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VOL. XI, No. 16

TORONTO, THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 1908

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French Politics and the Religion of the French

Two Interesting Communications—Abbe Gayraud Discusses the Politicians and Looks to the Survival of Democracy

CATHOLIC TIMES DESCRIBES THE SYSTEM

(Paris Univers, March 31.)

The iniquitous deed has been done! There has been found in the Chamber of Deputies a majority so blind to the true interests of the country, so devoid of all political sense, so regardless of the rights of their fellow-citizens in the matter of religious liberty, so ignorant of the real role played by the religious congregations, so led away by partizanship as to commit this act of injustice of refusing to listen to the applications for authorization which, under the law, the congregations had a legal right to make. They have done this that they may be able to perpetrate a crime against liberty and the Fatherland by abolishing religious associations, which have rendered to France, at home and abroad, such brilliant and indisputable services—associations the members of which now only demand the liberty that is conceded to all citizens.

What were the motives that determined the votes of this brutal majority? Were they influenced by the sophisms heard in smoking rooms and in the privacy of the lodges about the incompatibility of religious vows with the modern dignity of the individual and the doctrine of the inalienable rights of the man and the citizen? Do they believe the statement that the character of the education given by the religious associations is hostile to democracy and the Republic and imperils the moral unity of the country? Are they convinced that the state alone has the right to instruct and mold the minds of the young by compelling the heads of families to accept its schoolmasters and its teachings? Do they think it is their duty to defend the secular clergy against the alleged encroachments and exercise a censorship as to the orthodoxy of the sermons so as to preserve the purity of the faith? Do they honestly believe that the religious congregations, having political objects in view, have carried on an active and continuous political propaganda? Finally, do the various industrial, agricultural and commercial enterprises in which some of the religious congregations have engaged seem either incompatible with the sanctity of the cloister, or unjust, underhand and dangerous competition with occupations in which laymen are engaged? In other words, do they believe that every member of a religious congregation, whether a monk or a sister, is a slave who should be liberated, a fanatic who should be restrained, a disseminator of falsehood and a propagator of hatred who should be suppressed, a cunning exploiter who should be punished, a public malefactor who should be driven out of the State and got rid of in the name of justice, liberty, progress and modern civilization?

I have not the least doubt that among Prime Minister Combes' majority there will be found men of intellectual ability as well as men of very limited talents who sincerely believe all these absurd and nonsensical calumnies which have been disseminated by the Masonic lodges. They are incapable of making a clear distinction between a law which absolutely takes no cognizance of religious vows and a law which prosecutes them. These narrow-minded persons know of no middle ground between authorizing these vows and interdicting them under penalty of a fine, imprisonment, exile, or even death itself. As the liberty claimed by their opponents annoys them and imperils their political power it becomes, in their estimation, an attack upon the Republic, the Revolution and democracy, and, therefore, they deem it necessary and justifiable to call in the aid of the law to suppress it.

These obtuse persons ignore the respect due to the opinions of others, and, although they are ever denouncing the intolerance of the Church, they have no hesitation in making war upon the conscientious convictions of others and coercing religious, social and political opinions. The clear distinction which one of their number formulated the other day between philosophy, which is a contest of ideas, and politics, whose distinctive note is tolerance, is evidently beyond their perspicacity.

Persons who make much ado about the moral unity which Christian States tried to bring about in the Middle Ages, and who include among public rights liberty of thought and liberty of conscience, are endeavoring, through the ban placed upon all teaching by the religious congregations, and even upon all free teaching, to bring about a moral unity under conditions which, on account of the divergence in their doctrinal opinions, make it impossible for them to ever reach an agreement. Having read Larousse they believe it is incumbent upon them to attack the Church by disbanding the religious organizations, and, what I consider very comical, they have constituted themselves the champions of the secular clergy, of Christian piety and of the Concordat as against the members of the religious congregations.

Such are the men who make up the rank and file of the Ministerial majority. Do they know that in a free democracy the victors have no right to use against their political opponents the power of the Legislature in order to deprive the defeated of rights which they share in common with the victors, even as they share the hope that some day public opinion will restore them to power and intrust them with the management of the affairs of the State?

