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THE IDEAS OF A CATHOLIC AS TO WHAT SHOULD BE DONE.

Translated from the French of Abbé Martinet, for the True Witness.

(Continued from our last.)

7.—THE SCIENCES—WHAT THEY OWE TO CATHOLICITY.

The sciences are a magnificent domain which Catholicity should reclaim, history in hand. It has purchased them by its blood, and by the sweat of its brow: it alone has cleared and cultivated that noble region; and if stranger hands have come in to take part in her labors, they have at all times been the fewest in number.

Here, then, there is crying injustice to repair. For three hundred years has the European press never ceased to heap calumny and abuse upon those who taught us our alphabet. Foremost in this disgraceful work are the followers of Reform. Writers who could never have learned to read if they had not found schools instituted by bishops and monks, have dared to accuse the clergy and the monks of being the mortal foes of education.

The philosophic league, the inheritor of the antipathies and base passions of Reform, waxed higher still with its declamations. We see the rag-pickers (chiffonniers) of the Encyclopedia making their tiresome repetitions on monkish stupidity, in the very presence of the immortal monuments of erudition, of science, and of literature, wherewith the Benedictines and the Jesuits enriched Europe.

Had the clergy done nothing more than to rescue from the deluge of barbarism the writings of antiquity, they would still have merited the title of the fathers and benefactors of modern science. What could we now know, if the barbarians, by rending asunder the chain of human traditions, had placed the abyss of oblivion between the ancients and ourselves?

We boast of our creations. Now the truth is that man creates nothing: he discovers, he cultivates. He is as unable to invent a science of whose primary elements he is ignorant, as he is to produce from the earth a grain without seed. Without Euclid, formed by another, we should neither have a Kepler, a Descartes, a Pascal, or a Newton.

We shall not find any people who emerged from barbarism by its own strength. Nations have received one from the other the heaven of civilisation. The invention of arts and sciences seems to belong of right to the inventor of man. If the origin of all sciences is traditional, it is especially the case with the science of facts. The extreme importance with which historical studies are now regarded, ought to excite our liveliest gratitude for the men who, not content with transmitting to us the events of their own times, in chronicles of charming simplicity, have also preserved to us by their own exertions, the historians of Greece and Rome.

When we consider the eternal revolutions of Europe in the middle ages; when we see the nations who disputed over its dismembered members, seeking conquest only for the pleasure of hunting down and destroying all traces of Roman civilisation, then does the preservation of the productions of learned antiquity become a prodigy of the highest order.

This prodigy monasticism alone could operate. At a time when the art of printing was unknown, it was only that thousand-handed Briareus that could multiply and disseminate unceasingly those precious parchments which, reduced to a small number, would have been irretrievably lost, together with the libraries wherein they were kept. It required the invincible patience of the monks to persevere in a work which was constantly interrupted and frequently destroyed by the barbarians. It required their faith in futurity, their profound love of letters, to continue that task, at a time when the convulsions of the political world, famine, pestilence, in short, an unheard-of complication of scourges gave rise to an opinion, very generally entertained, that the end of all things was at hand.

In the eyes of the monks, the transcribing of manuscripts was a holy and a meritorious work. On certain days they prayed in common for the copiers. Besides the monks habitually devoted to this work, there were particular seasons, such as Lent, when the whole community was engaged therein. Nuns, too, had their share in this good work, amongst others those of Eike, in Belgic Gaul, who, in the eighth century, wrote entire volumes in letters of gold.

The statutes of the Chartreux, drawn up at the beginning of the twelfth century, by the Prior Gigue, bear witness that transcribing was their usual occupation—"In order," say they, "to be enabled to teach and teach with the hands, when unable to do otherwise." So great was their love for books that, according to Guibert, Abbot of Nogent, the Count of Nevers, to give them skins and parchments instead of the silver plate which he intended for them. The ancient annalists mention some curious con-

cessions on this account. Such is the permission to hunt granted by Charlemagne to the monks of St. Bertin, in order that they might have skins for binding the books belonging to the Abbey.

