

word, the prospects were very gloomy.

But the indestructible vital power of the Church exerted itself likewise, and the grace of God rewarded the efforts of the Popes, who graced the nineteenth century. Pius VIII. ruled but a very short time, but Pius VII., Leo XII., Gregory XVI., Pius IX. and Leo XIII., were beacon lights on the bark of St. Peter. A great division took place amongst Catholics: the chaff was separated from the wheat, and whilst thousands abandoned their faith, and became either infidels or heretics, millions approached Rome closer and closer, feeling that union is strength, and only a close and lasting union with the Apostolic See can bring forth blossoms and fruit of a spiritual life. The schismatic attempts of Ronge, Dollinger, etc., proved abortive, their deluded followers, we might almost say, vanished. The Syllabus of Pius IX. and the Clementine Council of the Vatican pronounced clearly and unmistakably against the errors and fallacies of modern learning. The centralization of the ecclesiastical power, united bishops, priests and people into an homogeneous mass of faithful Catholics, and we can say, without fear of contradiction that there is no century in Church history which shows the Church as numerous, as united, as clear in her doctrine, as successful in its work, as the departing nineteenth century.

The periodical change of seasons in nature finds its counterpart also in the life of mankind. New life is substituted for old and decayed life, and when nations become unfaithful to grace, God in their stead gives His grace to others, who hitherto sat in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Since Gregory XVI., the foreign missions amongst pagan nations have developed in a manner truly miraculous. There is no country on earth where Catholic missionaries have not penetrated. Hundreds of them died martyrs, a still greater number succumbed to jungle fevers, malaria, etc., and all of them had to lead a life of extreme poverty and consequent privations. But their converts number millions, and no amount of persecution was able to uproot the Church in Japan, China, Tonking, Annam and Siam, or on the Cannibal Islands. The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians, now, as well as in the time of Tertullian. Even in Protestant countries, like England, Sweden and Norway, there is a movement toward Rome, gathering force by days, and the Church not only made up for the losses of the sixteenth century, and the smaller losses of the centuries following, but she far exceeds her former figures. Today we count 320,000,000 Catholics, 150,000,000 Protestants and 130,000,000 Schismatics. The latter at least in Asia and Africa are also casting looks of longing upon the centre of Catholic unity, and during the century about three millions returned to the unity of the Church, whilst others are preparing to follow their example.

Turning our eyes upon the non-Catholic denominations, an entirely different spectacle meets our gaze. The nineteenth century showed no signs of life, but of decay. Tired of the endless dogmatic disputes, the Protestants to a great extent threw the keys into the arms of agnosticism. Others separated from the denomination to which they belonged, founded new confessions, and every attempt at reunion only brought out more fully the hopeless decision. Biblical criticism gradually led many to a rejection of the Bible itself, the cold nec-

luge more and more failing to satisfy feeling hearts, and apathy took the place of fanaticism. Not even the hatred against Rome, till now the rallying point of Protestantism, is able any longer to unite them. More and more the eyes of the better classes are wistfully turning to Rome, and ministers find themselves and their meeting houses abandoned.

In England the Tractarian movement brought church services nearer to that of the Catholic Church, and many of the learned and noble returned to the faith of their fathers. In Germany Frederic William III., King of Prussia by royal prerogative, welded Lutherans and Reformers into an evangelical church. The recalcitrant ministers were imprisoned and their churches closed. Many of the Lutherans emigrated to America, where the diverse churches led only to infidelity and the Protestant churches in the cities were emptied. The modern Julian the Apostate, Bismarck, tried to separate the Catholic Church of Germany from the centre of unity, and for fifteen years the Kulturkampf was waged by all means of injustice and brutal force. The May laws, intended for the destruction of the Catholic Church, inflicted a mortal wound on the evangelical churches. The protection of the old Catholics could not foster the abortive child into life, but the Catholics fought, united, acted under the experienced leadership of a Mallinkrodt, Windhorst, Lieber, Ballestrem, and they conquered. Bismarck went first to Canossa, and later on out of office.

America is a very good exemplar of the many sects wherein people change from one to the other, as they change their clothing. There are about three hundred and twenty different denominations in the United States, and this scattering of forces has produced a lethargy more pronounced than in Europe. One result is, that at present the majority of Americans are not even baptized. Infidelity dominates.

Likewise the "Greek Orthodox Church" in Russia, Turkey and Greece shows but signs of stagnation, and the sects, separating from her in spite of governmental persecution, are getting daily more numerous, as their tenets more extravagant and even criminal.

It appears to us probable, that the twentieth century will see the end of Protestantism as a system, and the battle will be fought between the Catholic Church and infidelity. The fate of the Schismatic churches is identical with the fate of the Russian Empire, and we do not know how this will turn out.

The metaphysical science (Philosophy) found during the century many exponents, but the quality did not correspond with the quantity. It was not, *Multum in parvo*, but *Parum in multis*. Reason wished to emancipate itself from the dominion of faith, and the result was the abandonment of the old, tried and proved propositions of Aristotelian and Scholastic philosophy and a wild, untenable speculation. Pantheism, Atheism, Theism and Idealism were the ruling systems, and under the leadership of Kant, the delirious dreams of transcendental speculations ripened everywhere. Of late there are signs that even the philosophers are ashamed of their work, and are returning to common sense, so that we can hope to see a really rational philosophy in the coming century. In this case philosophy will be a valuable ally to faith.

