

THE JESUITS OF NAPLES.

A Letter upon the recent Expulsion of the Jesuits from Naples, addressed to Signor G. Lacaita, by the Rev. William Perceval Ward, M.A., of Oriel College, Oxford.

"Meanwhile, permit a private individual, a foreigner, and a Priest of another Communion, to relate all that he has seen and been able to discover with regard to the Jesuits of Naples.

"But first let me premise, that when I left England, three years ago, I was as prejudiced as the rest of my countrymen against the Jesuits there were many things in the Roman system which I admired, but the Jesuits I thoroughly detested. I thought every Jesuit the very incarnation of a lie. I regarded them as exhibiting that character, which an Englishman most especially abhors, and which is expressed in the popular appellation of the word 'Jesuitical.' But in travelling slowly across Europe I observed four things, First, that their churches were better ordered than any others, and more frequented. Secondly, that they appeared to be the favourite confessors and preachers of the poor. Thirdly, that good men spoke well of them. Fourthly, that bad men spoke ill of them. These four facts, which I had observed as generally as a mere traveller can observe such things shook my prejudices; and by the time I arrived at Naples I was prepared to entertain the question, whether the extreme hatred to Jesuits might not have arisen in Englishmen from a dread of Popery inasmuch as they were the most zealous propagators of the Roman Catholic Faith, as it certainly did appear to me to have arisen in Catholic countries from a dislike or an indifference to all religion. I well remember a gentleman of rank and fortune at Berne, a Protestant, and a most excellent and highly-esteemed man, saying to me at that time: 'The cry against the Jesuits in Switzerland is a cry against the Christian religion and all order. The enemies of Christianity and of order know that so long as the Jesuit schools exist in the Catholic Cantons, they cannot revolutionize Switzerland; it is a time when every man must choose his side for or against Christianity or social order; and I, although a Protestant, have taken part with the Jesuits, being well assured that it is the side of religion and true freedom.' There were the words of a well informed Swiss gentleman three years ago, and have they not been verified? Has not religion been insulted both in the persons of the Protestant ministers of Vaud and of the Priests and Churches of Friburg, and Lucerne, and the Valais? Is not the whole social order of Switzerland decomposed, and all real liberty banished under the iron rule of a tyrant majority?

"Well, Sir, I arrived in Naples very much interested in the question of the Jesuits, and fully prepared to hear, read, and observe all I could, both for and against them. It so happened that the very first Ecclesiastic to whom I was introduced was a Jesuit. He spoke English perfectly, and undertook to teach me Italian, unluckily for my Italian, for we totally forgot that, in our theological discussions; but it gave me an opportunity of seeing a great deal of their system and habits of life. I was at the College three or four times a week at all hours, both with and without an appointment. I used to walk in as freely as I should into any College of Oxford or Cambridge, go straight to my friend's room, and if he did not answer to my knock, I used to walk in, and sit down, or walk about the corridors, till he came, or till I was tired of waiting. I mention this to disprove the common accusation of secrecy; nothing, indeed, could be more open or easy of access than the interior of that College. Now, what did I observe in these frequent visits at all hours from morning to evening? Invariably the same thing; order and industry in all; a quiet and tranquillity which would be remarkable anywhere, but at Naples most especially refreshing. As you passed along the corridors, through many a half-open door you saw a Padre hard at work in his little room, or met others passing quickly along to their different vocations. And what are those vocations? Ask the poor; inquire of the deaf and dumb; look into the confessionals of their church; and the pains of that and many others; go and examine their schools. Alas! this cannot now be done, but I will speak of what is past. I can never forget the first day I went over the schools; it was the hour of recreation; and the younger boys were at full play. The moment our party appeared their faces brightened, and they came running up to the Superior and the

other Jesuits who were with us in the most affectionate and confiding manner, kissing their hands, clinging to their cloaks, and each trying to get the kind look turned to himself, the same affectionate and respectful confidence was shown by the elder boys, when we went to the terrace, where they were walking. It would have been impossible for any father to have been more lovingly greeted than were those spiritual fathers by all the boys, both young and old, entrusted to their care. In one room were two young Abyssinians, who had been redeemed from slavery; they were then just come, and as wild and frightened as mountain hares. The other day I saw them again, and they showed the same confidence and love as the Italian boys. These of whom I have spoken were the pensionaries, and, as you know, the sons for the most part, of the nobility.

"But besides these the Jesuits had public schools, where fifteen hundred boys of the middle class were taught every day gratis, and even sometimes the poorer scholars were fed."

