

he had accepted it. In effecting the change, however, it would be of the utmost importance not to impair the inestimable advantage which our parochial clergy at present possess of holding their posts independently of any whims and caprices or unjustifiable prejudices on the part of their congregations. This advantage would, to a great extent, be imperilled if an incumbent was appointed merely for a fixed term of years, at the end of which he would vacate the living, unless his position was expressly renewed to him for another definite period. In such a case, if the patron were a crotchety or wrong-headed individual, the parson, as the expiration of his term drew near, might be reduced to a choice between his bread and butter on the one hand, and the faithful discharge of his duty on the other. But this evil would be avoided if, instead of a formal reappointment being requisite for his continuance in the incumbency after the completion of the fixed period, the law were to be that at the close of this period he should have the right of remaining in the living for another similar period, and so on *toties quoties*, unless at the end of any such period the Bishop of the diocese and the patron and, perhaps, a person elected for the purpose by the parishioners concurred in giving him a notice terminating his incumbency. If something of this kind were arranged, an opportunity would be afforded for relieving a parish of an incumbent whose ministrations were not conducive to its spiritual interests; while a sufficient safeguard would be provided against his being arbitrarily dismissed without adequate cause. Whatever suggestions may be made as to the details of the plan, it can hardly be denied that the principle is a sound one, and that no reform of our parochial system can be accepted as final which does not in some way or other mitigate the existing liability of a parish to be saddled against its will with an incompetent or unsuitable incumbent, till death them do part.

PHILIP VERNON SMITH.



ART. III.—CLERICAL EDUCATION IN ITALY,  
1786—1888.

THE regeneration of Italy and its unification under the dynasty of Savoy is one of the grandest of the events which have rendered the present century a period of unequalled progress and advancement. The aspirations of centuries have been fulfilled in a few brief years, and the greatest obstacle which stood in the way of the formation

of a perfectly independent kingdom has been removed in the fall of the temporal power of the Popes, which had in every age distracted and divided Italy, at once unspiritualizing its religion and breaking up its political influence. Among the most fruitful and fatal causes of the state of intellectual and political degradation into which the most beautiful and advanced country of Europe in every highest path of science, literature and art had fallen from the time of the Renaissance, the ignorance of the clergy and the debased condition of the educational seminaries must claim a most important place. The efforts which had been made from time to time to give a higher education to the clergy of Italy had failed, among many more obvious causes, through the neglect of the Court of Rome to put into execution the educational recommendations of the Council of Trent, and to enforce the yearly celebration of diocesan synods, that "pearl of its reformatory decrees," as Bishop v. Wessenberg has justly termed it. As the result of this fatal neglect, the state even of the grand-duchy of Tuscany in regard to the education and teaching of the clergy became so intolerable as to form the subject of the severest reprobation in the Assembly of the Bishops at Florence in 1786. Many and most suggestive were the memoirs which were presented to the assembly on this most important subject. Not only had the most vital subjects of religious teaching been wholly neglected, but the books which were adopted for instruction in both moral and doctrinal theology were found to be of the most dangerous character politically as well as religiously. The historian of this illustrious assemblage, the Abate Tanzini, the archivist of the Ecclesiastical Patrimony of Florence, has given us a graphic picture of the state of the parochial clergy at that period. After a brief introduction, in which he describes the absorption of the endowments of the Church by the regular clergy, and the injurious results of their wealth upon the state of the Church, spent as it was rather in gorgeous ceremonies and external matters than for the promotion of learning or of solid piety, he proceeds thus :

"In fact, if we regard the studies of the secular clergy, we see not without surprise that they are generally neglected. The seminaries have for some time presented only schools of literature or of morality. There is no chair of Scriptural theology, of canon law, or of ecclesiastical history—no methodical study of the works of the Fathers. The method universally adopted for the study of moral theology is no less imperfect than the books which are ordinarily used for it. The decision of cases having no connection, and for the most part metaphysical, form the exercises of the students in that

science. The works of the most lax moralists are the sources by which they obtain the solution of these cases. . . . The promotion to an ecclesiastical office is equivalent to a perpetual adieu to study. A simple benefice or cure is a patent of relief from study and a title of honourable repose. Many of the clergy, who on promotion to the priesthood are not provided with an ecclesiastical charge, turn themselves to other employments derogatory for the most part to their vocation, and always alienating them from study. It is not easy, with few exceptions, to find among the clergy, especially of the country districts, the Holy Bible, and an assortment of the books which are most necessary for the exercise of their ministry. A few books of an ascetical or moral character, and other scholastic works, which have outlived the ruin of their studies after their departure from the public schools, lying useless and covered with dust, occupy an old shelf in the corner of their room. In the midst of these ruins there rose from time to time some divine of distinguished merit, who in more fortunate times might have been able to restore ecclesiastical studies and to open paths hitherto unknown.

