

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

THE POPE TO THE KING.

The attitude of the pope and the Roman Catholics of Italy is set forth in a recent encyclical to the bishops, the clergy and the people of that country. It is an important document. It is clear as to the aims of the church and holds out no false hope concerning a possible yielding to the demands of the state. Italy must come to terms. The Vatican is prepared to continue to stand against the Quirinal. That is the plain meaning of the document.

The pope explains that he is responsible for the organization of the democracy of Italy and that it was undertaken in reply to the fierce persecutions directed against Catholic institutions. He accuses the government of inability to meet the demands of a suffering people. The state, he contends, by confiscating ecclesiastical property and the patrimony of the monks has dried up the springs whence flowed the riches of the people. Those lands, scattered over all parts of Italy, were the great reservoirs of the public fortune. The peasants and the poor drew their living from them. Before the sequestration of this property the people had a last resource in cases of urgent need. The reservoirs are now dried up; the capital has been squandered. The megalomaniac government has turned it into cannon and ambitious war vessels. The money of the church, of the congregations, and of the country has emigrated, especially to England. With the disappearance of coin came a ferocious and infamous fiscal system. Deprived of their capital, the peasant and the landowner are pressed by the agents of the treasury, who, being paid a percentage on the contributions, oppress and exhaust the poor man, while the ten thousand rich men, by coming to an understanding with the collectors, enjoy exceptional privileges. Such, according to the holy father, is the origin of the poverty and misery of Italy. To the crusade against the church, the encyclical says, it is due that the peasants find nothing to eat and therefore leave the country, and that the workingman has become the slave of society. In all parts of the country he is condemned to work hard for low wages. In many villages there is no bread, no meat. The policy of the Italian government is the policy of misery and famine.

In view of this state of affairs the pope tells the bishops, priests and laymen "to go to the people." That is, he recommends the establishing of parish associations, workmen's clubs, popular banks, agricultural savings banks, economic bakeries, and syndicates of all kinds. The idea is for the church to come to the aid of the classes stricken by the hand of a shortsighted government. It is hoped that the papal party in this way will be able to repair the net that has been broken by persecution and re-establish, one by one, the institutions the government has dissolved. Suffering there must be during the period of reconstruction, but ultimately the end will be gained.

The encyclical declares that though Catholics may submit under compulsion, to the existing state they cannot yield to it their allegiance. Their duty is to work for the restoration of the liberty and independence of their spiritual head. "To demand their consent to the present order of things is irrational and absurd, because directly opposed to the precepts of the apostolic see, to which they owe unconditional obedience."

From this synopsis of the encyclical,

as furnished to New York papers, it is evident that the pope looks upon a surrender to the Italian monarchy as impossible. The struggle may be drawn out indefinitely, but that will not change the final result. The Italian government now realizes its own weakness and the power of an utterance that has behind it the moral support of 250,000,000 faithful believers scattered throughout the whole world.

There are signs indicating that Italian statesmen will yet have to acknowledge that it was a mistake to wage war against the church that has the Italian capital for center. No civilized state can dispense with the moral influence exerted by the religious organizations. When working together for a common end, each within its own proper sphere, the church and state are the dispensers of blessings among the children of men. When at war with one another, the result must be not only moral but also economic decay and ruin.

FOR PEACE.

The peace congress proposed by the czar is now, it appears, assured. All the powers have signified their willingness to send representatives to such a gathering, provided the discussions be limited to the question set forth in the invitation of the Russian emperor. This bars all attempts at an arrangement of the Alsace-Lorraine question and similar problems.

It is now understood that the conference does not contemplate the disarmament of the nations but simply an agreement not to go on in the same direction. The question is to discuss the desirability or possibility of maintaining status quo. Can that be done?

The outlook for a successful answer to this question is not particularly bright. Still, the agitation of so good a cause will lead to something. It cannot be without desirable results. The problem of universal peace will be brought to the notice of the world more prominently than ever, and its intricacies will be mastered by an enlightened public. The obstacles with which diplomats at present may be unable to cope successfully will be removed in time.

It is expected that as soon as the Spanish-American peace conference at Paris has concluded its labors the czar will name the day for the disarmament congress.

THE INDIAN TROUBLE.

As usually, the first rumors of the difficulty with the Indians in Minnesota have considerably exaggerated the affair. Somebody in the early morning hours wired to all parts of the country that one hundred veterans of the United States army and three newspaper correspondents had been massacred by the savages. Where the report originated and how it found its way from the scene of disaster to the nearest telegraph office, no one seemed to know. A later report to the Minnesota Times reduced the number of killed to four, not including the representatives of the press, and it is to be hoped that this estimation of the casualties is nearer correct than the first one. It certainly seems incredible that 200 redskins should be able to annihilate a force of 100 United States soldiers and three vallant newspaper correspondents.

From all accounts the trouble with

the Indians on the other side of Leech Lake is one of long standing. The Indians claim that the laws enacted for the regulation of affairs on the reservation are cumbersome and expensive and that they operate against them. They claim that when summoned as witnesses they are left to find their way back to their homes as best they can, proper mileage not being paid them. The officials claim that this is not so, and that stories of ill-treatment are being circulated for the purpose of stirring up the savages to war. The controversy seems to have reached a phase in which bloodshed is unavoidable, whoever is responsible for it. The probability is that there is more cause for dissatisfaction among the Indians than their white friends are willing to admit, and the military measures necessary for the protection of life and property should be followed by an investigation into the cause of the disturbance with a view to preventing a repetition, by doing justice to all parties concerned—even to the Indians.

COLLECTIONS IN SCHOOLS.

The board of education, last night refused to permit the schools to be used as a collection agency. For years it has been besieged for assistance by persons and associations engaged in promoting projects and enterprises of a public and semi-public character; and for years it held rigidly to the rule that the schools could not be so used, no matter how meritorious the object in view. Once, and only once, did it recede from this well established position. That was during the last school year, when it was addressed by the Washington Memorial association, earnestly soliciting aid in the raising of funds for the erection of an institution of learning that should bear the name and perpetuate the memory of the first President of the United States. This request was backed by the strong and persistent appeals of local committees, who were actuated only by the highest and most patriotic motives. To these the board of education yielded, and suspended the rule so long adhered to.

The theme was a popular one, and furnished teachers with material for pretty pictures of patriotism. The old story of Washington was told over and over again in many different ways, and was made one of interest and instruction to the children.

But the undertaking had another phase. The amounts collected were small, yet in numerous instances the collection, according to authentic reports, worked hardship and humiliation. Pupils sometimes came to their teachers, but more frequently to their parents, with tears in their eyes. The cause was plain. Under stress of hard times, not every child was able to contribute even the small sums solicited. This made those less favored by fortune the unfortunate object during recess and noon hours, of the thoughtless gibes of children whose parents were in better circumstances. The consequence was that youthful pride was hurt and youthful friendships sundered. Some members of the board took cognizance of these results, and determined there should be no repetition of them. Recently, however, the board was again appealed to; this time by the commissioner general of the Paris Exposition, who asked that a day be designated for the collection of contributions, not to exceed ten cents per pupil, for the erection of a monument La Fayette, to be unveiled in the French capital in 1900.

The appeal is almost as strong in this instance as it was in the case of Washington, and like that is based entirely on patriotic grounds. In short the monument is to be a testimonial