OUR ROMAN LETTER.

Important Decisions Arrived at by the Recent Vatican Conferences.

Some Excitement Caused by a Pagan Funeral.

ROME, ITALY.

The conclusions arrived at by the conferences recently concluded here, under the presidency of Pope Leo XIII, will in all lit l'ihood be the subject of a special Pe ificial document. The following are the principle conclusions reached by the conferences:

The confirmation and extension of the jurisdiction of the Patriarchs over all the National Catholics belonging to their respective rites, whether they be laics, or priests or regulars; both in European and Asiatic Turkey, or whether they be scattered throughout various colonies appertaining to Oriental rites, as in Sicily, Leghorn, Venice, Istria and Dalmatia.

The result of this will be that each Patriarch will be, in the fullest sense of the word, the head of all those who belong to the rite to which he himself appertains.

To confine the action of Latin Missionaries and Apostolic Delegates to the Latin schools alone, which are established in the East. The result of this will be to abolish the reigning and harmful prejudice that Rome wishes to Latinize the East.

To facilitate the direct relations of the Patriarchs with the Holy See by authorizing them to have in Rome, besides the procurators of their various rites, Bishops residing in the Roman Curia and belonging as Consultors to the special Congregation of Propaganda for Eastern Affairs.

To increase in each of the five Catholic Patriarchates the number of educational institutes. In these the religious instruction given is to correspond with the respective rites to which such institutions belong, and the language taught in them is to be that of the nation to which such rite belongs. The result of this will be to prevent the educational institutions of Latin Missionaries from receiving scholars belonging to Eastern rites and nationalities.

The Holy Father has moreover decided to devote to this last work a special fund in addition to the annual vote to it by the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide.

Such are some of the resolutions arrived at, as given by the well informed Catholic Press. So far, no comment has been made on them. It cannot, however, be denied, that they are fully in accordance with the patient and long-sighted policy of Leo XIII. The East is full of prejudices against the West. This is especially the case among the Schismatic Greek Church. All are full of fear that Rome wishes to Latinize both the rites and the nations. The rulers of the East bear with suspicion and resentment that Leo has called the Patriarchs to Rome. The Italian anti clerical Press increases their fears by asserting that the scope of the conferences is to subject the East to Rome, and the result of the conference has been, not to lessen, but increase the power and prestige of the Eastern Churches. So far is Rome from wishing to domineer over the East that she has limited the sphere of action of her own missionaries in the East in favor of the priests of the Eastern rites. The meeting of the Patriarchs at Rome, may, therefore, be looked upon as a step of great importance towards the re-union of the two churches, for by it the Schismatics of the East have received a clear proof that in the event of a re-union the prestige and privileges of their church would be respected and upheld by Rome according to the utterances of Leo XIII. in his memorable Encyclical to the princes and people.

While the Apostolic solicitude of the Holy Father is in every way endeavoring to strengthen and increase the prestige of the Catholic Churches in the East, a new successor to Mgr. Elias Abolonian, the Catholic patriarch of Babylon, has just been elected in the person of Mgr. Ebedesuin Kajyatt. The election took place in the city of Mossul, the seat of the Catholic patriarch of Babylon, where the archbishops and bishops, according to their traditional privileges, proceeded to the new election. Mgr. Kajyatt, Archbishop of Amida and Diarbekir, was once a student of the College of Propaganda Fide. He was born at Mossul, and is 69 years of age, being born in October, 1825. He was consecrated Bishop of Amadia, October 28, 1860, and promoted to Diarbekir in March, 1879.

The Syro-Chaldeic Patriarch of Babylon has jurisdiction over two Archiepiscopal and ten Episcopal Sees. The Archbishoprics are those of Amida and Diarbekir and Kerkuk, the Bishoprics those of Akra, Amadia, Gezira, Mardin, Mosul, Salmas Seerth, Seana, Urmia and Zaku.

The usual Requiem High Mass has been said for the deceased Pontifical soldiers in the Church of SS. Angeli Custodi.

Mass was sung by Mgr. Krlik, Bishop of Dacca, Bengal. The choir was under the direction of the Commendatore Moriconi. Present at the ceremony were the Swiss guard, the Palatine guard, and the Gendarmeria of the Apostolic Palace. Many high dignitaries of the Vatican were also present. The Mass and the Absolutions sung were those of Terzirni. At the beginning of the function, at the Elevation, and end, was executed under the direction of the Maestro Molaioli, the march of trumpets, which it is the custom to render during papal functions.

