

apparent science: "Science, you are false; for you contradict what is absolutely true, the revealed word of God as interpreted by the infallible Church of God, and no two truths can contradict each other, since truth is that which is, and if it is it is, and cannot not be. I must therefore search for the natural truth of science in another direction. Now I have found what I sought! This contradicts no known truth, and besides approves itself perfectly to reason."

How much unnecessary and fruitless labor is spared to that great intellect by constantly following the principle of authority! Only he who has tried to read understandingly the works of St. Thomas can appreciate the force of his guiding principle, which enabled him to accomplish such prodigies within the very moderate span of life allotted him, forty-eight years.



THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

IN the October number of the *QUARTERLY* a brief sketch was given of the recent persecutions of the Uniat Greek Catholics of Lithuania. It is now proposed to say a few words respecting the condition of the Latin Catholics in the Russian dominions, who are still officially recognized as Catholics. They form a large body, numbering from eight to nine millions, and including the most highly civilized portion of the subjects of the empire. Nominally they are guaranteed the free exercise of their religion, but in practice the rule to which they are subject is very much like the English penal code of the last century in Ireland. The government removes their bishops and priests at its will, and in the same manner forbids the appointment of successors to vacancies among the clergy. It closes churches, suppresses convents, and even in certain cases forbids the administration of the sacraments without police permission. The comparative isolation of Russia from the other nations of the civilized world keeps the condition of its Catholic subjects almost unknown abroad. What the toleration really is which Russian absolutism grants to the Catholic Church we shall endeavor to convey to our readers.

The great bulk of the Catholic population in Russia is Polish,

or of Polish origin. Poland holds in the Russian Empire, in a religious aspect, a place similar to that which Ireland holds in the British. In each case a conquered nation has retained its religion, while its conquerors have allowed their original Christianity to be made subservient to the commands of their rulers. In Russia the divergence of the State Church from its Catholic original is much less than in England. It bears a close resemblance to the English schism as set up by Henry VIII. The most important Catholic doctrines and rites have been retained. The sacrifice of the Mass, the administration of the Sacraments, the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, prayers for the dead, the practice of fasting, and most other Catholic practices are retained in the Russian schismatic Church to-day. In one point it is in agreement with the Anglican Established Church, and that is in acknowledging the sovereign as the supreme religious guide and teacher of his subjects. The State religion is what it pleases the Czar to make it by law. Under it individual freedom of conscience finds no place. Indeed, the rejection of the supreme headship of the Church in the Sovereign Pontiff is the chief distinctive doctrine of the Russian schism. A large number of practices, indifferent in themselves, have been given an extravagant importance in the schismatic Church to make a distinction in the eyes of the common people between the religion of the Czar and that of the Catholic Church. Thus the use of organs or of statues in the churches is prohibited, though pictures, enclosed in copper raised outlines, are everywhere used. The Russians pray standing, and only prostrate themselves on the ground at intervals during the celebration of the Mass and public prayers. Any deviation from these established usages is regarded as little, if at all, short of heresy. Thus the Czar, Ivan the Terrible, who was contemporary with the English Elizabeth, proclaimed it a mortal sin to shave the beard as a disfigurement of God's image in man. His successor, Peter, the Great, on the other hand, ordered all his lay subjects to shave their beards under the penalty of high treason. In general, the ruling principle of the schism in Russia is that the monarch has the sole right to prescribe what his subjects shall believe and how they shall act. It is regarded as treason for a Russian subject to abandon the State Church, or to receive the sacraments otherwise than as prescribed by law. The Russians who have become Catholics, like Madame Swetchine or our own Prince Galitzin, have had to abandon their country at once. Residents in Russia, whether foreigners or subjects, who have never belonged to the State Church, are allowed by law to practice their own religion, but no liberty of conscience whatever is allowed to the old Russians. The Catholics in Russia are, therefore, entirely made up of the inhabitants of provinces

