

gether; they purpose to help Catholic France, and to be, wherever their lot is cast, the devoted helpers of the clergy, towards whom their attitude is one of filial deference. After the age of 30 members may continue to belong to the association, but its chief activities are, as its name implies, in the hands of the young.

Another point which is often misunderstood by the partially enlightened critic relates to France's actual educational status. On more than one occasion the writer has heard it remarked: "No wonder France is atheistic; it has no Catholic schools!" A mere glance at what Catholic France has been doing in this line will prove a revelation. The "eldest daughter of the Church" has always made it a law to propagate the Faith, and the greatest means which she has ever used have been the schools. When in 1882 religious instruction was proscribed from the public schools by the laws of laicisation, French Catholics did not forget their role of educators. Faithful to the voice of Leo XIII., they said with the Belgians, "Wherever a public school is built, let us have, across from it, a Catholic school." Huge was the task indeed. Up to the year 1901 the cost of the undertaking amounted to 56,000,000 francs. But the result surpassed all hopes.

In vain, to make things harder, did the Government impose the obligation of a degree before one could be allowed to teach. In 1897 53,502 persons fulfilled all the legal requirements and were admitted to teach in the Catholic schools. This relative triumph must needs bring retaliation, but also new victories. After the laws of 1901 and 1904, which refused all legal existence to teaching, religious Orders and all non-authorized congregations, free schools—i.e., Catholic schools—were closed by the thousands. Thanks, however, to the charity of the men and women of France, and also to the daring initiative of the religious teachers, who gave up wearing the religious dress to be able to keep the Faith alive in the hearts of the young, these schools sprang up again and became more numerous than before. Strange to say, even since 1910, the number of pupils in the Catholic schools has steadily been increasing. Referring to the statistics of one of the late years, we find an increase of three schools per 1017 pupils for the public schools, whilst for the Catholic schools the number goes up to nine per 1028 pupils. Is not this result remarkable, especially in view of all the hardships that had to be encountered? The schools are due to the deep religious vitality of France, which has manifested itself even in other ways. It may come as a surprise to readers to learn that on the actual Front in Champagne, in the devastated villages, it is the German guns alone which succeed in taking the crucifix out of the public schools. Taken down by the Government authorities, the *municipalités* one after the other took pride in replacing and keeping there the precious sign of our salvation. It is also very consoling to see how little patronised, in certain regions, are the public schools. Between 1909 and 1910, for instance, in Ile-et-Vilaine, Loire-Inférieure, and Mayenne the number of pupils lost by the public schools and gained by the Catholic schools was 1000; 3000 in the departments of Côtes du Nord and Maine-et-Loire. La Vendée, the country of the Chouans, should be put in a separate place, with a record of nearly 9000 for six years.

It is not a little amusing to note the statistics in some departments. For instance, in one of the regions of the west there are 24 public schools without a single pupil, and 23 having each three pupils, and 46 having only five. In certain towns of the same locality we find—

140 pupils in Catholic schools as against	20 in public schools.
160 " " " " " "	8 " " "
140 " " " " " "	2 " " "
85 " " " " " "	0 " " "
105 " " " " " "	0 " " "

These reckonings are merely local, but they, nevertheless, prove how active the old spirit of practical religious life still is in that great country whose glorious title of eldest daughter of the Church has ever been her proudest boast. We ask her critics to investigate and get familiar with things French and they will soon

be persuaded that France, although the Government is on the whole atheistic, as a people is still Catholic.

THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE

(An interview with COL. SIR MARK SYKES, BART. M.P.)

The newsboys along Whitehall were going by, shouting out the latest reports of the driving out of the Turk from the Holy Land. In a cavernous room, somewhere amid the solemn and interminable corridors of the British House of Commons, Col. Sir Mark Sykes was speaking about the significance of the liberation of Palestine by the British Armies under General Sir Edmund Allenby. Sir Mark Sykes speaks of the Eastern question from his own personal knowledge. He has travelled extensively in the Turkish Provinces of Asia, and he has served as Honorary Attaché at



LIEUT.-COL. SIR MARK SYKES, M.P.

Constantinople. The results of his travels and experiences are to be found in the seven volumes that appear under his name, all dealing with the Turkish dominance in the East. In the Boer War Sir Mark Sykes served through the entire campaign with the 3rd Battalion of the Yorkshire Militia, and the two blue chevrons on the right cuff of his service tunic are the outward token that he has served two years overseas with the British Forces in the present war. The Turk had just been cleared out of Nazareth, and was in full flight across the Jordan, and Sir Mark was asked whether the present occupation of the Holy Land by the British Forces could, with any degree of accuracy, be said to be the final achievement of the task the Crusaders set out to accomplish. His answer was emphatic, and negative. The war is not a Crusade, and the Turk has not been driven out because he is an unbeliever, but simply because he is the Turk.

"The liberation of Palestine by the British Armies," Sir Mark said, "has nothing whatever to do with the driving out of one religion, and its displacement by another. What it means, briefly, is that the Holy Land has changed hands in circumstances entirely different to any that have prevailed hitherto. There is, actually, no similarity whatever between the action that has just taken place and the events that happened centuries ago. Palestine has changed hands, that is all! It has changed hands before, but the conditions were entirely different. In the Babylonian times the land was invaded, the Jews were driven into

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