“In the times nearest to us we see in fact seminaries furnished with new professorial chairs. But if we consider the elementary books which are adopted for the rule of sacred studies, we are bound to confess, with grave regret, that they reject the better to substitute for them the more prejudiced writers. All the most discredited opinions by which, to their great injury, our people of Italy have been enslaved to this day are vigorously defended in these works. Hence we may say with reason that the youth of the clergy has made no greater advancement than to imbibe methodically ancient errors. Passing from the secular to the regular clergy, one must confess that, particularly in later times, we observe a greater application to study. But with the exception of some of the monasteries of monks, in which for some time learning has flourished, and men of a singular merit, in the rest the most noble subjects of learning have been generally ignored and neglected. Scholastic theology and moral casuistry entirely occupy the regular clergy, and furnish them with a wide field for reciprocal triumphs on a term or opinion in metaphysics. Preaching occupies the time of a great number of these, as the acquisition of a good memory and the equipment of hereditary Lent preachings (*Quaresimali*) obtain merit in their Order, reputation among the common people, and means of livelihood. Tuscany, especially in Lent, is inundated with these heralds of the Gospel. . . . The spiritual direction of every class of persons and of the public schools falls into the hands of the regulars. Rome is the centre of all their fears and of all their

hopes, and the polar star which guides them in the course of their studies."

The writer proceeds to describe the efforts of the Bishops to reform the Church of Tuscany, especially of Count Bonaventura della Gherardesca, Archbishop of Florence, whose attempt at reformation was stifled by the Congregation of the Index—an affront which hastened the death of the illustrious prelate. The efforts of his successor, Archbishop Incontri, to purge his diocese of the loose doctrines of the Casuists met with a like fate, and the same was experienced by Bishop Alamanni of Pistoja and Prato, the predecessor of the noble Bishop Scipio de' Ricci, whose life and labours have been so admirably illustrated by De Potter.

The reaction brought about by Pope Pius VI., whose object, under the tuition of the Jesuits, whose order he had called again into life, was to perpetuate the evils which the Abate Tanzini has so graphically described, frustrated every hope of the higher religious life in Italy.

We have now to inquire how far the Papacy, during the century which followed the triumph of this reactionary policy, has completed the picture of spiritual destitution and ignorance which was traced by the historian of the Florentine assembly in 1786.

The crash of the French Revolution, which shattered for a time the temporal power, and enabled the Court of Rome to consider the affairs of its spiritual reign, with a view to its firmer establishment, had, unhappily, the contrary effect. More than ever absorbed in its temporal interests and in the restoration of the secular authority, which she had so fatally yielded in the past, Rome continued to carry on the *semper eadem* of her political and religious life, and Italy was left to become in even a worse condition in both than she was in the period of the Revolution. It cannot, therefore, be matter of surprise that the debate upon ecclesiastical education was among the most important and suggestive of the many which rendered the work of the assembly so valuable and so instructive. Nothing impresses the reader so strongly in the perusal of them as the largeness and comprehensiveness of the views of the most influential of the Tuscan Bishops. "*Basta il Credo*," the twice repeated and twice accepted utterance of the Royal Commissioner, Professor Bartolomeo Bianucci, was the motto of the assembly on this supremely important question.

This sufficiency of the Creed as the basis of theological teaching met with resistance from those who advocated the adoption of a stricter and more scholastic method, embodying the systematic teaching of St. Augustine. Others, while ready to admit this restriction, alleged the old Jesuit formula,

“Augustinus eget Thoma interprete,” and desired to confine the teaching of the great Western Father within the limits of scholastic divinity. It was then that Dr. Bianucci asserted for the first time, in an assembly of Italian Bishops, the rights of the laity, founded on their baptismal covenant, in these remarkable words :

St. Augustine did not make a course of divinity either dogmatic or moral ; for as everyone has the light of reason and his own good sense to follow whatever doctrine he is persuaded of, it would be an intolerable slavery to adopt the system of any one writer more than another. To be a Catholic (he added), it was sufficient to be in agreement in fundamental articles, sufficient to hold fast and agree to the creed alone. So great was the fertility of the mind of man that it would be vain to hope for uniformity by prescribing St. Augustine.

