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Spain,* France,† Italy—The Papacy.‡

THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF ITALY.

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Even if the space assigned me were more ample, I should find it difficult to give a just account of the religious condition of Italy. One stands in great danger of generalizing too rapidly. Italy, indeed, is no longer a mere "geographical expression." She boasts of being "one and indivisible." Politically she is indeed a unit. One language also, with but slight dialectic differences, prevails from the Alps to the south of Sicily; but the diversities among the inhabitants are exceedingly great. The Venetian and the Sicilian are in many respects dissimilar. So are the Milanese and the Neapolitans. The Genoese were declared by Dante to be different in every custom—*diversi d'ogni costume*—from other Italians; and their peculiarities are passing away with exceeding slowness. Since the fall of the Roman Empire, about fourteen centuries ago, Italy, until of recent years, has had a sad and stormy history; there have not only been frequent invasions from without, but she has been distracted by internal strife and struggle. In such a state of things great differences of character and feeling have unavoidably arisen; and although under the beneficent sway of the House of Savoy these have begun to disappear, it will doubtless take generations before a truly national character can be formed.

It may be supposed that the religious diversities are smaller than our words imply. Still, they are by no means inconsiderable. Romanism has not uni-

fied, nor indeed has it moulded the mind of Italy to the extent that is generally believed.

The religion of the State is professedly Romanism; but the Italian Government is largely tolerant. The claims of the Church are by no means conceded in all cases by the State authorities. Thus every priest must serve for a year in the army; and when civil offences are committed by the clergy, they are tried by civil tribunals. On a great public occasion, such as the celebration of a victory, a bishop is usually asked to conduct a religious service; but except when the troops are out of Italy—in Africa, for example—there are no army chaplains; and in garrison towns there is no religious service for soldiers. (For ships of war chaplains are appointed.) The State and Church are by no means on friendly terms. The State has confiscated the property of the Church, but assigns the working clergy a salary during their period of service, and a small pension in old age. The clergy, as a rule, are poor; even high dignitaries cannot be called rich. The great body of the priests are the sons of peasants; noble families are generally reluctant that their members should enter clerical life. By the year 1867 many thousands of ecclesiastical foundations—which maintained about sixty thousand souls as monks or nuns—had been suppressed; their revenues were taken over by the State and life-pensions assigned their inmates. New corporations cannot legally be set up, but the law is continually evaded; and the State, anxious to avoid, if possible, an open rupture with the Church, winks at the abuse. The "secularization of Church revenues" was, of course, vehemently denounced by the Pope and the bishops, and the indignation of the Church rose to fever-heat when the Pope was stripped of his temporal dominions and the States of the Church

* See pp. 177 (March), 365 (May), 577 (present issue).

† See p. 537 (July), 602 (present issue).

‡ See pp. 135 (February), 201 (March), 285 (April), 565, 589 (present issue).