"Now, as to the sort of education they gave, I last year took one of our very best English scholars, who was for a short time at Naples, over these schools. He examined some of the boys both in Greek and Latin; in Greek especially, and he afterwards told me that they would have done credit to any of our English public schools. Again, what was their system of discipline with these day boys? Corporal punishment, never; and I have been present when the words, 'Ma figlio mio,' spoken in a tone of gentle expostulation, have been sufficient to cover a boy with sorrow and confusion for a fault. Such, indeed, will be found to be their system all over the world—a system of industry and discipline maintained and enforced by love. I appeal to all those who have been educated by them in this or in any other country in Europe whether this is not so. They are accused of following this system in order to alienate the affections of boys from their parents. Parents who have had children under their care for many years declare they have been returned to them most affectionate and respectful. I appeal, too, to parents to say if this is not so. Driven from these two points, their enemies accuse them of having an eye to future advantage in thus winning the affection of the young nobility; but they are as kind to the poor day boy as to the rich pensionary; they equally win the affections of the young Abyssinian as of the heir of an ancient title.

"Again, with regard to the young men who have been educated by them, what position in society are they found to take generally after their education is completed? This is a question which of course I cannot answer from personal observation. I have been told, however, that they are the best Greek and Latin scholars you have, but that the philosophy they have learned is antiquated and unsuited for the present day. This is precisely the popular accusation brought against our own University of Oxford; and yet the men of that University afterwards take the lead in all public affairs. I could give you a list of our greatest men who at the age of twenty-one were nothing more than good scholars (limiting that term to classical literature), and having learned no other human philosophy than that of Aristotle and Plato. If, therefore, this system of education be a fault of the Jesuits, it is a one which they share in common with one of the most celebrated Universities in the world. But I must not enter into this wide question.

"For the last two years my friend has not been in the College, but in that part of the establishment properly called 'Il Gesù,' and which is the Ecclesiastical department. I have also seen how matters are conducted there also, and I must bear testimony to the same order and industry, the same simplicity of life, the same openness and facility of access at all hours which I have described as characterising the Colleges. Indeed, last winter I was in the constant habit of going with one or two other English friends to spend an hour or two of the evening in theological and other discussions with Padre Costa. We never made an appointment, but took our chances of finding him; and we can all of us assert most strongly that we not only never saw anything to excite suspicion, but that everything we did see or hear was of such a nature as to preclude the possibility of harbouring any. I do not wish to give any offence when I say that these evenings were by very far the most intellectual, as well as religiously or theologically, interesting of any that I have ever spent in Naples. Indeed, I must say that it was their very great intellectual superiority which made me seek the society of the Jesuits at Naples. I always left with them in

one sense the full force of Dr. Johnson's definition of a Jesuit, 'Any one cleverer than yourself.'

"I have often taken parties of English friends over the whole establishment, who have been astonished and delighted with all they saw and heard; and have said afterwards, that the Jesuits were the only people, who seemed to be doing anything towards the education of youth upon anything like a system in Naples. I have also taken English Protestants to their church, who could hardly believe they heard aright, as the soundest and most glorious Gospel truths were announced with all the eloquence and fervour, for which those good Fathers are so remarkable; and who have also been quite startled by the first response of the five thousand in prayer. I have heard religious services in all countries of Europe, but I have never heard any of such power to move and raise the soul, as the Litany in the Jesuits' Church of Naples; the fulness and the earnestness of the one voice of that congregation, the voice of thousands, yet one it would seem in heart, and one almost in sound; it is impossible to forget it. Oh! that all the accusers of those Holy Fathers had but learnt to kneel in the church and swell that heavenward ascending incense of humble prayer 'Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis, Domine.' God grant them all to learn it even yet.

"The Jesuits are accused of bigotry. I declare that I have found without any comparison far, very far less bigotry and prejudice among Roman Catholics generally, and Jesuits in particular, than among the Protestants. In comparing Jesuits with other religious orders of the Roman Church, it should also borne in mind, that they were the only order who, from the first, opposed the institution of the Inquisition; while the Dominicans were its great supporters.

"I now come to another point; the Jesuits are accused of besieging the deathbed of their rich clients with requests for a legacy to the order. Rich persons, who have confessed to them, and received the last sacraments from them, but who have afterwards recovered, have declared, that money has not been once named by them. I appeal to any, who have been thus circumstanced, to say if this was not so. But if the Jesuits have received legacies, who will undertake to prove that they were not the free offerings of a grateful heart? Do other religious institutions never receive legacies?"

THE EAST INDIES.