conquered by or annexed to the Empire during the last century, or of colonists who have settled within its limits. The German colonies, which were founded in the rich prairies of Southern Russia after the conquest of the Crimean Tartars by Catherine II., are the largest body of these Catholic immigrants, and a diocese has been founded for them at Saratof in that country. Foreign settlers have also been long established in the great cities, and some of them have occupied high administrative offices and positions at Court. Thus the Governor of Poland, in 1862, was a Catholic of French descent, General Lambert, and a son of Prince Beauharnais, the stepson of Napoleon I., was married to a Russian archduchess, and held a high rank at the Imperial Court. The great mass of the Catholic population is, however, made up of the Poles and Lithuanians, who have steadily retained their faith since the conquest of their native land and its incorporation into the Russian Empire.

The original Polish State, or Republic of Poland as it was styled by its people, consisted of two great divisions—Poland proper, to the west, and Lithuania, with its dependent provinces of Podolia, Volhynia, and the Ukraine, on the east—reaching from the Baltic Sea to the borders of Turkey. Originally distinct, Poland and Lithuania had been united under one government by the marriage in the 14th century of the Polish Queen Hedwig with the Lithuanian Grand Prince Jagellon, who became sovereign of the united countries, and the real founder of modern Poland. The Lithuanians, who were less civilized, adopted Polish manners and language, and the union of the two countries became as close as that of Castile and Aragon in the Spain of our own time. At the time of the partitions of Poland between Russia, Prussia and Austria, the Lithuanian territory was first seized by Catharine. Warsaw itself, at first fell to the share of Prussia, from whose king it was taken by Napoleon after the battle of Jena. The territory thus taken was erected by Napoleon into an independent state, under the title of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, the sovereignty of which was conferred on the king of Saxony, but which had its own national administration and army. On the downfall of Napoleon the Congress of Vienna regulated Europe according to its own will. The Grand Duchy was transferred to Alexander of Russia as a separate and constitutional state, under the name of Kingdom of Poland, while the Lithuanian provinces were incorporated into the Russian empire under the name of Polish provinces. They were also guaranteed a separate administration within the empire, but with no constitution like that given to the kingdom. Nicholas, in 1832, swept away the constitution of Poland, and, though its separate existence is still recognized, its government has

since been ever more and more assimilated to that of the Russian provinces. It still retains, however, the superiority which its old civilization gives it among the half-barbarous populations of the empire. The literature of the kingdom of Poland, with its seven millions of people, is to-day greater than that of the whole of Russia besides. In manufactures it also leads the way, and under the ordinary course of events its population would seem to be called at no distant date to an important part in the direction of the Russian empire.

The Catholics of Polish race, however, are not confined to the former Polish territory. There is a considerable movement always going on among the population of the Russian empire, something analogous to that which has filled up our own Western States during the last half century. The rich plains of southern Russia, which were only annexed to the empire by Catharine the Second, offered, and still offer, strong temptations to immigrants from all parts of the empire. Among these many Polish families have removed to the new settlements and founded villages, while others have passed into Asia and are scattered all over the frontiers of the empire, much in the same way as Irish Catholics are in India and the British colonies. The Polish nation, in spite of its misfortunes, is growing in numbers and permeating the empire, and, like the Irish, it carries its religion with it. The Russian government puts every obstacle in its way, as the English did in the case of the Irish emigrants before Catholic Emancipation, but still the Polish element continues to increase. It is a significant fact that, some time ago, several of the most violent Russian leaders urged that the Polish provinces should be separated from Russia by a line of custom houses, as their competition was ruining Russian manufacturers. The proposition was not adopted, but it indicates the growth of Poland even under the restrictions imposed on it by a hostile and despotic government.