The other day there died in Trastevere a certain Antonio Curti, an inn keeper, who enjoyed much fame among his friends as a mangiapreti and an anti-clerical, and for having at one time conspired against the government of the Pope. Naturally his admirers at once determined to honor the deceased patriot with a civil funeral, and some among them determined to make the funeral an occasion for a demonstration against Austria, at present in high disfavor apropos of Istria. The funeral, therefore, took place on Tuesday, and was, as the Liberals say, strictly civil. The cross was taken down from the summit of the hearse and a bunch of red flowers was placed there in its stead. The hearse was followed by many well-known Radicals and anti-Clericals of Rome, and not a few women.

The Questura, however, was on the alert. It had pointed out in this case as it had done of late in so many others of a like character, the exact route through the city which the cortege was to follow. When, however, the procession reached Ponte Garibaldi, which connects Trastevere with the centre of Rome, the more ardent of the mourners tried to make the cortege leave the route pointed out by the Questura. Their intention was to pass by the Austrian Embassy and there have a demonstration. On a sudden they were met by a body of Carabinieri upon whose proximity they had not counted. The Carabinieri were soon joined by a body of infantry. The soldiers endeavored to stop the advance, and the tumult at once assumed alarming proportions. The soldiers drew their swords, and the mourners replied upon them a volley of stones. Three of the soldiers were wounded in the mêlée. In the meantime [illegible] drew the coffin from the hearse and placed it on their shoulders, [illegible] the bridge in spite of the efforts of the soldiers to stop them. [illegible] mounted the hearse and [illegible] horses at full speed [illegible] bridge. The corpse was then removed from the procession, and wild cheering and dogged resistance made its way towards the Austrian Embassy. When it was entering the [illegible], a short distance from the Embassy, it was met by a legion of carabinieri and police agents, and a company of infantry. Further progress in that direction was impossible, and the procession had to follow the rest of the route indicated by the Questura.

The body of Curti was afterwards cremated at the Campo Verano. The Messagero says that this is the 59th cremation that has taken place in the crematorium there erected. If we consider the number of years the crematorium has existed there we can at once see from these ciphers that the unhallowed practice has found but few supporters in Rome. It must be noted too that this number includes many who have been cremated not by their own wills but by the various anti-clerical societies to which they had belonged.

Zola's stay in Rome attracts but little attention, much less than anticipated. It would be difficult to give a reason for this indifference and contempt on the part of the Liberals. It may perhaps be explained by their hatred of France and the French, or by the fact that Zola has offended them by having taken the resolution of staying but a fortnight in Rome. The Folchetto, for instance, says of him:—"Here we have at last a writer who confesses how he makes his book and strives to obtain a sale for it. He has already composed his romance, the pages are now ready, perhaps even in the press(?), but because the book by some means or other bears the title of 'Rome' the conscientious artist leaves his home so often described by indiscreet literati, takes at Paris a return ticket to Rome and indulges in the expense of a journey thither. This visit will cost Zola a little money and many annoyances, but in the end it will serve to keep alive an interest with regard to the new book, which, if it were published before his journey would scarcely find a purchaser at Paris." These remarks are no doubt exaggerated, but they will serve to show the spirit in which Zola has been received in Liberal Rome.

PATRICK RYAN.

FABIOLA.

Or, the Church of the Catacombs.

Written by His Eminence Cardinal Wiseman.

[Published by special request.]

CHAPTER XXVII.—CONTINUED.

Deep silence was held while these words were fully uttered. The emperor seemed under the influence of a paralyzing awe; for soon recognising Sebastian, he felt as if standing in the presence of the dead. But quickly recovering himself and his passion, he exclaimed: 'Ho! some of you, go round instantly, and bring him before me' (he did not like to pronounce his name). 'Hyphax here! Where is Hyphax? I saw him just now.'

But the Moor had at once recognised Sebastian, and run off to his quarters. 'Ha! he is gone, I see; then here, you dolt, what's your name?' (addressing Corvinus, who was attending his father,) go to the Numidian court, and summon Hyphax here directly.'

With a heavy heart Corvinus went on his errand. Hyphax had told his tale, and put his men in order of defence. Only one entrance at the end of the court was left open; and when the messenger had reached it, he durst not advance. Fifty men stood along each side of the space, with Hyphax and Jubala at the opposite end. Silent and immovable, with their dark shafts and arms bare, each with his arrow fixed, and pointed to the door, and the string ready drawn, they looked like an avenue of statues, leading to an Egyptian temple.

