

## THE VATICAN IN DANGER

What Might Happen in Case of an Italian War

Suggestive Words of Anti-Catholic Journalists. What French Hated Might Bring Forth. Facts About Italy and Her Financial Condition.

Among the possibilities arising from the Italian occupation of Rome, says the Tablet, to which lukewarm Catholics deliberately blind themselves is the position in which it would put the Vatican in case of a war in which Italy figured as a belligerent. The Catholic press has indeed, unremittently pointed out the uneasily and hazardous complications created by the exposure of the supreme sanctuary of religion to all the vicissitudes of internal disorder or foreign invasion incident to the existence of the secular state, which claims its guardianship while usurping its inheritance. In our pages, as in those of our contemporaries, the danger has been set forth of the Pope, held, as it were, as a hostage by Italy in its own capital, falling the first victim to the rage and fury of the anarchy of Rome in case of a reverse to the Italian arms in the field. The Italian government, impatient to put down the most paltry riot in the streets during profound peace, would be absolutely incapable of protecting its venerable prisoner from such an outbreak of frenzy as would then be unchained against one habitually held up, to obloquy as a public enemy. In such a war the future of the Papacy would undoubtedly be the stake of battle, and the fact that the Italian defeat was to its profit would be sufficient to involve it, though bound and helpless, in the odium of the hostile triumph. Yet these considerations when argued on Catholics have been treated as bogeys of clerical journalism or hallucinations of the devout imagination. Perhaps they will be received with more attention when enunciated by one of the organs of Italian Freemasonry, untroubled with any suspicion of sympathy for the august victim of the catastrophe it predicts. The *Quattro*, of Genoa, in the supplement to its number of September 15, deals with this very question in a suggestive article, throwing a lurid light on the aims and views of the sect it represents. After pointing out "the great and almost inevitable probability of a collision between France and Italy, immediate or remote," it discusses the position and action of the Pope in such an event. The possibility of his leaving Rome is first considered, with regard to which the writer candidly acknowledges the choice would not remain with him, but with his captors. "It is easily comprehensible," he declares, "that the abandonment of Rome would depend not alone on his own will, but on the ascent or descent of the government, which, having the power to sanction or forbid it, would undoubtedly act in the manner it deemed most conformable to its interests and to the general policy of the country."

Re-enforcing its argument from history it adds the unquestionable truth that many Popes in the long story of the Papacy have been "either actual prisoners, kept in strict custody or held as hostages." We commend to the study of our readers the Masonic journal's anticipation of the probable result in the paragraph that follows: "Leo XIII then remains, we will suppose, in the Vatican, while the armies meet in battle. The fate of war has always and will always be, an uncertainty, and he who should refuse to admit the possibility of a reverse on our side would not be very well advised. Now when the news reached Rome of I will not say the loss of a pitched battle, but of the first check to our forces, what would follow? Plainly, this: that of the Vatican there would not be left a stone upon a stone, nor would any official force avail to guarantee the lives of its inmates." Here we have the latest Masonic ideal of the coming time, the Pope no longer a guest but a martyr, while we need hardly point out how fully the Catholic contention that he is the virtual prisoner of the Italian Government, enjoying only on sufferance the little liberty conceded to him, is accepted by the "mouthpiece of his enemies." The party of the revolution, felled in its impious object of accomplishing the annihilation of religion by the overthrow of the Temporal Power, is filled with increasing hatred of the institution which it regards as the obstacle in its path. Their designs are mocked and frustrated by the survival of undiminished force and splendor of the spiritual authority which they fondly imagined was bound up with the Principality of Rome and of the States of the Church. Hence the possibility of a catastrophe which would make their country infamous to all time is now fore-shadowed by them with a certain satanic satisfaction as the occasion for wreaking their malice on the representative of a force they have proved their impotence to subvert. The person of the Pope is at least in their keeping. If his authority eludes destruction, and the Palace and the Temple which are the tangible symbols of his intangible empire, can suffer the demolition which that empire escapes. This new attitude of the enemies of the Church has been fore-shadowed in some of their earlier utterances, and a recent number of the *United Catholics* gives an appropriate quotation from the *Riforma* of October 30, 1896, which is not without significance in the light it throws on the present situation: "The pacific conquest (of Rome) has been powerless to effect what the daring revolution had dreamed of in anticipation. In 1849 the profound idea had taken root in the minds of two or three individuals while walking the streets of Rome, that when a religion has ceased to be anything more than a rite, if you destroy its altar the religion will fall. An idea this without doubt, which our posterity will entertain again and which our progenitors have luminously professed. When the Roman conquerors wished to ensure the subjugation of a conquered people, they raised its cities to the earth, and rebuilt them on the same site in their own fashion. We moderns, on the other hand, not only

protect the temples and the altars of a vanishing religion which perverts its swearing implacable hatred to us, but build it new ones! Can you not imagine how the problem of the reconstruction of Rome would have been simplified if the idea of two of the triumvirs of the last Roman Republic of 'blowing up the mosques,' before surrendering the city to the advancing 'red leg,' had been carried into execution? And how much would not the Vatican question, properly so-called, have been facilitated, had not Alberto Mario, on the announcement that one of the four great arches of St. Peter's had been mined, opposed the intended attempt with a shudder at the volcano's sacrilege?"

