

Miscellaneous.

THE RELIGIOUS DANGER OF THE CONTINENT.

If the philosophers and the masses are in accord on the Continent, as Mr. Disraeli says they are in England, the priests will one day have to pass through a bad quarter of an hour. One of the most marked signs of the times in Catholic countries is the extent to which irreligion is becoming a religion, a fanaticism as fierce and as propagandist as that of any creed has ever been.

The laughing scepticism of "polite society" is vanishing away, and in its place we have a propagandist spirit which cannot be content without overt acts. Men write, it is reported, from all parts of France to congratulate M. de Sainte Beuve, most brilliant among essayists and among the few remaining masters of the lost art of conversation, to congratulate him on maintaining the "sacred cause" of Materialism in the Senate, and one such correspondent signs himself a member "of the grand Diocese," thus making of denial not only a creed, but an ecclesiastical organization.

In Belgium, where Ultramontanism has selected its battle-ground, materialism, utter and propagandist, is the creed of all but the religious, and is accompanied by a desire not merely to quit, but to put down the Church as an evil thing, a foe to human society. The struggle is regarded as one between Civilization and the Syllabus, as a warfare between irreconcilable ideas, in which every weapon is to be welcomed and quarter is disgraceful.

The Industrial Home for Girls is now permanently in a house belonging to the institution, at the N.W. Corner of Tenth and Catharine Sts. The attention of the public is respectfully invited to its object, viz.: to receive destitute or friendless girls between 12 and 18 years of age, and give them protection, instruction, and a home.

it is certain that the Austrian masses never got so excited on any secular matter.

We have often reminded our readers of the fact that a city riot in Belgium always includes an attack on priests or monasteries, and the curious state of affairs in the Department of Charente is a present illustration of the state of feeling. The priests there are being protected by Lancers from the hands of their flocks, who, were the soldiers withdrawn, would tear them in pieces.

We confess that as we read of the spirit which manifests itself in France, Belgium, and Austria when over pressure is removed, we scarcely wonder at the vehemence, or the rage, or even the cruelty of the priesthood. They must feel as the priest of the third century felt, impelled at once by an imperative duty and an overmastering fear, as if they were once more fighting a Paganism which, if victorious, would throw them to the lions.

To take a single illustration of their policy. The very best friends the clerical order can have are the few highly intellectual men who strive to (re)concile Rome with the modern world, who maintain that Christianity is compatible with any form of material civilization. To such men, the only men who stand between them and the materialists, and the only teachers who might in the last resort teach the masses that no dogma can produce hunger, that freedom inconsistent with belief in the Real Presence, and that the unity of the Church does not increase the conscription, the ultramontanes constrained by Rome, impelled by fear for themselves, driven by terror for the future of mankind, offer the Syllabus. Under penalty of being considered foes like the Voltairians and the Materialists. Naturally, the intellectual Catholics and the laity refuse, being unable to deny what they see—that civilization is good, and the Church is really reduced to what its enemies call it, a corporation hostile to society, and as such, in the judgment of those enemies, to be erased, razed off the ground it occupies.

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