

of amelioration is vanishing, would it not seem desirable to move voluntarily out of a false and painful situation? The reasons of moral security weigh heavily in the sanctuary of the Pontifical conscience. Tradition, the age of the Cardinals, and the fear of the unknown, play a considerable part in this evolution of the Holy See; but there comes a time when the question of existence overbalances all questions of opportunity and convenience, when the custom of centuries stands aside and vanishes before the need of living, breathing, and developing. The law of existence is the first law of all.

The Italian Government has measured the whole scope of this eventuality. Although it affects a serenity that is not in its heart, it fears an exodus. Since 1879 it has been concentrating a large proportion of its thoughts round this pivot of internal and general policy. In its judgment, to interfere with the existing conditions of the Conclave would be to lay hands upon one of the bases of its life and organism. When Pius IX. reached the decline of his Pontificate, loaded with years, M. Depretis made a whole campaign in the European capitals to force the Sacred College to elect the new Pope in Rome. In his successive notes he multiplied promises to the different Cabinets, and guaranteed, as he said, the absolute liberty of the Conclave. He took the Vatican under his guardianship, so that no power might favour the current in the direction of a possible exodus of the Conclave.

If in 1878 the Government dreaded a departure of the Papacy its fear has become greater since. Grave faults have been committed. The situation has grown worse. The two Powers, from adversaries that might be reconciled, have become two irreconcilable forces. The atmosphere of the Vatican has been renewed. They breathe there already the air of the future. On the heights of the Holy See there is felt something like the sensation of a new earth, the precursory breezes of another climatic season for the Papacy. That is the reason why the Quirinal has increased its efforts and will still increase them to hold the Vatican in its present state of immobility. At the commencement of the year 1890 M. Crispi opened negotiations with the allied Cabinets for the purpose of preparing the Conclave, forcing it to remain in Rome, and bringing about the election of a Pope who would not be too redoubtable. M. Rudini has continued this work. It has even been said that the Consulta included in its conditions for the renewal of the Triple Alliance a restrictive clause, a sort of agreement about the Conclave. In fact, this thing was attempted, but Mgr. Galimberti, becoming aware of it in time, was able to foil the manoeuvre. Yet it is certain that the Consulta delivered to the Emperor, through the intermediary of M. de Revertzen, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to the Holy See, a confidential note, in which it specified what it desired. It is also said that the Emperor was painfully affected by this communication, because his position as Chief of State and the traditions of the house of Hapsburg tormented him to favour too much the selfish projects of the Quirinal against the Pope, and therefore against the Catholics of his empire.

The reasons for this intervention are plain enough. An Italian ministry could never, without committing suicide or without absolute abdication, give to the Conclave and the Pope liberty to leave the Italian soil. The future of the house of Savoy and the life of its Government are based upon the *status quo*. The day that a departure should be accomplished the Italian State would be thrown off the track. The Roman question is the knot of the policy, the main spring of the Italian unitary mechanism. A change, a modification, or a transposition of factors, however slight that transposition might be, would bring about a dislocation and endanger all the solidity of the improvised State. The Conclave away from Rome, the exodus of the Papacy would be not only the overthrow of the order now established; it would be, with brief delay, a revolution in Italy. It would be the triumph of the republic. Bonghi said only the other day: "If the Pope quits Rome through the Via Flaminian, the King will be obliged to flee through the Porta Pia." Never under normal conditions has such an agitation been possible as that which would follow the departure of the Sacred College. What, then, would it be in our painful and difficult condition, at the time when the least shock is liable to produce an earthquake in the order of Europe? It would not only be the cause of the Pope opened up with *eclat*, but it would be a peril for the concert of the allied Powers. It would be the signal for new combinations and the prelude to extraordinary complexities.

Consequently the Powers, with Italy at the head of them, are interested in the unfolding of this historical episode. At no period in history has the Papacy had such mighty influence upon the march of international destinies. M. de Maistre once prophesied: "The days are approaching when we shall have in the world the visible presence of the Papacy." That time has now arrived. The Vatican has entered into the public conscience, into the calculations of States as the principal, the pivotal, factor in European order. Many statesmen regret that they did not take up their positions in 1870 in this great affair, in order to bring about an amicable arrangement between the two powers that together occupy the city of Rome. At that time an arrangement would not have met with the resistance that is offered to-day to any *entente cordiale*. On the one side as on the other minds have become embittered: the situation has become spoiled. There has been accumulated on the two heights of the Capitol and of St. Peter's

such an enormous amount of misunderstanding, disagreement and conflict that it would require a great stroke of Providence to bring things back again to their natural order. Therefore the eventuality of the Conclave interests the leaders of the nations. It is beyond doubt to-day that the whole quadruple force of Italy, Germany, Austria, and England, is combined against any innovation in the choice of a successor to Leo XIII. It would be excessive, it seems to me, to characterise closely the controlling inspiration of this attitude. The departure of the Sacred College would unquestionably be the most tremendous blow that could be directed against the Quirinal, the most fatal event, full of the gravest consequences. Now the Triple Alliance has need of Italy, and therefore it fears this mysterious exodus quite as much as does the Consulta.

