

reasons, and in order to prevent their doing mischief, because there was good reason for considering them disturbers of the public peace; and severe fines and other punishments were imposed on those who were the disciples of their errors. This period lasted for some centuries, as long as the Roman law was in force.

In the 'Third Period,' that of the Middle Ages, rulers went farther; fines were not only followed by confiscation of goods, but even capital punishment or imprisonment for life was pronounced against heretics, and this by the imperial laws of the Emperor Frederick II. and other emperors; to these laws the Popes were a party, as Leo X. expressly testifies. At that time, people looked upon heresy as a breach of the imperial law, to be punished with the loss of honour, forfeiture of goods, deprivation of civil rights, &c. Testimony of this is expressly given by Frederick II., who declares that in punishing heretics, he was but exercising his own temporal power, wholly independently, and was not acting under the influence of any spiritual authority. The reason the emperor gives for inflicting such heavy penalties was because it was a greater breach of the law to offend against the Divine Majesty than against any earthly majesty. This was the general way of viewing men's public social relations at that time. This period lasted till well on into the sixteenth century.

The 'Fourth Period,' which has been running its course up to the present time from the seventeenth century, did away with those penal enactments which had been passed under very different circumstances, as the reasons which had led to their being enacted, and the principles on which they rested, were no longer in force since the establishment of Protestant States in Europe. This is the period in which we meet with only protests or the reservation of rights, when, the rights of the Church, whether divine, or legal, or accruing to her from contract, were violated in favor of heretics.

The foregoing authorized historical summary of the course of Rome towards heretics is instructive to us in two most important respects. It teaches, first, that the Roman Church has never absolutely withdrawn from any of her alleged franchises. And secondly, that in the present age, she will not insist upon them when vigorously resisted. The latter point is that which concerns