

ENGLAND, MALTA AND ROME.

(Roman Correspondence of the Pilot.)

AMONGST the results of the English Mission to Rome on the affairs of Malta, which now occupy so large a share of public attention, the letter of the Sovereign Pontiff to the Bishop of that See is one of the most important. It indicates that a sort of uneasiness prevailed amongst the Catholics of that island,—that is to say, almost the whole of the population,—which it required the Pope himself to soothe. The letter of Leo XIII. was issued from Rome on July 27, and it deplures the existence amongst the people of opposition to and discontent with the ecclesiastical authority of that See. It demonstrates the causelessness of the pretents put forward in justification of this opposition, and it makes evident that the negotiations between the British Government and the Court of Rome had as their sole object the advantage of the Catholics of Malta and the settlement of possible difficulties which might in future arise between the ecclesiastical and civil authorities in that island. The necessity of acquiring the English language on the part of the Maltese is shown to be for their own benefit more especially so in the case of the clergy, whose position requires them to come into contact with the ruling powers—which employ that tongue—and a want of which, on the part of the clergy, would place them at a disadvantage. The hope is then expressed that these good and obedient Catholics, recognising the benevolent feeling of the Pontiff towards them, will acquiesce in the direction of their Bishop, and comply with his instructions.

The very fact that it was deemed necessary by the Pontiff to send such a letter indicated the existence of serious trouble in that island. And, indeed, the trouble is not of yesterday's growth. It has been maturing long; and the English authorities in Malta, as elsewhere, have been attempting for years past to submit these good Maltese to a regime against which both their faith and their manhood equally rebel.

Without entering into a lengthy account of the English line of action in respect to Malta and the Maltese, it is sufficient to say that the troubles which have recently come to a head are the results of attempts made to destroy the national language of the people, with the idea of substituting English in its stead; of introducing, by underhand ways, Protestantism; and by the weakening and lessening of patriotism. These purposes are intimately connected one with the other. If the English language were made compulsory and became universal, the introduction of Protestantism in the island would, it was hoped, be rendered easy. If Protestantism acquired a footing, the political autonomy and individuality of the Maltese would be lessened or destroyed, and the Government of the place would be made thoroughly English.

In pursuit of the first idea, the island of Malta was not yet full twenty-five years in the hands of the English Government, when the governor of that period made strenuous effort to supplant the native language by English. It may be mentioned here that the Maltese, in 1799, drove out the French, who were at that time regarded as the apostles of atheism, and selected the English as their protectors. In 1800 the latter entered on possession under remarkably free conditions on the people's part as to the full practice of religion and the enjoyment of special political rights. The languages generally spoken in the island are Maltese—a combination, they say, of Arabic and ancient Phœnician—and Italian. Except the peasants alone, everyone speaks Italian; and so much is this the case, that the movers to Italy of the redemption of Italian territory, still under the sway of the foreigner, are making special efforts to create a revolution which may release Malta from British rule and unite it with the so-called "United Italy." When, in 1825 the then governor of Malta strove to introduce the English language, to the supplanting of Italian and Maltese, his sole object was—according to information supplied *via voce* to me by a distinguished native of the island—the paving of the way for the proselytizing of the Catholics.

Since that period the governors of the island, with one exception, to be mentioned presently, laboured, with more or less zeal, according to the strength of their convictions or the energy of their character, for the propagandism of Protestantism. Naturally these efforts were made in a covert manner. The exception was the period in which the island was governed by an Irishman and a Catholic, named O'Farrell. His name is held in respect by the natives, and chiefly because he let them alone and allowed them to follow out the development of the rights and privi es accorded to them by law. Besides, he did not treat them as an inferior race—that method of treatment which is the outcome of Lord Salisbury's description of the Hindoo gentleman whom he insultingly described as "a black man." It is almost unnecessary to say that, with the exception of O'Farrell, all the governors of this most Catholic island during ninety years past have been Protestants, and most of them bitter opponents to Catholicity. Some of the chief secretaries have been Orangemen. O'Farrell's term was cut short; it was felt that his respect for the religion of the Maltese and his conciliation of their just political tendencies were out of harmony with the usual English method.

When it is considered that one of these over-zealous governors of Malta so far forgot the reverence due to his own position, and the respect due to the religious feelings of the people, as once to ride through their ranks during a solemn religious procession, it is natural to expect that they regard English interference with considerable suspicion. They are a hot-blooded people, and they seized the Governor and dipped him in the sea, in return for his unmannerliness. It was fortunate they went no further. The recent "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from Her Majesty Queen Victoria to Pope Leo XIII." came within an ace of being treated in a similar manner in attempting a similar outrage. Sir John Lintorn Simmons, who is nothing if not a fervent Protestant, attempted one day to ride through a religious procession. A policeman, or gendarme, seizing the reins of the Governor's horse, told him that such a step would arouse the feelings of the people to such an extent as to be

dangerous, not only to order, but to the person of the Governor, and led him away. The peace-loving policeman was suspended from his occupation by the Governor.

