past and future; an engagement, in fact," quoting the words of Count de Mun, "between society as founded by the will of man and society as founded on the will of God." The Temps, commenting on the introduction of the bill, said it was: "Not only the first blow of the pick in the structure of the Concordat, but the first step in the radical extirpation of the religious spirit, or, as it is called, in the dechristianization of France."

It is in admissions of this kind that we find the true motive of this iniquitous bill. All the other alleged motives—the excessive wealth of the Congregations, their usurpation of the duties of the secular clergy, and their revolutionary tendencies are only pretexts used to justify this attack on liberty, and to conciliate Frenchmen in its favor. Even were they founded on fact, they are clearly insufficient to prompt a Government, which has a morbid dread of being overthrown to commit itself to the project of depriving its most law-abiding and beneficent citizens of proper civil recognition and liberty.

The Catholic Church then, is the real point of attack, and in France the Church means religion. This alone explains the audacity of the bill against the Congregations. For well nigh thirty years they have considered an easy prey, and bill after bill has been framed against them; they have been taxed almost out of existence, and in suffering they have borne the burden alone, denying themselves, and consenting to live more meagrely and austere, so that they might meet the exactions of the Government, without reducing their allowance for charity, or calling on the faithful Importunately or ams, or suffering the Bishops and clergy to compromise themselves by a word in their defense. They are taxed for all the real estate they hold

improved and unimproved; for every door and window, as if they were shop or hotelkeepers; for personal effects, as if they had made no vow of poverty; for licenses permitting them to teach, care for the sick and other works of charity for the inheritance they are supposed to receive from their brethren who died penniless. Since 1872 business corporations in France have been obliged to pay 40 per cent. on the net profit of their business, of 5 per cent. on their original capital, being exempt from all tax if they could show they had made no profit; the Congregations are reputed to derive 5 per cent. on the gross value of personal effects and real estate, whether possessed or rented. A Congregation renting a house for \$1,000 must pay 4 per cent. on this amount, as if gaining instead of spending it. It is liable for the inheritance tax of \$2.70 for each \$100 of the share of the community possessions which the state attributes to each member.

It would be tedious to pursue the subject in detail; suffice it to say, with P. Belanger, who treats it at length in his book, Les Mesquines, that the Congregations are taxed eight times as much as ordinary business corporations, and that it is only a question of time when for lack of means they must cease to exist.

All this only makes it clearer that the Church is the real point of attack. The State is already assured of the death of the Congregations, and, from an economic point of view, has much to gain by taxing so heavily the citizens whose works of charity relieve it of the burden of millions of dollars yearly. There are in France 100 different congregations of men with a membership of 35,000 living in 874 communities, and about 873 congregations of women, numbering about 135,000 residing in 2,888 communities; these 3,757 communities have charge of about 18,000 establishments, schools, hospitals, asylums, reformatories. Their work and devotion are well known. According to M. Taine, they are "by their very institutions, benefactors of humanity, voluntary servants, vowed by their own choice to dangerous, repugnant and all sorts of ungrateful tasks. What are the tasks? Missions among savages and barbarians, infirm, incurable, insane, stragglers, and abandoned infants; innumerable works of relief, education, primary instruction, orphanages, asylums, workhouses, refuges and prisons. And all this is free or at next to no cost, because they have reduced their own needs and personal expense to the minimum. In very many communities of men and women the personal expense of each member does not exceed \$60. Among the Trappists this is the maximum."

"If one estimates the value of the work of each at 1,000 francs (\$200), which is below the mark, the total done by 160,000 Religious is 160,000,000 francs (\$32,000,000); even if one values it at 500 francs (\$100) the total is 80,000,000 francs (\$16,000,000) a year."

"Net profit for the public 80,000,000 francs, (\$16,000,000) a year."

