

THE POSITION OF THE HOLY FATHER.

The cablegrams concerning the Holy Father's health and the position of affairs in Italy, which have been so frequently published of late in the newspapers, are not remarkable for their truthfulness. These reports are started systematically by the enemies of the Holy See. The Reuter agencies, on which the dailies of the States and Canada chiefly depend for their European news, are in the hands of Jews, avowed enemies of Christ and His Church. Catholics do not generally heed such reports but wait until their contradiction follows. It is sufficient, however, for enterprising editors and managers that they are pleasing to, and urgently sought after, by a certain class of their readers, who would feel aggrieved if they were not occasionally treated to sharp denunciations of the Pope and prophecies of the speedy downfall of Rome.

Last week the news of this kind surpassed itself in impudence. That half a column of any newspaper deeming itself respectable should have been given up to a cabled opinion of the infidel author of "*Le Vie de Jesus*," Ernest Renan, on the future of the Papacy, is what no reasonable man could have thought possible. When this French atheist first published his blasphemous work, he vainly thought that he had wrought the destruction of all faith in Christianity. He is now asked to give his opinion on the future of Papacy. To what measures will not the enemies of the Church descend in order to dim, even a little, the brightness of her glory. He therefore prophesies that the Pope will soon have to leave Rome, that the Church will be rent asunder and Roman Catholicism utterly obliterated. Though no one has ever given Renan the credit of being, even a third-rate statesman, yet when the subject of his declamation is the Pope of Rome the fantasies of his disordered imagination become, for not a few, a "most important opinion."

To be a prisoner, to be driven out of Rome is nothing new to a successor of St. Peter, whom Herod put in chains. Many a Roman Pontiff was martyred and others have died in exile, but the Church with her visible head still remains. Often have "the kings of the earth stood up and the princes met together against the Lord and His anointed." Powerful men and mighty armies have sought to destroy the indefectible Church of Christ. The Lord has laughed at them. They have melted before His face as wax under the sun. Renan could have learned from the study of the history of his native France how feeble is the power of the mightiest conqueror against the word of Christ, or against the Head of His Church. Napoleon the Great brought Pius VII. a prisoner to France, yet Napoleon died a prisoner in exile, while the Pope was restored to his throne. Leo XIII. may be driven from Rome any day. He may die in his prison or in other land that may shelter him. Another shall be called to fill his place and the Church shall continue on forever. Christ has so promised: Behold I am with you all days even unto the consummation of ages. He founded his Church on the Rock of Peter and neither against the Rock nor the Church shall the gates of Hell prevail.

The Church has met with persecution everywhere. The world has always been at enmity with her. This is what Christ led us to expect. It is a visible note of the true Church, "If the world hate you know ye that it hated me before you. The servant is not greater than his master. As they have persecuted me so they will also persecute you." (St. John XV.) This enmity, amid all the changes of time, has always manifested itself in the same way, by attacking the Sovereign Pontiff, the Head of the Church. In the beginning Herod seized St. Peter and cast him into prison. The Roman Cæsars sent his successors to a martyr's death, with the expectation of drowning the whole Church in the ocean of their blood. In the middle ages German Emperors, usurping the rights of the Holy Church, sought in justification of their evil acts to banish the true Popes from Rome and set up anti-popes in their stead. And now modern Cæsarianism, claiming for itself the things that are God's, is assailing in every possible manner our present illustrious Pontiff, Leo XIII. As the Pope and the Church have passed through other persecutions so will they through this. The Cæsars have passed away. The old German Empire has given place to another. The King of Italy has been only a name before, and will

again. But the Popes of Rome have succeeded each other in an unbroken line, and will so succeed until the end of all things. The united prayers of the faithful throughout the world now ascending to Heaven will be heard, and peace and freedom once more come to the Church. After the lust and most terrible of the persecutions which she suffered from the Roman Emperors, the world thought and proclaimed that the name of Christian was forever blotted out. It was then God chose to declare His power and scatter His enemies. So has it ever been in the history of the Church, and so will it ever be. When the world thinks itself strongest, when it prides itself on its victory over the Church, God will arise in His might and manifest His power to the dismay of His enemies. The same God who sent an angel to free St. Peter from his chains and deliver him from his prison, will give liberty and peace to Church and Pontiff.

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CATHOLIC MONTREAL.

Montreal is so truly a Catholic city from its very foundation, that it should never lose sight of its old traditions. Its founders were M. Olier, who also founded the order of Saint Sulpice, M. de la Dauversiere, a pious gentleman of Normandy, and we may add Sister Marguerite Bourgeoys, foundress of the Congregation de N. D., and Melle. Mance, of the Hotel Dieu. The first governor and co-founder of Montreal was not only a Catholic, but one who aspired to high perfection. The city named Ville Marie, was consecrated in a special manner to the Holy Family, and very shortly after the first settlement was made there, the three communities of Saint Sulpice the Congregation and the Hospital Nuns began likewise their life of usefulness, being designed by M. Olier, to honour respectively Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Previous to the arrival of the first colonists, we read of the Chevalier de Montmagny, Viceroy of New France, who was likewise a devout Catholic and a Knight of Malta, going, in company with the Jesuit Superior at Quebec and others, to examine and pronounce upon the site of the future city.

Parkman and other historians give us a graphic description of the first Mass said at Ville Marie, in the May of 1642, by the Jesuit, Pere Vimont. He at first intoned the *Veni Creator*, and having said Mass, addressed a few but very impressive words to the little band who stood about, comparing their undertaking to the seed which was to grow into a stately tree.

In the group around him were, the Governor, Paul de Maissonneuve, Melle Mance and Madame de la Peltrie, joint foundress with Marie de l'Incarnation of the Ursulines of Quebec. The air is described as soft and balmy. Nature had put forth all its charms, the young verdure was already mantling the hoary sides of Mont Royal, when the spiritual life of Ville Marie began. Of course, it would be impossible to glance, even after the most cursory manner, at the varied incidents of these primitive days, all so truly Christian, so truly Catholic. Now the old Bonsecours church, not that of course with which we are familiar, but one occupying the same site, was built mainly through the exertions of Marguerite Bourgeoys and her companions. How the parish church was erected, and how devoted priests, the Jesuits, ministered until the arrival of the Sulpicians, who were designed for the special pastorate of Montreal, gave noble examples of zeal and heroism. Of the nuns, too, and their labours. While the settlers were, comparatively speaking, a handful, Sister Bourgeoys collected the children of white people and Indians alike in one of those towers, which stand at the gate of the Grand Seminary to-day. The other was a chapel, and under it is buried the remains of an Indian Saint. In the words of the late Thomas D'Arcy McGee:—

But men or angels seldom saw a sight to heaven more dear,
Than Sister Margaret and her flock upon our hillside here.

A charming incident is recorded during the governorship of M. de Maissonneuve. Floods threatened the very existence of the fort, which not only was the chief means of defence for the straggling settlement, but also contained the provisions and ammunition brought from France. This was at Christmas time. M. de Maissonneuve made a vow that if the fort were spared, he would plant a cross on the summit of Mount Royal. The waters advanced to the very threshold,