He ended with the assertion :

Che bastava convenire nel *credo*, e lasciar sul resto a ciascuno la libertà di opinare al suo talento.<sup>1</sup>

No such vindication of the right of private judgment had been made in Italy since the day when Pope Cœlestine congratulated the people of Constantinople on their rejection of the errors of Nestorius, in the words, “Beata grex cui dedit Dominus de pascuis judicare.” The articles of the Apostles’ Creed, the only compact between the Church and the individual Christian in the day of his reception into the spiritual community, was made the charter of his future liberty as a disciple of Christ. Like every other compact, it can never be enlarged or otherwise disturbed without the consent of both the parties to it. The Church of Rome, conscious of this truth and confessing its justice, has in the Council of Trent proclaimed the Creed to be the “firm and *only* foundation of the Christian Church.”

On this foundation the Christian is to build up his faith, not cramped by definitions and a terminology not clearly expressed in the Scriptures, but according to the light given him and in the use of the means appointed in the Word of God. This is indicated by the condition added by Bianucci : “e lasciar a ciascuno la libertà di opinare al suo talento.” This great and original liberty of the Christian disciple had been frustrated by the rigid system of the Roman Church, which instead of teaching her children to build up their faith from the Word of God and the articles of the Apostles’ Creed, which are the summary of those fundamental truths, of which the Scriptures are the only true development, has raised for them an elaborate system of rite and doctrine, which leaves them to work in chains, and so forces them to become listless and inactive in their service, without duty or responsibility, a

<sup>1</sup> “Atti dell’Assemblea,” pp. 81, 95.

state inevitably producing all the features of degeneracy and decay, which the historian of the Florentine assembly so regretfully depicts. The religion of the priesthood ceasing to be the growth of their inner life, had become a cold and external production. Formed and moulded by the definitions of Papal bulls and decrees, and fenced about with rules of inexorable stringency, it substituted an abject and unreasoning submission for a dignifying and reasonable faith. Our author tells us, in illustration of these facts, that "the famous bull *Unigenitus* was placed by a synod of Pistoja, in 1721, immediately after a brief confession of faith." "Not only papal bulls," he continues, "but all the decrees and consultations of the Roman congregations, were regarded as inviolable laws, not even subject to private interpretations. It was sufficient that a book was inserted in the Index to cause it to be condemned to the flames, or kept under lock and key, and to serve as food for the moths on an inaccessible shelf, in company with the Koran or the works of atheists or infidels."

Under such a system the regeneration of the clergy of Italy was impossible. Every century would but make the yoke heavier and the bearer of it more completely enslaved. But though the education of the clergy was discussed in the Florentine assembly, with freedom and apparent success; though the opinions of the laity on this vital subject found utterance for the first time in Italy, and the representatives of the Grand-Duke, the Senator Serristori, and the Royal theologians, Paribene, De' Vecchi, Palmieri, Bianucci, and Longinelli, proclaimed the judgment of the learned and enlightened on the shortcomings of clerical education, the means of carrying out their suggestions failed utterly. The ten volumes which embody the proceedings and memoirs of this illustrious assembly remain to this day a silent monument of the wisdom of its members as well as a classical example of the purest Tuscan language. The revival of the power of the Curia, after the French Revolution, was completed in the triumph of the Holy Alliance; and its withering influence on every great and good effort for the advancement of the spiritual life of Italy, crushed out this last attempt to raise the *status* of the clergy, and to make their education worthy of its great aim, while the bull *Auctorem fidei* of the reactionary Pope Pius VI. completed the destructive work. The great Bishop Scipio de' Ricci, the reformer of the Church of Tuscany, wearied out by the terrible persecution he endured from the Court of Rome, surrendered himself at last to the irresistible yoke, and in the weak moments of his last days appealed for the canonization of his kinswoman St. Catherine de' Ricci as a kind of atonement for a work which rather merited a halo of glory.

A century has intervened since that fatal triumph of the Curia; and we are invited by another learned and enlightened Italian to survey the clerical world of Italy as it is in 1888—just a century after the Abate Tanzini had depicted it in his admirable introduction to the history of the assembly of 1786.

