

his religious convictions; he loved and lived on the applause of the gilt-edged-do-nothing's of English *Salons*; he was invincible in sentiment, and weak-kneed where principles had to be sturdily maintained. Like many another, also, he acted, not from conviction, but with an eye to the smile and approval of the bitter enemies of his Church.] G.

HOW TO READ PROTESTANT HISTORY.

FRANCIS PARKMAN is a staunch Protestant as any of his writings will abundantly testify. His style is dashing and ornate, often mock-heroic: always somewhat stilted withal. Treating almost always of the deeds of Catholic warriors or mariners, he never misses an opportunity of having a fling at Catholicity. As a sample of one of those arts of vilification which are at once so subtle and so commonly employed in Protestant histories we commend the following:—

“Years rolled on. France long tossed amongst the surges of civil commotion plunged at last into a gulf of fratricidal war. Blazing hamlets, sacked cities, fields steaming with slaughter, profaned altars, a carnival of steel and fire marked the track of the tornado. There was little room for schemes of foreign enterprise. Yet far aloof from siege and battle the fishermen of the western parts still plied their craft on the Banks of Newfoundland. *Humanity, morality, decency, might be forgotten, but codfish must still be had for the use of the faithful on Lent and fasting days.*” —(*Pioneers of France in the New World*. Chap II. p 208.)

It is Dean Swift, we think, who gives it as a standing rule of Protestant clergymen, who have not a sermon for Sunday to abuse the Papists. The theme is so congenial, that no studied preparation, no deep thought is necessary for it. Francis Parkman carries this rule into book writing and improves upon it. With him abuse of the Papists is an every day duty and assumes as many shapes and shades as a summer cloud; when he cannot find real faults he trusts to invention. One would think the visits of the Basque and Breton fishermen to the banks of Newfoundland to fish for cod were no very promising pin whereon to hang a sneer at Catholic practices. Not so Francis Parkman.

Catholic France is fighting for bare existence against the devilish fanaticism of her Huguenot rebels who threaten to blot out her very name from the map of Europe with one huge clot of blood, and because she, engaged in a holy war, still continues her Catholic practice of abstinence from flesh meat on Fridays out of respect for the day on which the Saviour died for all men, Francis Parkman deems it a holy and wholesome thought to sneer at the observance, and to put a false construction on the act. “*Humanity, morality, decency, might be forgotten, but codfish must still be had for the use of the faithful on Lent and fasting days.*” The evident animus of this slur is, that Catholic France (and therefore by implication all Catholics) cared more for the minor practice of abstinence than for the higher principles of morality, humanity, and decency: Catholics will break the ten commandments of God and twenty more if there were so many rather than break the minor law of fasting. Well! if Catholics are really as bad as Francis Parkman paints them, it must at least be some consolation, even to Francis Parkman, if he values virtue at all, to find that Catholics have some morality at least, if it be only on the minor point of keeping inviolate the law of their Church with regard to fasting. Surely our Protestant historian is not angry with them because they are not wholly reprobate; because forgetting humanity and decency so far as in battle to sack cities and burn hamlets, they still have as much decency and morality left as keeps them from violating an express law of their Church. Francis Parkman, we think, is unreasonable.

But on another count Francis Parkman is unreasonable. It is not under any circumstances quite fair to hold a nation, as a people, much less as a Church, answerable for the deeds of immorality, inhumanity and indecency, which nearly always mark the path of a conquering army. The war may be on the responsibility of the nation, but the individual acts of immorality, inhumanity and indecency rest on individual responsibility alone. A commander may punish them “to encourage the others,” but he cannot wholly prevent them.” At any rate the nation as a