

power, have dared, with the police at their head, to search everywhere until they found and seized everything. Even our lawyer was condemned as a criminal for having sheltered our books and statues! Now we are in exile, with God alone and His Cross.'

Exiled, broken-hearted, exhausted, and in such dire poverty that they are 'ready to succumb'—their sole crime the faith which they professed and the good which they unostentatiously did for the bodies and souls of others. The 'Bloc' has driven the clergy out of their homes, and (so to speak) stripped them to their chest-protectors. They have even seized and poured into the coffers of the State the slender provision that was made for sickness, old age, and debility among the parochial clergy. The result of the conditions thus suddenly created has been much hardship and dire need that cannot, for a time at least, be met by adequate organisation. In the country parishes, and especially among the mountains (as we can personally testify), the French Catholic clergy, with their humble little presbyteries and their slender stipends, led lives of hard self-denial and Spartan simplicity. But home and stipend have been suddenly cut off. And they have now to face the storm as the deciduous northern trees face the bitter winter—with bare poles (as the sailors say), stripped of the protecting covering that shielded them in better and sunnier times. Here is part of an official statement sent to the Paris 'Gaulois' by the Bishop of Digne—the poorest episcopate in France:—

'Some parishes are for five or six months snowed up, and are several weeks without any communication with the outside world. All must lay in provisions for the entire winter, and bake their own bread. Happily, our cures are industrious and accustomed to be content with little. One of them lived on 300 francs (£12) a year, and devoted the remainder of what came to him from the State (£25) to various good works. Another is not very anxious for the future, because he says he will be able to pull on with a franc (10d) a day, honorarium for his Mass, and another franc earned by his sister. Some eke out their livelihood by winding clocks, or making beehives; whilst others do some knitting or agricultural work. All this is not very dignified nor becoming to the priesthood; but necessity has no law, and our poverty is our excuse.'

There is a courage that flies naked at the face of a foe, though he be clad in 'bars of brass and triple steel.' And there is the rarer courage that has the grit to be silent and the strength to sit still. Passive resistance riveted to a backing of noble self-sacrifice forms an armor that the 'machine' will find it difficult to pierce. Briand and his atheistic confreres counted, no doubt, on being able to starve the clergy into surrender. They have failed. And the failure places an aureole upon the heads of the priesthood of France.

In many parishes in France, the municipal councils (which now have nominally control of churches, presbyteries, etc.) have allowed the clergy the use of their former residences free or at a nominal rent. In such cases the Prefect (who is a 'removable and promotable' puppet of the Government) usually interferes and orders the eviction of the priest. This was the case at Laneuville-devant-Bayou. On receiving the Prefect's peremptory order, the mayor and his assistant replied as follows:—

'Monsieur the Prefect: I acknowledge receipt of your circular of February 28, telling me brutally to drive out at once from the presbytery the pastor who has dwelt there for twenty-three years. Though this circular deeply grieves me, it does not alter my opinion; for a Catholic mayor knows always what course he should take!

'In signing our decision as to the free use of the presbytery, we all foresaw, and we were therefore more fortunate than the authors of the Law of Separation, what would be the consequence of our act. What are you doing with the right of ownership? How are you respecting universal suffrage? It matters little to you indeed. But have the Catholics nothing to say? You will tell me that the law is on your side. And I too respect my country's laws when they are worthy of the

ages past; but when they assail my faith as a Christian, I will obey my conscience before everything, I will obey my God.

'Find someone else, then, M. le Prefect, to undertake your vile task; but, so long as I shall be the mayor of Laneuville, the presbytery shall gratuitously give home and shelter to him who at Metz defended his fatherland.

'MASSON, Mayor.

'As assistant to the mayor of Laneuville, I in my turn refuse to drive out the priest.

'DAUBY.'

Macte virtute! More power to the sturdy elbows of the mayor and assistant-mayor of Laneuville-devant-Bayou!

While police officials are ransacking the clothes-presses of nuns, and stealing the contents of the poor-boxes in the churches, and sending the presbytery saucepans and iron spoons to the auctioneer, the unofficial thieves and the great guilds of crime are having a gay time through the length and breadth of France. Here is how the situation was recently described by the Paris correspondent of the London 'Morning Post':—

'Both in the country districts and in the streets of the capital bandits and footpads flourish in seemingly irreducible hordes, and the normal record of crimes of violence in Paris and in many provincial towns could not be matched in the Russian Empire outside the notorious hooligan strongholds of Odessa and Warsaw. M. Berry pointed out that in Paris during the last two months there have been no fewer than eighty-eight murders or attempts at murder in broad daylight, while audacious robberies are of common occurrence. The state of terrorism in the country districts was described by M. Cochin, and other deputies gave lugubrious accounts of the condition of things prevailing in small provincial towns. One case was cited where a youth received twenty-eight wounds and was censured by the magistrate for having defended himself; his assailants received three days' imprisonment.'

A fellow-feeling makes the French Government wondrous kind to the footpads! During the massacre of the innocents at Bethlehem long ago, word went around that Herod's own infant son had been slain. Whereupon (so runneth the story) some one remarked that it were better to be Herod's pig than Herod's child. In France to-day, it were better far (in the matter of personal comfort) to be a Deeming or a Charles Peace than a Sister of Charity.

A PAGE OF IRISH HISTORY

HOW THE UNION WAS CARRIED

A cable message received last week stated that a measure, called an Administrative Council Bill for Ireland, had been introduced by the Government in the House of Commons. In connection with the proposal to restore a portion at least of that which was filched from Ireland over 100 years ago by bribery of the most glaring kind, the following extracts from a record of the Irish Parliament of 1775, issued by Messrs. Longmans, Green, and Co., will be of interest, as it throws a striking side-light on the general corruption which prevailed in that Assembly. The details are furnished by a secret official document, probably compiled by Sir John Blaquiere, the Chief Secretary of the period, and now in possession of Mr. Vincent Scully. This document has been edited by Dr. William Hunt, president of the Royal Historical Society, who has also written an introduction which gives so much of the history of Irish politics of the eighteenth century as will enable the reader to understand the full significance of Blaquiere's record. The work is rendered complete by an appendix, mainly founded on and presenting correspondence preserved in the Public Record Office, which carries the narrative to the end of 1775, and relates to the troops drawn from Ireland for the war with the American Colonies and the corrupt means adopted

To Secure a Majority

at the General Election of 1776. Blaquiere's record itself gives a list of the members of the two Houses, and the Chief Secretary's opinion of them, with no-

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