From Madrid and Lisbon we find similar influences proceeding. The relationship of the two Queens with the houses of Savoy and Hapsburg render the diplomacy of these two countries very malleable for the wishes of the Quirinal. All who know the political soil of Rome, that soil so multiform, so difficult to understand, made of a combination of mystery and subsoil, a delicate domain reserved for the *elite* of politics, are not ignorant of the fact that the Ambassadors of Madrid and Lisbon to the Pope have received orders to assist the moral effects of the Triple Alliance, and to influence ecclesiastical opinion in Rome against the probability of an exodus of the Sacred College.

But will these combined efforts succeed? If the Quirinal has such a strong interest in maintaining the present state of affairs ought the Vatican to favour its rival by remaining in expectation and inaction? Is it not evident to every impartial observer that opposing interests must bring about a diversity of conduct? If the entire existence of the Italian State is linked with the *status quo*, ought the Pope to fasten himself to a waiting policy? If every day, standing with folded arms, he finds himself losing ground; and if the removal of the Sacred College puts in question all the work of the Italian revolution, is it possible to hesitate and not have recourse to such a convenient weapon? Objections are made on the difficulties of removal, that black cloud in the international horizon, and the uncertainty of a return. But what the Vatican will not do at an inopportune moment and of its own accord, it may be forced to do the day when the revolution considers itself strong enough to enter the arena for the last battle. Everything that is great in history has its thorns. Whatever has an influence upon human destiny may make the most courageous tremble, and cause the most creative minds to falter. But extraordinary situations demand extraordinary acts. The Papacy has faith in the Divine force. It rests upon the Infinite and upon the moral miracle. As an historical power, as a human contingency, it has its modesty and its timidity. It knows the calculations and the hesitations of political bodies. It is anxious and is not afraid. It takes refuge in worldly prudence. But when it is not alone its human side that is at stake, but all its pastoral ministry: when all its religious mission and all its social and amphictyonic arbitrage are threatened, how can we refuse to admit that Leo XIII. and his counsellors should discuss the reasons in favour of an exile necessarily temporary? Has not the Sacred College several times been in session abroad? And have not these extraordinary sessions been followed by a marvellous rejuvenation of the moderating and pacifying power of the Holy See? But I do not wish to enter upon an argument. My intention is simply to be the sincere interpreter of the reality, a witness of facts. And is it not strange that when one weighs the reasons for and against, we are brought infallibly to the conclusion that an exodus alone will bring about a solution worthy of the Pope, of Italy, and of the civilised world?

(To be concluded.)

In one of its recent issues the *Moniteur de Rome* gives expression to an opinion that a very remarkable article which recently appeared in the *Grahsanine*, a journal of considerable influence in St. Petersburg, has not received all the notice which it deserves. According to the Russian authority, the incidents of the second of last October ought to have opened the eyes of all friends of the Pope to the seriousness of the situation in which his Holiness is placed. The Italian Radicals have given the world clearly to understand that on the very day on which war may chance to be declared they will at once set fire to the Vatican; while there are to be found not a few among the lower ranks of this party who are but little disposed to wait for the declaration of war before carrying their design into effect. The *Grahsanine* declares that it can well understand the apprehensions which fill the mind of the Pontiff and his fears lest the date of his departure from Rome may be hastened. The same paper asks what hopes there are that liberty of action will be allowed to the next Conclave which shall assemble for the election of a Pope, and adds that the only chance of a favourable issue to the present crisis is to be found in the united action of Catholics in all parts of the world.

We notice in a London paper that the Pope has conferred a notable distinction on Mr. Clement Scott, the well-known Catholic litterateur of London. The honour referred to consists of the Papal blessing inscribed on a document signed and sealed at the Vatican, and enclosed in a magnificent casket of lacquer and Damascene steel. This favour is intended as a recognition of Mr. Scott's eloquent protests against the atheism of the current dramatic literature. Mr. Scott is the son of a Protestant clergyman. He became a Catholic when quite a young man. Amongst the other distinguished literary men of London, who are also known as practical Catholics, may be mentioned Mr. F. C. Burnan, editor of the famous comic paper, *Punch*.