

OUR LETTER FROM FRANCE

(From our own correspondent.)

Paris, July 15.

War Preparations.

All the noise in the air in France and Germany during the past spring and summer is over the increase in the number of men of their armies. The newspapers are full of the business, and the Parliaments day after day discuss the matter—Ministers and Deputies of a conservative turn are for increase, and Socialists, Freemasons, anarchists, and revolutionists generally are against. Strange to find revolutionists and rowdies the peace party! In Germany the Government has swamped the Socialists, and carried its complete proposals. In the divided and demoralised French Parliament, the Prime Minister, M. Berthou, is proceeding very slowly with his '*Loi de trois ans.*' The Socialist periodicals are pouring shot and shell into his army-increase project in the House, whilst outside, with tract and article and speech, they are trying to rouse the French youth in opposition. In fact, in several barracks mutinous riots have taken place. Though both Governments are striving to increase their armies, still both loudly proclaim: 'All is for peace; all is defensive.' Both Governments are the victims of circumstances. The Franco-German war of 1870 left a legacy of fearful unhappiness to both countries, and, strange to say, rather more to the victorious Germans than to the defeated French. This result was foretold, in 1870, by the English diplomat, Sir Robert Morier. So it appears from his letters recently published. On August 12, 1870, Morier wrote to the Emperor William, with whom he was very friendly: 'The annexation of Alsace and Lorraine will constitute the greatest mistake that Germany could make.' Sir R. Morier, who knew France and Germany better than old Von Moltke or than the tricky Bismarck, was aware that the Alsaciens were more French than the French themselves, and their eyes would always be turned across the Vosges Mountains to France rather than across the Rhine to Germany. Hence he wrote: 'The annexation will create a permanent state of armed opposition, and will render disarmament impossible.' The absorption of the two French provinces would bring no advantage whilst involving an immense annual army expenditure. But the pan-Germanising vanity and ambition of Bismarck prevailed with the old Emperor over the wisdom and fore-knowledge of Morier. Hence, Germany is today staggering, even more than France, under a huge military expenditure. In 1870, the newly established German Empire began with a credit balance. In 1913 its national debt is £244,675,000. In 1912 Germany's army and navy expenditure was £63,000,000; that is three times more than it was even fifteen years ago. The army and navy expenditure of France is not so high, but it is very great. Its army cost France in 1911 £36,000,000, and its navy, £16,493,382. What ruin: what a legacy of calamity the stupid ambition and obstinacy of one man can bring upon nations. One more illustration of the saying—'How little the people know the unwisdom with which they are governed!'

Some Celebrations.

The Feast of the Blessed Jeanne d'Arc has been celebrated this year with great splendor. In Paris the whole city, even the commercial thoroughfares, were decorated with flowers and flags, oriflammes, and tricolors, national and Papal colors. The popular quarters of the city vied with the aristocratic in celebrating the Beatification *de la grande Française*. Several statues of the heroine were erected as meeting points for the different processions—one at *Place St. Augustin*, another at *Place des Pyramides*, a third at *Place de la Concorde*, etc. Forty thousand *manifestants* assembled before the statue in *Place St. Augustin*, and, having covered it with crowns of flowers, moved to other points in the city through throngs who shouted, '*Vive Jeanne d'Arc! Vive la France!*' as the different groups constituting the procession appeared and passed by. The military gait of the bodies of students from the faculties of law, medicine, letters, science, chemistry, and public

works, and the *élèves* of over a dozen lycées and colleges aroused special notice. Another procession of the League of Patriots started from the Tuileries having for its objective the statue of the saint in the *rue de Rivoli*. Several members of Parliament led this procession. At its head was Paul Déroulede, who crowned the statue with a garland of violets exclaiming in a tone of vibrant emotion: '*Gloire à Jeanne d'Arc! Vive la France!*' Maurice Barrès, a noted member of the Chamber of Deputies, then delivered an allocution which was received with applause. Other bodies, such as the Association of Catholic Young Men and the *Cercle des Ouvriers Catholiques*, held processions on their own account. The ceremonies in the churches were particularly imposing. Cardinal Amette, Archbishop of Paris, presided at Notre Dame. The nave was filled by 6000 persons. Oriflammes, banners, and shields swung from galleries and pillars. The panegyric of the *Bienheureuse* was delivered by the Abbé Prade. St. Sulpice, Saint Honore, the Madeleine, Notre Dame des Victoires, etc., imitated or surpassed the mother Church in the exceptional solemnity of their functions, the beauty of their decorations, the number of the faithful present, and the impressiveness of the sermons. Though constant rain fell, the private houses and public buildings, as darkness came on, were illuminated on the right and the left bank of the Seine. Suddenly at 9.30 o'clock, the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, on the heights of Montmartre blazed out in a maze of light with ever-changing colors—green, red, and white,—so that the noble building appeared like some gorgeous monument in a dream. The news from the provinces shows that the provincial towns, such as Nancy, Troyes, Reims, Boulogne, Nimes, Limoges, Lyons, etc., imitated the faith and enthusiasm of the capital. After this, who would say that the Catholic Faith is dead or dying in France? It is true that here and there, as at Montpellier and Orleans, Freemasons and Socialists showed their teeth, but popular enthusiasm overwhelmed them.

Frederic Ozanam.

Following on the celebrations in honor of the Blessed Jeanne d'Arc came those in memory of the great Ozanam (b. 1813, d. 1853). As all know, Frederic Ozanam, a great lawyer, a great litterateur, a great historian, but above all a great Christian, was founder of the now world-wide charitable Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Hence the conferences, where strong, have held impressive demonstrations—church functions, panegyrics, and meetings in memory of the birth (1813) of their founder. Pope Pius sent Cardinal Vannutelli from Rome to represent him at the celebration in Paris. These celebrations have been held throughout the French world—even as far away as small towns in French Canada. The anniversary has brought out several panegyrics, and three or four 'Lives' of Ozanam. There are one or two short biographies of Ozanam in English. I don't know any reading more inspiring for a young man facing the world than the lives of Garcia Moreno, and Frederic Ozanam.

Emile Zola.

'It takes all sorts to make a world,' they say. And there are all sorts of Frenchmen. There are those who admire everything noble, unselfish, Christian, who are delighted to recall the memories of the Blessed Jeanne, of the brilliant and faithful Ozanam. There are also those who love carnal, filthy putridity, and who consequently admire that supreme representative of the foul, in our time—Emile Zola. Of some writers of fiction it could be said—They have touched nothing which they have not adorned; of Zola it can be said he has touched nothing which he has not defiled. Louis Veullot went to Rome, a city which is a museum for artists, a library and treasure-house for the educated, and a sacred sanctuary for believers, and Veullot wrote *Les Parfums de Rome*. Zola went to Rome and wrote a book on his visit, which might be called *Les Odeurs de Rome*. Truly for some nostrils *il n'y a pas de parfums: il n'y a que des odeurs*. He went to Lourdes and over that grotto of mystery and miracle he threw the fetid air of a charnel-house. He profaned everything he touched—even the beautiful French language of his

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