

lowed out the civil laws as regards the Sacrament. And it is the same even in Catholic countries. Austria, the most Catholic country, enacts that no marriage shall be valid unless the husband has a certain amount of property, sufficient to support his wife. But Holy Church does not recognise this enactment. She cannot fashion her precepts to the changing laws of any country. Being a universal Church, she imposes her discipline to bring the blessings of the Sacrament of Matrimony to all faithful souls.

I mention these facts merely to put you on your guard against statements, which so many people are fond of repeating at the present time, that Catholics are opposed to the Government. No such thing. The whole desire of the Church is to strengthen and consolidate the foundation on which the greatness of Australia rests—the Christian home, sanctified by the Sacrament of marriage, which will give vigor and virtue to the future of this country. Without the Sacrament of marriage we will see that terrible cancer of divorce spreading amongst us, as it has in other lands. I was delighted the other day to learn that in the Philippine Islands, which are peopled by fine Catholics, when the American Government endeavored to introduce divorce the whole of the inhabitants rose up with a voice of united protest. They did not want divorce, they said, as divorce was contrary to the teachings of the Church, and they would have none of it. In Ireland, where the spirit of religion lives and flourishes, as it did in the days of St. Patrick, there is no divorce court. Ireland is the only country in Europe which has no such court. Whilst in the United States, outside of the Catholic congregations, one family in every 14 bears the stain of divorce, in Ireland the proportion is only one family in 4450, which means that there is no divorce at all.

No matter what the law of the land may enact, Holy Church remains inflexible as regards the sanctity of the Sacrament of marriage, which is the foundation of the Christian home, bringing peace and happiness on earth, and preparing man for eternal life before the altar of God.

ANTI-CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION IN PORTUGAL

THE SEPARATION LAW AMENDED

At a conference lately given in Oporto before an audience as carefully selected as are the crowds who from town to town follow or precede the triumphal car of the Ministers of the Portuguese Republic, in order to make up for the coldness of the inhabitants, Dr. Affonso Costa or, as he calls himself, Citizen Costa, explained to 'Citizen Pius X.' the real significance of his Law of Separation (writes the correspondent of the *Catholic Times*). This is nothing more nor less than the nationalisation of the Portuguese clergy—the fight against the internationalisation of religion—(internationalism in secret societies being apparently perfectly legitimate). The Law of Separation, the corner-stone of the great edifice of the republic which includes such further precious stones as the most immoral divorce law in the world and the Law of Tenancy, which needs a special bureau to try to explain it to a puzzled nation of landlords and tenants, may be more justly called the Law of Subordination to the State of the Catholic Church, of all the Churches, in fact, though it is an added insult in Portugal to put the Catholic Church on the level of any of the two or three little Protestant sects as the republic affects to do. In exchange for the loss of her privileges, the Church obtains the undisguised fiscalisation of the State in every act of her life. This is not exactly how the orator put it. After a short historical sketch, which showed clearly the utility of the republican theory regarding as prehistoric all the events preceding the 5th of October of last year, he declared the Church was in her death-throes, and expressed the hope that his Law would free the country people from

The Prejudice of Religion.

The law, he says, is generous and tolerant (tolerance being such a beautiful virtue when exercised by a handful of sectarians towards nineteen-twentieths of the population over whom they hold a usurped authority). It is, in fact, founded on 'the four bases of liberty, responsibility, fiscalisation, and generosity.' These are his words. It is a pity that, to parody Falstaff, there is such an intolerable deal of fiscalisation to so very little generosity.

To go into detail would occupy too much space, but the poor simple 'believer' who still holds his faith may do so strictly in private, provided he has only eighteen companions, for twenty constitute a congregation, where the public may enter freely buildings in which religious instruction is being administered, such places becoming by that fact public. To church one may not go before sunrise nor after sunset. He may leave money for Masses, a fraction of his fortune only, but the bequest is to hold good only for thirty years after his death. These Masses are only 'validly' said (textual) in the public chapels and churches graciously ceded by the State for the use of their owners. He may even build a chapel if he likes, but at the end of ninety-nine years it will revert without compensation to the State. He may give money to the Church through the hands of an association that is obliged to devote a part to works of beneficence and instruction, which may mean a laicised school.

