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THE PILGRIMAGES TO ROME.

There can be no doubt that the multitudes of pilgrims, who go to Rome annually to express their attachment and loyalty to the Holy See, have their faith and piety strengthened both by their visits to the Holy Father personally and by the many evidences of the antiquity and continuity of the Catholic teaching which they see on every hand.

On the other hand there are memorials which attest that Catholic doctrine is the same to-day as it was one thousand years, and even eighteen and a half centuries ago.

Rome is the city which was destined by Almighty God as the depository of Faith, and the insult to our Almighty Creator is the more grievous that Free-thinkers should select the Eternal City as their place of meeting, because it is the city which has been designated as the tranquil and venerated See of Christ's vicar on earth.

There are, especially in the catacombs, other testimonies, not only to the Pontificate of St. Peter in Rome, but to other doctrines of the Church which modern heresiarches have denied, and no one can thoughtfully see these testimonies without acknowledging that the teaching of the Catholic Church has remained unchanged during the lapse of centuries.

the pilgrims on their strong faith, their practice of the Christian virtues, and their frequentation of the sacraments instituted by our Blessed Lord, the Saviour of mankind.

The pilgrims were told of their noble ancestors who loved the Church of Christ, and "were devoted without reserve to the chair of Peter, being ever ready to defend and maintain what is true and good." They were exhorted not to be degenerate descendants of those glorious ancestors, for they would thus work not only for their own happiness, but likewise for the prosperity of France.

The Holy Father added that if it be necessary, he will be ever ready to accept any suffering to make France happy, prosperous and great.

The pilgrims were deeply moved by this affectionate address, and they returned to their homes with increased affection for the venerable Head of the Church.

As Premier Combes has become so paternal that he must meddle in the private affairs of the French people, and as he forbids many of his officials to hear Mass, to say the Rosary, or to venerate the crucifix, we presume his next step may be to forbid his subjects to go to Rome any more as pilgrims.

THE FREETHINKERS AND THE POPE.

The Holy Father has pronounced a solemn protest against the Congress of Free Thinkers which recently met in Rome and passed resolutions denying the divinity of Christ and the divine authority of the Christian religion.

The Holy Father, in his paternal protest against the blasphemous meeting, expresses intense sorrow that the divine work which Christ did on earth should be the object of attack by human malice, and all the more that such an attack should be made in Rome, the city from which the Church on earth is governed.

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The Holy Father expresses that he has received much consolation for this insult to the Divine Majesty, from the fact that he has heard recently from many pilgrims to the Holy City expressions of strong faith and filial affection, and particularly from one thousand members of the Catholic Association of French young men who visited the city a few weeks ago, and were received by the Pope at a solemn reception.

Nevertheless, it is stated by those who witnessed the Free Thinkers' assemblage that it was a complete failure in regard to the intellectual standing of those who took part in it. In fact, the Paris correspondent of the New York Tribune declares in a cable despatch to his paper that it was a complete fiasco.

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In their expressed condemnation of liberty of conscience, and the toleration of those who disagreed with them. All this did not prevent this Congress from aiming at the forcible suppression of Christianity, and from passing resolutions to this effect.

Professor Haeckel himself seems to have been about the most eminent of the scientists who were present at the gathering, but it is well known that he is far from being as versed in scientific research as were even some of those who have preceded him.

UNDER WHICH KING?

To the present time, the Sees of Laval and Dijon, in France, have not been filled. They are vacant owing to the resignation of their Bishops which was requested by the Pope, while M. Combes, the French Premier, insisted that they should retain their offices.

M. Combes was approached to ascertain whether he could agree to the nomination of new Bishops to replace Mgrs. Geay and Le Nordetz, but he refused to recognize that any resignations have taken place.

Under the circumstances the Holy Father would be justified in nominating Bishops to the vacancies without troubling himself to please the Government; but this action would be interpreted by M. Combes as a breach of the Concordat, and would furnish a pretext for the introduction of a bill to annul the Concordat, though it is M. Combes and not the Pope who has openly violated that agreement.

Such a pretext the Holy Father does not wish to furnish, but he has found a means to supply temporarily the needs of the two dioceses, without infringing the Concordat. It is, of course, necessary there should be a head for each diocese, and it is, therefore, now announced that the Pope will nominate two titular Bishops as Apostolic Administrators for the two dioceses without waiting for the consent of the Government.

M. Combes has relied on the fact that there is an army of between six and seven hundred thousand officials through the country who depend upon him for their daily bread, so that he has in this a security for a certain amount of influence to be exerted in his favor at the next elections.

Hitherto, we confess, we have been deceived in our expectation that the French people would rise in their might to put an end to infidel domination, as the Belgians did years ago.