De Cesare, of Città di Castello, in his "Conclave di Leone XIII. e il futuro Conclave," after giving a full description of the present state of the cardinalate, and a prophecy of the future devolution of the Papacy, closes his work with a view of the state of the clergy and of religion in Italy at the present moment, which presents points of the highest interest and instruction, not only to the Roman Church, but also to our own. For the neglect of the higher education of the clergy opens the same vista of danger to the Christian ministry in every part of the visible Church. The fatal incapability of the clergy to recognise the altered conditions in which they are living, whether social or political, leads our author to the train of thought into which he enters in his eighth chapter.<sup>1</sup>

He shows that the clergy in Italy, who had held an honourable position in society in earlier days, had now lost its credit. In endeavouring to bring back an irrevocable past, they had severed themselves from modern progress and thought, and had reached the lowest step of the social ladder in consequence. He then gives a picture of the state to which they are reduced even more deplorable than that which had been sketched a century before:

Miserable indeed is the education of the Italian clergy in this day, painful the condition of the diocesan seminaries. They merely result in rubbing off from the pupils their rustic habits, for it is from this class that they ordinarily come; they merely subject them to a mechanical discipline, and place nothing behind it. The young clergy, educated to abhor liberalism, of which they have not the least idea even in embryo, far less a precise one, hate it in the rudest manner. To them liberalism is all that is modern; it is a sect. The new civil orders and social institutions, the studies, the movements of thought, everything is confused in their heads, and so all are hated equally and unconsciously. The old philosophy rivets in their minds the old errors. The clergy once had simple and vigorous natures, and had men of a high intellectual worth. The most intelligent were the most liberal in politics. There existed a liberal and national clergy in every part of Italy; a clergy who did not think the teachings of the Church and Christian morality irreconcilable with civil progress.

After giving many illustrious examples of such patriotic clergy, he continues:

With examples like these, it is not to be wondered at that the educated classes of Italian society avoid entering the priesthood, and that it loses its credit and influence. The efforts of the Pope to raise

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<sup>1</sup> "Il Conclave di Leone XIII.," p. 564.

again the ecclesiastical studies are praiseworthy, but they are limited to Rome, and Italy has as many seminaries as there are dioceses, and these in an exuberant and ridiculous excess, the result of mediæval superfetation, and not the least among the causes of the decadence of study. Good seminaries are made by good bishops, but if good bishops are not wanting to us, they do not abound, and, indeed, are few. Many of the seminaries are in an atmosphere destructive of all educational efforts.

From the seminaries, the clergy, ordained priests, if they are provided with pecuniary means, run to Rome to try their fortune, or else apply themselves to elementary or secondary teaching; but the least competent and most needy embrace, through the pressure of necessity, the cross of a spiritual cure, and begin a painful struggle for existence, and which only closes with it.

The life of the beneficed clergy (*curati*), chiefly those of the rural districts, who are the most numerous, is a cruel torture. With a miserable stipend (*una congrua miserevole*<sup>1</sup>), which does not permit them to live, they involve themselves in little matters of trade. They become intermediaries of merchants, tradesmen, purveyors of cattle or corn, gamblers in lotteries or cards, drinkers, smokers, and often blasphemers, brutalized by want solitude, or ease. Without any book but the breviary, with a little church which has neither sacristy nor confessional, deprived of decent furniture, and a residence falling into ruin—such is their condition, and such the exercise of religion in a great part of the kingdom. The ideal of the priesthood utterly destroyed, the people ridiculing the preaching of the clergyman, and in no degree taking it as serious. Oftentimes he is their debtor, and preaches that debts should be paid; he condemns indolence, but is himself idle; he condemns card-playing, and after his preaching teaches it to his flock.

After an eloquent denunciation of the discord between Church and State in Italy, and a review of its ruinous consequences, our author observes:

A Pope of genius ought to reform the Church, purifying all the hierarchy from all the superfluity, all the anachronisms and corruptions which afflict it. The plan of government of the universal Church is still that of Sixtus V. The spirit of Jesus which animated in other times all the organs of the Church, now animates only a small portion of it. The Italian priesthood is uncultured, and unfurnished with any idealty. It boasts of being practical, and not neglecting any means of reuniting worldly ends and personal advantages. The means of education of the Italian clergy are inferior to those of the French, German, Austrian, and Belgic clergy.