With such insolent conduct on the part of rulers—and the example of their superiors was imitated by inferior officers of the Government—it was natural to expect that a durable peace could not long be maintained. Nor was it. Three years ago the politico-religious difficulty became invested with a new form in Malta.

Then a powerful and influentially supported attempt was made to introduce the Primrose League into the island. It seems strange that such an idea should enter the mind of reasonable beings; but it is, nevertheless, true. Lady Salisbury, Lord Salisbury's secretary, and, presumably, the Duke of Norfolk—for it was at his residence the letter was written—sent a document to the Bishop of Malta at that time—Right Rev. Mgr. Bubadjar—requesting him to announce the matter to his people, and, in fact, to propagate the association. This the Bishop objected to for several very evident reasons: his work was purely ecclesiastical; this association was not presented to his notice by his ecclesiastical superiors at Rome; it was not a religious or devotional association of the Catholic Church; it had, in other countries, a political colour and tendency; in short, as a Bishop, he could not undertake the task. The Primrose League made no way in Malta!

The consequences of this action on the part of the Bishop, dealing with such zealots, might have been easily foreseen. A number of difficulties were raised around him, it was said, at Rome—and it is suspected that the influence of the Duke of Norfolk is not foreign to the result—that the Bishop was a person who was not acceptable to the English Government! This sort of attitude on the part of the Government at home and that of the island continued; the Prelate was adored by his people; difficulties were daily arising; finally, the Bishop was summoned to Rome, and, for peace sake, a successor to him was appointed in Malta, in the person of Mgr. Pace, whose name, though meaning "peace," is strangely and ironically at variance with the condition of affairs in which he is now living, and which has required the recent letter of the Pope as a soothing and calming word.

The people of Malta have been possessed with the idea that the mission of General Simmons to the Vatican boded them no good! They knew the man, and their experience of him led them to distrust him. When a local newspaper published an article in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, the Governor, Simmons, appealed, but in vain, to the Bishop to use episcopal influence to crush the journal. In his report to the British Parliament, General Simmons has characterised the clergy of Malta as "ignorant." This ignorance consists in not knowing English, and it is but a few of them who do not know that tongue, for the study of it was introduced into the seminary years ago. He himself cannot talk the general and common language of the country he governed at a salary of £5,000 a year. When he came to Rome and was first presented to the Pope, he attempted to speak French. Chaucer describes one of his characters as speaking French of "Stratford-atte-Bowe," but no poet has yet discovered the locality of Sir John Simmons' French, such as he spoke at the Vatican. He has been distinguished here above all other representatives, by his rudeness and want of tact; having no respect for the feelings of others, and talking of the Pope in a manner which was exceedingly offensive to the sentiments of Catholics here. Altogether he is just the sort of man to describe the clergy of Malta, nearly all of whom know five or six languages, as ignorant, because, in his eyes, to be ignorant of English is the unforgivable sin.

P. L. CONNELLAN.

EUROPE'S OVERWORKED MILLIONS.

(Oregon Catholic Sentinel.)

COMPARING the conditions of the labouring men in Belgium with that of his brother in the United States, the *Oregonian* says:—"The labour movement has borne him beyond the protest against long hours of toil, and his demand for wages has resulted in according him, even in the humblest vocation, a sum per day which exceeds what the Belgian toiler in like vocations earns in three. The public schools are everywhere open to his children, but he is not taxed to support a lazy priesthood or a standing army, and is allowed an aggregate of holidays in the year that enables him to familiarise himself with all the pretty parks and suburban resorts in his vicinity." It is hardly fair to parallel the Belgian with the United States workman, and attribute all the evils of his condition to a "lazy priesthood." The Belgian labourer is as well paid as his Protestant neighbour in Germany, Norway, Sweden, or even England. It will hardly be contended that a lazy priesthood is responsible for the social difficulties in these countries. The position of the wage earner in Belgium is precisely similar to that of his fellow labourers all over Europe. In every European country he is over-worked, under-paid, under-fed, and poorly clothed; his opportunities for education, for social enjoyment, for the improvement of his condition generally are limited. Look at Europe! for ages men, women, and children have toiled in field, mine, and factory; for centuries youth and strength and means were sacrificed in wars instigated mainly by the avarice, pride, or lust of petty prince or ambitious emperor. The Church found the masses of mankind in slavery. She destroyed slavery by teaching the equality of all men before God, the immortality of the soul, and moral responsibility and punishment for sin in this world and the world to come. This was the slow work of centuries.—Feudalism with its lawless chieftains, its oppressions, its turbulence, interfered with the growth of the democratic spirit in the Church, prevented the diffusion of knowledge, and held the emancipated slave as a peon. The craft guilds organised under the direction of the Church were the first labour societies. They were the outgrowth of the Christian spirit permeating society. Nevertheless the conditions of the masses of the people during the middle ages show a gradual improvement down to the date when Martin Luther and the so-called reformers cast the fire-brand of religious discussions into the European household. Of their condition in England, we have a