That Rome cannot be permanently held by United Italy without a war for its possession, is a conviction deeply rooted in the minds of Italian Liberals, and their declarations to that effect have been repeatedly quoted in these pages. The resentment of France for the advantage taken by Italy of her misfortunes, has since 1870 for twenty-three years without being any nearer to extinction than when the deed that excited it was recent history, and the Folchetto, writing on the day after its latest anniversary, acknowledges this fact in the following terms: "The hatred and contempt in which we are held by the French, whether Imperialists, Orleanists, or Republicans, date from 1870 and their roots are entwined in the wall of Porta Pia, exactly on the spot where the breach was opened and Italy passed through." Since the recovery of France from her disasters the political action of Italy has been inspired by a single motive, fear lest her prize should be wrested from her. It is this chronic alarm which has driven her in blind panic into the Triple Alliance, and urged her to the maintenance of those costly and crushing armaments which have been the destruction of her material well-being. Economy is vital to her, yet she dare not disarm in face of the red spectre of war that haunts the dreams of her statesmen and people. An eminent French economist, M. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, in a recent article, shows her bankruptcy to be imminent, and the organ of her Austrian ally, the *Nene Tagblatt* of Vienna, writes in the same strain, declaring that only by fresh taxation can she be rescued from the abyss on the edge of which she is suspended. The acceptance of this drastic remedy is said to be the condition on which the financiers of Berlin will consent to subscribe a new loan of 500 million francs required to save off the catastrophe. Her financial condition is believed by many well-informed persons on the Continent to be an element of danger for the peace of Europe, rendering war itself a more tolerable alternative than the present strain on her resources. An "eminent foreigner," interviewed by the correspondent of the *Gazzetta di Torino* has expressed himself in this sense, declaring that Italy has entered on a period of moral and material decadence, which will render her position at the end of some years still more equivocal than at present. Her German allies, he goes on to assert, are fully aware of her critical state, and may be driven by this knowledge to hasten on a catastrophe which they regard as the inevitable prelude to "a new, rational, and stable re-organization of Europe." The tightening of the bonds between Russia and France, and the increasing ill-will between the latter country and Italy, signified among other indications, by the presence of the Prince of Naples at the German manoeuvres in Lorraine, and the proposed assignment of an Italian port for the refitting of German vessels, are incidents which may point to the same conclusion. Thus the event which the enemies of the Pope have declared would render his position one of the most extreme and imminent danger is no remote or impossible contingency, such as may be left to the consideration of the future. The position of Italy is, in any case, too unstable and insecure, both as regards her foreign and domestic relations, to make her a safe guardian either for the venerable person of the Pope, or for those monuments which are the sacred heritage of the Catholic world.

### DOMESTIC READING.

If we are laborers together with God we will never look at the clock to see when it is time to quit work.

Faith and perseverance are life's architects, while doubt and despair bury every thing under the ruins of endeavor.

To be effectively honest a man must be honest at heart. Honesty that comes through a bell punch is full of holes.

We cannot conquer fate and mortality, but we can yield to them in such a manner as to be greater than if we could.

Short is the road, light the fatigue, but eternal the rest to which each day brings us nearer. —Blessed Jordan of Saxony.

There are in the world circumstances which give us for masters men of whom we would not not make our servants.

It is not charity, but rather great cruelty, that prevents us from reminding a brother of his faults. —St. Antoninus.

The firmest friendships have been formed in mutual adversity, as iron is most strongly united by the fiercest flame.

Each man can learn something from his neighbor; at least he can learn this: to have patience with his neighbor, to live and let live. —Charles Kingsley.

I wish women understood better the great power that motherhood is. I wish they knew better how to use that power, not only to make their children love them, but to keep the love of their husbands. —Madeline Vinton Dahlgren.

We live and move and have our being in the midst of a civilization which is the legitimate offspring of the Catholic religion. The blessings resulting from our Christian civilization are poured out so regularly and so abundantly on the intellectual, moral, and social world, like the sunlight and the air of heaven and the fruits of the earth, that they have ceased to excite any surprise except to those who visit lands where the religion of Christ is little known. —Cardinal Gibbons.