The leaders of the Ministerial majority, who are men of brains, are not influenced by all this rubbish. They have a clearly defined political social and even religious policy, with which they will combat the Church and suppress the religious congregations. Anti-Christianism, toward which the various currents of contemporaneous socialism are converging, sums up the policy of the Ministerial leaders. All the reasons they allege for their conduct, with the exception of anti-Christianism, are simply so many traps set to catch fools. They aim at organizing a democracy without religion; that is to say, a democracy in which religion shall be proscribed, a democracy from which religion will be banished, a democracy from which religion will be wholly eliminated so that in society as constituted organism religion will play no part except as the manifestation of the individual conscience and of the individual life. A Godless society and a Godless humanity are to supplement a Godless science. Atheism must reign triumphant in the laws as it reigns triumphant in the professorial chairs, in the family as in the State; in the formation of character as in the imparting of scientific information to the mind.

Such, if I am not greatly mistaken, is the intended outcome of the war upon our religious congregations. The reprisals of the Dreyfus champions and the bitterness of electoral campaigns furnish only the occasions, the pretexts. The real cause of the war upon the religious congregations is that in these congregations there lives and is made manifest the spirit of Christ, which is now more than ever a "sign of contradiction."

A defeat in such a cause reflects glory upon the defeated. How will they bear themselves under the blows

they have received? It is for their wisdom, their zeal, their patriotism to decide. If they are willing to subject themselves to a new humiliation by submitting modified proposals for our charitable institutions and for our missionary establishments in foreign countries, they will in that way unmask the Combes Government and its Parliamentary majority and show the country that they do not intend when they let it be understood that religious congregations devoted to charitable and patriotic work would receive every consideration at the hands of the Government and the Chamber of Deputies.

If, on the other hand, the members of the religious congregations who have been struck down by the Combes majority, convinced of the utter inutility of making any new demands, resist the tyranny of which they are the victims and should not leave their convents until compelled to do so by armed force—if, I say, they do this, it will be a protest in behalf of the rights of conscience and of free citizens against Parliamentary iniquity and the tyranny of legislative omnipotence.

In a little while they will take up the case of the Sisters, who are also doomed. In order to deprive Combes and the "Executive" Commission of the Chamber of Deputies of any pretext for resorting to subterfuges, it would perhaps be well for the congregations of nuns to tack on to the demands already submitted other special demands, under a subsidiary heading, which would deal exclusively with works of charity and foreign missions. In this way, the Government and the Commission would find themselves under the necessity of placing themselves on record in regard to the special work of the Sisters, which would mean that they are not avoid making a detailed examination of this work.

Whatever may be thought of these tactics, it behooves the Catholics of France not to forget that their rights are violated and their liberties trampled under foot in the persons of the men and women who constitute the membership of the religious congregations. More than ever it is their duty to organize for the electoral campaigns of the future. A high ecclesiastic has stated that "the Concordat is to-day virtually abrogated." To-morrow it may be actually abrogated. A law dealing with the supervision of public worship, which was drafted some time ago, will establish among us a veritable kulturkampf.

We should prepare ourselves for the coming contest by going among the people, as is the wish of the Holy See, by defending their material interests, by working with them to realize their ideal of social justice so much in keeping with the Christian sentiment of brotherly love, by making them see and feel that it is of the utmost importance to them that the liberty of the Church shall be maintained. The past is behind us. Let us turn our gaze to the future, which belongs to democracy. Let us bend ourselves to the work of winning for this democracy at one and the same time liberty and the fraternity taught by Jesus Christ.

The members of the religious congregations are vending their way in exile, but France remains. Let us not be angry with France, but let us prepare for her on the morrow a glorious and a prosperous future. The religious life cannot be eliminated from a society that is Catholic. It is the unfolding flower and delicious fruit of faith. The events now taking place are perhaps the prelude of a great evolution affecting the relations between Church and State in our country. Must not the principles of the Revolution work themselves out to their legitimate consequences?

