

is the source and the centre, as of civil, so of ecclesiastical arrangements; truth shall be synonymous with order and good government. What can be simpler than such a teaching? Puritans may struggle against it, and temporarily prevail; sceptics may ridicule it, object, expose, and refute; readers of the Fathers may strive to soften and embellish it with the colours of antiquity, but strong in the constitution of the law, and congenial to the heart of the people, and in the long run it will extinguish the very hope of competition.

So counselled the Achitophels of the day; it was devised, it was done. Then was the inauguration of the great picture of the lion and the man. The virgin queen rose in her strength; she held her court, she showed herself to her people; she gathered round her peer and squire, alderman and burgess, army and navy, lawyer and divine, student and artisan, she made an appeal to the chivalrous and the loyal, and forthwith all that was noble, powerful, dignified, splendid, and intellectual, touched the hilts of their swords, and spread their garments in the way for her to tread upon. And first of all she addressed herself to the law; and that, not only because it was the proper foundation of a national structure, but also inasmuch as from the nature of the case, it was her surest and most faithful ally. The law is a science, and therefore takes for granted afterwards whatever it has once determined; hence it followed, that once Protestant, it would be always Protestant; it could be depended on; let Protestantism be recognized as a principle of the constitution, and every decision, to the end of time, would but illustrate Protestant doctrines and consolidate Protestant interests. In the eye of the law precedent is the measure of truth, and order the proof of reasonableness, and acceptableness the test of orthodoxy. It moves forward by a majestic tradition, faithful to its principles, regardless of theory and speculation, and therefore eminently fitted to be the vehicle of English Protestantism such as we have described it, and to co-operate with the monarchical principle in its establishment. . . . So much for the law; but this was only one of those great functions of the nation which became the instrument of the Protestant tradition. Elizabeth had an influence on her side, over and above, and even greater than the authority of the law. She was the queen of fashion and of opinion. The principles of Protestantism rapidly became the standard generally, to which genius, taste, philosophy, learning, and investigation were constrained and bribed to submit. They are her legacy to the nation, and have been taken for granted ever since as starting-points in all discussions and all undertakings. In every circle and in every rank of the community, in the court, in public meetings, in private society, in literary assemblages, in the family party, it is always assumed that Catholicism is absurd. No one can take part in the business of the great world, no one can speak and debate, no one can present himself before his constituents, no one can write a book, without the necessity of professing that Protestant ideas are self-evident and that the religion of Alfred, St. Edward, Stephen Langton and Friar Bacon, is a bygone dream. No one can be a Catholic without apologizing for it. And what is in vogue in the upper classes is ever, as we know, ambitiously aped in the inferior. The religious observances of the court became a reigning fashion through the social fabric, as certainly as its language or its mode of dress; and, as an aspirant for distinction advances from a lower grade of society to an upper, he necessarily abandons his vulgar sect, whatever it is, for the national Protestantism. All other ways of thought are as frightful as the fashions of last year; the present is the true, and the divine; the past is dark because it is dumb, and living dogs are worth more than dead lions. As to Catholicism, the utmost liberality which can be extended towards it, is to call it pretty poetry, bearable in tragedy, intolerable in fact; the utmost charity towards its professors is to confess that they may be better than their creed,—perhaps believe it, and are only dupes,—perhaps doubt it, and are only cowards. Protestantism sets the tone in all things; and to have the patronage of the wealthy, the esteem of the cultivated, and the applause of the many, Catholics must get its phrases by heart.

It is the profession of a gentleman; Catholicism, of underbred persons, of the vulgar-minded, the uncouth, and the ill-connected. We all can understand how the man of fashion, the profligate, the spendthrift, have their own circles, to which none but men of their own stamp and their own opinions are admitted, how to hate religion and religious men, to scoff at principle, and to laugh at heaven and hell, and to do all this with decorum and good breeding, are the necessary title for admittance; and how, in consequence, men at length begin to believe what they so incessantly hear said and what they so incessantly say by rote themselves,—begin to suspect that, after all, virtue, as it is called, is nothing else than hypocrisy grafted on licentiousness, and that purity and simplicity and earnestness and probity are but the dreams of the young and theoretical. It is by a similar policy, and by a similar process, that the fathers of the English Reformation have given a substance, a momentum, and a permanence to their tradition, and have fastened on us Catholics, first the imputation, then the repute of ignorance, bigotry and superstition.

And now I will mention a distinct vehicle of the Protestant tradition in England, which was an instance of good fortune, greater than its originators could possibly have anticipated or contrived. Protestantism became, not only the tradition of law and of good society, but the tradition of literature also. There is no English literature before the age of Elizabeth; but with the latter years of her reign begins that succession of great authors which continues to flow on down to this day. So it was, that about the commencement of the sixteenth century learning revived; on the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, the men of letters of the imperial city, and, what was of more consequence, its libraries, became the property of the west, schools were opened for the cultivation of studies which had made Greece as renowned among the nations in the gifts of intellect, as Judea has been in the gifts of grace. The various perfections of the Greek language, the treasures of Greek thought, the life of taste and Greek art, after the sleep of ages, burst upon the European mind. It was like the warmth, the cheerfulness, and the hues of spring succeeding to the pure and sublime, but fantastic forms of winter frostwork. The barbarism, the sternness, the untowardness, of the high and noble mediæval school, eyed with astonishment the radiance, and melted beneath the glow of a genius unrivalled in the intellectual firmament. A world of ideas, transcendent in beauty and endless in fertility, flooded the imagination of the scholar and the poet. The fine arts underwent a classical development, and the vernacular tongues caught the refinement and the elegance of the age of Pericles and Alexander. The revival began in Catholic Italy; it advanced into Catholic France; and at length it showed itself in Protestant England. A voice came forth from the grave of the old world, as articulate and keen as that of a living teacher; and it thrilled into the heart of the people to whom it came, and it taught them to respond to it in their own tongue, and that teaching was coincident in this country with the first preaching of Protestantism. It was most surely a most lucky accident for the young religion, that, while the English language was coming to the birth with its special attributes of nerve, simplicity and vigour, at its very first breathings, Protestantism was at hand to form it upon its own theological patois, and to educate it as the mouthpiece of its own tradition. So, however, it was to be; and soon,

“As in this bad world below

Noblest things find vilest using,”

the new religion employed the new language for its purposes, in a great undertaking, the translation of its own Bible; a work which, by the purity of its diction, and the strength and harmony of its style, has deservedly become the standard of the language to all future times. The same age, which saw this great literary achievement, gave birth to some of the greatest masters of thought and composition in distinct departments of authorship. Shakespeare, Spenser, Raleigh, Bacon, and Hooker are its own; and they were, withal, more or less the panegyrists of Elizabeth and her religion, and moreover, at least the