

this practice in the great Church of St. Domingo with all the impetuosity of native eloquence. Don Diego Columbus, the principal officers of the colony and all the laymen who had been his hearers complained of the monk to his superiors; but they instead of condemning applauded his doctrine as equally "pious and seasonable."

It is true the Franciscans took the political view of the case, and though they dared not approve the principle, yet strove to palliate its injustice, and to excuse the conduct of the laity by considerations of spiritual policy. Though the dispute ran high the Dominicans were sustained in their principle, whilst in practice the "distributions" were continued in the colony. This only fired the zeal of the Dominicans to fresh ardour. It was exactly at this point that Ferdinand took that step which, by crippling the Church's action, retarded the abolition of slavery from the 16th to the 19th century, and thus enabled liberal philosophy to lay claim to an honor to which it is far from possessing the slightest right. In order to quieten the colony, which had become thoroughly aroused by the remonstrances and censures of the Dominicans who had refused the Sacraments to any holding slaves, Ferdinand, in an evil hour for himself, for the slave and for the Church, issued a decree of his Privy Council (1513,) declaring—that after due consideration of the Apostolic Bull and other titles by which the crown of Castile claimed a right to its possessions in the new world, the servitude of the Indian was warranted both by the laws of God and man; that unless they were subjected to the dominion of the Spaniards, and compelled to reside under their inspection it would be impossible to reclaim them from idolatry or to instruct them in the Christian faith; that no further scruple ought to be entertained as to the lawfulness of the *repartimientos*, as the King and Council were willing to take the charge of that upon their own consciences; and that therefore the Dominicans and monks of other religious orders, should abstain for the future from those invectives which, from an excess of charitable but ill-informed zeal, they had uttered against the practice.

This is a curious document, illustrating as it does at one and the same time, the flimsy nature of all State-theology; and the antiquity and similarity of State interference in spiritual things. We think we could find some curious parallels in the May Laws and Bismarckian theology of modern Prussia. The hands indeed are the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob.

To show how thoroughly he was in earnest in this decree, Ferdinand conferred new grants of Indians upon several of his courtiers. It is true that at the same time "he published an edict providing for the mild treatment of the Indians under the yoke to which he had subjected them—he regulated the nature of the work they were to perform—he prescribed the manner in which they should be fed and clothed, and gave directions with respect to their instruction in the principles of Christianity." This was all very good under the circumstances; but himself had rendered it necessary by his insane and unholy intermeddling with the action of the Church. Had he left the Dominicans to the free exercise of their duties as authoritative exponents of Catholic spirit, his regulations would not only have been rendered unnecessary, but Indian slavery would, in a few short years, have been swept from the earth. So thoroughly disheartened were the Dominicans by this mischievous meddling on the part of the State that numbers of them applied to their superiors for permission to remove to the continent to pursue the objects of their mission under less adverse circumstances.

And yet the Catholic Church is blamed for not having accomplished what mischievous State interference rendered impossible. How exacting some people can be!

H. B.

Let him, who desires to see others happy, make haste to give while his gift can be enjoyed; and remember, that every moment of delay, takes away something from the value of his benefaction. And let him who proposes his own happiness, reflect, that while he forms his purpose, the day rolls on, and the night cometh, when no man can work."