This was in M. Taine's day, and as he says, his computation is below the mark. To replace the Congregations to-day, to apply the statist principle of solidarity for charity, as M. Viviani advocates, the State will have to assume charge of 110,000 sick, infirm and dumb—250,000 in all—all of whom are cared for by the Congregations. At 500 francs or \$100 a year, this would cost the State 125,000,000 francs or \$25,000,000 a year. Observe that this figure is based on the ridiculous low sum of \$100 a year for each person, and it does not include land, buildings, salaries of officers and servants. Add to it the cost of teaching nearly 2,000,000 of children, 1,600,000 of whom are in the primary schools, and the others in the secondary schools and colleges maintained by Religious without an cent of support from the State, at an average of \$10 a year each the State will have to pay \$20,000,000 more, besides supplying buildings and paying to officials and teachers the usual salaries which Religious do not receive. In other words, to suppress the Religious will cost the State \$45,000,000 annually, and if we compute salaries, for 170,000 persons, officials and others, at an average of \$500 a year, at least \$85,000,000 more. To this must be added the initial expense of buildings, and the outlay for sustaining the work of the 9,000 priests, 4,000 now done gratis by 9,000 sisters working in foreign missions to extend French civilization and influence. To do the work the Religious are now doing gratuitously, the State would need to expend fully \$200,000,000 annually.

This again only emphasizes the folly of the French Government and impresse on us the conviction that there is something more in view than the extinction of the Religious Congregations in France. With a deficit of 65,000,000 francs in the Budget of the year, and the threatened financial depression in Europe, the French Government might prudently hesitate to add an annual item approaching \$200,000,000 or 1,000,000,000 francs. No king less than the revenues of the Church itself could tempt them to face this new burden. It is true, they claim that the Religious in France possess a billion of francs, but this is not an annual revenue, nor is it an honest estimate of what they own. In 1890 the property of the Congregations was computed by the Government to be worth 700,000,000 francs. In 1895, when estimated honest for purposes of taxation, less than 500,000,000; and now,

by estimates which, the agents were warned, would not be made the basis of taxation, he would not be questioned in court. It foos the enormous total of 1,000,000,000 francs!

N doubt the people to whom all this, or what will be left of it, has been promised for a superannuation fund, thought the Religious really owned it. They had no means, as the Government had, of estimating the value of the property of the 18,000 or more establishments conducted by the Congregations in France. They are not accustomed to calculate, and they could not be expected to perceive that even according to the Bill nine tenths of the property really owned by the Congregations, if not all of it, would revert to its original owners and not to them. They could not suspect, as Cunt de Mun pointed out in his noble speech against the bill that the Government is throwing this sop to them to win their favor and keep them quiet. To the French ear a milliard sounds so imposing that we cannot blame the masses of the people, if they fall to reckon that at most the interest on this sum would be 30 million francs, or \$6,000,000 annually, in return for the 1,000,000,000 francs taxes they would have to pay annually; so that in reality, instead of receiving the milliard of the Religious, or any part of it, the Government really means to exact a milliard from them, and that yearly.

M. Waldeck Rousseau and his allies may easily promise the people a prize that does not exist; he and his colleagues have in view the real profits of the Religious Congregations out of the property which is an easy task. It is worth more than the milliard of the Religious, and the Government could then release itself from the expense of 50,000,000 francs (\$10,000,000) yearly which it now pays as indemnity for its spoliation of Church property a century ago.

It is clear from what has been said above that the property of the Congregations in France has been rated far beyond its real value. The Government values it at the stupendous round number of 1,000,000,000 francs, under the catch word milliard; the Congregations themselves reckon their property as worth close to half that sum, 486,000,000 francs; of this sum a careful economist, M. Beauregard, in the Monde Economique, computes that the rented property is 129,408,320 francs, and the mortgaged, 206,885,802, so that in reality the clear titles of the Congregations are worth only 156,096,973 francs. Comte de Mun showed so clearly that the Government had exaggerated the value of the property held by the Religious that M. Waldeck Rousseau dared not meet him on this point.

