

intimate thought on this matter. One day this very winter he called for the records of the Conclave. He is studying the question at the present moment. It is probable that he will remain undecided, to say the least. Russia, flanked with France, has all the reasons in the world for continuing the actual immobility of Europe. But the immobility of Europe cannot exist without the immobility of the Vatican. Parliamentary corruption, the financial decadence of Italy, the difficulties with which Prussia and Austria are grappling, the moral conquests which Russia continues to make in the East and the advances which she is gaining every day over her competitors; the entire *ensemble* of the general situation allows the Czar to favour the *status quo* up to the day when he shall feel that the East, without too much commotion and bloodshed, is about to adorn his half-European and half-Asiatic crown with new diamonds. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that Russia will hardly be favourable to the exodus of the Conclave. But the Vatican, on the other hand, knows that if Russia has her motives for maintaining the policy of expectation, this policy is contrary to the interests of the Papacy. If all danger of war is averted, the Pope sinks more and more to the level of a vassal of Italy, and degrades himself in a corrupting promiscuity. The Holy See can also wait for centuries, but when it considers the actual transformation of the Italian atmosphere and the progress of the usurping State, it must feel its confidence weakening with time as well as the serenity of its judgment.

France is at the mercy of contrary currents. She understands the advantages of an exodus, but she fears the perils of the change. Nevertheless, there was a time when she visibly encouraged ideas of initiative and projects of departure. Since M. Ribot came into power this encouragement has perhaps been transformed into contradictory counsels. Every Republican Ministry fears a European complication because any war would be the death of the present *regime*, in the dictatorship of a victorious or extraordinary general: A fortunate Massena or triumphant Napoleon would soon put his iron gauntlet, his mighty sword, at the head of affairs. The sceptre of France would naturally slip into his hands. There is in French diplomacy a great deal of precocity, too much timidity, and a confusion that can be easily understood, together with an amount of groping in the dark, all of which is the result of the fact that the republican system has not yet created a political selection: Leo XIII., I am told, has a full appreciation of this moral and psychological state of the political world in France. If a resolute man, having a synthetic conception of the condition of Europe and of the Holy See, were directing the destinies of nations, we should already have seen Leo XIII. try his *coup d'etat*, and bring upon the political scene one of those historical decisions which influence for centuries the political forms of mankind.

These are the principal reasons both for the removal of the Conclave and for keeping it in Rome. I shall not speak of the influence which the Consulta, aided by its friends, will endeavour to exercise upon the Conclave. This pressure will have no re-action upon the decision of the Holy See, because the latter will accept no advice either from Governments or sovereigns. The right of exclusion was a favour of the middle ages, graciously granted by the Popes to a Catholic Emperor. It was a sort of communication of power; but as that faithful Christianity sank in the vicissitudes of revolutions, the Vatican cannot communicate to the outside bishops this participation in its power. It is only in times of complications, external and internal, that these attempts to influence and intimidate could infallibly determine the Sacred College to seek an asylum in a foreign land.

In Rome all the *élite*, all those who regard with knowledge the inevitable transformations of the Papacy as a human power and a historical institution, incline more and more to the exodus of the Conclave. It would be a mistake to suppose that the higher spheres have confined their preoccupations and their decisions to the case of war. A new world is moving in the great Roman brain. All wide-opened intelligences feel that a future different from the past is coming on. They know that to allow this time of change in social forces to pass by without taking up a position would be to lose the empire over souls. Now, with the system of Sixtus V. and the antique traditions, it is impossible to take this place in history. We must have a renewal of forms and methods, and an adaptation to the needs and conditions of the time. The rejuvenation must not be postponed. If the Papacy does not get out of its present situation; if it endures without acting the indirect protectorate of the Italian State, it will no longer be possible for it to bring about the modification which the bureaucratic system of the central government of the Church stands in need of. An exodus would be the signal, the starting point of this metamorphosis, which has become necessary.