To understand the attitude of the Imperial Government towards its Catholic subjects is difficult for any one not familiar with Russian life and ideas. The Czar and his ministers make no pretence to special religious zeal against Catholic doctrines. They do not declare them "damnable and idolatrous," as English statesmen were used to do; nor do they regard the Pope as Antichrist, or refuse to hold any communication with the Roman See. In words, the Russian Government is respectful towards the Catholic Church and its head. With occasional interruptions, diplomatic relations are maintained with the Holy See, and different Czars have testified a high personal respect for the reigning Pontiffs. At the same time, no scruple is made of closing Catholic churches, of suppressing seminaries and convents, of banishing bishops from

their dioceses, of forbidding communication on religious matters between its Catholic subjects and the Head of their Church, of intruding nominees of the Czar into the place of Catholic bishops and priests, and of prohibiting the administration of the sacraments, and even of religious instruction, by the clergy at the will of the Czar. The emperor claims the right of deciding who are Catholics and who are not, irrespective of the convictions and free will of his subjects. He proclaims the fullest toleration for all creeds, subject to the laws of the empire, but he reserves to himself absolutely the making of the laws. Are Catholic churches open in St. Petersburg and Warsaw; are Catholic bishops treated as important personages by the governors of provinces; are Catholics employed in high offices of the army, the administration, and the court; the government declares that its tolerance is universal and known to all the world. Is a Catholic population driven by soldiers to a schismatic church, or a Catholic banished for confessing to a Catholic priest, or having his child baptized by one,—that is declared to be a purely political act of the administration. Genuine freedom of conscience is, in fact, impossible under the existing form of government in Russia. The monarch claims absolute dominion over his subjects, in both civil and religious matters. Obedience to his commands in everything is the cardinal dogma of the Russian despotic monarchy. The Czar is head of the Church as well as of the State, and the State Church is merely a board of his administration, subject to the same "general regulation" as the Naval Office or the Ministry of Agriculture. That Catholics should recognize such a power on the part of any human authority is impossible while they continue Catholics. Does the government forbid Catholic priests to hear the confessions of penitents, or command them to reveal the secrets of the confessional to the police,—as is the actual law of the schismatic church—the priests must disobey the law or place themselves outside the Church's pale. Does it prohibit a Catholic parent from having his child baptized, or himself from receiving the sacraments in a Catholic church, he too must disobey, or incur the guilt of mortal sin. The government, however, pretends to look on such orders as part of its civil powers, and describes disobedience to them as an offence against the ordinary laws of the empire. The Catholic Church, the divinely established teacher of supernatural truth, has ever refused to accept such a doctrine, and hence its condition in Russia is a constant struggle for existence against the hostility of the government.

The condition of the Catholic subjects of the Czar, however, varies greatly in different parts of the empire. In the great cities like St. Petersburg, Odessa or Riga, the government makes compara-

tively little interference with the exercise of religion. Since the time of Peter the Great, the policy of the Czars has been to attract immigration from more civilized nations, and to attain that object, freedom of religion has been conceded to immigrants. French or German Catholics, and their descendants, are allowed to practice their religion almost without State interference, except in the matter of mixed marriages or of any attempt at conversion of schismatics. In Poland, where the Catholics form the bulk of the population, much severer restrictions are placed on the Church. The administration constantly interferes in religious affairs, and endeavors to make the clergy entirely subordinate to its own authority. The building or repairing of churches, the establishment of convents or hospitals, and still more of schools, are illegal, except by special permission from the authorities, which is frequently refused. The bishops and priests are very often exiled or imprisoned without any form of trial by administrative process or a simple command of the minister, and churches are thus left without pastors for many years. The late Archbishop of Warsaw, Mgr. Felinski, spent twenty years in exile in a remote part of Russia, where he was kept from all communication with his diocese, and under police supervision like an ordinary criminal. The catechism taught to the children, and even the Sunday sermons of the clergy, are subjected to the police censorship. The appointment of priests to parishes, and the admission of students to the seminaries, are arbitrarily controlled by the government. From time to time, as after the insurrection of 1830, and again in 1863 and the following years, there are fierce outbursts of persecution, in which the public exercise of worship is almost practically suspended.

