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## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

**WHAT DOES HE MEAN?** IF the reports that have reached us from Rome be true, we must necessarily be in no slight measure confused as to what the meaning of the German Emperor may be. King Humbert has been rightly described as being that which the late Comte de Chambord, or Henry V., as he was known by his followers, might have been, had he chosen to stoop to the position—at is, *le roi légitime de la révolution*, the legitimate King of the revolution. Humbert wears his crown in virtue of his complacency, and remains at Rome as his father went there because he must dance to the tune the revolution plays him if he would continue to wear a crown at all. But the Emperor William has been supposed to be a monarch of a very different standing, and of a very different frame of mind. We were led to believe, and with every appearance of reason, that his attitude towards the revolution would be even more stern and unbending than had been that of his grandfather, and, if there was any excuse for his unfilial temper towards his father, it might seem to arise from his sincere conviction that the liberal principles by which he was guided were mistaken, and certain to prove mischievous in their effects. When, therefore, we find his Majesty insulting the Pope on behalf of the revolution, and performing ceremonies whose end is to glorify the revolution—we cannot tell what to think of the position. What has occurred thus suddenly to change the disposition of the German Emperor, and, so far as we can see, to make him lower his head in presence of that sinister power which threatens to destroy all thrones, and which has already brought kings into subjection to it? It is but a few months since King Humbert was obliged to sit by with an applauding smile upon his face, while a panegyric was delivered on Mazzini the bloodthirsty enemy of kings, and in whose name the assassins of kings may fitly take their murderous oaths. And now the German Emperor takes his stand beside this puppet king and, in the image of his forerunner, crowns the revolution. What is there that lies beneath all this? we may very reasonably inquire. Are there, indeed, tokens that the revolutionary tide is also rising in Germany and that the ruler who would not be submerged and lost must go with the flow? The method of dealing with the revolution employed by the Emperor William I. was different from this. He met it firmly, and in those respects in which he had erred and given it an advantage, he retraced his steps. He was manly enough to acknowledge his fault, and bold enough to amend it. He also had insulted the Pope, and besides had injured religion, but he perceived the evil of what he had done and made reparation for it. With the wisdom of a man of long experience and matured judgment he perceived that to yield to the revolution was to perish, and learning also by experience that to cripple in his realms the power of the Pope and of religion was to yield to the revolution he undid the evil he had done. What, therefore, does his successor mean by the new departure he seems to have made? Is he also, influenced by some motives not as yet revealed to us, about to become a legitimate monarch of the revolution—and with what results? But as to the invitation which he has given the Pope, to renounce his claims to independence and join the legitimate kings of the revolution—conservative sovereigns as, apparently in jest, he calls them,—the Pope may, for example, accept it when he too can sit by and smile, when the man who has already distinguished himself as the panegyrist and worshipper of Satan, most appropriately delivers a panegyric on Mazzini. The Pope may be a martyr at the hands of the revolution, but its legitimate king he cannot be—not even at the invitation of the German Emperor.

**A PLEA FOR THE TEMPORAL POWER.** BUT even if there was no particular meaning in the action at Rome of the German Emperor, which also is quite possible, for emperors are but men, and, as such, must be liable to be influenced by their surroundings so as occasionally to do and say things

which in recollected moments they would leave undone and unsaid, the invitation given by his Majesty to the Pope must remain unaccepted. The Pope cannot be the ally of revolutionary kings and subject, like them, to the control of an evil power. Neither can he

be the ally of kings who, in the sense of the term as used by the Emperor William, supposing him to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather might be called conservative. In either case the Pope would be the servant and tool of despotism, for nothing is more despotic than the revolution, nothing more arbitrary, nor more unsparring. It would be a sacrilegious thought, were it entertained, that the Pope could obey this power, and serve its interests in guiding the Catholic people; But neither could the Pope ally himself with the despotic monarchy, and exert his power in insisting on the submission of the people to its arbitrary will. It was, indeed, the suspicion of such an alliance that first of all gave to the other despotism its chief force, and caused the catastrophe that overtook the Church in France at the close of the last century. In the alliance between the higher clergy, the scions of noble houses, whom the necessities of their rank, for whose adequate support great revenues were required, induced to become churchmen and the lords of the soil, from whom they suffered hardship and ill-treatment the people saw the alliance between the Pope and despotism and, overlooking the great benefits received by them otherwise from the Church, laid on religion the blame of their misfortune. When the despotic monarchy, therefore, was torn down the Church shared in the fall, and was no less wounded and no less outraged. But, being immortal, she recovered from her wounds, and the consequences to the people themselves were far worse than anything that overtook her. For the sake of the people, were it for nothing else, the Pope must remain independent of the despot and visibly separated from him. If the word, for instance, goes forth in Ireland, where under a constitutional monarchy despotism prevails, that the people are to be dragooned and trampled on, their just demands denied, and their efforts to obtain or preserve their rights brutally repressed, there must be no suspicion in their minds that the Pope is in sympathy with their oppressors. If a Catholic population is expelled from Germany under circumstances of great injustice, and among deplorable suffering, it must not add to the grief of the people to think that the Pope is in sympathy with their tyrant. What the Catholic world needs is an independent Pope—himself alone, unbiassed and unswayed, exercising without partiality the tremendous powers that God has bestowed upon him. If it be sacrilegious to consider him as the ally of the revolution, it is hardly less so to regard him as the ally of the despot. In either case the ends to be gained are earthly only, having no relation to the things of God, opposed to the welfare of the people, and having evil for their end. We see, then, more clearly than before the necessity of the temporal power. Nothing else can guarantee the independence of the Pope. And his independence is threatened on both sides. Holy Father, says the German Emperor, ally yourself with the conservative Sovereigns. Become at once the puppet and the tool of despotism: Yield to us, cries the revolution, not daring to invite an alliance—go out of the Vatican and acknowledge yourself beaten, so that we may make a full profit of the people. Various as the contest may seem, it is the same, for its end is the same, that is the mastery of the world and the enslavement of mankind. While the Pope remains as he is, deprived of his possessions, and living on sufferance within the stronghold of the enemy, he will ever be the object of this two-fold struggle—and the Catholic world will continue subject to apprehension and distress. We maintain, therefore, that the visit of the Emperor William to Rome and the consequent events make more plain than before the necessity for the restoration of the temporal power—the only sufficient guarantee of the Pope's independence and the pledge and assurance of his safety.

**A GREAT ENTERPRISE.** IT may, perhaps, prove conducive to the peace of the world that a new tie of friendship has possibly been formed between England and Russia. This has been due, in the first place, to the genius of an English sailor named Joseph Wiggins, whose calculations led him to conclude that that portion of the Arctic Ocean known as the Kara Sea could not be icebound all the year, but must afford, during some months at least, an inlet to the great rivers Obi and Yenisei, which flow through the centre of Siberia, from South to North, and form a waterway to the very confines of the Chinese Empire. Joseph Wiggins, therefore, who had meantime risen to eminence in his profession, kept constantly in view an intention of carrying his calculations into practical effect, and, as soon as he should be in a position to do so, exploring in person the sea and rivers alluded to,