

tenance of religious worship. This solemn bilateral treaty has now been set aside by the one party to it, without so much as consultation with—or even notification of—the other party. It is an act of national repudiation of a national debt.

After the Revolution this or that religious Order as such (Dominicans, Franciscans, Capuchins, etc.) was no longer regarded as having a separate corporate existence in French law. They were looked upon by the State merely as ordinary French citizens, having no legal incapacity by reason of vow, habit, or rule; free to live where and how they pleased; to practise such arts, trades, professions, or callings as to them seemed good; to receive inheritances, donations, and legacies; to be voters, deputies, or senators; and subject, in their various relations, to the civil, commercial, and criminal codes like every Jacques Bonhomme from the Straits of Dover to the Pyrenees. The Revolution shuffled off religion. It even raised its fiery face and its blood-stained hand against the Almighty. But amidst all its follies and excesses it left the Catholic religious—the friends of the orphan and the sick and the poor—a degree of personal and collective freedom that is large and generous by comparison with the grinding disabilities which the Radicals and Socialists have inflicted upon them. Freedom of association and of teaching was further secured by the charters of 1815 and 1830, by the Republican Constitution of 1848, by the Act of 1850 on primary education, by that of 1875 on superior instruction, and by the vote of the Senate on the conferring of degrees.

It is a mighty fall from what was—considering all its circumstances—the relatively liberal law of 1790 to Grevy's decree of March 30, 1880, ordering the dissolution of the various Jesuit communities throughout France. Another decree was published at the same time requiring all 'unauthorised' religious associations to secure a legal sanction to exist which—it was nevertheless rather plainly intimated—they were not likely to receive. Sixteen hundred lawyers entered a protest against these decrees. They declared them a violation of French law, and maintained that, by virtue of the 'droit public,' religious congregations had the same right to exist as associations of any other kind, without special authorisation, and that the only duty they owed to the State was that of due obedience to its laws. But the Government, urged on by the secret societies, had unsheathed the knife and was bent upon reaching the throat of the religious Orders. It was an open and undisguised war upon the Church in France. Orders were therefore given to push the campaign vigorously in every department. 'Four hundred magistrates,' says M. Edmond Rousse, of the French Academy, 'refused to carry out the unworthy office forced upon them and handed in their resignation. Their places were filled by four hundred other functionaries, and before the close of the year—after disgraceful scenes which have not yet been forgotten—the decrees were carried out. All the communities of men were dissolved and their monasteries left empty. Only a few servants remained to keep watch over the deserted buildings and to open the doors for the requisitions of the police or the gendarmes on their beat.'

The besieging of convents, the banishment of the Sisters from the hospitals, etc., and the forcible—oftentimes violent—expulsion of aged men and women whose lives were devoted to the cause of charity, proved to be a highly unpopular measure. But the surface of French politics moves quickly nowadays. One of the most conspicuous features of the present French Republic is, according to Lecky, 'its astonishing ministerial instability.' Between 1870 and the closing days of 1893 France had no fewer than thirty-two Ministries. Since Grevy's anti-monastic 'coup' of 1880 as many as nearly thirty have had brief and inglorious innings. Most of them have kept up the tradition of war against religion. But till the advent of M. Waldeck-Rousseau none of them hazarded a repetition of Grevy's rough-and-tumble crowdbar campaign against men and women the head and front of whose offending was the faith which they possessed and the noble lesson of Christian charity of which, their lives were a daily sermon. A more ingenious mode of compassing the destruction of the religious Orders was devised—by imposing upon them, and upon them alone, a crushing burden of taxation. This was the now famous 'loi d'accroissement.' It failed to effect its purpose. And, as the result, the Associations Law was passed by the Senate. It is merely Grevy's old weapon, furnished up and covered with a decent show of legality. It is essentially a measure of persecution. And the 'Radical' declared that the anti-clerical party would 'demand the denunciation of the Concordat, the complete suppression of the congregations, the

monopoly of education by the State, and the untested domination of lay' (by which it means atheistic) 'ideas.'

All this has come to pass. The so-called Separation Law crowned the work. Briefly, French atheists and anti-clericals are girding themselves for a long and final struggle with religion. Leroy-Beaulieu, Barry, Lefebvre, Hurlbert, the Duke de Broglie, Lecky, and others have, in sundry volumes, shown the amazing extent to which the long State campaign against the religious Orders has been accompanied by a fanatical and aggressive official propaganda of atheism in the public schools; by a serious and far-reaching persecution of civil functionaries who dare to exercise or allow their families to exercise the duties of their religion; by prevention of ministrations to the sick and dying in hospitals, etc.; and by the systematic harrying of the bishops and parochial clergy and the cutting down of their meagre incomes—the meanest of all the forms of controversy, as Lecky calls it in his 'Democracy and Liberty' (vol. ii., p. 84). What the end will be, no man can with confidence predict. The spirited action of the German priesthood and episcopate during the continuance of the Falk legislation furnishes a lesson which, we trust, may not be lost upon their confreres at the other side of the Rhine. French—as well as German ecclesiastics have suffered 'suppression' and even imprisonment to good purpose before now. In 1812—according to a recent work by M. Georges Picot—three State prisons in France held four cardinals, four bishops, two superiors-general of religious Orders, one vicar-general, nine canons, and thirty-eight parish priests and curates. The Radical and anti-clerical programme in France will, in all probability, call for an even wider range of personal sacrifice than this from French bishops, priests, and religious. We venture the hope and belief that there shall not be wanting to those at home, the spirit which makes their countrymen and countrywomen such splendid martyrs on the foreign mission-field. The great heart of France is soundly Catholic. But it is, perhaps, over-timid or over-sluggish, as the result of a long tradition of political repression. Humanly speaking, it seems to us that only such an example of courage and sacrifice on the part of hierarchy, clergy, and religious as Germany in similar circumstances presented, will arouse a healthy public opinion in France against religious persecution and turn at last to good account a movement which is, directly and openly meant for the ruin of Catholicism, and ultimately for the destruction of all religious faith in the country. In two succeeding issues we will deal with later aspects of the campaign for the suppression of Christianity in France.

Crime in the British Isles

By way of addendum to the extended editorial article on 'Catholics and Crime' in the last issue of the 'N.Z. Tablet,' the following article from the London 'Saturday Review' will be of interest to our readers:—

The prison boards in Scotland and in Ireland work under identical acts of Parliament—those of 1877. The principles by which they are regulated should, therefore, be precisely similar. There are fewer criminals in Ireland than in Scotland. According to the estimates of 1905, it is allowed that there will be 120 less prisoners a day in the prisons of Ireland than in those of Scotland. Yet the Irish board is to absorb £144,597 as against £105,588 allotted to the Scotch. Why? Because, although there are less prisoners in Ireland, there are more officials. In Scotland there are only 467 paid employees, in Ireland no less than 622.

The policing of Ireland costs the ridiculous sum of nearly a million, and a half. The metropolitan police of Dublin costs nearly six times as much per head as that of London. And yet there is very little crime in Ireland.

The statistics of Irish crime are really remarkable. They prove that the police can discover scarcely any criminals, and the prisons are almost empty. The following list shows that there is less crime in Ireland than in England and Scotland:—

ENGLAND.

Year.	Population.	Convicted Criminals.	One Criminal in
1900	32,249,187	8,157	3,953
1901	32,621,263	8,841	3,689
1902	32,997,626	9,352	3,528
1903	33,378,338	9,879	3,378
1904	33,763,434	10,233	3,099

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