The condition of the Catholic population in Lithuania and the old Polish provinces is still worse. The Catholic churches are there frequently seized by the authorities and handed over to the State Church, while the Catholic population are not permitted to replace them by others at their own expense. In the Archdiocese of Mohilef, the Primatial Catholic See of Russia and the largest diocese in the world, which includes a territory twice the extent of the United States, the diocesan seminary was arbitrarily suppressed by the Emperor Nicholas some years ago. The so-called Roman Catholic College, a board of ecclesiastics appointed by the government and controlled by it, has supreme power over the internal administration of the dioceses, and deprives the bishops of most of their jurisdiction over their clergy. A disobedient or immoral priest is often maintained in his parish in spite of his bishop's suspension, and any attempt to give him a successor exposes the bishop to banishment. The very right to be considered Catholics is only allowed at the discretion of the government. It

has frequently happened that large bodies of Catholics were officially declared to be members of the State Church, because the police authorities had decided that their grandfathers were once schismatics. In such cases the profession of the Catholic faith becomes an act of treason, and the administration of any sacrament to them by a Catholic priest involves him in the same charge. To hear the confession of a Catholic who has been pronounced a schismatic by the police, is a crime of the highest magnitude in Russia for a Catholic priest. For all Russians belonging to the State Church no religious freedom whatever exists. The government, composed as it is in a large part of infidels and partly of Protestants, prescribes what its orthodox subjects shall believe, how often they shall communicate, how they shall pray, and, above all, what are their duties towards the emperor. The schismatic priests must make their sacred functions a part of the policy of the empire. A law requires them, under the severest penalties, to reveal to the police the secrets intrusted to them in confession whenever they have a bearing on political matters. Another law prescribes the exact number who may enter the schismatic convents or monasteries, and regulates the age and other conditions of their admission to a religious life. The Russian Church admits, like the Catholic, the divine origin of the Christian hierarchy, and that the bishops, under their lawful head, are the sole guardians of revealed truth. For centuries it recognized the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople as its head by divine right. At the end of the sixteenth century the Czar Fedor obtained for a pecuniary consideration from the Greek Patriarch of the time, Jeremias, himself appointed by the Sultan, the appointment of a Patriarch of Moscow as supreme head of the Russian Church. About a century later, Peter the Great, on the death of the patriarch, Nikon, decided to leave the post vacant, and substituted in his place a body of bishops, priests and government officials as the supreme authority in religious affairs. The Holy Synod, as this body is named, is still the only head of the Russian State Church, and as the emperor names and removes all members of the synod at will, his ukases are virtually the only rule of faith and morals among his subjects.

Could the Catholic Church be rendered equally subservient to the emperor's will, the government would care little for its abstract dogmas. A schismatic Latin Church, or one which practically accepted the government as its guide in everything, would be as useful an instrument of rule as the Greek schism. From the first seizure of Polish territory in 1772 down to the present, the policy of Russia has been to reduce the Catholic Church in its dominions to that condition. Catharine the Second had no sooner seized on the province of White Russia, than she guaranteed full freedom

of conscience to its Catholic people, but at the same time, of her own imperial power, she proceeded to establish a new Catholic diocese in her dominions, without any authority from the Sovereign Pontiff. The Catholic dioceses in the north of Europe are, for the most part, very extensive, and in Poland especially it is usual to have one or more suffragan bishops in each, without any jurisdiction of their own. The Catholic diocese of Wilna, of which White Russia formed a part, was administered by Mgr. Massalski, who procured the consecration of a suffragan, to reside in the Russian territory, in the person of Mgr. Siestrencewicz. The latter was a courtier by nature, and he devoted himself to the interests of the Russian Court, without reserve. Though only a simple delegate of his bishop, Catharine at once recognized him as the head of the Church in her dominions, and gave to him the control of the College of Justice in St. Petersburg in all matters of ecclesiastical discipline. To prevent worse, the Holy See erected the diocese of Mohilef in the newly-conquered territory. This was subsequently raised to an archdiocese in 1784, and made the Metropolitan See of the Catholic Church in Russia. The whole of the old Russian Empire is included in the jurisdiction of its archbishop, which thus extends from the Dnieper to the Arctic Ocean and Behring's Straits, from the borders of Sweden to those of China. This immense diocese Archbishop Siestrencewicz continued to administer for more than half a century. He was consecrated in 1773 and took up his residence as Bishop of Mohilef in the following year, and his death only occurred in 1826, at the age of ninety-five. It was a period of unexampled confusion, both in the world and in the Church. The latter was attacked on every side. The emperor Joseph in Germany interfered with the jurisdiction of the Holy See and tried to change the relations of Church and State. The ancient German Empire was swept away by Napoleon, and its territory remodelled. The French Church was overthrown by the revolution, and only restored with a diminished episcopate by the Concordat of 1802. Two Popes in succession were carried away prisoners from Rome, and for several years all direct communication with the Holy See was impossible to the Catholic world. The occasion was then peculiarly favorable for Catharine's project of reducing the Catholic Church in Russia to a condition like that of the existing body known as Old Catholics in Germany and Switzerland. Russia had bought from the patriarch of Constantinople, a hundred years before, all his jurisdiction over the schismatic church. Her rulers flattered themselves that they could repeat the same policy with regard to the Latin Church and the Holy See. Siestrencewicz was an excellent instrument for such a policy. As a Catholic bishop, appointed by the Holy See,

