

I cannot deny that I drop my pen with pleasure to lovingly contemplate this sublime figure with the eyes of my imagination . . . Ireland, Green Ireland, Catholic Ireland, rejoice, though humbled and in bondage. Your garments are coarse ; you are loaded with chains and lie on a bed of straw. But on that bed you have given birth to a king among men. Ireland, Green Ireland, rejoice, though humbled and in bondage." It was eminently fitting that Donso Cortes, desiring to consecrate himself to the Church in the layman's sphere of action, should take as his guide Daniel O'Connell, who, in strength of Catholic faith and devotion to Catholic truth, yields first place to no man.

Acceding to the urgent entreaties of his friends, Cortes now gave himself up to the composition of a work worthy of himself and of his cause. The result was his "Essays on Catholicism, Liberalism, and Socialism," a book that ranks with the best productions of any age. Before beginning to write he made a pilgrimage to Alba de Tormes, and laid his homage and his intentions at the shrine of St. Theresa; nor would he consent to the publication of his essays until they had been examined in their dogmatic aspect by one of the most famous theologians of Paris, all of whose observations were finally adopted by the author. Max Muller is right when he says :—"The torch of imagination is as necessary for him who looks for truth as the lamp of study. But above all is the star of faith, that guides in all things from darkness to light." Donoso Cortes' whole life was a victory for faith.

The "Essays on Catholicism, Liberalism, and Socialism"* are great enough to immortalize any man. "The merit of the work" says Canon Torre Velez "is not in the matters it treats of, nor in the facts it states, nor in the problems it deals with, nor in the amount of erudition it displays, nor in the clear method it follows, nor in the critical skill it manifests ; for everything in the "Essays" has been treated of and discussed a thousand times before. The merit of Donoso Cortes, so far as the "Essays" are original and great, consists in raising the question to a height to which

no other book carries it, and in the new aspect with which every question is investigated from the first to the last page. . . . There is no dogma of faith, nor hierarchy in the Church, nor institution in society, nor important question in philosophy, nor epoch in history, nor human aberration in the speculative sphere of the schools or in the practical life of nations, which does not occupy its proper place in the vast plan of this work." Cortes is the Spanish De Maistre who wishes to bring back all Europe and the world to the rule of Christ as King. Theocracy, the truest of all democracies, is his aim. For him the Catholic Church is "the mistress, the foundress, and the life of society." To see her again on the throne of Europe, the cynosure of all eyes, is his ambition. This end will be attained when man is guided by supernatural principles both in his individual and social relations.

Those who attempt "to guild refined gold, to paint the lily, or add another hue unto the rainbow," have picked flaws in Cortes' philosophy. He is charged with exaggerating the importance of authority and with dethroning human reason. He does hold that complete autonomy of reason is impossible for him who reveres the infallibility of the teaching Church. Theoretically he is slightly wrong, for his principle seems to favor Traditionalism ; but practically he is wholly right. A desire "to choose and see our path" is the besetting sin of the nineteenth century. Obedience, unceasing and unquestioning, to authority must ever be the only safe rule for Catholic laymen. "Doctrinal intolerance" is their salvation. Read what Cortes says of it :—"The doctrinal intolerance of the Church has saved the world from chaos. Her doctrinal intolerance has placed beyond question political, domestic, social, and religious truths—primitive and holy truths—which are not subject to discussion, because they are the foundation of all discussions ; truths which cannot be called into doubt for a moment without the understanding at that moment oscillating, lost between truth and error, and the clear mirror of human reason becoming soiled and obscured." Thus only did Cortes assail

*M. H. Gill & Son, Dublin. Translated by Rev. Wm. McDonald, Rector of the Irish College, Salamanca.