

lips, he has allowed the most grossly unneutral actions leading to the prolongation of the war and the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of harmless people; prating of America first, he has permitted American commerce to be driven from the seas and American domestic trade to be crippled; speaking for democracy, he has made himself an autocrat; preaching peace, he does all in his power to stir up strife at home. Such is the man we have made President. Instead of an American and a Democrat, we have an agent of Wall Street and of England. To secure his re-election, he is ready to carry the country to the verge of war with a friendly power, or even to go beyond. It is time that Congress put the brakes on, and it is for the people to make Congress act. Let each voter write his Representative at once. There is no reason to suppose that voters will display any eagerness to respond to this appeal, or that these fulminations will do the President any serious harm, but they are interesting as a piquant psychological study. And we are looking forward with eager curiosity to the vitriolic discharge with which these vehement and hot-head papers will hose the President for his latest and real ultimatum.

The Poison Dinner

Further particulars regarding the Chicago poison case confirm the comment which we made a week or two ago to the effect that the recent anarchistic developments in that city have a somewhat sinister significance for American Catholics. It appears that Cronos, who has been arrested for the poisoning, is an anti-religious maniac, and that the programme planned by him and his confederates included special attacks on churches and religious gatherings. As we mentioned, letters have been seized giving details of the scheme, and in these the buildings that were to be wrecked are mentioned, and the nature of the bombs to be used is described. One kind of bomb is called 'fit for a crowd coming out of a church'; of a second kind it is said: 'It will send priests and such people high in the air.' We learn from *America* that all suspected of complicity in the wider plot are Italians, except Cronos, who is an Alsatian. According to the chemists the soup served at the Chicago dinner contained 4.81 grains of arsenic to the pint, and a trace of copper.

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The American papers are printing letters alleged to have been written by the culprit, and in one of these Cronos gives a brief account of his preliminary preparations: 'As I love Science I hate Religion and as I have seen the menu for that Diner 12 days before I thought that it was a sanitary thing to make a good clean up. And I started right away to work. I worked till late in the night every day and I prepared the poisons but the most had a bitter taste. Later I agreed for Arsenic and Barium Chloride.' In a further communication the writer gives his reason for the crime: 'Why I did it! While at Europe millions of Christians are slaughtering each other in the most bloodk massacre, and in these free country thousands of men and women are tramping the streets without food and shelter at the very same time the Church holds diners and pays 15 6 for each cover which starts with Beluga Caviar and Champagne, the same money which was begard from poor working men and women the same money were the blood of poor workers has run for. Those conditions are an scandal. That is the failure of Christianity an insult towards honesty and a Challenge to Humanity. Let the Church answer those my charges toward the World and I shall stand for the charges made against me.' These are the morbid ravings of a diseased mind; but the malady is a dangerous one, and one against which society must vigorously protect itself.

Plants growing near the sea have thicker leaves than those growing inland. Apparently the sea salt is the cause of this phenomenon, as plants cultivated in artificially salted soil yield thicker leaves.

THE FUTURE OF RUSSIA

THE POSITION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

In no part of Europe is the war likely to effect greater changes than in the East. We can imagine what the position of Russia will be, after her victory, if she becomes suzerain of all Poland, enlarges her influence over the Balkan States, establishes herself in Constantinople, and adds parts of Asia Minor and Armenia to her realm. The question is, what bearing the increase of her power will have on the different Churches in these regions (says a writer in the *Catholic Times*). German writers like Schroers, Rosenberg, and Pfeilschifter have spoken of the great dangers of Czarism spreading out from the White Sea to the Indian Ocean. The greed of Grand Dukes they insinuate, would account for such an extension rather than religious motives. The Church would become in their hands a convenient instrument of domination; and the members of the various Eastern Churches would be forced 'with Russian brutality' into the Orthodox fold. In reply, Mgr. Battifol, in a chapter of the book, *Germany and the Allies*, which I have mentioned before, offers some suggestions which deserve careful attention. Russians, he says, are religious with a profound and child-like faith, submitting themselves, as only Easterns can, to the divine will. Every soldier wears a cross, sometimes of great value. Invariably the dying ask for the Last Sacraments.

Russians and the Catholic Churches.

Pfeilschifter himself noticed the veneration of Russian prisoners for sacred images. 'In the German provinces,' he adds, agreeably surprised, 'they never robbed Catholic churches; intruders were stopped by the simple words "Holy Place." They spared the houses which bore a crucifix or an image of the Blessed Virgin; they left the farm of his brother-in-law untouched, because there was a cross on the gate. Officers and lettered men smile at the superstition of their soldiers; but their own scepticism has a latent background of religion.' In his manifesto after the declaration of war the Czar said that 'Russia, related by faith and blood to the Slav nations, could not remain indifferent to their fate and had risen, impelled by brotherly sentiment, like one man in defence of Serbia.' Profound religious feeling and brotherly sentiment do not imply enforced ecclesiastical unity. 'Holy Russia' is no more synonymous with the Orthodox Church than the 'Holy Roman Empire' with the Catholic Church. Considering that among seven groups of Slav nations in Austria-Hungary five are Catholic, the solution of the Slav problems on the basis of Orthodox unity would be impossible.

Serbia's Concordat with the Holy See.

Serbia reconquered her old historical kingdom, having obtained in 1879 religious autonomy. In making herself independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople she was true to her past; she did what her King Stephen Duschak had done in 1352, when he freed himself from Byzantinism. The Archbishop of Belgrade, who assembles in annual synods his four suffragan bishops, is now the Metropolitan of the Serbians; and they are to Russian 'brethren-in-the-faith.' Besides this, Serbia had, a short time before the war, made a Concordat with the Roman See, which gave the Catholics in her midst, some 4000 in number, not merely religious toleration, but a regular standing in her national life. She followed the precedent of Montenegro, which nearly thirty years before had made an agreement with Leo XIII., whose far-seeing policy of giving Catholicism a regular position in the Balkans was now bearing fruit. Serbia took this step in the teeth of the opposition of Austria, which had hitherto exercised a protectorate over the Catholics. If her country is restored and if—though this seems a long, long way off—Bosnia and Herzegovina are added to her frontiers, then the 400,000 Catholics who inhabit