One of his own friends, which was occupied by the Sisters of Providence, enumerated as one of their houses; the Grand Chartreux, which was confiscated by the Government during the Revolution, and never restored to them, was counted as worth 1,768,000 francs; the Hotel de Lorgues, in rue de Sevres, Paris, rented by the Lazarists, is credited to them for 2,900,000 francs; the Christian Brothers are accredited as owning the property they own of the city of Paris in Rue Ecole Polytechnique, and in his book Les Mesquines, mentions a house of the Ursulines, which M. Brisson valued at 700,000 francs, the Religious themselves at 197,000 francs, and the legal estimators at 173,000! The French people know by this what to think of the fraudulent valuations of their Government.

In view of this colossal falsification of values on the part of the French Government, it is scarcely worth while to pursue further the investigation of their specious pretense. It is silly on their part to say that the Congregations are hostile to the Republic, as if the 135,000 Religious women—Little Sisters of the Poor, Good Shepherd Sisters and the other 2,880 communities of women had nothing to do but plot against the Government—women who are too absorbed in their works of charity to know that their rulers are plotting their suppression. It is false to proclaim as traitors 35,000 religious men of whom all but 5,000 dwell in the cloister heedless of the machinations of Socialism, Masonry and Protestantism, while these 5,000 are busy teaching and preaching the word of God, all too busy, we should say, to attend to their own interests. It is an audacious libel on secular and religious clergy alike to intimate as M. Waldeck Rousseau is constantly doing, either that the 50,000 secular priests of France are so inefficient as to permit the 5,000 religious priests who are engaged in the ministry to usurp their places, or that these 5,000, most of whom are employed in teaching or missionary work, are so unfaithful to their religious rule as to desert their communities to go abroad seeking worldly favor, influence and preference to their brethren in the priesthood.

The more one studies this question the more one is amazed at the situation of affairs in France. How is it possible that in a nation of 38,500,000 people, of whom all but a million are Catholics, the Government should dare to make such an attack on civil and religious liberty? We may ask, what has come over the people that they return to their parliament men who are disposed to betray their fondest interests? Have Frenchmen finally fallen under the deadly yoke of evil secret societies? The petty persecutions by which not Religious only but all the clergy, Bishops as well as priests, and the laity are daily harassed everywhere in France, are sufficient indication of the spirit which animates their present Ministry. No opportunity of

annoying faithful Catholics is let pass; now an order to the navy forbidding their time honored observance of Good Friday, and then an order to the Seminary in the army not to visit their seminaries during their time of service; then all civil employes are forbidden to figure in church services; school teachers must not sing in the choir, and priests must not walk through the streets in their cassock; one Bishop is cited to court for refusing to admit Masonic flags into the church during a requiem, and another is fined for insisting on having a customary religious procession. All this the people tolerate, nay, indirectly, at least, support by their apathy, and directly also by entrusting with power men who are sworn enemies of religion.

Some explanation, if not excuse for this apathy and connivance is found in the activity with which the enemies of the Church are working against her. Father Belanger tells us: "Every morning unobtrusive lies crowd the columns of the newspapers like a swarming of the ancient harpies. They tell honest men that the Congregations are scandalously rich, bent on controlling everything, enemies of the republic, they falsely impute crimes to the members, ignore their virtues and services or even attribute them to bad motives. At the outset one scarcely believes them; a secret instinct makes one discern the falsehood of calumny in these denunciations; but daily the baneful swarm returns screaming its incessant refrain, piercing the ear and then the mind. At length, however, ever fond of justice and gratitude, one is overcome and dispirited by this deluge of lies." We need not go to France, nor read French newspapers, to realize that the modern newspaper press, like the history so often written about the Church, is a conspiracy against truth. The present crisis in France makes this very clear; but it has also made clear the diabolical purpose of this conspiracy of falsehood: "Iniquity hath lied unto itself," and before the world, as well as before the better classes of Frenchmen to day, the members of the French Government and of the majority supporting them are pilloried as masters of duplicity, as enemies of all religion, as depollers of private property, destroyers of liberty of conscience, and oppressors of the poor whom they are preparing to tax beyond endurance while deluding them with the hope of a share in their spoils. Even should the bill pass this result of its discussion is precious beyond reckoning. It has brought out clearly the fact that the attack on the Religious Congregations is only the first skirmish in a war on the Church itself.