In natural science the century was

very productive, and can boast of solid progress. But also here we find much chaff amongst the wheat. Instead of being contented with examining the laws of nature, the scientists placed their investigations into the service of infidelity, and geology, chemistry, archaeology, astronomy, and kindred sciences were used as a means at their disposal, to disprove the Bible and rob the people of the treasures of faith. Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Jackel, Hartman, etc., became conspicuous by their bold attempts to disprove the history of creation as contained in the Bible, and to declare man evolved from an ape. But the zenith of their novelties is passed, their sun is setting and here also we witness a gradual return to sound and impartial logic.

On the other side newly invented or improved instruments and the close observation of nature led to important discoveries of natural laws, and allowed natural philosophy a phenomenal development, of which all countries and all classes profited. This work is but begun, and the new century will behold marvels. Earth is man's legitimate dominion, and he cannot call himself fully the Lord of his dominion, until he fully understands his kingdom.

In consequence of the progress in natural science an immense number of mechanical inventions was made, by which the century was far above any of the preceding ones. In the beginning of the century any kind of texture was made by hand, and manufacturing depended on horse or water power. Travelling was slow and fatiguing, navigation uncertain and hazardous, light was furnished by wax or tallow candles. Now the nations possess steam and electric power, petroleum, gas and electric light. The hand-loom gave way to the most complicated machinery, replacing the work of thousands of hands. Travelling is common, distance is annihilated, the elements are successfully overcome, and even aerial navigation seems near its solution.

Warfare, instead of being an onslaught of brutal masses, has become a real science, carried on on scientific principles. Agricultural machines sow a production far beyond the most sanguine expectation. Medicine and surgery are boasting of marvelous triumphs. Domestic comfort is tenfold to what it was one hundred years ago.

All these improvements, however, were not an unalloyed blessing to the world. It is even an open question, whether they were a blessing at all. We are in a period of transition. Machinery rendered possible the centralization of production: the middle class of mechanics could not compete with the enormous and cheap output of large factories. An appalling disproportion between the earnings of capital and that of labor shook human society to its foundations, and the social question became a puzzling one. It is not solved to-day, it will not be solved in the near future, and it is impossible to foretell the solution after the present fermentation is over and the new state of things an accomplished fact. Wealth and poverty are both gigantic forces, and the bitter contention between them is of paramount physical, moral, social and religious importance. Who will gain the mastery? Ultimately we believe that poverty, that the masses, will win, but by the sword.

Also in politics the century brought about enormous changes. We spoke above of the downfall of Napoleon, which changed the map of Europe. But this is not the only change. The

holy Roman empire of the German nation was buried in 1806. Holland lost Belgium; Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein; France, Alsace-Lorraine; Austria, Lombardy and Venice; Spain and Portugal, most of their colonies; the Holy Father, his patrimony of St. Peter; Turkey lost Egypt, Rumania, Bulgaria and Servia; Poland and some of the minor German States were wiped out as independent States. Luxembourg became independent of Holland; France conquered Algiers and Tonkin; Russia, a great part of Asia; England took possession of every vacant spot on earth which she could reach in time. The empires of France and Brazil were changed into republics; the United States developed from small beginnings into a powerful nation.

Most of these changes were brought about by war, and the pages of history are filled with the records of blood. The peace congress at the Hague was in the eyes of the world but a farce, and the wars now going on are but acts of highway robbery.

The most important political change was in the governments themselves. Formerly governments were autocratic and the king's interests were identical with the interests of the country, but now the industrial and commercial interests of the nation determine its politics, and dynasties have to identify themselves with these interests. The facility of transportation and postal communication brought the nations nearer to each other than they had been heretofore but they also excited greater jealousy and fiercer competition, till at the close of the century nations appear to us like shop-keepers, trying to outlive each other, and ready to use the most reprehensible means to gain financial advantages.

It was a delirious dance around the golden calf, and it will be, it must be, the task of the twentieth century, to reduce these aspirations to a legitimate size, else mankind will soon be more wretched than it ever was within the history of the world. Signs of improvement are not wanting, but just at present the crisis of the fever has not yet passed, and hence we have to expect convulsions in the near future, which will clear the atmosphere, bridle human passions and lay a better foundation for the future. May God grant it!

## NO LONGER "DARKEST AFRICA."

"The twentieth century Africa promises startling contrasts when compared with the Africa of the nineteenth century," writes Hon. O. P. Austin in the December Forum. "With an area four times as great as that of the United States, a population of 150,000,000, a soil and climate capable of infinite variety of production, a rapidly expanding commerce, and the greatest known supplies of ivory, gold and diamonds, its development under the modern methods which are now being applied to it is practically assured. The home of the oldest civilization, it is the last of the continents to yield to the touch of the newest civilization. But yesterday enveloped in the darkness of mystery without and ignorance within, to-day illuminated by the search light of modern methods; and as its importance and attractions are being recognized, with this recognition must come development. With 200,000,000 Europeans scattered over its vast area, acquainting themselves with its natural conditions and requirements, with the steamer, the railroad, the telegraph and the tele-

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