and professing himself subject to its authority, he had religious jurisdiction over the consciences of the Catholic population. Whenever he exceeded his powers or chose to change the discipline or government of the Church, he could count on the government to prevent any complaints being addressed to the Sovereign Pontiff, or any communication being received from him. For a time Siestrenczewicz was virtually independent of the Holy See, though professing to respect its authority. He changed the courses of Catholic instruction in the schools and seminaries, and ordered Canon Law to be taught to his clergy "within the limits prescribed by the Empress," and made a Jansenist catechism, condemned by the Holy See, the basis of Catholic teaching. He even went so far as to become a member of the Protestant Bible Society established in England, and attempted to introduce it among the Catholics of Russia. When ordered by a Brief of Pius VII. to retract the circular in which he recommended this society, the government forbade its publication in Russia, and Siestrenczewicz continued in his course, without regard to the communications of the Holy See. The members of the Religious Orders of both sexes were also forbidden to communicate with their Generals outside Russia, and were made subject in everything absolutely to the will of the archbishop. All appeals in matters of Catholic discipline were ordered to be decided by the Roman Catholic College of St. Petersburg, consisting of one ecclesiastic from each diocese, approved of by the government, and two others appointed by it absolutely. The Archbishop of Mohilef was at the head of this body, but, at the discretion of the government, he might be replaced by any other bishop. The college itself is subject to the senate of the empire, and can only publish its decrees on Catholic discipline or doctrine by the permission of that body. Communications with the Holy See may only be made through the Russian Ministry, which publishes or withholds the answers at its own discretion. On the death of a bishop, the government presents what names it pleases for his successor to the Sovereign Pontiff, and, if he refuses to accept them, the sees are left vacant, or administrators are appointed by the government itself. When the Holy See addresses inquiries as to the fitness of the candidates thus presented to it, to the clergy of Poland, the latter are forbidden under the severest penalties to answer unless through the government, and in accordance with its wishes. Such is the actual state of the Catholic Church in Russia to-day, and it is only little short of miraculous that it has still preserved the Faith untarnished during the long century of its oppression.

During the reign of Alexander the First, the rival of Napoleon, the attitude of the government was much more favorable to the

Church than it had been under Catharine. Alexander himself had leanings towards Catholicity, and it is even said that he was received into the Church on his death-bed. However this may be, he allowed Catholics comparative liberty during his reign, though he rigorously prohibited the conversion of schismatics, or even of the Uniat Catholics who had been enrolled in the State Church by force. On the death of Alexander active persecution began under Nicholas. In 1828 an imperial ukase was issued which would virtually have left the Church without clergy in a couple of generations. All candidates for the priesthood were required, before they could be received into a seminary, to present titles of nobility, and, besides, to have finished the course of studies of some Russian university, and to be twenty-five years of age. Each candidate had further to provide a substitute in the army, to pay one hundred and fifty rubles towards the support of the schismatic church, and finally to obtain permission from the Minister of Public Worship at St. Petersburg. This decree, could it have been enforced, would have virtually prevented any supply of priests to replace the existing clergy, but its violence defeated itself, and it has remained practically unexecuted. It is, however, a striking instance of the methods of Russian despotism in its pretended policy of toleration.