One thing is sure, that the French Government must now be certain that the Bishops and clergy will not render obedience to an infidel government in its usurpation of an authority which has been divinely given only to the successor of St. Peter.

ITALIAN CATHOLICS AND THE SUFFRAGE.

A despatch from Rome states that several Bishops of North Italy, among whom is Cardinal Ferrari, Archbishop of Milan, and an intimate friend of the Pope, have united in petitioning the Holy Father to consider whether the moment has not come when it would be advisable to allow Catholics to participate in the general elections of Italy.

It is said that the petitioners represent that the abstention of Catholics from voting during the last thirty-four years has brought no advantage to the claims of the Vatican for independence, but has seriously endangered the interests of religion by entrusting power to the open enemies of the Church, and they believe that if the people are allowed to vote, at least many good Catholic candidates would be elected who would be somewhat favorable to religion, even though active friends of the Church might not be successful as candidates for the Chamber of Deputies.

The prohibition to Catholics to take part in the elections was issued by Pope Pius IX. after the occupation of Rome by the Italian Government.

The Pope considered that the voting of faithful Catholics from abstention at the Parliamentary elections would constitute a continuous protest against the occupation of the States of the Church, and it was hoped that this protest would result in forcing the Government to make peace with the Church by reinstating the Pope as sovereign of Rome at least, and the territory in the immediate vicinity of Rome as far as the sea. It is difficult to say what policy is likely to have the best results, but there are many who think that the interests of religion would not suffer if the suggestion said to be given by the Bishops referred to were followed.

It cannot be denied that the majority which sustains Premier Combes in the French Chamber of Deputies is a decisive one; for though it has varied from time to time, sometimes growing less, on the whole it has kept close to one hundred, though it has at times gone as low as eighty.

THE SITUATION IN FRANCE.

It cannot be denied that the majority which sustains Premier Combes in the French Chamber of Deputies is a decisive one; for though it has varied from time to time, sometimes growing less, on the whole it has kept close to one hundred, though it has at times gone as low as eighty.

It is very possible, and even probable that the disorderly conduct of M. Combes' opponents has been misrepresented, as we know that it is a favorite pastime with the associated press reporters to represent in an unfavorable light those in Europe who support the Catholic Church, and to represent in the best light possible those who are endeavoring to work out her overthrow.

The Premier declared that the Concordat between the Church and State cannot be kept up; for the Pope has no right to discipline a Bishop, contrary to the French laws, as Pope Pius X. had attempted to do with Mgr. Geay.

The truth is that the supervision of the Episcopate belongs essentially to the Pope, and no French law or laws of any other country can restrict that right, which is included in the office which Christ committed to St. Peter.

the French Government to have him appointed in the first place. He was more a Government Bishop than a Churchman, and it is no very great matter for surprise that Premier Combes has constituted himself Bishop Geay's defender. But the Bishop himself practically admitted that Pope Pius X. was right, for notwithstanding the French Premier's advocacy of his cause, and his prohibition against the Bishop's obeying the decree ordering him to go to Rome, Bishop Geay admitted his error, and yielded to the Holy Father's desire that he should resign his Bishopric.

M. Combes pretends to believe that the charges against the Bishop were trumped up by the Royalists because Mgr. Geay is a Republican. That was certainly not the case, for the original charges were brought up under Leo XIII., who was a true friend to the Republic; but in any case, it is the Head of the Church, and not the Head of the State, and particularly an unbelieving Premier, who has the right to decide who is a suitable person to hold the office of a Bishop.

The victory remains with Pope Pius X, though, indeed, it is in the power of M. Combes to persecute the Church. He cannot, however, carry out his plan to make the doctrine and discipline of the Church depend upon his whims, and the firmness of the Pope has taught him this lesson.

He threatens to abolish the Concordat. Should this be done, it may not be so great an evil to the Church as he imagines. The Concordat appears to be of little benefit when the Government which has the operation of it in its hands violates its provisions as will as Premier Combes has done.

Yet, we have still hope that M. Combes will not indefinitely have his own way. There is good reason to believe that his course is not so popular with the French people as he imagines, and he may be thwarted even in his effort to abolish the Concordat. Already many departmental Councils have passed resolutions condemnatory of the policy of the Government which has caused so much trouble and dissatisfaction through the country. It is a surprise to the Government that among the Councils which have done this is that of the Lower Seine.

This recent resolution shows that there is great dissatisfaction existing at M. Combes' course, and it cannot but influence the next elections, if it does not even influence the present Chamber to call a halt.

