

nation; from the laws, and from all that is official life, every religious idea and inspiration is systematically banned, when it is not directly antagonised; the public manifestations of Catholic faith and piety are either prohibited, or under vain pretexts hampered in a thousand ways. The family is deprived of its foundation and its religious constitution by proclaiming what they call "civil matrimony," and by the instruction which they require shall be altogether secular, from the primary elements even to the higher instruction of the Universities; so that the new generations, so far as depends on the State, are, as it were, obliged to grow up without any idea of religion, wholly devoid of the first and essential notions of their duties towards God. This is putting the axe to the root, nor can there be imagined a means more universal and more effective to withdraw society, the family and individuals from the influence of the Church and of the faith. "By all manner of means sap clericalism (or Catholicity) in its foundations, and in the very sources of its life, that is, in the school and in the family," is the authentic declaration of Masonic writers.

It will be said that this happens not alone in Italy, but that it is a system of government to which States are generally conforming. We reply that this does not destroy, but rather confirms what we say of the intentions and of the actions of Masonry in Italy. Yes this system is adopted and put in practice wherever Freemasonry exercises its impious action, and as this sect is widely spread, hence it follows that the anti-Christian system also is very largely applied.

But its application is more rapid and more general, and is pushed more to extremes in those countries whose governments are more under the action of the sect and promote its interests more. And, by evil fortune, in the number of these countries is at present new Italy. It is not a thing of to-day that it is subject to the impious, maleficent influence of the sects; but for some time past these having become absolutely dominant and most powerful, tyrannise over it at will. Here the direction of public affairs, in that which concerns religion, is wholly conformable to the aspirations of the sects; which for their carrying-out, find in the depositories of the public powers declared abettors and docile instrument. The laws adverse to the Church and the measures offensive to it are first proposed, decreed, and resolved in the bosom of the assemblies of the sects; and it is sufficient that anything whatsoever may have a sort of appearance, though distant, of bringing scorn or evil to the Church, to see it forthwith favoured and promoted. Amongst the most recent facts we will recall to mind the approval of the new Penal Code; in which that which they desired with the greatest tenacity, notwithstanding all reasons to the contrary, was the adoption of the articles against the clergy, which constitute for that body as it were, an exceptional law, and they go so far as to consider as criminal some acts which are for it most sacred duties of the ministry. The law upon the *opere pie* (charitable institutions), by which the whole patrimony of charity, accumulated by the piety and by the religion of our ancestors in the shadow and under the tutelage of the Church, has been withdrawn from all its action and interference; that law had been already, during many years, promoted in the meetings of the sect, just because it should inflict a new injury on the Church, diminish her social influence, and suppress at one blow a great quantity of bequests for purposes of worship. To this is added the eminently sectarian work, that is, the erection of the monument to the notorious apostate of Nola, promoted, determined on and carried out by the assistance and the favour of the ruling authorities of Freemasonry, which by the very mouth of the most authoritative interpreters of the thought of the sect, did not blush to confess its aim and declare its significance. The scope was to scorn the Papacy the significance is that it is now desired to substitute for the Catholic faith the most absolute liberty of examination, of criticism, of thought and of conscience; and it is well known what such language means in the mouths of the sectaries. And the seal was put upon it by more explicit declarations publicly made by him who is the head of the Government; declarations which sound exactly thus: The real and true struggle, which the Government has the merit of having comprehended, is the struggle between faith and the Church on the one side, free examination and reason on the other. Let the Church seek to react, to enchain again reason and liberty of thought and to conquer. As to the Government, in the struggle, it declares openly in favour of reason against faith, and it attributes to itself the task of acting so that the Italian State may be the evident expression of this reason and liberty—a sad task, which in an analogous occasion we lately heard audaciously reasserted.

By the light of such facts and of such declarations, it is more than ever evident that the master idea which presides over the march of public affairs in Italy is, in what concerns religion, the putting into execution of the Masonic programme. We see what part of the programme has been already realised; it is known what still remains to be executed, and we may foresee with certainty that, as long as the destinies of Italy will be in the hands of sectarian rulers, or dependent on the sects, its execution will be pushed forward more or less rapidly, according to circumstances, even to its fullest development. Their action now is directed to reach the following aims, according to the vows and the resolutions taken in their most authoritative assemblies—vows and resolutions all inspired with hate to the death against the Church:—Abolition in the schools of any religious instruction whatsoever, and the founding of institutions in which also the female youth may be withdrawn from every clerical influence, of whatever sort it may be; since the State, which should be absolutely atheistic, has the inalienable right and duty of forming the heart and mind of the citizens, and no school should be withdrawn either from its inspiration or its vigilance. Rigorous application of all the laws in vigour directed to insure absolute independence of civil society from clerical influences. Rigorous observance of the laws which suppress the religious corporations and use of all means to render them effective. Systematisation of all the ecclesiastical patrimony, starting from the principle that the proprietorship of it belongs to the State and the administration of it to the civil powers. Exclusion of every Catholic or clerical element from all public administrations, from the *opere pie*, from hospitals, from schools, from councils in which they

might prepare the destinies of the country, from academies, circles, associations, committees, families; exclusion from all, everywhere, for always. Instead, the Masonic influence should make itself felt in all the circumstances of social life, and become mistress and arbitress of all. With this, the way will be smoothed for the abolition of the Papacy; thus Italy will be freed from her implacable and mortal enemy, and Rome, which was in the past the centre of universal secularisation, whence should be proclaimed in the face of the whole world the Magna Charta of human liberty."