The convents were the next object of attack. In the Lithuanian provinces, at the accession of Nicholas, the convents and monasteries of the Latin Rite numbered three hundred, exclusive of those of the Uniat Catholics. In 1832 two hundred were suppressed, their property seized, and their inmates either turned out or sent to the convents not yet suppressed. The plot for forcing the Uniats of Lithuania away from the Church was now at work, and to prevent the Latin Catholics from interfering with its success the government undertook to regulate the administration of the Sacraments by the Latin Catholic clergy. In 1837 an imperial ukase forbade Catholic priests to admit to the Sacraments "unknown persons," that is, those not belonging to their parishes. This was intended to prevent the persecuted Uniats from receiving any religious assistance, and it was subsequently re-enacted in 1859 by Alexander the Second. In that year Count Lunscoi, the Imperial Minister, issued a rescript, in which he stated :

"His Majesty the Emperor has learned that some Roman Catholic ecclesiastics have admitted members of the Orthodox Church to confession and communion. Accordingly his Majesty the Emperor has deigned to command that such act be forbidden once more to all the Catholic clergy, under penalty of immediate expulsion from the country. . . . His Majesty the Emperor orders at the same time that all ecclesiastics residing in the Government of Witebsk shall engage by a written promise not to

admit any but their own parishioners, *and persons furnished with authentic documents showing that they belong to the Catholic Church, to confession, communion, or any religious act.*" In Russia to-day an imperial passport is necessary for a Catholic before he can approach the Sacraments. Such is the law of toleration for religious conscience so loudly proclaimed by the Russian Government.

Another order of 1842, which is still, we believe, in force, ordered every Catholic parish priest in Lithuania to present to the schismatic priest the list of his own parishioners, and obtain the signature of the latter to its truth. The liberty of being a Catholic thus depends on the good will of the schismatic clergy who, if so disposed, may claim, under different pretexts, Catholics as Russians. In such cases the State wholly ignores any right to freedom of belief. The Catholic has to choose between apostasy or banishment. His children, if he have any, will be brought up by force in the schismatic Church. In its system of perverting Catholic children the Russian Government seems to have closely copied the Irish penal code of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The ministry is empowered to take such measures as it thinks fit to secure the orthodoxy of children whose parents are suspected of Catholicity. At times this policy is pushed to extremes. After the storming of Warsaw and the overthrow of the Polish nation in 1830 an Imperial rescript that all the male orphans in the Kingdom of Poland between the ages of six and seventeen should be sought out for transportation to Minsk (in Lithuania), and sent in due succession to the companies of the military colonies. Those who have read the papers recently published in the *Century* magazine can form an idea of what the transportation to the military colonies meant for those unfortunate children who were, if they survived, to be brought up in the schismatic worship. It reminds one vividly of Richard Cromwell's letter, in which he offers to ship a thousand or more Irish orphans to the West Indies, as "the means of making them English," or as he naively puts it, "at least Christians."

Liberty of speech on religious matters is also denied by law to the Catholics of Russia and Poland. An edict of Nicholas, published in 1847, proscribes all public discussion of the differences between the Catholic Church and the Schism. The ukase enacts, amongst other provisions:

"The loss of all civil rights, and from six to ten years' imprisonment at hard labor, for whoever in a public place shall venture to find fault with religion, or the Christian church (*i.e.*, the Russian schism). For whoever hears such words and does not lodge information with the police, six months' to a year's imprisonment.

“For the same offence in writing or print, if spread in any way, banishment to the remotest districts of Siberia.

“For whoever induces a person to pass from the orthodox religion to another, exile to Tomsk or Tobolsk (Siberia).

“For having, by sermon or writing, attempted to induce an orthodox person to join any other religion, the first offence imprisonment for one to two years; the second, imprisonment from four to six years; the third, transportation to Tomsk or Tobolsk.”

