

## RUSSIA AND ROME

Whilst the journals of the civilised world display a keen interest in the political and social condition of Russia little attention is paid in the press to the present state of religion in that great country. Yet one of the results of the revolution has been to produce something in the nature of evolution in the Orthodox Church. A telegram from Moscow states that the Russian Church Council has decided to establish "a special department for the reunion of all Christian Churches." This is a very ambitious programme indeed, and if the project were to be interpreted as an attempt to bring about doctrinal unity between the numerous Christian denominations I fear that it could not be considered very practical. But if it means anything, it surely implies an invitation to the Holy Father to enter into negotiations with regard to the possibility of reunion between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, which are not doctrinally very distant from one another. If any such appeal has been made to his Holiness he will not, it may be assumed, turn a deaf ear to it. His predecessors, Leo XIII. and Pius X., were exceedingly eager to cultivate friendly relations with the Christians of the East in order that the way might be prepared for the removal of doctrinal misunderstandings and difficulties, and it would assuredly be a triumph for Christianity if, as the outcome of the war, the people of Russia were brought within the fold of the Catholic Church.

### Compensation for Losses.

The addition of the Orthodox millions to the Catholic population would do much to compensate for the losses the Church has suffered through the deaths of faithful members during the terrible conflict. It would, no doubt, be an error to cherish sanguine hopes. In the days of the Czar the authorities of the Orthodox Church were intolerant and strongly opposed to the claims of the Roman See, and many of them still retain their prejudices. But, in any case, the outlook for the Catholic Church in Russia is now much more encouraging than it was under the Czar's regime. According to a Polish journal which has been dwelling on the state and prospects of the Catholic Church in Russia, M. Kerenski gave her complete freedom. A commission set up in Petrograd undertook to examine the question of reorganising religious life in Russia from the legal point of view. The Government endorsed the conclusions at which it arrived and safeguarded the liberty of the Catholic Church in all parts of the country. Amongst other things, it permitted the introduction of the religious Orders and the education of the clergy without interference on the part of State representatives. The requests put forward by the bishops respecting legal rights were accepted. The re-establishment of former Catholic dioceses, the creation of new Sees, and the nomination of assistant bishops were agreed to, the bishops being left to settle these matters with the Holy See in Rome. Many difficulties had to be overcome. The work before the clergy was heavy and the number of priests was not sufficient to meet all the requirements. But there were clear signs of progress, which were inspiring. The diocese of Minsk was re-erected, and the step was deemed of high importance ecclesiastically. Measures were taken for the restoration of the See of Kamieniec, but they were interrupted by the arrival of Austrian and German troops in the Ukraine and Podolia. The question of establishing a Catholic bishopric in Siberia was also under consideration.

### Many Converts.

Meanwhile the Catholic clergy availed themselves of opportunities for winning converts. The conversions were numerous, not only amongst the Poles, who had joined the Orthodox Church under pressure, but also amongst the Russians. This was the case especially amongst people who belonged to the aristocratic and official classes. In those days the Catholic Church gained a good deal of ground in Russia, and the power of attraction it exercised on the people was remark-

able. For instance, the Corpus Christi procession in Petrograd was a splendid sight, and the vast gathering made a deep impression on all who beheld it. Catholic life became very vivid in the Polish colonies which are to be found in different parts of Russia, and particularly so in Petrograd. Here was founded an association for promoting Christian Democracy. Avoiding politics pure and simple, it devoted itself to the solution of social problems in accordance with Catholic principles. It attained a large measure of success, and formed branches in all the chief towns of Russia. In certain respects the conditions under which the Catholic Church carried on her work were changed when the Bolsheviks took over the Government on the fall of M. Kerenski in October, 1917. But it must be said that in their relations with the Catholic Church the Bolsheviks have not only been tolerant, but on occasion have shown a preference for the Catholic clergy. They look upon them as clerics who are self-sacrificing and who were formerly persecuted, whereas they are decidedly hostile to the Orthodox priests, regarding them as reactionaries. Still, it must be stated that in the commotions which have occurred at different places in Russia six Catholic priests have died as martyrs. At the same time, though the Catholic Church in Russia is financially weak, it can be said with certainty that the Catholic priests enjoy much more liberty than was granted to them when the country was under the rule of the Czar. The obstructions which then prevented a Catholic advance have been removed, and whatever the future of the country may be one may predict without hesitation that the Catholic bishops, clergy, and faithful will be free to develop their religious and social works.—H. Allan Newton, in an Exchange.

### JOYCE KILMER.

Dead! with that golden splendor all about you  
Of high and pure and selfless sacrifice,  
Dead! and for us, the legioned friends who loved you,  
Deep Sorrow's veil enshrouding heart and eyes.

For us—the loss—the thought that no to-morrow  
Shall bring us back the poet friend we knew—  
The soul to all nobility responsive,  
The spirit gallant, valorous, and true.

The kindly hand that truth's bright falchion wielded  
St. Michael wise, undaunted, and serene,  
The song that brought new glories to the worship  
Of Christ our Lord and Mary Virgin-Queen.

The friend so leal to Friendship's fairest meaning,  
The poet chanting down triumphant ways,  
Yet turning still to cheer his wearied brother  
With words of strength-enkindling cheer and praise.

The soldier who at freedom's holy calling  
His splendid all laid freely on her shrine,  
And in far France with Eire's lines advancing,  
Poured out his life's bright sacrificial wine.

The kindly human man whose very presence  
Has blessed and bettered whereso'er he trod,  
The saint whose face already shines upon us  
A star to light us to the courts of God.

Eleanor Rogers Cox in *America*.

Over 3000 persons attended the annual pilgrimage on a recent Sunday to Alt-no-t-Sagairt, the holy mount near Hilltown, Co. Down, to commemorate the massacre there of a priest and many of his congregation in the Penal Days. Many priests attended. An eloquent sermon was preached by Rev. W. H. McLaughlin, of Crowdon. The sacred ceremonies in the open at the foot of the mount were most impressive. Very Rev. Canon Kearns, P.P., D.D., officiated.

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