Let us not be troubled in spirit nor lose courage. Upon our horizon rises up the gentle figure of Joan of Arc

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and the bark of Peter steers safely through all tempests. To-day belongs to our tyrants, but eternity belongs to God.
 ABBE GAYRAUD.

THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT AND THE NATION.

A correspondent of The Catholic Times writes:

At the present moment the French Parliament is for two reasons—the enforcement of the Associations Law and the misunderstanding with Rome—an object of interest to earnest-minded Catholics all over the world. These two reasons are the results of one policy. The policy is anti-clerical, a term which in modern France, and used in connection with its present Government, has much the same meaning as irreligious. Englishmen are asking themselves can the Parliament of France really represent the nation? Is this anti-clerical policy the expression of the wishes of the many? Does France thus signify by the actions of her present Ministers her mind and her pleasure as regards the Church? The English mind is perhaps liable to decide—in most cases it is incompetent to judge—upon these questions according to its prejudices. A Protestant will too willingly conclude that a limited Catholicism is a real desideratum of the French nation, and that such is the object that they are now striving for. Certain aspects of

THE PRESENT ANTI-CLERICAL MOVEMENT

will have been developed in his favorite newspaper, instilling the belief that though in themselves the measures at present in motion are decidedly retrogressive, yet this has its compensation in the exigencies of the moment. To a Catholic the matter naturally assumes a graver aspect. It touches his Church, and it concerns the future of that Church in a large country which is reputedly Catholic. It also induces a judgment upon the present state of Catholicity in France, a judgment which, if anything more than unfounded in fact, is

AS A RULE, UNJUST.

The difficulty lies in reconciling the policy of the French Parliament, and especially its anti-clerical measures, with the reputed Catholicity of the nation; and any judgment formed without full knowledge of the country tends to deny either the representative quality of the one or the very existence of the other. As a rule, the question remains an enigma, and the rumors, doubts, and fears current among French Catholics, aiding to understand, only aggravate the difficulty. The present may be but a prelude to things much worse; if religious are banished, it is possibly to accustom priests to the spectacle, if parts of the ecclesiastical system are attacked, it may be but to try the quality of the whole fabric. All this serves to make the problem more difficult of solution. The inability of the English mind to grasp the conditions of the Parliamentary system in France is mainly responsible for its want of comprehension of the present religious difficulty; not the accidental conditions—the working of elections, the action of Government influence, even the incapacity of the country to organize strong political agitation—but rather other more radical and inherent conditions under which the system must work; the ignorance, indifference, and

WANT OF PRINCIPLE

displayed by the electorate. As M. Faguet has well remarked in a recent work dealing with the political

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state of France, universal suffrage, which was calculated to obey the force of public opinion in its action, will do so only under circumstances of exceptional and vital importance; otherwise it will fall under the influence of local or personal interests. The force of the remark can only be appreciated by one who knows the part assumed by the Chamber of Deputies in the administration of France, and the influence that the local or personal interests referred to may have upon the electorate. This Parliament of France seems in the main to be representative of the people, though of course if the aristocracy of the country stands aloof from politics it excludes itself from the representation. But the Parliament cannot be said to be forced upon the nation by undue influence on the part of the Government. That such influence exists is undoubted, but with the system of centralization it is considered unavoidable, and as exercised by the present Government is not considered "undue." Yet though the Parliament represents the nation, it does not necessarily follow that it receives its sanction for its irreligious measure in

THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE.

It is a material representation—formally and as a collective body, it has no mandate. The influences that weigh in the choice of a deputy are many and various; they are very rarely of the plebiscitary character that determines elections in England. To appreciate them, one must understand the importance of a deputy in the administration of his constituency. Without going at length into the question, a few words will suffice to show what that importance is, and will serve to show at the same time the vicious character of the political circle involved in the French Parliamentary system; the duty of the Government is to administer the country; to stay in power it cannot rely upon a party majority, and consequently must ensure the adherence of deputies by granting them practically what each wishes for his constituency, whereby each deputy succeeds in administering his own constituency himself. Once this power has been obtained, it is clear that

