

THE NIAGARA FLURRY.

WE view with extreme regret the breaking out of a party agitation in the Diocese of Niagara. Not that we are surprised at this, for it has been clear enough to those who watch for signs and developments, that a neighbouring diocese contained men and institutions dangerous to the peace of the Church. These persons are like the belligerent spirits in a standing army whose whole ambition is to share in carrying on war, for war to them means notoriety, the love of which is their besetting sin. While one centre of infection remains it may spread the germs of trouble far away.

One, however, would have thought that the experience of the last few years would have cooled their passion for party dominance. Probably it is owing to the collapse of their policy in the diocese of Toronto that they have set out upon a campaign in a neighbouring one. The Church Association of the Niagara Diocese has not yet issued any definite statement of its objects and the means proposed for their accomplishment. There has been some very vague talk of "putting down ritualism," but what that somewhat stale, flat and unprofitable effort involves is not stated. We doubt much whether any one member of the new association knows precisely what he really wishes done except in a general way, and certain are we that no rational statement has yet been made as to the reason for such movement. So far as we are informed there are not half a dozen churches in that diocese where the ritual is in any way noticeable,—except for extreme baldness. To talk in this day of putting down the reverential observance of rubrics, or suppressing what tens of thousands of clergy regard as obligatory on their consciences to observe, is not only woefully out of tune with the times, but offensive to the feelings of the more enlightened and high minded opponents of "ritualism," so-called. The movers in this agitation are not compelled to worship in any church where what they have no fancy for is seen. Why should they then worry their souls over forms which are dear, and pleasant, and helpful, to their brethren? Is that doing as you would be done by? Is the meddling spirit, the love of domineering over the tastes and consciences of others, so very stimulating to spiritual growth, that the evangelical life of a Christian cannot progress without this excitation?

If this movement is really the outcome of an earnest love for souls surely the agitators must have a wonderful idea of the proportion of things to leave those spheres of Christian evangelisation which are crying aloud for workers, in order to spend time, temper, money, and energy in pottering amongst the pious devotees who love a ritualistic worship in order to stop their devotions being carried on? It is to us very much as though those who love to see dinner served ceremoniously were made the object of attack by persons who prefer a chop and potatoe to all the courses of a French cook! What possible injury to a sincere, devout wor-

shipper can be done by those things which excite the wrath of persons of puritanic tastes in worship-form? There was in "the dark ages," i.e. the "medieval" time between the commencement of Church revival and its triumph, a cry raised that those who did such and such things were "on the road to Rome." But that cry to-day is historically laid upon the same shelf as a belief in witchcraft—it is mere silliness, simply that and nothing more. The desire to control the devotions of others is unworthy of members of the Church of England. The love of dominance is not a passion which culture develops, or which is consistent with a refined regard for the usages and tone of well educated and well bred people, it is in its very essence a somewhat vulgar taste, just as much so as that which leads others into eccentricities of ritual to secure notoriety. The movement in the Niagara diocese will not justify any dithrambics, it is merely a partisan effort primarily incited by men who have an evil notoriety elsewhere as professional peace disturbers. Does Judge Muir think it well for the discipline of the Church to be conducted by public meetings? Does he not see that this agitation is an attempt to set ecclesiastical law and order aside in favour of lynch law? Is that what society and the Church look for in one of Her Majesty's Judges?

Before going further the agitators would do well to ask themselves quietly, "What business is it of mine to meddle with the ritual of other Churchmen except to put the law in motion, if so moved, against offenders?" If the ritual objected to is lawful it cannot be lawful to seek its suppression, if unlawful then let that unlawfulness be demonstrated. But excited public meetings are not such a tribunal as seem to us fit for hearing charges so grave! Such meetings are a good device for advertising party agitators and party institutions, and we strongly suspect that the ritual plea is a mere stalking horse, a mere excuse for exciting the diocese of Niagara in the interests of a certain set of men and their favorite institution in the diocese of Toronto. It would be more to their honour if they dropped the cloak and spoke out bravely what their real intentions are. If the new Niagara Association is in earnest in a desire to have worship in all the churches in that diocese conducted according to the rubrics we will furnish a list of several score wherein those rubrics are constantly violated—but not by excess of ritual! Our Hamilton friends might usefully reflect on the story of the cat used by a monkey to draw chestnuts out of a fire, as we suspect they are being used for a similar purpose. The "Cause," the party organ, the party funds, the party institution, are in great straits, they cannot thrive on good honest work for the Church, agitation is the be-all, and end-all, of their existence. There is a sad necessity for some rousing advertisement, "the chestnuts" are ready and the poor diocese of Niagara is to be used to draw them into the grasp of the needy! But what sort of Churchmen are those who are willing to be made a cat's paw of? But, isn't setting a whole diocese by the

ears in order to advertise a small party organ, and to promote other small party enterprises, somewhat like burning down a village to secure a dish of roast pig?

A PARASITE.

WHEN from a wayward child a toy is taken that has been interfering with lesson-time, there is usually a little display of temper. If this is not rudely displayed a wise parent refrains from further punishment. Our article, "Nonsense in Excelsis," took away a pet toy from the *Christian Guardian*, a toy that prevented its attention to the study of ecclesiastical history, which, in its case, seems to have been begun, continued and ended with Macaulay's romances on the English Church. We view its anger with complacency. As that pet phrase, "On the road to Rome," has been shown to rank with "hickory, dickory, dock," "hey diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle," and other phrases that delight the infant mind, we trust the *Guardian* will turn its thoughts to things less absolutely foolish than such senseless language as it has been using so many years. We congratulate our neighbour on so quietly dropping its toy, which no doubt it has put into the lumber room with the o'd rocking horses, tin soldiers, trumpets, and drums of its innocent years.

But while not offering one word in defence of the phrase, "On the road to Rome," it seizes upon a statement we made, for criticism. We declared the more modern religious bodies to be "parasites of Rome." This is objected to by the *Christian Guardian*. But surely without reflection—for is not the Methodist body commonly called a "Protestant Church," and if it is a Protestant Church it must exist as a Church to protest against Rome, therefore its existence as a church is dependant upon Rome. Take the protestant features away from Methodism and it would be no longer what it is constantly declared to be, a Protestant Church. Is the *Christian Guardian* ready to cut out these features and build up a body, which will derive its title and claim for support from no relation to Rome? This very word they all use as a designation demonstrates that these so-called evangelical churches, that is, the bodies created and made by men during the last three centuries, cannot be the Church of Jesus Christ, for there was no Rome to protest against for centuries after His Divine society was founded. The fact is clear as the sun that the Protestant Church is a body existing only because of its relation to the body against which it protests, therefore living upon such relation it is "a parasite." We thank God the Church of England has life direct from the Divine and Supreme Church founder, whose function in this no man can dare to usurp without a blasphemous claim to wield the sceptre of Christ.

We would, however, beg our critic to remember that the Methodist body takes every fraction of its ecclesiastical apparatus from the Church of England. Take away from them even the literature provided by the Church to-day, and every Methodist pulpit,

Feb. 14, 1888.
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