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EDITORIAL

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

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THE War Minister of the Kingdom of Bavaria having pardoned two officers who had come under the ban for “expressing Socialistic views,” the despatches announce that Herr Franckenstein, a Centrist, that is, a member of the Roman Catholic political party in the Bavarian Diet, attacked the War Minister for his leniency, declaring that “Socialism is completely undermining the discipline and loyalty of the army; and the two officers have repudiated their pledge of loyalty.”

When the Christian political movement was struggling to gain its footing under the rule of the old Roman empire, not a few were the instances of military men who “expressed Christian views,” and who were disciplined for so doing. Some, as the celebrated Marcellus the centurion, were even punished with death. The theory—which correctly proceeded from the premises that the Christian Movement was a political movement aiming at the subvention of the existing system of government—was that Christianity was completely undermining the discipline and loyalty of the army, and amounted, when favored by army men, to a repudiation of their pledge to the Emperor. The bishops of then pleaded against, or condemned, according as they thought they had the power, the disciplining of the Marcelluses. Such acts of discipline were termed “persecution” by the bishops; and not a few of the thus “persecuted” were enrolled on the list of martyrs.

As vast as, indeed, a vastly more general political movement than, the Christianity of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries is the Socialist Movement of our own generation.

It is “in form” that the political prelates of to-day should scent in Socialism the identical danger to their political rule that the officials of the old Roman Empire scented in Christianity, and that these political prelates should demand severe pun-

ishment for the officers in the army who “express Socialistic views.”

But, is it equally “in form” that the political prelates, whose keen political noses are scenting in Socialism the danger that the officialdom of the old Roman Empire scented in the political organization named Christianity,—is it equally “in form” that these political prelates, having much more recorded history to illumine their minds—is it equally “in form” that these political prelates should know no better than to kick against pricks as their heathen forebears did?

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