'Hyphax,' said Corvinus, in a tremulous voice, 'the emperor sends for you.

'Tell his majesty, respectfully, from me,' replied the African, 'that my men have sworn, that no man passes that threshold, coming in, or going out, without receiving, through his breast or his back, a hundred shafts in to his heart; until the emperor shall have sent us a token of forgiveness for every offence.

Corvinus hastened back with this message, and the emperor received it with a laugh. They were men with whom he could not afford to quarrel; for he relied on them in battle, or insurrection, for picking out the leaders. 'The cunning rascals!' he exclaimed. 'There, take that trinket to Hyphax's black spouse. And he gave him Fabiola's splendid ring. He hastened back, delivered his gracious embassy, and threw the ring across. In an instant every bow dropt, and every string relaxed. Jubala, delighted, sprang forward and caught the ring. A heavy blow from her husband's fist felled her to the ground, and was greeted with a shout of applause. The savage seized the jewel; and the woman rose, to fear that she had only exchanged one slavery for a worse.

Hyphax screened himself behind the imperial command. 'If,' he said, 'you had allowed us to send an arrow through his head, or heart, all would have been straight. As it was, we are not responsible.'

'At any rate, I will myself see my work done properly this time,' said Maximian. 'Two of you fellows with clubs come here.'

Two of his attendant executioners came from behind; Sebastian, scarcely able to stand, was also there; mild and intrepid. 'Now, my men,' said the barbarian, 'I must not have any blood spilt on these stairs; so you knock the life out of him with your cudgels; make clean work of it. Ma'am, what is your petition?'—stretching out his hand to Fabiola, whom he recognized, and so addressed more respectfully. She was horrified and disgusted, and almost fainting at the sight before her; so she said, 'Sire, I fear it is too late!'

'Why too late?' looking at the paper. A flash came from his eye, as he said to her: What! You knew that Sebastian was alive? Are you a Christian?'

'No sire,' she replied. Why did the denial almost dry up in her throat? She could not for her life have said she was anything else. Ah! Fabiola, thy day is not far off.

'But, as you said just now,' replied the emperor, more serene, returning her petition, 'I fear it is too late; I think that blow must have been the ictus gratiosus.'

'I feel faint sire,' said she, respectfully; 'may I retire?'

'By all means. But, by the bye, I have to thank you for the beautiful ring which you sent, and which I have given to Hyphax's wife' (her own late slave). 'It will look more [illegible] on a black hand. [illegible] on mine. Adieu' and he kissed his hand with a wicked smile, as if there were no martyr's body near to witness against him. He was right; a heavy blow on the head had proved fatal; and Sebastian was safe where he had so longed to be. He bore with him a double palm, and received a two-fold crown. Yet still, an ignominious end before the world; beaten to death without ceremony, while the emperor conversed. How much of martyrdom is in its disgrace! Woe to us when we know that our sufferings earn us honor!

The tyrant, seeing his work completed, ordered that Sebastian at least should not be cast into the Tiber nor on a dunghill. 'Put plenty of weights to his body,' he added, and throw it into the Cloaca, to rot there, and be the food of vermin. The Christians at least shall not have it.' This was done; and the Saint's Acts inform us, that in the night he appeared to the holy matron Lucina, and directed her where to find his sacred remains. He obeyed his summons, and they were buried with honor where now stands his basilica.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CRITICAL DAY: ITS FIRST PART.

There are critical days in the life of man and of mankind. Not merely the days of Marathon, of Cannæ, or of Lepanto, in which a different result might have influenced the social or political fate of mankind. But it is probable that Columbus could look back upon not only the day, the precise hour, the decision of which secured to the world all that he taught and gave it, and to himself the singular place which he holds among its worthies. And each of us, little and insignificant as he may be, has had his critical day; his day of choice, which has decided his fate through life; his day of Providence, which altered his position or relations to others; his day of grace, when the spiritual conquered the material. In whatever way it has been, every soul, like Jerusalem, has had its day.