In the eleventh century, Geoffry Martel, Count of Anjou, granted also for a similar purpose, to the Abbey which he founded at Saintes, the title of all the doe-skins taken in the island of Oleron.

The correspondence of the saintly personages of these days of monkish ignorance still breathes their passionate love of books.

In the middle of the ninth century, Loup, Abbot of Ferrières, wrote to Pope Benedict III., to ask him for certain books which were not to be had in France, viz., St. Jerome on Jeremiah, Cicero's Oratory, the Institutions of Quintilian, the Commentary of Donatus on Terence, promising to have them copied, and then returned; moreover, he requests a friend to bring him Sallust's Wars of Catalina and of Jugurtha, together with the Verrines of Cicero. We further learn, that he had established his copiers, not at Ferrières, but at the Cell of Saint Josse, because of the vicinity of Montreuil, for the greater facility of receiving and returning the books which he borrowed from the monasteries of Great Britain.

What a passionate lover of books was Fréculph, Bishop of Lisieux, of whom the chronicle (which is still read with pleasure, after the Discourse on Universal History, to which it had served for a model) attests that his erudition both sacred and profane was immense.

And then the monk, Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II.,—what a love he had for books!—His letters are entirely taken up with books, and the sums which he expended for the purpose of having them transcribed in France, in Italy, Germany, and in the Low Countries. Here he recommends a correction of the text of Pliny; there he offers in exchange for the Achilleide of Stace, a celestial sphere on which he had been employed. Moreover, he asks the monks of Fleury for the books of Cicero on The Republic, the Verrines, and his other discourses.

What a book hunter again, was Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluni; not content with replacing those books which the bears had destroyed in his monastery, he had all those transcribed which he could discover in the monasteries of France, and went even to Spain to purchase, at the price of their weight in gold, translations of Arabic books, amongst others that of the Koran.

And what are we to say of those monks of Fleury, who imposed on their pupils the annual tribute of ten thousand volumes. In the conflagration which destroyed their monastery, towards the end of the ninth century, they left their furniture and other effects to the flames, in order to save their library.

The Abbott of Fontenelle, Ansegise, had a tower built for the better security of the books of his convent. The Abbott of Saint-Gall, in order to preserve the library of his abbey from the ravages of the Huns, had it conveyed to the mountains of Switzerland.

But we must not imagine that this care was confined to sacred and ecclesiastical books. The learned author of the Recherches sur les bibliothèques, has proved, by a multitude of facts, that the monks regarded the preservation of even profane authors as a religious duty; of these instances we shall give but one:—

"The Abbot of Altona (X. century) caused himself to be represented at the head of a manuscript, consecrating to St. Stephen the works of Horace and of Virgil, wherewith he had enriched the library of his abbey. We also find a similar dedication addressed in four verses to St. Benedict, patron of the abbey of Fleury, on another manuscript of the twelfth century. This species of offering was made by laying on an altar the book which was given to the library."

Most marvellous thing! austere Priests who only gloried, like St. Paul, in knowing Jesus crucified, fervent monks, extenuated with fasting, clothed in hair-cloth, and shrinking with horror from even an unchaste thought—these consumed themselves with vigils and toils, in order to transmit to us in their integrity, the licentious fictions of mythology, the lascivious verses of Horace, of Tibullus, the Loves of Obid, the disgusting obscenities of Plautus, the impieties of Lucretius, &c. It was the hope of these devoted men that the knowledge of the strange aberrations of the human mind would make us better appreciate the light of faith; and the representation of the extreme corruption of man, abandoned to himself, appeared to them, what it really is, a natural introduction to the great mysteries of redemption.

If they are mistaken—if a generation stultified by Voltaire has grown ashamed of Christian civilisation, and would fain establish on its ruins the folly of Paganism, whose is the shame of such stupidity? Let us not forget that the first exploit of anti-

christian philosophy, when it attained to power, was to consign to the flames the treasures of learning, and to smite the learned as well as the religious, seeing that France had no need of literati.

