

Miscellaneous.

HOW THE LYONS PRIESTS FARED IN ROME.

It is probably within the knowledge of most persons who pay any attention to what is going on abroad, that an angry suit is now going on between the clergy of the diocese of Lyons, backed by the French Government, and the Court of Rome.

The immediate cause of conflict arises from the attempt of the Court of Rome, in pursuance of its centralizing principles of policy, to impose upon the diocese of Lyons the Roman liturgy, in the place of the one which it has been the especial boast of that diocese to use, as a badge of distinction, and to which the clergy of that diocese ascribe a highly venerable antiquity. Accordingly, this clergy, animated with a strong sense of dutiful reverence, subscribed a memorial to the pope, which was signed by 14,000 priests, that is to say, by nearly every ecclesiastic in the diocese, and then carried to Rome by five members of their body, deputed to present it to the Pope. These five priests have been to Rome on the duty intrusted to their charge, and have addressed to the follow-clergy at Lyons a report of what befel them on their mission, which report has been published by a leading paper in Turin. It should be stated, for those who have no previous acquaintance with the subject, that the practically unanimous feeling of the clergy of the diocese was not participated in by their archbishop, Cardinal Bonald, who had been at Rome some time when the deputation was sent thither, and actively advocated submission to the changes which the pope was anxious to introduce. Their interview with the cardinal was marked by an astonishing amount of prevarication and shuffling, with vain attempts at overbearing the delegation, on the part of this official. They were not to be deterred from their purpose, however.

"With a real sadness at hearing their archbishop giving expression to so grievous and unjust imputations," the delegates withdrew from his presence, and proceeded to pay their respects to Cardinal Antonelli. Here everything was charming and affable, so that the good priests of Lyons do not conceal their high sense of the extraordinary condescension shown them by this dignitary of the Church, and their firm conviction of his sincere readiness to prove their good friend. Only unfortunately they discovered that the cardinal was practically debarred from giving that effect to his warm zeal in their behalf which they trustingly credited him. The matter did not lie within his department, and so, after a conversation marked with the warmest protestations they had to leave Cardinal Antonelli with no greater result than having been fascinated by his manner—the assurance that it was not he, but Monsignore Pacca who must be applied to for an audience of the pope, and the advice to go and discuss the object of their mission with Monsignore Bartolini, Secretary of the Congregation of Rites, within whose special jurisdiction the question lay. With heartfelt thanks for the cordial disposition he had evinced, by rendering them such essential service, and an inward conviction that if it depended on him alone, the rights of the Church of Lyons would be inviolate, these simple-minded delegates now trudged away to Monsignore Bartolini.

But here, such a change came over the spirit of their dream, as can be expressed only by those who experienced it. "Coming from a person highly distinguished for his education, the courtesy of his language, the perfect tone of his manners, here we fell suddenly on a man whose coarseness bore the stamp of his origin. As soon as he was told who we were, and why we came, this man of an enormous and deeply-colored face flew into a very paroxysm of frenzy; his too vehement speech could utter none but stammering and inarticulate words; his face became suffused with blood and made one fear a stroke, and in the midst of these furious transports we could with difficulty pick up the following imprecations: 'We were mutineers, insurgents, schematics, and other pleasant objects of the same kind.' Holding in his hand a volume by M. Bouix, the intrinsic merit of which he enhanced, he suddenly shied the volume across the room. In spite of the savage grotesqueness of this Roman Jeffries, the delegates tried for some time to converse with him; but at last, 'half smiling with pity, half feeling a sense of shame, they got up to take leave of this strange authority,' being determined never to visit him again.

So far, the Lyons delegates had had some rather strange interviews, but were really not a whit advanced in their business; namely, to see the pope, and present to him the petition. Now, it is an established usage that the pope is accessible to every priest. Nothing is wanted but to express a desire for an audience, and the ecclesiastic is admitted with the shortest possible delay to the presence of his highest superior. On this occasion, however, the established rule was departed from; for although the five priests duly demanded an audience with the proscribed formalities, no reply was for some time vouchsafed. The truth is that the pope was at a loss how to see them without getting entangled in awkward discussions, and Monsignore Dupanloup exactly stated the case when he said that the petition was felt to be a weapon too terrible to encounter. Still for a pope roundly to refuse audience to pious professed Catholic ecclesiastics was an impossible act, and so one morning Cardinal Bonald sent for the delegates, and submitted to them in writing the terms on which they were to be received. They ran thus: "1st. The pope consents to receive you. 2d. I shall be present, and it is I who will present you. 3d. You will merely have to

