

which seems to most minds one of the craziest fancies ever broached, is sufficient to slay his belief at a blow. Why, again, if the Squire's arguments were so unanswerable as against Christianity, were they of no avail against the far weaker creed of Theism, to which the Squire is equally opposed, but to which Robert still continues to cling? So it is in the scenes with Mr. Grey; so it is in the scenes with Mr. Langham. The book is a curious contrast in this respect to Newman's tale, "Loss and Gain," written to prove—not the untenableness of Christianity, but of the position of the Church of England. There the arguments on both sides are given at considerable length, and without any evasion of difficult points. No doubt the author makes his own champion win the victory. But he is at least fair to antagonists, and states their case as clearly and forcibly as he can. Of course we cannot expect Mrs. Ward to write with Cardinal Newman's power, but she might have imitated his fairness.¹ If she was capable of arguing Robert's cause clearly and vigorously, she ought to have done so. If she was not capable of doing so, she ought not to have written the book at all.

H. C. ADAMS.

ART. VI.—HOME RULERS AND THE PAPACY.

AMONG the most pardonable of the ambitions which we may suspect Leo XIII. of cherishing is that of restoring the Papacy to the position of arbiter in the world's quarrels. The reference of the Philippine Islands dispute to his decision had quite a mediæval flavour about it, and the recent Rescript on Irish affairs, though ostensibly published only for the direction of the clergy in a case of morals, and with a distinct repudiation of any political bias, is a decisive condemnation of the methods essential to the success of the agrarian revolt in that country. Indeed, so long as political acts have their moral side, the infallible guide in morals cannot disclaim the political consequences which must flow from his decrees, and the more active the Pope becomes within the proper sphere of his jurisdiction, the greater must be his practical interferences in matters outside of it. But it is one thing to aspire, and another thing to achieve. The compliment paid by Prince Bismarck in the Philippine reference was graceful enough as an act of courtesy, but it did not really bring him a

¹ Especially we have a right to complain, when she handles matters of well-known controversy, but has not troubled herself to examine what controversialists of acknowledged weight and credit have said on the subject, or at all events has not noticed it.

step nearer the revival of his old prerogative. The Rescript to the Papal clergy in Ireland, though most commendable in substance, irreproachable in tone, and wholly justified by the occasion, is quite as likely as not to shatter a loyalty which never had a firmer basis than alliance against a common enemy.

If, however, we put aside general considerations for a moment, and regard the position as it affects the English leader of the Home Rulers, we find that time has brought about a singular revenge upon Mr. Gladstone. In 1874, the Liberal Premier, defeated upon the Irish University Question by a reactionary combination of Roman Catholic priests, and having failed to rehabilitate himself by an appeal to the country, retired for awhile into private life, with the immediate purpose of compounding thunders against the Vatican. The result was an admirably expressed pamphlet, in which, though by no means for the first time, the monstrous results which logically flow from an allowance of the Vatican claims were duly set forth; and Mr. Gladstone seemed to discover, what had long been a commonplace among Protestants, that a man who surrendered to the Vatican his moral and spiritual independence must virtually surrender also his civil allegiance. The Pope has waited fourteen years for an effectual retort, and now he has his opportunity. The former champion of an endangered civil allegiance has become the advocate of revolution, and those who have made surrender to him of their political independence have to follow him into encouraging dishonesty and outrage, against which even the Vatican protests in the name of religion and morality. The revenge is certainly complete. Who would have foreseen—we will not say fourteen, but even three years ago that Mr. Gladstone would so soon come to see with complacency, or, at least, without rebuke, the employment of such methods as the Plan of Campaign, and the cruel, pitiless boycotting, with all their hideous sanctions; while on the other hand, the Sacred College, so often identified with blurred and distorted moral teaching *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, comes forward unsolicited, and boldly proclaiming the evils by their English names, so that Latinity could give no excuse for pretending an ignorance of what was meant, condemns them for what they are—sins against God's law and human charity?

Of more practical importance, however, than any merely controversial advantage is the question, What will be the probable effect of the Papal Rescript upon those to whom it was addressed? In considering this we must remember that Roman interference, even indirectly, to check Nationalist aspirations in Ireland is a novel experiment. It is true that

at the time of the Norman invasion the authority of the Church was on the side of the invader as against the mere Irish, and so remained until the Reformation. Since that time the cause of rebellion against English domination has always found a ready ally in the authority of what has come to be called "the old religion;" Papal legates have encouraged revolt, and gloated over massacres of the heretics, whilst English Parliaments have visited Roman Catholicism with penal laws, which probably were not far wrong in identifying it with downright treason. Except so far as this identification of Romanism with disloyalty was mistaken, Irishmen have not had the sincerity of their devotion to their religion tested by their readiness to endure much for its sake. For aught that has ever yet appeared to the contrary, their affection for it may have been only proportionate to their reliance on it to back them against the Saxon and heretical tyrant. Until the publication of the recent Rescript, we do not remember an instance in which the action of the Vatican has been such as even to hint a suspicion of the safety of this reliance. It is not only historical considerations that dispose us to doubt whether the loyalty of the Irish people to the Papacy is capable of standing any very serious strain. Granted that there was a time when priests and people were alike sincerely attached to their religion, and would have submitted to Papal discouragement of disaffection with as good a grace as they display when the Holy Father compliments his children of the Isle of Saints, yet it must be admitted that for a long time past the tendency has been quite the other way. In most countries the Roman priests are a caste apart from the people, and it is in conformity with the Papal ideal to keep them so. But in Ireland the priests are daily more and more men of the people—by birth, by education, by surroundings and modes of thought, one with the very classes of the people from whom the enemies of the Saxon and the landlord are drawn. They have found their sacerdotal powers and privileges to be handy and serviceable weapons in the cause of their peasant brethren; will they now turn those same weapons of spiritual terror and compulsion to the destruction of all that they have been helping to build? We doubt it. And as with the priests, so with the people. Some there are, of course, who cannot be excepted—there are always the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal—with whom religious considerations will be paramount. But for the bulk of the disaffected, just as the Irish of the last century learned from the American War of Independence to cherish the idea of becoming a nation, and gathered from the French Revolution lessons in rebellion, so now steady

