

Europe and this country at the present time. . . . For many years before the advent of Luther Bible reading was encouraged. Luther was not accepted by the conservative element because he seemed to divorce conduct from faith. Modern students of history can find no record whatever to confirm the statement made in some of the text-books—that indulgences were ever sold for the remission of future sins. Teachers of history should be careful to justify the conservative side.

That is excellent both in letter and in spirit, and it is a most hopeful sign to find such principles being laid down at a gathering of teachers by a recognised authority on the subject. 'Teachers of history should be careful to justify the conservative side.' If that were hung up on the walls of our New Zealand schoolrooms as an instruction to the teachers what a very different complexion would be given to the history lessons on these controverted points.

### Secularism and Crime.

A week or two ago we quoted the testimony of several thoroughly competent and disinterested authorities as to the unsatisfactory and disappointing results of the secular school system in America and its utter failure to turn out good and honest citizens. Amongst others we quoted the Brooklyn (New York) 'Eagle' of June 1, 1902, which said: 'Our whole machinery of education from the kindergarten up to the university is perilously weak at this (the moral) point. We have multitudes of youths and young men and women who have no more intelligent sense of what is right and wrong than had so many Greeks of the time of Alcibiades. The great Roman Catholic Church is unquestionably right in the contention that the whole system as it now exists is morally a negation.'

And now we have still more striking evidence from misgoverned and misguided France of the baneful effects of secularism in education. Mr Richard Davey, one of the very highest authorities on contemporary France, has been contributing to the 'Fortnightly Review' a series of articles on 'Some French Facts,' and in his contribution to the October number he deals particularly with the attack which is being made by the Radical press not only on the Church but on the very idea of religion and with the expressed intention of the French Cabinet 'to dechristianise the people as speedily as possible.' Amongst other things he says:

If this systematic lessening of religious influence resulted in a corresponding improvement in the general tone of public and private morality, there would be less to say against it; but the contrary is the case. At no period have crimes of violence, murder, rapine, suicide, and general dishonesty been so prevalent as in France at present. It is noteworthy, too, in this connection, that out of a hundred boys and girls between the ages of twelve and sixteen, convicted and condemned for various crimes and misdemeanors in Paris alone, eighty-nine received their education in schools from which religion has been banished, and only two in the clerical schools.

Eighty-nine criminals from the secular schools to two from the clerical schools! 'By their fruits ye shall know them' applies to systems as well as to individuals, and a fact like the foregoing brings out the true inwardness of the secular education system better than whole reams of argument could do.

### Religion in Italy

The religious condition of Italy is the subject of an exceptionally careful and fair-minded article in the current number of the (Anglican) 'Church Quarterly Review.' We have become so accustomed to the stereotyped Protestant description of Italy as a country sunk in ignorance, corruption, and superstition that it is quite refreshing to come across a writer who makes an honest effort to do justice to the faith and piety which are the undoubted characteristics of the great mass of the people. The writer in question has lived for several years in Italy; he has had extensive opportunities for personal observation; and he has had, besides, the advantage of an intimate friendship with not a few of the most learned, and most devout of the Italian clergy. We wish to cite his testimony on two points that are specially deserving the attention of our non-Catholic friends: First, the superiority of the worship of the Italian villages as compared with that of rural England, and, second, the fidelity with which the Church in Italy has maintained devotion to our Blessed Lord, notwithstanding the widely disseminated stories about the universal 'Mariolatry' amongst the Italians.

Speaking then of the worship of the villages and of the living faith of the Italian people the writer says:—

'With all allowance for a considerable minority who have rejected Christianity, there can be no doubt that by far the greater part of the Italian people profess and practise the Catholic religion. The churches are numerous and generally well attended. . . . There is something beautiful and

touching in the unanimity of an Italian village in matters of religion. The English visitor may be moved to a righteous envy when he observes the whole population flocking together to the house of God, and compares with this pleasant scene some village at home where the great part of the population spends the Sunday morning in bed, and the rest of the day in the public-house or at the street corner; where those who worship in hostile church or chapel; where most of those who worship in church think they have fulfilled their obligations by listening to Matins, and where only a tiny minority offer the Lord's Service on the Lord's Day.'

It is natural that the devotion to the Madonna, which is so congenial to the southern temperament, should, to the colder nature of the Englishman, seem exaggerated, and it is not surprising, therefore, to find our writer expressing himself as unpleasantly impressed with the extent to which the Blessed Virgin is honored and invoked. That the honor shown to the Mother does not detract from the worship rendered to the Son is, however, adequately shown by the following passage:—

'The only effective counterpoise to the devotion to the Blessed Virgin seems to be the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. We are bound to express our sense of the fidelity of the Roman Church with respect to the Holy Eucharist, which she has set forth as the central act of worship. She cannot be reproached, as we have too ample cause to reproach ourselves, for rare Eucharists, celebrated at unseemly altars by half-vested priests, and attended by scanty congregations. She has not to bear the shame of allowing her children to grow up in ignorant neglect of that which is yet declared to be "necessary to salvation." In almost every village of the Roman obedience the daily bell announces the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, and every Sunday the people assemble with one consent to offer the service which our Lord ordained, and not to substitute for it a service of man's invention. And the faithfulness of the Roman Church in this respect has been rewarded by her constant reminder of the service which Christians should offer to the Father in union with the Redeemer. . . . We are perhaps hardly exaggerating if we say that devotion to our Lord is maintained in Italy chiefly by reverence to the Blessed Sacrament.'

It would be unreasonable to expect that a writer on such a subject, who has made his observations and formed his conclusions from the standpoint of a different religion should be entirely free from bias, but, as we have said, the article is certainly written in a thoroughly honest, impartial, and painstaking way, and those of our Protestant friends who are so fond of telling us to 'Look to the state of Catholic countries' would do very well to give it a little more serious attention and thought.

### The Somaliland Affair.

There would seem to be a touch of De Wet about the character known to the cables as the Mad Mullah of Somaliland. At least he resembles the Boer hero in these two particulars, that he is difficult to find and difficult to get any good out of when he is found. It is many months now since the first expedition of nearly three thousand men set forth under Colonel Swayne to punish the Mullah, and when at last they did come up with him the column suffered a very severe reverse. It was on October 6 that the British force reached Grego, which is about a day's march from Mudug, the supposed centre of the Mullah's operations, and as soon as Colonel Swayne advanced he was attacked in force. The enemy were reported as having been ultimately driven off, but this was only accomplished at a heavy cost to the expedition, for Colonel Phillips, Captain Angus, and fifty men were killed, and over a hundred were wounded. Colonel Swayne retired to Bohotle, where he has since been awaiting reinforcements and awaiting also the organisation by the War Office of another expedition to punish the Mullah for punishing the first. The leisureliness of the methods adopted by the War Office is so well known that it is not surprising to find that it was only on Saturday last that the cables were able to inform us that the advance of this second expedition 'has commenced.'

Although the expedition has at last commenced its advance there is little likelihood that it will be able to accomplish much for some time to come, as the highest military authorities at Aden seem to be agreed that the season is past for an active prosecution of the campaign in the Mullah's country. 'No effective advance,' writes the correspondent of the 'Morning Post' at Aden, 'will, indeed, be possible until August. Until then nothing will probably be attempted, except the strengthening of the military posts, the encouragement of trade, and the reassuring of the inhabitants.' Meanwhile, although it has been reported that the Mullah 'shows no desire to assume the offensive,' several small parties of his horsemen have been observed near Bohotle, and it is well known that he has for some time past been gathering reinforcements from all sides. The Mullah may be mad, but there is considerable method in his madness.