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Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

M. ANATOLE LEROY-BEAULIEU publishes in the *THE INFLUENCE* *Revue des Deux Mondes* of January 15, a second OF THE CHURCH article on the Pope's Encyclical. He testifies strongly to the wisdom of the letter and the benefits to result from its being taken as the guide of the people. In alluding to the recognition made by the Holy Father of the people's rights, he points out that in this the Pope coincides with the teaching of the Scholastics, who had taught doctrine on this matter which in later days has been ignorantly attributed to the men of the Revolution. The Pope, however, he asserts, although he ascribes to the State considerable powers of interference, does not in this respect, go to the lengths to which the Scholastics had gone. This restraint Mr Leroy-Beaulieu attributes to the difference between the forms of Government respectively distinguishing the different epochs. So much, nevertheless, he explains as common to all forms of Government, that their aim is Caesarism. We gather incidentally that the writer does not approve of the late action of the Pope in favour of the Republic. He speaks very strongly of the impossibility of making a distinction in giving it support, between the rational and desirable measures taken by it, and those it has adopted for the oppression of religion and for expelling God from the schools. He lays chief stress on the protection afforded to the family by the Church and the resistance she offers to the encroachment on it of the State. This, he says, has gained for her the sympathy of many men who otherwise care little about her, and has led them to seek for their children a Catholic education. M. Leroy-Beaulieu in effect deprecates impressively the gross materialism of the day and protests against the effort to extirpate from among the people the influences of Christianity. His article, coming as it does from so distinguished a man, who can hardly himself be regarded as a Catholic, should have particular force for reflecting minds among the non-Catholic people. Catholics will find in it a becoming homage paid to the influence of the Church and the wisdom of Pope Leo XIII.

COMING EVENTS?

BUT M. Leroy-Beaulieu may well point to the influence and teaching of the Catholic Church as influences necessary for the welfare and safety of society. The other alternative is now well within his sight. Behold some results of the education of the period, and what is got by thrusting out God from the schools of the people and clapping the door of the schoolroom in His face. Shut out God and the devil enters, and these are the fruits of his presence. All Paris is trembling, and London bids fair to tremble with her, at the revelation that anarchy is growing more violent in her streets, and must make its terrible mark there before very long. This is gained by giving the secret societies—and chief among them, the Grand Orient—now openly established among ourselves, free course of action, and allowing them to influence the legislation of the country. This is science and learning as men of the more advanced schools understand them, for the benefit of the race. The Church kept the people in ignorance. That was, and is still, the old cry—ignorant or insolent and lying—according, as those who utter it are stupid, or false and designing. The Church did not keep the people ignorant. Where, for example, was there, or is there now, a city better provided with schools of all classes than was Rome under the Popes? Where was there a country in which a more devoted effort was made to educate the masses than France, where the Blessed De la Salle and his sons, long before a scheme of national education was thought of for England, gave themselves up under the encouragement and guidance of the Church to teach the children of the people. The Church was the pioneer of enlightenment and education throughout Europe, and has never ceased to do her utmost there in their cause. Except in the Papal States, indeed, the public revenues were not in her hands—but in the one exceptional country, schools and universities abounded, and more than abounded. It was not in her power to establish national systems of education. And these, besides, are of compara-

tively recent invention. She might as well, for example, be reproached for not lighting the medieval towns with gas or electricity. A third of the people or one half of the people, we are told, did not know how to read under Catholic Governments, and we may believe it was so if we will accept statistics prepared for their own ends by the enemies of the Church. But those of such people who did know how to read had been taught at a sacrifice that no society except the Catholic Church has ever made for the same cause. Even the Socialist Hyndman, for instance, acknowledge her services to education in England. The education of Europe by the Church has received two great checks—one by means of the Reformation in Germany, so marked and immediate that certain scholars of no great piety who were inclined to adopt the new doctrines were warned and drew back—as, indeed, Professor Karl Pearson also reminds us in his article in the *Academy* from which we lately quoted. Instead of the continued advancement of science, there were the insurrection of the peasants, wars of the Huguenots, wars in the Low Countries, projected Mohammedan alliance, and other matters of the kind. The other check has been given in our own days. It has come from the Revolution, from the secret societies—and chief among them the Grand Orient, now established also in New Zealand—and already we begin to see the results. And let us, in passing, note the meeting of extremes. The religious so-called reformation and the irreligious movement have so much in common that the spirit of plunder and robbery is a characteristic of both. The one robbed the Church, and appropriated to private and profane uses the property held in trust for the poor and devoted to their services in both temporal and spiritual matters—to their education among the rest. The other would—and possibly will, rob society at large—and now gives us a foretaste, as we see in Paris, of the methods by which it proposes to do so. What will be the fate of the much boasted educational systems and scientific institutions we should like to know, if, as seems not improbable, an angry mob gets loose to riot in profligacy and excess. It may remain for the men of another generation, reclaimed by the devoted efforts and unflinching constancy of the Catholic Church—to look back upon these days of ours and record with regretful indignation the results of the check given to the good work of Christian civilisation that we ourselves have witnessed. A world recovering from ruin and degradation may chronicle with horror works worthy of societies whose god—palpably wor-shipped by them—is the devil, and chief among which is the Grand Orient of France—now openly established in New Zealand. Well may moderate men, like M. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, even although they can hardly be reckoned Catholics, point to the Catholic Church as the only hope of a threatened world.

BUT what is the advantage of knowing how to read, THE GOOD OF IT, and what is the loss to those who cannot do so?

May we judge by newspapers of the day? Morning after morning, and evening after evening, columns filled with nauseous, loathsome, almost beastly, details. A detestable series of murders is committed, and, behold, the man accused of them is promoted to the place of a hero! His looks are detailed, even his portrait is published. All his movements are recorded—we are made minutely acquainted with his love affairs. Time was when the off-scourings of the town assembled in front of the gallows, and their literary requirements were appropriately supplied by the last dying speech, or the farthing ballad. We have now improved matters, and are more refined and better cultured. We do not go to take our stand beneath the gallows, but the gallows literature adorns our breakfast tables, or solaces the retired hours of our evenings. Such is the intellectual advancement of the day.—And, indeed, the *Quarterly Review* some short time ago published an article enlarging on the literary taste of the period, and giving instances of the class of books most in demand. It was of a nature to leave little to be wondered at in the execrable details that the daily papers are now so busily engaged in disseminating. What, therefore, is the good of being able to read, if thus an avenue is prepared by which, for the most part, disgusting matter is conveyed to the mind? Unfortunate, indeed, are the people for whom a monster of wickedness takes the part of a hero—and that greedily devours, as news of importance and interest, the details of a career for which the gallows is too good an

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