

must be made incapable of retraction, all his mistakes become impossible of reparation, by pronouncing him *incapable of error*! The whole of this monstrous conglomeration of age-long blunders must take on the rigidity of stone and the frigidity of ice! *Unlimited authority is invested with personal infallibility.* Was there ever such social petrification as that? As Robert Mackenzie well says, "the assertion of infallibility is a reiterated declaration of irreconcilable hostility against all enlightening modern impulses. It is the assumption of power more despotic than the world ever knew before in order the better to give effect to this hostility."*

But two things are very plain : first, the effort is vain to sweep back the tide of progress ; and, secondly, this is a mere expedient to arrest or at least conceal the waning power of the Papal church. Men and women even in these Papal lands are beginning to read, to talk, to think. The Bible is printed and distributed and read. Knowledge runs to and fro in the earth and it is the natural, eternal foe of ignorance and its allies, superstition and bigotry. You cannot keep the people in slavery to the Vatican unless you keep them in chains, and intelligence carries a file for all fetters. A railway, a printing press, a common school, a newspaper, are God's battering rams to demolish the walls that shut in the human mind and shut out light and liberty. Rome resists progress, but in so doing resists Providence, for back of human history is the Hidden Hand of God. Final defeat is inevitable to those who fight against Him. Already the Pope has ceased to be the master of earthly kingdoms. Nearly twenty years ago he surrendered his sceptre of Temporal Sovereignty at the imperative call of an intellectually enfranchised people, and retired to his prison in the Vatican. Father Hecker vainly re-affirmed the right of the church to punish 'crimes in thought.' Even the Romanist has begun to think and to think for himself. He is learning that the 'footprint of the Ass' that the Virgin rode on the way to Egypt, could not have been left on a rock in Brazil, inasmuch as Brazil was rather *off the route* from Bethlehem to Egypt, and so he ceases to kiss with idolatrous homage a mere water-mark on the stone. He reads a stray leaf of a torn bible, or a chapter in the gospel published in a daily paper, and wonders why no priest or pope, confessional or penance, stood between that prodigal and his Father ! It is intelligence that begets independence, that detects Jesuitical intrigues and priestly delusions, that scorns anathemas directed against human prosperity and happiness, and defies bulls of excommunication which thunder against invention, discovery and human brotherhood. Above all, it is intelligence that nourishes an independent faith and an unhampered worship.

We believe in perfect freedom of religious opinion and worship. To the Romish church as representing a form of ecclesiastical faith and

* "Nineteenth Century," Chap. ix.