(To be continued.)

LETTER OF THE REV. DR. CAHILL TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE EARL OF DERBY.

"In the first place, then, I can sincerely assure you of my earnest desire and determination to promote, to the utmost of my power, the cause of Protestant truth, in opposition to Popish error; and upon the particular question of the grant to Maynooth.....my inclination and my opinion are, and have always been, opposed to the grant..... I am strongly in favor of an inquiry, and shall support Mr. Spooner's motion for a committee on the whole subject of the grant; and shall cordially and strenuously concur with Lord Derby's government.....for the entire repeal of the act of '45. More than this, I cannot think you will require from one who aspires to be a member of the administration to which alone you can look with confidence for the sincere and effective support of Protestantism against the spirit and mroads of the Papacy."—Fitzroy Kelly.

Parochial House, Navan, April 17, 1852.

My Lord Earl—The extract just quoted is taken from a letter recently written by your Solicitor-General; and as he mentions your lordship's name, the sentiments expressed in his communication must, of course, be adopted by you. So, then, your law officer for England and Ireland sends forth a preliminary missive, in imitation of the far-famed "Durham letter;" and the parliamentary eloquence of '52 is about to rehearse the same soul-mouthing bigotry as the disgraceful session of '51; and the words "Popish error" and "the Papacy" are again to form the filthy vocabulary of legislative rancor; and the new Tory cabinet are ranging themselves under the old faded colors of the "mummies of superstition;" and the Catholics of Europe, and the Catholic victorious army of England, are again to hear the language of burning insult uttered from the seat of justice, and stamped by the authority of the crown. If, my lord, the lowest law-officer of the lowest court of (what is called) justice in this empire, uttered the words of the extract quoted above, he would be pronounced by universal condemnation as unfitted for the impartial discharge of his duties; and he would be distrusted in his decisions by every client of his court.

And can it be, that what would be disgraceful at the Old Bailey is honorable at St. Stephen's? or, that the language and the conduct which would be contemptible and criminal in the lowest officer of police, is professional and suitable in your lordship's colleague? Europe has not as yet had time to take repose since the revolutionary convulsion which was planned and executed by your Whig predecessors in office. The name of English bigotry is associated with the plundered convents of Switzerland, with the assassination of the Priesthood, with the floggings and hangings of the monster Haynau, and with the sanguinary scenes of Hungary, Germany, Prussia, Lombardy, and Naples. Since the expulsion of the perfidious Russell, and since the humiliation of his colleague, Captain Rock, we, the Catholics of this country, seemed to have a gleam of hope that the official descendants of Pitt and Fox, of Grenville, the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, would not have the mean cowardice to kick us on the ground as we lay prostrate beneath the ravages of famine, the cruelties of extermination, and the insatiable vengeance of religious penalties. We fancied that the Earl of Derby would not condescend to walk in the footsteps of Lord Stanley—that the narrow prejudices of the green lordling would be lost sight of on the elevated ground of the matured earl; we fancied that the unripe, petulant acrimony of the beardless Secretary of Ireland would be dissipated before the meridian greatness of the imperial Premier of England—but we have been deceived, and the letter of your subordinate proves that the giant oak will take the warp of the baby-plant, and that the ministerial successors of Somerset are as ready to-day, in the nineteenth century, to malign, to insult, to persecute, and to exterminate our race and our name, as their ancestors were in the very worst days of our ill-fated country, and in the reddest scenes of our disastrous persecution. The history of the whole world presents no parallel to the ceaseless and the unmitigated ferocious bigotry with which England has assailed our creed since '46. The records of the Catholic courts of Europe furnish no modern instance where public official insult has been offered to the Protestant creed of their subjects; but in Great Britain and Ireland the Priest is not allowed to touch the ermine of a judge, although he has sworn to maintain the supremacy of the laws; and his name or his profession cannot be pronounced in the presence of royalty, although he is prepared to fight for the honor of the