listen to the words which the pope will address to you, and which afterwards I shall get printed. 4th. You are interdicted from making any reply to the pope's words, unless he addresses some individual question, otherwise I alone shall lead. 5th. It is distinctly understood that you will not present your petition, and will not speak about the liturgy." The first impulse was to decline an audience on these humiliating conditions; but the reflection that they would thus miss hearing the pope's allocution induced them to bow to them. On the 4th February they were accordingly admitted to the pope's presence, when, we are told, "everything went off in strict accordance with the programme." The cardinal stood at the right, his vicar-general at the left hand of the pope. Several times the delegates attempted to utter a few words, but immediately the cardinal was there, sometimes thrusting his hand before the face of him who wished to speak, and so imposed silence. "Thus we went away without having been able to say a word or present the petition of a whole diocese." With this abortive audience, the official action of the delegates in Rome came to an end, and they returned home, leaving their petition with Cardinal Antonelli, who, they fondly believed, would do his best to promote their business. It happened, however, that one of their body had to stay behind in Rome from sickness, which had previously prevented his accompanying his colleagues to the audience. This ecclesiastic now determined to seek in his individual capacity of mere priest a private audience of the pope, with the view of finding an opportunity of enlightening him as to the temper of the Lyons clergy. The difficulties thrown in his way were great, and he had already been assured that his request would not be attended to, when one morning he was suddenly summoned to the Vatican.

The interview that now took place between the French priest and Pius IX. was marked by all the characteristic features of the pope's bawdy, explosive, and weak temperament. No sooner was the priest ushered into his presence than the pope, as if bursting with impatience, accosted him outright in a voluble and excited strain, which ended by his calling the Lyons clergy oppositionists. The French priest appears to have been a man of quiet nerve; for instead of losing his head at this unexpected harangue, he simply waited until the pope had exhausted his passion, and then respectfully taking up the talk, he simply but firmly went through step by step, the historical grounds on which he and his fellow-clergy took their stand. Gradually the pope felt at a loss how to rebut these calm arguments, and plainly revealed his own sense of his position in the remarks which he hazily ejaculated. The pope having exclaimed, in reference to the petition, that he could not receive it, the priest eloquently dwelt on the painful impression which must be produced in the diocese, by this resolution. "What will be said, what will be thought, O Holy Father!" he said, "when we return to our diocese and report to so large a number of priests of all ages, your humble and respectful prayers, your numerous and respectable signatures have been rejected as worthless by the supreme pontiff, who has not even chosen to receive them." To this the pope, somewhat moved, listened to the words, "Obedience, obedience!" whereupon the priest exclaimed, boldly, "Obedience! oh, beyond denial the diocese has never failed in it, but yet, especially under present circumstances, would not a feeling of sincere affection, and of hearty thankfulness be of greater worth than a constrained and forced obedience?" With these warning words ended this remarkable interview. Softly murmuring obedience once again, the pope gave his parting blessing, and the French ecclesiastic went out, "with the consciousness of having done his duty, but sadly penetrated with the conviction that the cause of Lyons was lost."

To append any commentary to this striking narrative would be an act of supererogation. What can be more demonstrative of the foolish self-will and inflated arrogance, which has possessed the papacy in these latter times, of its visible decrepitude, than this exhibition on the part of Pius IX. of a determination, at all events, to humiliate, by an exercise of such authority as remains to him? The pride of this proceeding—a proceeding that gratuitously aims at wounding the dearest feelings of a powerful section of faithful Catholics, by depriving them arbitrarily of privileges sanctioned by immemorial practice, and solemnly confirmed by former popes—smacks truly of the suicidal folly which is proverbially inflicted by the gods on those doomed to destruction.—London Spectator.

THE FINE ARTS IN CHURCHES.

Our worthy and eloquent townsman Rev. J. A. Seiss, writing from Antwerp to the Lutheran, thus discourses of the interior decorations of the cathedral of Notre Dame, in that city: "I returned again to Notre Dame, to see whether its interior would yield me any such satisfaction as I had found on the summit of its exterior. The immense concourse of people, who had been attending service there, were just dispersing for their homes. We had hardly entered, until our eyes rested on a vast painting, exhibiting the Saviour nailed to the cross, full of patient resignation, whilst the flesh is stripping from his bones as the rude and excited workmen lift the heavy timber in its place. It is one of the great productions of the renowned Rubens. Thrills went through me as I stood there, contemplating the humiliation and sufferings of my loving Saviour, who

counted not His life dear unto Him, but gave Himself up freely to all this agony and cruel death for me! A little further, and we stood before another picture, one of still greater power, the production of the same artist, and his great masterpiece. It exhibits the Saviour's sufferings consummated, and friendly hands engaged in removing his dead body from the cross. We stood, with uncovered heads, and looked. If there ever were "sermons in stones," there is gospel in these dumb colors. A thousand such sermons as that to which I had just been listening, without a miracle, could not impart as much. That wounded, bruised and bloody body, so heavy in death, touched so tremulously, looked at by such tearful eyes and such agonized spirits, who, that has the least faith in the gospel narratives, can view for a moment without feeling his heart thickening in his breast, and rising to his throat, and beating with inexpressible emotions? I was moved, a few hours before, as I gazed, from the steeple's summit, on nature, and thought of the majesty and glory and goodness of nature's God; but here came emotions of the spirit, oh, how much more potent and profound! as that steeple's base, I stood gazing upon the picture of that to which incarnate goodness was brought by human guilt, and thought of what Almighty God condescended to undergo for my salvation.