These are so many authentic declarations, aspirations, and resolutions of Freemasons or of their assemblies.

Without at all exaggerating, this is the present and the future state which is being provided for religion in Italy. To dissimulate the gravity of it would be a fatal error. To recognise it such as it is, and to confront it with evangelical prudence and fortitude, to deduce the duties from it which it imposes on all Catholics, and on Us especially, who as pastors should watch over them and conduct them to salvation, is to enter into the designs of Providence, and to fulfil a work of pastoral wisdom and zeal. For what regards Us, the Apostolic Office imposes on Us, to protest again loudly against all that has been done to the prejudices of religion, is done, or is attempted to be done, in Italy; defenders and guardians as We are of the sacred rights of the Church and of the Pontificate, openly We repel, and to all the Catholic world We denounce, the offences which the Church and the Pontificate receive continuously, especially in Rome, and which render the Government of Catholicity more difficult to Us, and more heavy and unbecoming Our condition. For the rest We are firmly resolved to omit nothing on Our part which may avail to maintain the faith alive and vigorous in the midst of the Italian people, and to protect it against the assaults of enemies.

We therefore also make appeal, Venerable Brothers, to your zeal and your love for souls, in order that, comprehending the gravity of the danger they run, you may prepare the remedies, and put everything in operation to ward them off. No means in Our power is to be neglected; all the resources of speech, all the industries of action, all the immense treasure of assistance and of graces which the Church places in Our hands, are to be employed for the formation of a clergy instructed and filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ; for the Christian education of youth, for the extirpation of evil doctrines, for the defence of Catholic truths, for the preservation of the Christian character and spirit in families.

As to the Catholic people, it is necessary, before all, that they may be instructed in the true state of affairs in Italy in the matter of religion, of the tendency, essentially religious, which the struggle against the Pontiff has in Italy, and of the true scope it constantly aims at, in order that they may see with the evidence of facts in how many ways snares are held out in a religious point of view, and that they may be persuaded of the dangers they run of being despoiled of the inestimable treasure of faith. Being convinced of this truth, and sure, besides, that without faith it is impossible to please God and to save themselves, the faithful will understand that it is a question of the greatest, not to say of sole interest, that each has the duty of guaranteeing here below, and putting in security before all, at the price of any sacrifice, under pain of incurring eternal misery.

The remainder of the Encyclical deals chiefly with the moral duties of Italians under the circumstances referred to by Leo XIII.

P. L. CONNELLAN.

## THE IRISH LANGUAGE.

(From an occasional Correspondent.)

THE Rev. Mr. Jordan delivered his first lecture on the Language and Ancient Literature of Erin, last Tuesday night, November 25, in the Exchange Hall, Wellington. Dr. Cahill occupied the chair. On the platform, to support the lecturer, were Messrs. J. J. Devine, Sheridan, O'Dea, and Colonel McDougal. Among the audience were his Grace the Archbishop, the Very Rev. Father MacNamara, V.G., S.M., the Rev. F. Kerrigan, S.M., P.P., Te Aro, also Fathers Goggin, S.M., Tupman, S.M., St. Patrick's College, Doberty S.M., and Rev. Mr. Coffey, St. Mark's Anglican clergyman. The attendance was good considering the many attractions elsewhere. The lecture throughout was listened to with marked attention, and received round upon round of applause, the lecturer having at the outset gained the ears and hearts of the audience. The applause was really deserved, for Mr. Jordan's treatment of his subjects was lucid and interesting, and, no doubt, went home to the hearts of many present. The Rev. Mr. Jordan is a capital speaker, and his mastery of the Irish tongue was itself a treat which Irishmen seldom or never before enjoyed. His lecture was illustrated with tales full of humour and wit so racy of his native country. Mr. Jordan began by stating he considered it an honour to have the present privilege of addressing the audience on subjects so important as the ancient language and literature of Erin, as these subjects referred to and included the history of a race the most remarkable in the history of Western Europe, whose traditions were lost in the mazes of antiquity, and there was no other race which left its marks on the history of the globe, that preserved its ancient traditions with so much care as the Celtic, that swarm from the Japhetic hive which spread over Western Europe long before the period of authentic records. These old traditions and associations were highly guarded and treasured by the Irish at the present time as titles of nobility to a fallen family. The remembrances of those long past ages helped to strengthen them under trials and braced them with hope for the future. If he spoke in a sympathetic and favourable manner of what might be called a rude age, and times of savage manners in the history of his country, he hoped the audience would pardon him, for he knew quite well that his favourable estimation was more than counter-balanced by the ridicule, contempt, and apathy from which all matters relating to Irish tradition and history suffered at the hands of many, and he thought it best when giving the national history of any nation, to err on the favourable side than to pervert or suppress the truth. It had been stated in public that the Irish were never a nation,