It is hard to say what this law cannot be made to apply to against Catholics. It is true that its general application is impossible. The Russian prisons would not suffice to hold the number of offenders were it put into execution strictly. At the same time, it is a powerful engine of oppression in the hands of hostile magistrates or police officers, and under its provisions obnoxious individuals only hold their personal freedom at the mercy of the officials even of low grade. This ukase was issued at almost the very time when Nicholas was signing a new Concordat with Pius the Ninth as a pledge of his protection to the Catholic Church in his empire.

This last fact is significant of the value which must be given to the promises made from time to time by the Russian Government to the Holy See. The Catholic world occasionally learns that arrangements have been made with the Holy Father for the appointment of Catholic bishops and the relaxation of the persecution of Catholics in Russia, and many are ready to believe that peace has thus been really restored to the Catholic Church there. Unfortunately, such is the reverse of the fact, The Czars and their ministers often find it expedient to relax the policy of destruction for a time, but it has never been yet abandoned, however fair the promises made by the Imperial Government. Catherine, in the Treaty of Partition in 1793, “promised irrevocably for herself, her heirs and successors, to maintain forever the Roman Catholics of both rites in the possession of their privileges, churches and property, and the free exercise of their worship and discipline.” This solemn stipulation did not prevent the suppression of four thousand parishes and the forcible separation of nearly eight millions of Catholics from the Church within the following three years. Nicholas, in February, 1839, wrote, himself, to Gregory XVI.: “My son has exactly reported to me the affectionate words which your Holiness has deigned to charge him with for me. I am happy to reply by the renewed assurance, that I will never cease to count among the first of my duties that of protecting the welfare of my Catholic subjects, of respecting their convictions and assuring their peace.” The very same month, the entire Uniat Catholic Church of Lithuania was officially proclaimed a part of

the State Church. A few years before, when the nomination of Monsignor Pawlowski to the Archdiocese of Mohileff was asked by the Russian Government, the Russian minister to Rome, Fuhrman, solemnly pledged his word to the Holy Father that the ukase which forbade Catholic priests to administer the sacraments to the Uniat Catholics, had been revoked. This, the Holy Father himself published in a subsequent allocution, but it did not prevent the ukase from continuing in full force, nor its emphatic republication by Alexander the Second, after the close of the Crimean War. A concordat was signed by Nicholas in 1847, when the revolutions in France and Germany had suggested even to his despotic temper the necessity of temporizing with his Polish subjects. As soon as the political danger had passed, the concordat was simply disregarded. The Uniat Diocese of Chelm in Poland itself was suppressed by Alexander in exactly the same way as those of Lithuania had been by his father, before the concordat. In 1863, the time of the last Polish insurrection, when the churches of Warsaw had been closed for four months, and the administrator of the Archdiocese kept in close imprisonment, the Russian Government presented the name of Monsignor Felinski as an acceptable candidate for the vacant See. Within a few months he, too, was sent into exile to the remotest province of European Russia without a trial, and had to spend no less than twenty years away from his diocese. With such a series of facts before us, we can attach little faith to the result of any negotiations between the Russian Government and the Holy See. The whole policy of the empire, in religious matters at least, must be radically changed before any sensible improvement can be expected in the external conditions of the Catholic Church in Russia. The fundamental law, which declares that "once a schismatic, always a schismatic," must be swept away, and the imperial despot must recognize that conscience at least is above his control, before persecutions will really cease for the Catholic Church in Russia.

That it will have an end sooner or later, there is no room for doubt. The autocratic system of government is already rotten; and the enormous accessions of territory which Russia has received, and is still receiving in Asia, will but hasten its fall. The State Church exercises almost no influence over the educated classes of the empire, and yet religion is felt to be an absolute necessity by the whole Russian people. The Catholic Church alone can fulfil its wants in this respect, and now, as in the days of Diocletian, it well may be that the darkest hour of persecution is only the precursor of the glorious dawn of religious liberty in the Russian Empire.