These are the "thoughts from behind the head," as Pascal says, which are boiling now in the Roman brain. It is true that the old Cardinals and traditions are opposed to a departure except in case of war or revolution. In the world that loves peace and dreads all change it is said that the Conclave should be in Rome if Europe retains its present physiognomy, and if a riot is not to be dreaded in the city. To set out for a foreign country has no charm for the timid, for the ferocious sticklers for custom; but if this view has the majority for it, it

has no other merit. When the vacancy of the Holy See shall occur, a man of decision, imbued with new ideas and of a superior atmosphere, may carry the majority with him and make the *coup d'etat* of the Papacy. It is said in the last Consistory the Holy Father spoke of these new conditions of the Conclave, and it is probable that Leo XIII. will define the conduct to be followed. If the Pope was a younger man, he would long since have taken the road to exile, because he has in an eminent degree the prescience of the future, and a thorough understanding of the radical changes that must be made.

From all these considerations, in conformity with the ideas which are expressed around the Vatican, the impression is derived that the more we get away from 1870 the more the movement of events and the development of the situation will exercise their influence in the direction of a transformation: and, consequently, the necessity, or at least the utility, of a departure of the Conclave seems apparent. It is the prelude to a foreign Pope.

THE BISHOP OF DUNEDIN ON INDULGENCES.

HIS Lordship the Bishop addressed a crowded congregation in St Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday evening:—

The Bishop said his intention was to speak on the subject of indulgences. He feared, meantime, that he must appeal to the kind indulgence of the congregation as he found he was hoarser than he had believed himself to be. He knew he had a cold but did not think it was so bad. He would not be able to speak as usual. He took up his subject not in a controversial spirit or a spirit of argument. He simply meant to explain what the doctrine of the Church was. Beginning thus he would try to give them a distinct idea of what indulgences were not. He would ask a few questions and answer them in a few words. Was an indulgence a forgiveness for sin? Was it a forgiveness of the guilt of sin and of the eternal punishment due to it? It was not. Did an indulgence give permission to commit sin? It did not. It was neither a pardon for sin nor a license to commit sin, and the astonishing thing was that any one could be found at that hour to say that it was anything of the kind. Such profound ignorance was hardly to be expected. If he had clearly and distinctly expressed himself he had now laid it down that an indulgence was not forgiveness for sin nor license to commit sin. He would ask another question. Did the Pope sell indulgences? He did not. Had he ever done so? He had not. Any one who asserted that he did, or ever had, stated an untruth, and uttered a calumny against the Church of God. When they found books written in English and other languages making such statements they must consider them as falsehoods, and such false statements must be made now deliberately because any man who took a little trouble could know these statements to be untrue. When men deliberately made false statements such statements were what were in common language designated lies. Indulgences did not give pardon for sin; they were not licenses to commit sin, and the Pope did not sell and never had sold them. Yet we found books used in the public schools teaching the children that the Pope sold indulgences, that indulgences were a pardon for sin and a license to commit sin. This was a wrong, an injustice, and a tyranny. Government took the money of Catholics to enable them to teach this deliberate falsehood to the children of the country. This was a wrong and an insult. It was deliberately to teach the children of Catholics and others what the Catholic Church did not teach. They were bound to raise their voices and protest against this. They were bound to demand justice as their right, and to agitate and continue to agitate until justice had been obtained by them and the wrong had been righted. Now he would proceed to state what an indulgence was. The doctrine of the Church to-day had not altered. Her doctrine was the same to-day as it had been in all the ages in which she had existed. Let them take up a little catechism used here, and they would find in it an exposition of the Catholic doctrine made clearly and distinctly. The teaching was what he had now stated that an indulgence was not a pardon for sin or a license to commit sin. On the contrary, the catechism taught, that a man in a state of sin could not gain an indulgence that in order to gain an indulgence he must be in the friendship of Almighty God, that he must be in a state of grace. The doctrine was laid down plainly, and the catechism could be had at the cost of 1d. Every one could obtain it; every one could afford to pay a penny for it. There was, therefore, no excuse for calumniating the Catholic doctrine. The most rev preacher went on to say that he had this little book printed in 1888, but the same doctrine had been taught in the diocese before it was published. The original had been written by Dr Butler, Archbishop of Cashel, at the beginning of the last century. It was the catechism which he himself had been taught between 50 and 60 years ago; his father had learned it before him, and his grandfather 100 years ago. There had been no variation in the catechism. The prelates of Australia assembled at the Synod of Sydney in November 1885 had approved of it. He had not changed a word of it. A few chapters had been added on subjects which he thought might be useful, but it contained the teaching