WHAT INFLUENCES THE CHOICE OF A DEPUTY

is mostly of a local or personal interest. The general policy of political groups becomes little in comparison with the influence of a certain candidate in furthering the interests of the constituency, in having roads made, bridges built, public works of any necessity taken in hand, or the interests of individuals, in securing places as local functionaries, administration of Government monopolies, etc. As Mr. Bodley puts it, the deputy is looked upon as the "fountain of honor and promotion." Oftentimes, it is true, no such interest as we have described underlies a vote, and then perhaps, as Jules Lemaitre remarks, if an elector be asked why he has given his vote to one candidate in preference to another, he will reply with simplicity: "Oh, I know well enough he is a 'canaille' like the others, but then he is a good-natured fellow, and I know he has nothing but his salary as deputy to live up-

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on." But putting these cases aside, it may be considered a general rule that where influences are at work they are not those of the broad national character that touch the English electorate. It will be understood from this what we mean when we say that the French Parliament is a material but scarcely a formal representation, and how with ordinary fairness in the elections the "barbar" does not in reality voice the nation. It will be seen how the anomaly can arise of the elect of the nation being at the same time the object of its contempt.

ITS RULERS MEDIOCRITIES

of its own choice, the methods of its legislature the disapprobation of all. M. Faguet, whom we have already quoted, is by no means exaggerating when he sums up the character of French politics in the words "The political system of France is one of mendacity. Candidates beg for votes; if elected, they must, in order to pay for these votes, beg favor from the Government, and the Government in turn begs for votes in the House, which it pays for in favors granted to deputies for their electors—France has become a market." Political corruption, in fact, pervades the whole mass, though it is a corruption adapted to the age; places are bought and sold, though the payment is in kind. The evil results of this corruption are apparent to everyone, though outsiders often fail to see their cause. Instability of government is not the least. The chances of re-election for a deputy are increased well-nigh to certainty if he be "ministrable," that is, if he becomes a Minister or his name figure on Ministerial lists. The temptation to bring about

MINISTERIAL CRISES

every few months is obvious. But a greater evil still is that the political circle, once formed as it is at present, is of all things the most difficult to break. The only possible remedy seems to be one of that energetic nature which the French alone know how to apply, as indeed they alone seem to need. But the discussion of remedies lies out of the province of this article. All we have desired to do is to show how it is that a Catholic country, or at least one where there is presumably a Catholic majority, and where the form of government is representative, can allow its Parliament to carry on what is admittedly a warfare against religion.

DE LA SALLE GYMNASIUM CLOSING

The pupils of the De La Salle Institute held the closing exercises of the gymnasium on Wednesday evening of last week. The rooms, which were tastefully decorated for the occasion, were crowded with an enthusiastic gathering of clergy, parents and friends. Rev. William McCann presided. Among those present were Rev. Fathers Rohleder, Canning and Williams; Trustees, M. Walsh and J. Caderet, C. J. McCabe, P. McCabe, T. Mulhall, J. D. O'Donoghue, J. O'Hagan, C. Read, T. Winterberry, W. Winterberry, J. L. Costello, L. V. McBrady, C. J. Gilhooley, A. Short, G. T. Wright, A. Travers, F. Higgins, J. Gormally, T. Walsh, P. McKeown, N. Harrison, T. Balfour, W. Balfour, M. Power, M. Clancy, C. Zeagman, M. J. Kirby and the fathers of the boys in the competition. The boys looked neat in their smart black costume, and went through their exercises with marked precision. In both classes it was only a question of seven points difference between first and last contestant. In the junior class the prize winners were: J. Power, 1; W. Carter, 2; B. O'Reilly, 3. The winners of the senior class were: A. Kirby, 1; W. Oster, 2; G. Harrison, 3. The pick-a-back contest was won by F. O'Farrell and H. O'Donoghue. Some very neat work was done by a class of twenty boys on the vaulting horse, Professor Williams, of Toronto University, who judged the contest, spoke highly of the efficiency of the performance, complimenting the instructor, Mr. Joseph Latremouille, on the very gratifying results of his training, as shown in the boys. Rev. Fathers Rohleder and Canning also spoke of the excellence of the programme and the ability of the boys, enlarging on the value of physical training and the importance of such a school organization as that of the La Salle Athletic Association. The handsome set of prizes donated by the Athletic Club of Branch No. 1 I. C. B. U. was presented to the successful competitors next Monday evening.