Such is the description of the religious condition of Italy in the close of the nineteenth century. But it is not here reproduced in order to cast blame upon those whose neglect, or perhaps inevitable failure, to find a sufficient remedy for so deep a disease have contributed so largely to perpetuate it, and even to make it almost desperate. We would rather read in it a larger moral, and derive from it the conclusion that unless the education of the clergy and its independence enable it to take its appointed place in the social system, unless it is at least abreast with the laity in knowledge and intelligence,

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<sup>1</sup> The author refers in a note to authentic statistics.



above all in that department in which it claims to be a teacher and a guide, the same fatal results which are here described will inevitably come to pass in every branch of the Christian Church. Many of us remember with grief and shame what our own Church was before its resurrection in the closing years of the last century, when Wesley and Whitfield led the way to a higher spiritual life, and were followed by the leaders of the Evangelical school, and they again by the noble revival of the Oxford divines, who reintroduced that higher learning which the earlier movement needed. My late venerable friend, Canon Tate, of Richmond celebrity, gave me a picture of the state of the Church in the North of England in his day which too nearly approached the Italian picture to give any ground for rejoicing that we "are not as other men are." Thankful indeed ought we rather to be for the spiritual renaissance whose results are so manifest in every part of our Church. But we cannot fail to see that there is much still wanting in the higher education of the clergy, and that neither universities, nor colleges, nor seminaries can inspire that love and devotion to theological study which ought, in a manner, to be inherent in the clerical body. Means are now provided for this purpose which had no existence in the earlier part of the century. Every clergyman cannot be expected to possess a library adequate to all his necessities. But there are few who have not the means of recourse to the public libraries which abound in every town, and in not a few of the villages in rural districts. There ought to be in everyone who enters the sacred profession an ardent desire to keep in the front of the great battle with error and infidelity, and never to fall listlessly into the rear at so great a crisis as we are passing through at this moment of restless activity and of unforeseen change.

The religious serials furnish material of the highest value to those who are unable to acquire knowledge by a reference to first sources and by individual and personal research. A life-giving doctrine needs life-inspired teachers, and in this day of universal and unprecedented progress in science, art, and learning, to stand still and to carry on a mere mechanical routine would be equivalent to a desertion from the warfare of truth. "*In viâ vitæ non progredi est regredi*" were the pregnant words of St. Bernard in a day when the church was just reviving from the paralysis of the Middle Ages. And it must be the motto and the inspiration of every Church and every individual Christian in this period of almost superhuman progress. We dare not desert our standard or betray our cause at such a moment, and personal piety, however extended throughout the Church, will not be sufficient to save it in the hour of danger if we neglect all those other means of defence

and gifts of the Spirit which constitute in their combination that perfect panoply which the Apostle describes as the "whole armour of God." Let us never forget that self-help in the matter of religious as well as secular pursuit is the only kind of help that can result in real and abiding success—the only influence which springs from the inner life, and can bear fruit in the lives of those who are placed within its reach. "All that is truly great," writes Dr. Channing, "is individual." The Church was called in the individual. Every one of the Apostles had a distinct calling; the individual Christian preceded the formation of that greatest of social organisations—the Church of Christ.

ROBERT C. JENKINS.

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#### ART. IV.—CHOLERA.

*Notes of "Lectures on Cholera" delivered at Gresham College.*

BY E. SYMES THOMPSON, M.D., F.R.C.P.

#### III. THE PREVENTION OF CHOLERA.

**B**EFORE passing to the consideration of the subject of the present article, a few words must be said upon the factors that modify the occurrence and spread of cholera. Amongst these, notice has already been taken of the facilities afforded by improved intercommunication of countries by means of railways and steam-ships, and also of the preponderating influence of the water-supply in disseminating the disease in any particular locality. There remain, however, certain other factors which cannot be passed by in silence. These are: (1) density of population; (2) the season of the year; (3) food; (4) alcohol; and (5) the age and previous state of health of the patient.

Density of population is of extreme importance in many ways, as can easily be understood; for not only does it tacitly imply the existence of unfavourable conditions in reference to food and previous state of health, but also accompanied by poverty, as it usually is, there will unfortunately be joined to the other disadvantages that caused by abuse of alcohol. Even as regards the influence of different seasons of the year, density of population plays a part, for the heat of summer is more felt in courts and alleys, and these are an unfailing concomitant of thickly inhabited parts, through which currents of fresh air cannot circulate. There is nothing more certain than that an epidemic is widespread and fatal in its effects in proportion to the density of the population at the site where it commences. This was very clearly shown in the epidemic