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QUESTIONS OF THE HOUR.

The Pope has lately summoned a "General Council" to meet in Rome in December of next year. It is expected to be of more importance than any Papal gathering since the Council of Trent, three hundred years ago. The papal system is shaky from base to summit; and the new Council is summoned with a view to prop up the rotten edifice. It is thought probable that an attempt will be made to get the proposed Council to define the Pope's Temporal Power as an article of faith not to be called in question by any good son of the church. It is also expected that Infallibility will be defined as abiding in the Pope as head of the church. No doubt many other matters will be discussed, and plots will be concocted whose ramifications will extend all over the world.

The attitude of Austria towards the Papacy gives promise of a glorious future for that great empire. The trammels of the *Concordat* are burst asunder, and Austria acknowledges the rights of conscience,—freedom of worship, of education, and of the press. All religious denominations are placed on the same level in the eye of the law. The Pope's latest "*allocution*" was a fierce denunciation of these reformers. It is gratifying to see that, while the clergy of the Empire use all their power to support the Pope and thwart the liberal views of the Government, the people with wonderful unanimity and enthusiasm declare in favor of reform. This revolution in Austria is one of the most wonderful events of this century, and is the severest blow to the

prestige of the papacy since the French Revolution.

Universal attention was attracted throughout Europe by the inauguration of a splendid monument to Martin Luther, at Worms. The King of Prussia, most of the German princes, and representatives of nearly all the States of Europe were present. Queen Victoria sent a message by telegraph, expressing the sympathy and the congratulations of Protestant England. So large a religious gathering—and one so influential and significant—has not been held in Europe for many a day, if ever; for it is estimated that over one hundred thousand people were that day in the little town of Worms!

Three hundred years ago the Pope would have had the energetic aid of Austria to extirpate the "Lutheran Heresy;" but almost on the same day that the colossal monument of Luther was inaugurated at Worms the Pope was pouring forth his maledictions on the devoted head of recalcitrant Austria! Verily the world has advanced, in three hundred years, in the right direction.

France is becoming sadly priest-ridden, much as was the case during the last years of Louis Philippe's reign. The Emperor seems to have thrown all his influence into the scale in favour of the Ultramontanists. He is probably trying to gain sufficient influence with the clergy and the Roman court to secure the election of a Bonaparte to the Papal chair. He may be disappointed in his hopes; and it is certain that his present policy is full of domestic peril. Both France and Italy—countries that cling