Confiscation of Church Funds.

He may have already given alms to the Church as he has done for the building of the votive Church of the Immaculate Conception in Lisbon, but as the building is not yet finished the ever complaisant State takes charge of it also, relieving him of all further anxiety in its regard. The State, moreover, takes over all gardens, country houses, etc., belong to the dioceses, and all furniture not in its opinion strictly needful for worship. No building once contaminated by having been in the possession of the Jesuits may be used for religious purposes. Priests may be priests provided they are entirely formed in Portuguese schools and seminaries, instructed by masters appointed by the State, from books likewise approved by that ubiquitous entity. No other priest may officiate in any capacity, and even that kind of priest may not on any account teach even religion. No guild or brotherhood may have schools, while any fraternity wild and wicked enough to admit an ex-friar or nun is by the very fact instantly dissolved.

No Criticism of the Government.

Any priest misguided enough to criticise the Government, its form or its actions or any of its laws, is to be at once fined, suspended, and generally made an end of. Of course no Brief or Bull from Rome can pass without the gracious permission of the Minister of Justice, who even extends his solicitude to the Lenten alms of the faithful, and kindly undertakes to see that they are properly applied.

Of course all the Bishops and priests are ready to accept the law with tears of gratitude; or if they are not—the bare possibility intrudes itself for a moment—the Republic will still triumph, for it has the country on its side—as was so clearly shown in the matter of the forbidden processions held everywhere in its despite, and at the reception of Affonso Costa in Braga. On that occasion he found it necessary to import a band of Carbonarios, some of whom were wounded when they tried to dance in a church. Not a flower was to be bought for love nor money. The banquet could hardly be got together because of the ill-will of the shopkeepers, and not a carriage appeared at the station on the arrival of the Minister.

The Clergy and the New 'Law.'

The Oporto correspondent of the *Times* telegraphs: At a meeting held at Oporto the Catholic priests agreed unanimously to decline the pensions granted by the Separation Law, since they consider that their consciences will not permit them to accept the conditions attaching to them. They affirm their patriotic sentiments, but they expect the Catholic Faith to be accorded the same measure of liberty and the same privileges as it receives in the United States, Brazil, Switzerland, and other advanced countries.

The clergy of the various Protestant sects, who welcomed the freedom which, before its publication, they expected would be accorded to all creeds by the new law, are now much concerned at the control which the State has over their churches and revenues.

Costa's Motto, 'No God and No Religion.'

A writer in the *Times* says the new Separation Law seems to aim at the suppression of religion altogether. After describing its provisions, he proceeds: It will be seen that it interferes very distinctly with that liberty of worship hitherto accorded to foreigners in Portugal. The Sunday evening services at the English churches are rendered illegal, and the churches may be at any time expropriated. The prohibition of services after sundown blights the hopes of any Protestantism for Portugal. It is only in the evening that mission congregations can be got together and any furtherance of the evangelic cause accomplished. With public worship confined to the hours of sunlight, the most that can be expected is that the Protestant congregations already constituted will be enabled to have their Sunday services till by their gradual extinction that time is hastened when Señor Affonso Costa's prophecy of no God and no religion in Portugal will be fulfilled.

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

June 16.

The Catholic schools close on Monday for two weeks for the mid-winter vacation.

Very Rev. Dean Regnault, S.M. (Provincial), arrived from the south yesterday.

Messrs. Hazleton, Redmond, and Donovan, the Irish envoys, passed through Wellington *en route* for the south during the week.

A retreat for ladies to be conducted by one of the Redemptorist Fathers will take place at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Island Bay. Those desirous of attending should forward their names to the Rev. Mother. A retreat for men will commence at St. Patrick's College on June 30. Those desirous of participating should forward their names to the Rev. Father O'Reilly, S.M. (vice-rector), St. Patrick's College.