

tinguished. Mr. Major, who was the first to edit Walton's text, tells us in a note that "the extraordinary course of life pursued at Gidding, the strictness of their rules, their prayers, literally without ceasing, their abstinence, mortifications, nightly watchings, and other peculiarities gave birth to censure in some, and inflamed the malevolence of others, but excited the wonder and curiosity of all. So that they were frequently visited with different views by persons of all denominations, and of opposite opinions. They received all who came with courteous civility, and from those who were inquisitive they concealed nothing. Notwithstanding this, they were by some abused as Papists, by others as Puritans. Mr. Ferrar (sic) himself, though possessed of uncommon patience and resignation, yet in anguish of spirit complained to his friends, that the perpetual obloquy he endured was a sort of unceasing martyrdom. Added to all this, violent invectives and inflammatory pamphlets were published against them. Amongst others, not long after Mr. Ferrar's death, a treatise was addressed to the Parliament, entitled, 'The Arminian Nunnery, or a brief description and relation of the late erected monastical place called the Arminian Nunnery at Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire: humbly addressed to the wise consideration of the present parliament. The foundation is by a company of Ferrars at Gidding.'"

"Soon after Mr. Ferrar's death," continues Mr. Major, "certain soldiers of the parliament resolved to plunder the house at Gidding. The family, being informed of their hasty approach, thought it prudent to fly; while these military zealots, in the rage of what they called 'reformation,' ransacked both the Church and the house, in doing which they expressed a particular spite against the organ. This they broke in pieces, of which they made a large fire, and at it roasted several of Mr. Ferrar's sheep, which they had killed in his grounds. This done, they seized all the plate, furniture and provision, which they could conveniently carry away."

What a contrast between these two scenes: a house of perennial praise ransacked by the hypocritical ruffians who sympathized with the fanatic 'Praise-God Barebones!'

A PUBLIC HYPOCRISY.

We are frankly opposed to all religious tests for political offices. For that reason we are not able to regard as a thing apart the indecent Declaration which the King is required to make in the presence of Parliament immediately after his accession. We object to it, not merely on the ground of its indecent terms, but on principle. We are therefore out of sympathy with the views expressed by almost all the speakers who debated the matter last week in the House of Lords. They spoke almost unanimously, in favor of retaining the test; they deprecated the retention of its actual terms.

There was one exception. Lord Halifax spoke hotly on the hypocrisy of the debate, and said one noble thing which must have made some ears tingle as if they had been boxed. He noted a remarkable difference between what men said in public. He struck at another hypocrisy as well—the hypocrisy of those who object to any religious test in the case of persons engaged to give religious instruction, and insist on the retention of a religious test in the case of the King. On these two hypocrisies the whole case for the Declaration rests. For we cannot suppose that the Bishop of Bristol would wish any one to infer, as his speech in the House of Lords might seem to imply, that any lack of charity on the part of the Roman authorities can justify retaliation in kind. Apart from the Bishop of Bristol the debate turned exclusively on the popular prejudice which continues to demand of the King a religious test, from which all his servants, with a single exception, are exempt. The Duke of Norfolk himself accepts the demand as inevitable.

For the existing Declaration the House of Lords had not a good

word to say. But it is condemned on the most unworthy grounds. It is condemned as containing terms which insult the King's Roman Catholic subjects, who are sneeringly described as extremely sensitive people. It is not condemned for what it is, a detestable piece of false theology, derived from a period of detestable controversy. It is known that when the Declaration was first drawn up by the patrons of Titus Oates, it was resented by sober-minded men who unhesitatingly called themselves Protestants. They objected, not out of any tender regard for Papists, whom they cheerfully harried and hanged, but out of regard for their own consciences. Evelyn went with Godolphin to Dr. Gunning, the Bishop of Ely, to be resolved whether they could with a good conscience declare the Mass idolatry, as the law required—the Declaration being then imposed on all public officers. The learned Bishop told him that he disliked the Declaration as much as they did, but he found some distinction or other with which to resolve their conscientious difficulty. We could wish that public men who discuss the Declaration at the present day would face the fact that, apart from any sensitive feelings that may be ruffled by it, the document itself is a blatant piece of irreligious nonsense. It is pitiful to hear the Archbishop of Canterbury bleating about as if the thing were intrinsically tolerable. He knows perfectly well that the Mass is no more idolatrous than the 'Te Deum,' and yet he speaks as though it were only for the sake of other people that the King should seek to affirm what is false.

But, as we have said, the terms of the Declaration are not our chief grievance, nor shall we be content with the best-mannered of substitutes. Nor have we any doubt that most thinking men agree with us. It is easy to fill in the gaps of the speech of Lord Halifax. What men say in private is that to impose a religious test of any kind upon the King is iniquitous and absurd. What they say in public is that it must on no account be pretermitted. The discrepancy between their private and their public utterances probably accounts for the difficulty of settling the business. If men really thought a religious test of some sort desirable, they would without much difficulty frame a Declaration on which they could agree. But in their hearts they are conscious of the hypocrisy of framing a new religious test at this time of day. It is easier—it puts less strain upon consciences—to retain the atrocious words of an age that believed in tests, than to frame a new test in which they do not believe. And in fact we will openly avow that we prefer the retention of the odious words in use—a mere relic of a shameful past—to the imposition of a new test which would necessarily be supposed to represent the standard of our day.

The essential fact is that militant Protestants know that in the Royal Declaration they have a good thing; it is, indeed, all that is left them of the glorious days of the Popish Plot; they will not readily part with it, and they are numerous enough to make politicians count their votes anxiously. That is the meaning of Lord Lansdowne's smooth prophesying about a 'rapprochement.' The object is to get the Duke of Norfolk and his friends to accept a form of Declaration which the Protestant mob might also be induced to accept. But who supposes such a thing possible? The sacrifice of a single word of the Declaration will lash the Protestant mob to fury. The House of Lords showed the wisdom of cowardice in refusing to appoint a committee for the accomplishment of an impossibility. We are not sorry. Lord Jersey's amendment, carried unanimously is less mischievous even than the Duke of Norfolk's motion, for it suggests no amendment of the Declaration, and merely deprecates any action which would weaken the security of the 'Protestant Succession.' When conviction has been carried home to a sufficient number of slow moving Englishmen that the abolition of the Declaration will have

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no such result, the Declaration will disappear. It is even possible—but of this we have little hope—that a sufficient majority of Dissenters and other Liberals, who recoil with horror from any religious test imposed on any public servant, may come to see that the same measure should be meted out to the chief public servant.—Church Times (Anglican).

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