And so with Fabiola, has not all been working up towards a crisis? Emperor and slave, father and guest, the good and the wicked, Christian and heathen, rich and poor, then life and death, joy and sorrow, learning and simplicity, silence and conversation, have they not all come as agents, pulling at her mind in opposite ways, yet all directing her noble and generous, though haughty and impetuous, soul one way, as the breeze and the rudder struggle against one another, only to determine the ship's single path? By what shall the resolution of these contending forces be determined? That rests not with man; wisdom, not philosophy can decide. We have been engaged with events commencing on the 20th of January; let the reader look, and see what comes on the following day in his calendar, and he will agree it must be an important day in our little narrative.

From the audience, Fabiola retired to the apartments of Irene, where she found nothing but desolation and sorrow. She sympathised fully with the grief around her, but she saw and felt there was a difference between her affliction and theirs. There was a buoyancy about them, there was almost an exultation breaking out through their distress; their clouds were sun-lit and brightened at times. Here was a dead and sullen, a dull and heavy gloom, as if she had sustained a hopeless loss. Her search after Christianity, as associated with anything amiable or intelligent, seemed at an end. Her desired teacher, or informant, was gone. When the crowd had moved away from the palace, she took affectionate leave of the widow and her daughters; but, some way or other, she could not like the heathen one as she loved her sister.

She sat alone at home, and tried to read, she took up volume after volume of favorite works on Death, on Fortitude, on Friendship, on Virtue; and every one of them seemed insipid, unsound and insincere. She plunged into a deeper and a deeper melancholy, which lasted till towards evening, when she was disturbed by a letter being put into her hand. The Greek slave, Graja, who brought it in, was startled and alarmed by what she witnessed. For her mistress had scarcely glanced over the note, than she leapt up wildly from her seat, threw her hair into disorder with her hands, which she pressed, as in agony, on her temples, stood thus for a moment, looking up with an unnatural stare in her eyes, and then sank heavily down again on her [illegible] [illegible] down groan. From the [illegible] in both her hands, [illegible] relaxed, apparently unconscious.

'Who brought this letter?' she then asked, quite collected.

'A soldier, madam,' answered the maid.

'Ask him to come here.'

While her errand was being delivered, she composed herself, and gathered up her hair. As soon as the soldier appeared she had [illegible] brief dialogue.

'Whence do you come?'

'I am on guard at the Tullian prison.'

'Who gave you the letter?'

'The Lady Agnes herself.'

'On what cause is the poor [illegible] there?'

'On the accusation of a man named Fulvius, for being a Christian.'

'For nothing else?'

'For nothing, I am sure.'

'Then we shall soon see that matter right. I am sure witness to the contrary. Tell her I will come presently; and take this for your trouble.'

The soldier retired, and Fabiola was left alone. When there was something to do, her mind, [illegible] once energetic and [illegible] though [illegible] [illegible] more painfully. [illegible] close up, protected alone in [illegible] prison, and was at once [illegible] the regular call, which [illegible] obtained in [illegible] rank, looked in her power [illegible] pagan institutions.

'What is the meaning of this Agnes?' [illegible] after a [illegible] [illegible] and brought [illegible]

'And to Fulvius [illegible] well as [illegible] accusation against you [illegible] minutes will [illegible] Tertullus myself [illegible] charge of [illegible]

'What charge [illegible]

'Why, that you are a Christian.'

'And so I am [illegible]

Agnes, [illegible] the [illegible]

'The [illegible] Fulvius [illegible] here, [illegible] Sebastian's [illegible] edge or knowledge. [illegible] found that [illegible] had constituted [illegible] manly virtues [illegible] to fulfil in her [illegible] on the [illegible] duties. [illegible] child's credulous [illegible] course, [illegible] should [illegible] Fabiola's [illegible] her position [illegible] to fail [illegible] be not [illegible] but [illegible] [illegible] 'How long [illegible]

'All my life [illegible] that [illegible] mother's milk.'

'And why [illegible] [illegible]

'Because I [illegible] [illegible] as to [illegible] [illegible] would not [illegible] the only object [illegible] generous mind [illegible] name.'

'True, dearest [illegible] that [illegible] that was a Christian. I [illegible] have taught it. I [illegible] anything in you.

'You think [illegible] you know not [illegible] [illegible] daily [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the word [illegible]

'Well, Agnes, [illegible] [illegible] this with your [illegible] position. You will [illegible] Fulvius to [illegible] Christian. [illegible]

'[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] roof [illegible] idea of [illegible]

'Yes, to [illegible] cleaner of [illegible] (though I [illegible] more much, I [illegible] early, [illegible]