FOUNDATION OF ROME

Rome, April 21.—According to tradition, this was the 2,656th anniversary of the foundation of Rome, termed here Rome's birthday. Prince Colonna, the Mayor of Rome, received thousands of telegrams wishing the Eternal City a glorious future. These came mainly from the many foreigners who are in Italy, and who came here for the purpose of attending the historical, agricultural or Latin congresses.

MONTH AFTER MONTH a cold sticks, and seems to tear holes in your throat. Are you aware that even a stubborn and long-neglected cold is cured with Allen's Lung Balsam? Cough and worry no longer.

INTER-CATHOLIC CLUB DEBATING-UNION.

The ninth debate of the I.C.C.D.U. took place last Thursday, the 16th, at St. Joseph's Club Rooms, Queen street east. The subject was "Resolved, that the Chinese Should be Excluded from Canada." Mr. J. W. Griffin and Mr. Doyle, of St. Joseph's, successfully upheld the affirmative, while Messrs. Rioux and DeRoche debated for the negative. The judges were Rev. Father Canning, Mr. A. Cottam and Mr. J. J. O'Sullivan. President E. V. O'Sullivan occupied the chair.

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL.

Boys' Honor Roll.
 Form IV.—Excellent, B. Buckel, H. Campbell, J. McCool, W. Orr, J. Wither, F. Martin, J. Casolan, Owen Lynch, A. Dee, C. McCurd, J. Halley, good, J. Murray, F. Wade, J. McMahon, Leo Curran, J. Clarke, F. Albert.
 General Proficiency—Senior Fourth, B. Buckel, A. Dee, J. Cocolan. Junior Fourth—J. Clarke, J. Wither, J. McCool.

Senior III.—Excellent, William Overend, Wilfrid Bourdon, Walter Dennison, Jos. Bauer, John McTague, John Byrne, William Monahan, Theo. McConvey, Walter Hanson, Izzie Milne, good, Norman Kelly, Francis Foley, John Bellmore, Basil Hartnett, Leo Wade, F. Sickingler, Michael Moad, Leo Jenkins, Leo Brodie, John Martin.

Junior III.—Excellent, T. O'Brien, W. Vahey, T. Lundy, F. Campbell, F. O'Brien, J. Nicholson, W. Ayers, Leo Ryan, Edward Curtis, B. Donovan, good, W. Gibbs, E. Lane, J. Burke, C. McEvay, Jno. McLaughlin, F. Casey, Edward Doyle, N. Brodie, H. Sullivan, W. McGinn, R. Grossi, E. Hanson, F. Ryan, J. Emmos.

Senior Second Form—Excellent, T. Shannon, H. Ladderville, J. Deferati, F. Fennoy, good, H. Doran, T. Caranagh, L. Murphy, D. Lee, A. Massey, P. Hailey, J. Cronin, E. Devine.

LADY HIBERNIANS ELECT OFFICERS.

The Ladies' Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians concluded their Biennial Provincial Convention on Monday. One hundred and twenty-five members from different parts of the Province attended the sessions at Cameron Hall. Following are the officers elected for the ensuing two years: Provincial President, Miss A. O'Meara, Ottawa; Provincial Vice-President, Miss M. Dunbar, Ottawa; Provincial Secretary, Miss M. O'Brien, Ottawa; Provincial Treasurer, Miss N. Rabelly, Toronto.

The secretary's report showed an increase of 450 in the Order's membership since their last meeting. Messrs. H. Kelly, C.P., O.A.H.; P. W. Falney, F. J. Walsh, P. S. Patterson, A. Stewart and P. J. Crotty, members of the Order in Toronto, were in attendance at the sessions to assist the ladies.

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