## CATHOLIC EDUCATION.

Best Guide to the Republic's Civil Progress.

Pope's Legate Cardinal Ruffini the Catholic Schools and Pays a High Tribute to the American Constitution and the Mass When Framed.

Mrs. Schell, the apostolic delegate to the United States, declared himself on the subject of Catholic schools, a recognition given him by the faculty and students of Georgetown college in the hall of Father Dunn, Washington.

The delegate was attended by the secretary of legation—Mr. Sparoli and Dr. Fapt. Several addresses were made to which Mr. Schell responded at length. His remarks were a eulogy upon Catholic schools, which, in view of the recently expressed purpose by Catholic authorities in Baltimore to ask that aid for the schools of the church, may be regarded as significant. The delegate spoke in Latin and the following summary of his remarks was furnished by Dr. Fapt.

After a graceful reference as to the duty of Catholics to observe Thanksgiving and pray for the prosperity of the republic, Mr. Schell said:

"We may be sure of this, that all the Americans of whatever church they may be members, even if of some religion, the value of the Catholic school; they are interested in it; they honor it; they wish it to continue and progress; they have learned by experience that citizens educated in those schools do not fall short in knowledge and in love of the American constitution; that they do not lag behind the most progressive of the American people; they are endowed with steadiness of character, with constancy of right purpose; that they are just, active, charitable and generous unto sacrifice."

"Such then is the magnificent spectacle presented to America by the Catholic schools; and such the spectacle given by the three Christians to the whole world in the early centuries of the Church. In those days it looked as if pagans and philosophers might dispute the faith, and condemn the customs and religion of the Christians, but in reality they could not conceal very long their true judgment; nor hide their admiration as the spectacle of the social and religious virtues presented by Christians. How advantageous it would have been for the public welfare if they had favored the new religion instead of preventing it; and if they had recognized and fostered harmony between Christian truth and morality on one hand, on the other hand the spirit of social and public life. It was impossible at the time to bring about this harmony, because the civil constitution was tainted with error and superstitions and because it was believed with no good reason that the ruin of the state would follow inevitably the disappearance of these superstitions."

"But thanks to God and glory to the men who inspired the American constitution, such a state of things as obtained in Rome is not possible here."

"I will say that wherever seriously meditation on the principles of the American constitution, wherever is acquainted with the present conditions of the American republic, should be persuaded and agree with us that the action of the Catholic faith and morality is favorable in every way to the direction in which the constitution turns. For the more public opinion and the government favor the Catholic schools, more and more will the welfare of the commonwealth be advanced. The Catholic education is the surest safeguard of the permanence throughout the centuries of the constitution and the best guarantee of the republic in civil progress. From this source the constitution will gather on that annihilation no necessary for the perfect organization of that progressive body which is the American republic."

"That is the true expression of conviction and so to speak the profession of my faith in this matter. Up to the present it has been impossible to me and never, perhaps, shall I find out what was the origin of the suspicion that my views were not favorable to Catholic schools."

"Those who at first, or after, have attributed to me such an absurd opinion ought to point to some word or action of mine to justify themselves. Had I spoken differently I should be unwilling to my mission, ungrateful to the generous hospitality which I have enjoyed and am enjoying in America, and moreover, I should have given the lie to my first and unchangeable conviction."

"Every Catholic school is a safe guardian of youth and it is as the same time for the American youth a place of training, where they are brought up for advantage of church and country."

"Grant, heaven, that the Catholic schools may continue; increase in number; grow stronger; reach the highest perfection, endowed with the blessings of God; commanded by the authority of the Church and the Holy Father, honored and appreciated by honest citizens, from the illustrious president down to the most humble workman. Those only are against them who do not know them, or who are not animated by the spirit of the Church, and are wanting in the sentiments of true liberty."

### College Club.

A Catholic college club has been formed at the University of Pennsylvania, at which college, it seems, there are quite a number of Catholic students. The new organization has taken the name of the late Cardinal Newman, and it is said to be in a flourishing condition already.

To live is hard, and there is not one of us, I fancy, who has not again and again been tempted to despair of life when he has dared to look upon its dark mysteries; but again there is not one of us who has not found a great sorrow, a great disappointment, a great trial, an avenue to unexpected joy.

Some people talk as if the whole object of life was to obtain liberty, instead of the whole object of liberty being to attain a higher and fuller life. To be free to speak, to write, and to act just as we choose is certainly a thing to be desired, but a far higher aspiration than this would be that we should only choose to speak, to write, or to do that which is true, fitting and valuable.

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