intercourse with America, coupled with the example of the nations of Europe renouncing Papal allegiance, has prepared the Irish laity to look upon Papal authority as a highly commendable thing when used on their behalf, but as possessing no terror when used against them.

It must not be supposed from the foregoing that we anticipate anything like an open revolt against the Papal edict. That would answer no man's purpose. From the Bishops we can expect no more nor less than a show of submission, sincere enough in some cases, palpably insincere in others. The Spanish Cortes had always too much respect for the Royal authority to refuse obedience to the King's decrees, but passed over such as were obnoxious with the curious phrase that they should be "*obedecidas e non cumplidas*"—obeyed, but not complied with. In this spirit the higher clergy will treat the objectionable Rescript, while the more obscure will have no great difficulty in setting it aside altogether. As for the Pope, he has liberated his soul, and has put himself right with conscientious Christendom, and nothing short of a very glaring defiance of his authority is likely to provoke him to further meddling. But no such outbreak is to be apprehended. The significance of the decree, and its applicability to Irish circumstances, will be subjected to a process of whittling down. The speaker of to-morrow will go as far as the speaker of to-day, and one short step further. His successor will the next day take for granted that all previous criticisms are admitted, and will himself carry the minimising process one degree further. After a little while, people will cease to talk about it, or even to think about it at all, and then, although the Plan of Campaign may not be revived, boycotting will remain too powerful a weapon to be lightly dispensed with. So far, then, as the Papal Rescript is concerned, little or nothing will have been done. The loyal will have been confirmed in their loyalty; the disaffected will refuse to be diverted from their conspiracy.

But while the Rescript of itself could effect little or nothing directly, its publication was none the less timely and indirectly useful. In Ireland, the steady and, at the same time, vigorous application of the law was beginning to have its effect. The power of the League was diminishing, and scheming Irishmen were beginning to ask themselves whether, after all, it might not be as well to be on the side of the law. Could they finally get rid of the notion that the English Government had in its extremity appealed for Papal aid, and obtained it, thousands of these self-seeking waverers would lose not a moment in joining the party of law and order. Even as it is, the effect has not been wholly trivial, as the anger of the Home Rule leaders sufficiently indicates. In England the results are

less easily traceable, but we are inclined to think they were considerable. The danger in this country was from the wholesale demoralization of the Gladstonian Party, who were rapidly following their leader into a toleration of every kind of excess. Crimes and acts of dishonesty, which would two years ago have shocked the consciences of all but some half a dozen of utterly abandoned politicians, were coming to be excused and almost applauded; and it really seemed as if, where the greater glory of Mr. Gladstone was the object, hardly any act could be pronounced immoral. That even the proverbially lax Roman Curia should be roused to protest against a state of things approved by the most Puritan section of this virtuous country could not but startle many amongst us, and we believe that it did lead at least some to consider to what mischievous lengths the tide of political partisanship can carry even respectable and God-fearing folk.

For ourselves, the conclusions to be drawn from a consideration of the whole episode are plain enough. The Pope may or may not be wise in his generation, but so far as we are concerned: *Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis, tempus eget.* We cannot do otherwise than praise Leo XIII. for taking such steps as his office or his conscience, or both, may demand of him. But whether he is losing or winning his own battle, he is not fighting ours. Our work is to persist in our own course, showing, in the first place, that we will have the law obeyed, order maintained, and the rights of property respected. After that, we may safely appeal to the enlightened sense of advantage of a people keen to perceive on which side the best bargain is to be made. If we are firm, the League can give them nothing; whilst they may look for our help in the better drainage of their rivers, the management of their railway system, and the revival of their fisheries. We are the natural purchasers of their products, and the natural market for their wares.

These are the considerations which move the modern Irishman, for whom, in a great measure, the ages of faith have passed, as to a great extent have vanished the chivalry, the manhood, the sense of humour, which till lately were so characteristic of the race. It is useless to shut our eyes to the fact that we have to deal with a demoralized people, and can, for the present, appeal only to such qualities as are left capable of being moved. But whatever be her government, or however kindly her seasons, Ireland can never recover her place among the nations till her people have learned that it is better to tell hard truths than easy lies, more profitable to toil than to remove a neighbour's landmark, and more manly to put a shoulder to the wheel than to sit by the roadside and call upon Hercules.

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