Queen, and to spill his blood in defence of the throne. This gratuitous insult—this governmental persecution—this anti-Catholic, this anti-Irish conspiracy—may be clearly defined the perfect exponent of English tyranny; and if we, the Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland, will tamely submit to this incomprehensible insult, our base cowardice is the admitted definition of national slavery. This insane bigotry may for a time, by its cumbrous weight, smother our crying vengeance; but the day may not be far distant when Europe and America may adopt the insult offered to Ireland, and prove to your lordship's Tory successors that there is more loss than gain in exciting religious sanguinary animosities, in alienating the unbroken allegiance of seven hundred years, and in dividing the devoted strength and proverbial courage of the one-third of your empire.

As your lordship is pledged through your colleague to support, in reference to the grant of Maynooth, Mr. Spooner's motion for the entire repeal of the act of '45, I can therefore have no hope of arresting your lordship's decision, in what I shall aptly call "this mad career of legislation on this question;" but, like the humble historian, who can perhaps prescribe the battle much better than the general who commands, your lordship will not, I trust, consider it presumptuous in me to lay before you what I consider the clear case of "the act" referred to, and to warn you against the trick, and the deceit, and the injustice of "the repeal" to which your subordinate seems to pledge both your lordship and your cabinet.

For several years before 1782 your country attempted to trample on America, in something of the same fashion as your cabinet now attempts to overawe unfortunate Ireland; you inflicted "tonnage and poundage" on the insulted Americans just as you now inflict your spurious Bible and your piebald creed on the maddened Irish Catholic. And, as there is nothing new under the sun, be convinced that in the same manner as your beardless senators and your biblical cabinet lost heretofore glorious America, the time is fast approaching when your scalding tyranny all over the world may yet rehearse the tragical history of Bunker's Hill and New Orleans. The revolution of France followed in 1789, and England, therefore, gave the Catholics a vote in the election of a member of parliament in 1793. England was threatened by French Republicanism in 1794, and therefore England determined to educate the Irish Priests at home in 1795; and Napoleon conquered Italy and Austria before the end of 1796, and therefore Maynooth received the grant of £8,700 a year. I am not ungrateful for this act of English political generosity; on the contrary, I am actuated by deep feelings of acknowledgment, although I am forced to believe (from the avowal of the government of that day) that state policy and not friendship towards Catholics urged the parliament to decide on the paltry, unwilling endowment. Sir Robert Peel completed in 1845 the common decency of English justice, in raising the yearly grant to £30,000; and, although the Protestant Church, of only half a million of souls, has £1,300,000 annually, and although the Presbyterian conventicle, of a mere section of the population, has £38,000 a year, the Catholics, who numbered seven millions, were grateful for this additional, kind, and unsolicited grant of Sir Robert Peel.—And although the Catholic monasteries have been thrown down, the colleges dismantled, the churches plundered, the abbey lands seized, and the consecrated legal property of the poor and the stranger confiscated by Henry and Elizabeth, and then settled by what are called "acts of parliament" on our slanderers and calumniators; and although this plundered state of the poor of Ireland and England amounts at the present day to the astounding sum of eight and a half millions sterling (annually), we (the Catholics) had nearly forgotten this robbery of our Church, and of the patrimony of the poor, and we were beginning to entertain feelings of charitable intercourse with the descendants of the greatest villains, assassins, and murderers that ever the world saw in any age or country, till Lord John Russell raised the fury of the empire against us, by an insult and a slander without a parallel in modern history. And as if it is intended to tread out every feeling that could bind us to the throne, your colleague (which means your lordship) has commenced the session of '52 by a gratuitous insult on our creed, and has threatened, in a rare combination of slander and bigotry, to support Mr. Spooner's motion for the entire repeal of the grant to Maynooth. And now, my lord, will you be kind enough to tell us, Catholics, how we have forfeited the confidence of the English government; and what fault we have committed which merits the penalty of reversing the act of '45? This is a case, in which the laity are not implicated—it is a charge which solely concerns the Priesthood, I am a very humble individual, indeed, but I demand from your