We admit that we cannot fully account for the apathy hitherto shown by the French people in supporting M. Combes, but we believe it arises from a general indifference to the political situation. But this indifference is apparently passing away, and those who seem to know best the signs of the times foretell that there will, on the next opportunity, be a large majority against the irreligious policy of the Government, which will bring about the downfall of the present Cabinet.

It is stated also that though there is no nuncio of the Pope at Paris, and no French Ambassador at Rome, there are communications between the Vatican and the French Government, carried on by special messengers, and it is hoped, notwithstanding the hostilities which have been carried on between the two authorities, that an agreement will be reached soon regarding the appointment of Bishops to all the Sees now vacant.

Premier Combes gave a list of those whom he wished to be selected, but Pope Pius X. insists that only those who are worthy of the office shall be appointed; and so far an agreement has not been reached; but the demand of M. Combes has already been greatly modified, and it is expected that there shall be other modifications to meet the Pope's views. The Pope has already required exact information to be given him in reference to all those who have been named by the Government, and he will not appoint any whom he does not esteem worthy of it.

THE BOSTON P. E. CONVENTION.

A conclusion has been reached at the Boston Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church on the question of the marriage of a divorced person.

The Bishops were in favor of the prohibition of all such marriages, except in the case when the parties have been reconciled and wish their remarriage to be celebrated anew. The House of Deputies, composed of clergy and laity, was divided in opinion, the clergy being mostly against the marriage of a divorcee; and the laity in favor thereof, if the divorced person has been the innocent party when a decree of divorce had been issued by the courts on the ground of adultery.

The question in dispute was earnestly debated without either side giving up its view, till at last a compromise was agreed upon, and it was agreed that "no minister, knowingly and after due enquiry, shall solemnize the marriage of any person who has been or is the husband or wife of any other person then living, from whom he or she has been divorced for any cause arising after marriage. But this canon shall not be held to apply to the innocent party in a divorce for adultery, provided that before the application for such remarriage a period of not less than one year shall have elapsed after the granting of such divorce."

Clauses are added requiring the papers and the decree of the court to be shown in evidence that the divorce is asked for in accordance with the requirements of this canon; and to the minister the discretion is given to decline to solemnize such marriage.

An amendment was also passed in reference to the administration of the sacraments, providing that if a clergyman shall have reasonable cause to doubt whether a person has been married otherwise than as the Word of God and the discipline of this Church allow, such clergyman shall refer the matter to the Bishops before administering the sacraments. The Deputies had made an exception to this clause in favor of the innocent party divorced on the ground of adultery who had remarried, but the Bishops struck out the exception. Their action was afterward accepted by the Deputies.

It is supposed by leading Churchmen that the middle course thus adopted will greatly diminish the number of remarriages of divorcees in the Church; but it is stated to be the intention of those who are entirely opposed to such remarriages to obtain an expression of opinion by the Convention against such marriages under any conditions.

According to the compromise which has been effected, the so-called innocent party is actually authorized to marry some third person, though delays are thrown into the way. If we are to believe that this canon is intended to meet the divine law on the subject of marriage, as we have been told, it seems that it should either allow the marriage without putting difficulties on the road, or prohibit it absolutely.

The motion for a change of name of the Protestant Episcopal Church was defeated after a long debate, the present name being retained by a considerable majority.

SOLDIERS AT MASS.

G. V. L., of Elm Creek, Manitoba, writes: "There are certain French noblemen who stand during the elevation. Is that a privilege granted the French nobility and the French army?"

When Pepin the first king of the Carolingian dynasty of France was solicited by Pope Stephen III, to protect him against Astolphus, king of the Lombards, Pepin hastened to the rescue of the Holy Father, and defeated Astolphus. The exarchate of Ravenna was taken by the victorious monarch and added to the dominion of the Pope. It was allowed when Pepin and his soldiers assisted at Mass, that the same form of homage should be shown to the Blessed Sacrament by the soldiers, as was shown to the king; namely, they stood in the royal presence and presented arms. Hence at the elevation of the Mass the soldiers when in military array presented arms standing, and the custom has been continued, but there is no privilege of this kind that we are aware of where there is not a military array. The concession was given in recognition of the aid given by the army to the Pope.

We regret very much to chronicle the death of Rev. Father Twohey, parish priest of Trenton, Ontario. Father Twohey's death took place at Mount Clemens, Mich. He had gone there for treatment for inflammatory rheumatism, but died of typhoid fever. Father Twohey was a native of Lindsay. To the Archbishop, priests and people of the Archdiocese of Kingston Father Twohey's death will be sad news. He was a most exemplary priest of Holy Church, and was held in the highest regard by all who had the privilege of his acquaintance. May his soul rest in peace!