When will men learn to lay aside their narrow bigotries? And when will people learn to lay aside their groundless prejudices against the use of Christian art in churches, to give force to Christian facts and ideas? Nature is but a gallery of pictures, designed and painted by the great Artist, who fashioned the worlds and adorned the heavens and the earth with beauty. The Bible is a book of pictures, given forth under the inspiration of the indwelling Spirit, to teach us wisdom. Eloquence is but spirited word-painting, conveying great ideas with clearness to the soul. And why should painting on canvas, or truthful carvings of nature's materials be refused as helpers to set evanescible facts before men's eyes in those hallowed places where they congregate especially for the contemplation of these very things? But I must not dwell upon this topic, lest I should offend against a sensitive generation, and my journey eastward be taken as a journey towards Rome in a sense not to be coveted.

A LADY AND A ROBBER.

The following authentic story will invalidate the often repeated charge against women, that "they cannot keep a secret." Some years since, a lady called at a glover's shop in the outskirts of the city of London, and purchased a pair of gloves for her immediate wear, observing, at the same time, that she was on her road to Burnet—that she had left her gloves at her friend's house, where she had called, and that she was apprehensive of being benighted if she went back for them. The glover fitted on the gloves; and the lady, after paying for them from a purse well stocked with bank notes, stepped into her carriage, and proceeded on her journey. She had scarcely reached Finchy Common, when a highwayman stopped the carriage, and demanded her money. He entreated her not to be alarmed, as he had no intention on her person—if she surrendered her property, it was all he wanted, declaring that distress, and not his will, urged him to this desperate act; and he was determined to remove his pecuniary wants or perish. The lady gave him her purse, and the desperado rode off.

After he was gone, and her fright had somewhat subsided, the lady imagined that in the address of the highwayman, she recognized the voice of the glover she had just before dealt with. This conviction struck her so forcibly, that she ordered her servant to drive back to the town—not choosing, she said, to venture further over the heath.

On her arrival at the glover's she knocked and gained admission, the glover himself opening the door. The lady desired to speak with him in private. The glover showed her to a back parlor when she exclaimed:

"I am come for my purse, of which you robbed me this evening on Finchy Common." The glover was confounded; and the lady proceeded, "It is of no use for you to deny it. I am convinced and your life is at my mercy. Return to me my property, and trust to my humanity."

The glover, overcome with guilt, shame, and confusion, confessed the crime, returned the purse, and pleaded his distress. The lady after suitable admonition, gave him a ten pound note, bade him mend his way of life, and keep his own counsel; adding that she would not divulge his name or place of abode. She kept her word; and though the robbery was stated in the papers, the discovery was omitted; and it was not until recently that a minute account of this singular transaction was found among the papers alluded to. Even in the private memorandum, the name and residence of the glover was omitted; and the secret, in that particular, rests with the lady in the grave!

SOUTHERN "INDEPENDENCE."

C. C. Hazewell, Esq., thus portrays in the Traveller the result that might be expected to follow our acknowledged support of the independence of the South as a separate government: "Observe what that 'independence' would mean. It would mean our abdication of the position of the American nation. Let but the Southern Confederacy be acknowledged by us, and it would succeed immediately to the place formerly held by the United States, in the estimation of the world. It would become the first power in the world. It would become the first power in North America, and if Maximilian should succeed, Mexico would have the second

place, while ours should be the third. The foreign conviction would be that secession had not done its perfect work on us, and that the 'Union' would be further divided—and this view would be justified by events.

The Confederacy would be petted and encouraged by Europe, because it had broken up the American Republic; and as it would have much to sell that the world wants, and therefore would necessarily be a good purchaser of what Europe has to sell, the weight of the foreign business world would be thrown so heavily on its side. Every influence—political, social, pecuniary and military—would be adverse to us. Our position would be not unlike that which the whole country held in the twenty years that followed the opening of the war of the French Revolution, when we were insulted and robbed by the great belligerents. We should be set upon by every European country but those which are not naval powers. Were slavery in Barbary what once it was, Americans would again be bought and sold in Tunis and Tripoli. We should have to fight for safety. All this would happen externally; and not improbably our internal troubles would be far greater than those which foreigners would cause to visit us.

With an enormous national debt, and heavy local debts, and with taxes of the heaviest kind, how long would it be before the Red Specter of Socialism would come to haunt us? We should have revived the old contest between the House of Have and the House of Want, which has ended so fatally for other lands. And the governing party would be depressed with the consciousness of having failed in the war with the Confederacy, while their foes would be encouraged and assisted from abroad.

We could not, therefore, if we would, acknowledge the 'independence' of the South, and there is neither reason why we should acknowledge it, nor disposition to make such acknowledgment. As a mere question of dollars and cents, it would be cheaper to fight the rebels for ten years to come than to transfer the war into our streets and fields. This the rebel leaders ought to know as well as we know it—and if they are ignorant of what our interest is, we should enlighten them by our action. There is no reason why the war should last much longer. One year of effective operations ought to suffice to "crush out" the rebel armies, and to establish the affairs of the Republic on a new and permanent basis.

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