NEW CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL AT AGRA.—Last New Year's Day was solemnised at Agra with a grand Catholic display. The new cathedral was consecrated by our venerated Bishop Burgin, and opened to the public. The ceremony began at nine o'clock in the morning. His Lordship, attired in the most costly vestments, accompanied by his Coadjutor, Right Rev. Dr. Carl, and assisted by the Reverend Fathers Boaventura, Marmet, Dodot, Angelo, and by a number of Acolythes, preceded by the cross, went round the outer walls, sprinkling them with the holy water having performed the same in the interior of the church, he sat down on the Episcopal chair, and delivered a very impressive sermon, taking the text from the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 4th. "Neither is any other nation so great, that hath God so nigh them, as our God is present to all our positions." He expatiated on the ancient epochs and events of the Mission of Hindostan, and he mentioned, that about three centuries ago the messengers of the Catholic Faith came to the city of Akbar, and that amidst dangers and persecutions they planted the sign of Redemption on the very same spot from which he was speaking. He then passed in review the various fortunes of the Catholic Church in Hindostan since that era, and concluded by pointing out, for the edification of the Faithful assembled, the symbolic meaning of a Catholic temple. He made an honourable mention of the Rev. Father Boaventura, who has been the architect of the new building, and of John Reullo, Esq. who, with surprising zeal, had directed the works. The sermon being finished, a long procession composed of the Clergy, Nuns, pupils of the three Agra Orphanages and the Faithful, sided by the gallant Irish soldiers of Her Majesty's 23rd Regiment of Foot, went to the old church to bring the Holy Sacrament to the new one. The procession being over, Pontifical Mass began, and after the Gospel His Lordship ordered the 101 orphan children of the Agra establishments to advance in front of the great altar, and he addressed the congregation in their behalf. At such a moving spectacle many hearts were

tears of compassion on those poor child on whose parents have given their blood and life to support the glory of the British arms during the late struggle in the Punjab. A collection was made for the support of the Agra Orphanages, which amounted to about a thousand rupees. In the evening Vespers were pontifically sung by Bishop Carl, and after the Te Deum the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament closed the ceremony of the day. The choir was conducted by the Ladies of the Convent of Jesus and Mary, and the effect produced under the large vaulted roof by their sweet voices and notes was quite surprising. The church was crowded by almost all the Christians of different denominations residing at Agra, who conducted themselves in the most honourable manner. The form of the building is cruciform; in the interior the ornamental part is after the Corinthian style; it contains seven altars, and its outward dimensions, except the porches, are the following:—100 feet in length, 70 feet in breadth, and 55 feet in height. The church is situated in a very conspicuous compound, surrounded by a wall, which is surmounted by a terrace.—Bengal Catholic Herald.

THE RUINED ABBEY.

'Tis sad to mark this ruined pile, its lofty walls o'erthrown,  
Its graceful spire a shapeless mass, with matted weeds o'ergrown,  
Its stately columns all defaced, and here a sculptured cross,  
'Mid tangled ivy half concealed, and covered o'er with moss.  
For here, though all is silent now, there rose in golden days,  
At early dawn, from grateful hearts, the matin song of praise,  
And soft and sweet, at day's decline, 'neath twilight's mantle dim,  
Stole forth upon the evening breeze, the solemn vesper hymn.  
Here noble deeds were planned and done, of charity and love,  
Untold, perchance, by mortal tongue, but registered above,  
Here, too, was learning's calm abode—her consecrated ground,  
Where hard and sage, their woes forgot, a home of refuge found.  
The wearied heart here learned at last in blessed content to live,  
And found, at length, that perfect peace the world can never give,  
Forsook the toys and gauds of earth—bade wealth and fame farewell,  
And sought, with penitential tears, the cloister's lonely cell.  
Wherever man has bow'd to God, in humble faith and pray'r,  
A sacred presence seems to me for ever resting there;  
And though the shrine a ruined heap, or desert waste may be,  
The memory of the past abides—'tis holy ground to me.  
Though all is changed, yet still I love those glorious days of old,  
When men, in simple faith secure, prized goodness more than gold;  
We wear, 'tis true, no feudal chains, we scorn oppression's powers,  
And yet, methinks, the olden time seems happier far than ours.

"YOUNG ENGLAND."

—New York Freeman's Journal.

THE "DUBLIN EVENING MAIL."—HIGH CHURCH AND REPEAL.—This High Church journal has, in the conclusion of a lechrymose article on the subject of the appointment of an Englishman to the vacant (Protestant) See of Cork, the following passage:—"One of the two Archbishops, an Englishman, the Bishop of Down is an Englishman, the Dean of Kildare, is a Scotchman, the Dean of Limerick is an Englishman, the Dean of Lismore is an Englishman, the Archbishop of Down is an Englishman, the Archbishop of Cashel is an Englishman. We might extend the list if we pleased. Is such an intolerable tyranny to be endured? Is this an honest carrying out of an union between the two Churches? A repetition of such atrocious and excessive anti-Irish tyranny will certainly swell the ranks of the Repeal party, and will be a source of great injury to the Government."