

ignored England. I do not mean of set purpose ignored, but as the natural consequence of our act. Bishops brought from the corners of the earth in 1870, what could they know of English blue books, and Parliamentary debates in the years 1826 and 1829? It was an extraordinary gathering, and its possibility, its purpose, and its issue, were alike marvellous, as depending on a coincidence of strange conditions, which, as might be said beforehand, never could take place. Such was the long reign of the Pope, in itself a marvel, as being the sole exception to a recognized ecclesiastical tradition. Only a Pontiff so unfortunate, so reversed, so largely loved, so popular even with Protestants, with such a prestige of long sovereignty, with such claims on the Bishops around him, both of age and of paternal gracious acts, only such a man could have harmonized and guided to the conclusion, which he pointed out, an assembly so variously composed. And, considering the state of theological opinion seventy years before, not less marvellous was the concurrence of all but a few out of so many hundred Bishops in the theological judgment, so long desired at Rome; the protest made by some eighty or ninety, at the termination of the Council, against the proceedings of the vast majority, lying, not against the truth of the doctrine then defined, but against its opportuneness. Nor less to be noted is the neglect of the Catholic powers to send representatives to the Council, who might have laid before the Fathers its political bearings. For myself, I did not call it inopportune, for times and seasons are known to God alone, and persecution may be as opportune, though not so pleasant as peace; nor, in accepting as a dogma what I had ever held as a truth, could I be doing violence to any theological view or conclusion of my own; nor has the acceptance of it any logical or practical effect whatever, as I consider, in weakening my allegiance to Queen Victoria; but there are few Catholics, I think, who will not deeply regret, though no one be in fault, that the English and Irish Prelacies of 1826, did not foresee the possibility of the Synodal determinations of 1870, nor will they wonder that Statesmen should feel themselves aggrieved, that stipulations, which they considered necessary for Catholic emancipation, should have been, as they may think, rudely cast to the winds.

And now I must pass from the mere accidents of the controversy to its essential points, and I cannot treat them to the satisfaction of Mr. Gladstone, unless I go back a great way, and be allowed to speak of the ancient Catholic Church.

§ 2. THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

When Mr. Gladstone accuses us of "repudiating ancient history," he means the ancient history of the Church; also, I understand him to be viewing that history under a particular aspect. There are many aspects in which Christianity presents itself to us; for instance, the aspect of social usefulness, or of devotion, or again of theology; but, though he in one place glances at the last of these aspects, he