Will the bill pass? Will the Government yield to the pressure brought to bear upon it by the Holy See? Will the Socialists prove inexorable in demanding the passage of Article XI of the bill forbidding association with foreign members or superiors, and the insertion of a clause against the religious vows, hereby implying that Bishops are wrong in obeying the Pope and making "unlawful" even the secular priest's vow of chastity? It is idle to speculate on these and similar questions. Thus far four articles of the bill have been passed, the fourth with an odious discrimination against Religious Congregations, while the Socialists passed in spite of the Premier's protest. It is said that the Government is alarmed at the arrogance of its Socialist allies, and that it may resign, modify the bill or protract or postpone the discussion of its crucial Article XI until autumn. In any case, the Congregations which, overtaxed as they are, have little to lose by suppression, have already gained by the noble vindications of the Holy Father, M. Monlaries, Comte de Mun and the Abbe Gayraud, as well as by the letters of the Bishops who have espoused their cause. In no event will the Government make it difficult for purely charitable and missionary Congregations to reorganize under its patronage; the Pope's letter has had this effect and his threat to deprive France of her missionary protectorate has brought her Ministers to terms. Still, it would seem that the teaching orders must go, and none of their members may exercise his profession of teaching until he shall have forsworn his vows. While following this legislation, and praying for France and for the bishops and priests who are threatened with the loss of their best auxiliaries, as well as for the Religious men and women who may soon be impoverished and driven out of home and country, it will not be amiss for us to consider our own affairs and try to realize that quite as much as our French brethren we need to shake off our apathy and unconcern about our religious interests in our own country, and prepare ourselves to resist the aggression of too many of our Protestant fellow-citizens, if not the oppression of our Government, at home as well as in our new possessions.

massive, thick walls and vaulted. It was originally occupied by the French, but after the capitulation became British military headquarters and was occupied by General Amherst, where he signed many of the historical documents of the times. Up to a few years ago it was used as a private residence, its latest occupant being Mr. Thomas Malone, and on his leaving it, it was converted into a club house, the St. Louis Club, and was so occupied at the time of its destruction. It was in this house also that Colonel B. C. A. Juby, a prominent character in the old Province of Lower Canada, in his day, was born in 1795.

THE LENTEN SEASON.

Lent is the soul's accounting-time. As the man of business at stated times sets his affairs in order, so during Lent the practical Catholic turns his attention more closely to the things which concern his eternal salvation. He inquires more diligently into his relations with God; and he endeavors to place himself in his true position of a creature towards his Creator. Strive how we may, we are so imperfect and surrounded with temporal concerns that we lose sight of our spiritual affairs almost unconsciously. The holy season of Lent, with its solemn reminders of religious truths and religious duties, helps to awaken in us a sense of our dependence upon God, and to inflame us with a desire to serve Him more faithfully. Begin Lent with Ash Wednesday, with its significant reminder that we are but dust after all, despite our riches, honors, titles, hopes and ambitions, and that, be our time on earth long or short, we must finally return to the dust whence we sprang, the Church day by day, and week by week, constantly calls upon us to remember God and the things of God; to remember death, and to bear in mind the eternal consequences of mortal sin. Every Catholic should listen to the voice of the Church especially during Lent, and so live according to its spirit that the sea may be to him truly a holy season, so that he may rejoice at Easter in the Resurrection of Our Lord.—Sacred Heart Review

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HISTORIC LANDMARKS.

The partial destruction of a noted Canadian landmark a few weeks ago, the house at one time occupied by the Irish poet—"the loved of all circles, the pride of his own"—Tom Moore as Lechaine Que, has been quickly followed by the total disappearance of another and still more ancient edifice, or witness the following:

One of the oldest, if not the very oldest house in Three Rivers, Q.B., was burnt to the ground at an early hour on Saturday morning, 9th inst. Cause of fire unknown. As may be supposed, it was built in the style peculiar to those days in Canada,