

From the News of the Churches.

### MARIOLATRY REBUKED BY A ROMAN CATHOLIC.

We extract the following from the *Observateur Catholique*:—

"Much is now said of the erection of a colossal statue of the holy Virgin on a rock in the diocese of Puy. It is a good work to raise a statue to the holy Mother of Jesus Christ, but we regret that that of the diocese of Puy should be the symbol of a dogmatic definition which we must regard as erroneous. We could, moreover, have desired that it should not have been so coarsely affirmed that the new statue will be the 'fortune of the country,' by the concourse of pilgrims which it will be the means of attracting to it. The idea is truly somewhat earthly, and might suggest a surmise that the (ostensibly) religious act is designed to veil a business speculation. We certainly desire the prosperity of Velay (the country which surrounds Puy), but this country would appear to us somewhat audacious to aim at such an end by means of a statue erected to the holy Virgin. The triumphs of 'La Salette' must not disturb the repose of other pilgrimages. That of Puy has been renowned for a lengthened period. We do not think that Velay ought to feel the need of a new consecrated rock; it is, however, true that the new dogma creates new necessities. The pilgrimage of Our Lady of Puy doubtless required to be made an actual fact. But if a pilgrimage more novel than that of Our Lady of Puy be positively desired, the spirit of commercial gain must not be allowed to insinuate itself into a project, which, from its very nature, ought to be simply religious. Moreover, this idea of a statue in honour of the new dogma, has not been first conceived by the Bishop of Puy. Pius IX has set the example, and, in some localities, the zealous are leaving no stone unturned to make this example contagious. They call loudly for money, and propose subscriptions backed up by the most high-sounding appeals. The men of business are outdone."

### THE ARCHBISHOP OF VENICE AND THE CONCORDAT.

The following circular letter has been addressed by the Archbishop (Patriarch) of Venice to all printers, booksellers; and venders of prints residing within his diocese. It is regarded as a still more important document than that recently published by the Archbishop of Milan:—

"*Pietro Aurelio Matti, by the Mercy of God Patriarch of Venice, &c., to our beloved Sons, the Booksellers, Publishers, and True Believers residing in our City and Diocese.*

"Innumerable are the complaints which, for a long time past, have been made to us by laymen and ecclesiastics of all ranks of the countless works which are published to the detriment of religion and morality; and, in truth, the harm which they do to society at large, and to each single family, cannot be sufficiently deplored. Such works neutralize all the care of good parents and tutors.

"When the youth of the country first make their entrance into the world they meet at every step with bad, loose, immoral books, which, like lurking serpents, are prepared to inject their venom into their innocent minds. But at length God, who directs the hearts of kings, inspired (*ispiro*) our most pious Monarch with the idea of the Concordat, the object of which is to protect all believers, and particularly the

Catholic youth, against the attacks of the impious, and the dangers of temptation.

"Already have we frequently reminded our beloved sons in Christ of the holy laws of the Church, and have warned them against books which are dangerous to religion and morality, at the same time making known to them the very strict regulations of the Council of Trent on the subject, but now it is our special duty to see that those regulations are observed. The Concordat gives to all Archbishops and Bishops the full power and right to use their own authority in this matter, and also promises that the Government will employ the most efficacious means for preventing the spread of the plague of bad books throughout the Empire. Although all ecclesiastical ordinances relative to this matter are in full force, we will at present do no more than mention some few of the conditions of the same, and more particularly those which must be literally and punctually obeyed.

"No one, be he priest or layman, will be allowed, without previously obtaining permission from our ecclesiastical 'censure,' to publish—either as author, printer, or vender—any work, either directly or indirectly, touching on religion or morality, or specially treating of the Liturgy, or of any other subject.

"It is also forbidden to introduce any book whatever from other countries, without having applied for, and obtained, the approbation of the ecclesiastical 'Censure-office,' excepting in cases where the book has been marked as being among the works which are permitted.

"Should any person dare publicly or privately to sell books, prints, or paintings which are prohibited by the Church, or could be prejudicial to religion or morality, be it known unto him, that we will not only suppress such illicit sales ourselves, but will also call in the arm of the civil power, which the Monarch has placed at the disposal of the Church, to our assistance.

"Most beloved sons, as you well know that we have no other object in view than the welfare of your immortal souls, and your eternal salvation, we reckon on your strict obedience, and so doing we wish you all health and happiness in the Lord.

"Given in the Archiepiscopal Curia, at Venice, Dec. 31st, 1855.

"P. AURELIO MATTI, Patriarch.

"D. GIOV. GHEGA, Chancellor."

"As the foregoing document tells its own tale," says the Vienna correspondent of the *Times*, "it is but necessary for me to remark that the Concordat gives the Roman Catholic hierarchy no right to introduce a 'preventive censure' into Austria. Count Leo Thun, the Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs, has reminded the Italian bishops that the 'censure' has been totally abolished in Austria; but they are not likely to take any notice of his remonstrances, as he is, so to say, the father of the Concordat. It was expected that the convention with Rome would give internal peace to the Empire, but there has seldom or never been such a general ferment in the country as now. In Bohemia the indignation of the Catholic population is so great that the authorities are astounded, and at a loss how to act. A person, whose words deserve full credit, assures me that if the police were to undertake to arrest all those individuals who in Bohemia openly rail against the Concordat, they would have to incarcerate half the population of the province. In the Italian provinces the state of public feeling is quite as bad, and the disaffected have now a new grievance. Until now the Hungarian bishops have remained quiet, but you may be sure that they will soon be up and doing."