

of dealing adopted, probably of necessity, by the courts. No one doubts, we suppose, the absolute honesty of such men as Dr. Briggs and Professor Campbell, in reaching and holding the conclusions, however erroneous they may be, to which they have given utterance. This being premised, the terms during which the sentence of suspension against the former is expressed, viz., "until such time as he shall give satisfactory evidence of repentance," is painfully suggestive of the idea that, while he is being excommunicated for giving utterance to his conscientious convictions, all that is necessary to his restoration is a recantation under pressure, which to him, we may suppose, would seem not unlike that which was at one time forced upon Galileo by stress of a still heavier penalty. Thus it will be seen that so far as the effect of the discipline goes, its influence is against rather than in favour of honest research and speech. Closely connected with this is the other suggestion that, in the case of Professor Campbell, the energies of the court will not, probably, be devoted to convincing him of his error by showing that those inconsistencies and wrong teachings which he thinks exists in some portions of the Old Testament Scriptures are apparent rather than real, but by impressing upon him by disciplinary measures the fact that, as a Presbyterian minister, he must not say such things, whatever he may think.

The sum of the matter seems to be that, whatever the immediate results of the trials recently concluded, or at present in progress—and we do not forget that the Methodist Church of Canada has just now inhibited one of its ministers from the exercise of his ministerial functions for an offence of alleged heretical teaching—the day is probably not far distant when the great Christian churches, failing, as they must almost surely fail in these days of minute critical inquiry and free thought, to either enforce existing creeds, or to accomplish any revisions which will not soon in their turn become unsatisfactory and need to be revised, will find it wiser to eschew everything in the shape of a cast-iron mould of doctrine and return to what seems to the simple reader of the New Testament to have been all that was originally required, satisfactory evidence of a living faith in and loyalty to the one great Head of the Christian Church, in all its manifold forms and sub-divisions. It is not easy for the lay mind to see why this would not meet every requirement of aggressive Christianity, and at the same time have the great advantage of enabling the churches to retain the services of such men as those whose cases are now or have recently been under discussion, and who are admitted to be able Christian teachers but also most exemplary in conduct and spirit.

He is great who is what he is from nature and who never reminds us of others. —Emerson.

THE AMERICAN PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION.

Although the next Congressional and State elections are still a long way off, and the next Presidential election scarcely as yet thought of, the probable influence of the American Protective Association (or as it is briefly called, the A. P. A.) is being everywhere canvassed. The widespread interest in the organization as an element to be taken into consideration in calculating the chances of the old parties in the near future, and the probable effect upon them of the new element thus introduced, is largely to be accounted for by the announcement already made that in many districts, in the approaching city elections, a preliminary skirmish will be indulged in, which may mean little or much, according to the result. But the mass of voters, and the vast majority of the party "bosses," ever looking forward to an election of some sort, must naturally speculate in forecasting future elections, upon those of the highest and most general importance. What uneasiness is felt among Americans on account of this newly-introduced political problem is, therefore, connected mainly with speculations as to the greater elections to be held at various times during the next three years.

Politics in America are, however, too closely interwoven with every ramification of the public service, and the party system too firmly fixed as the controlling power, to allow the introduction of any new disturbing element without a frightened recalculation of forces in both the Republican and Democratic ranks. This is first seen in the smallest ring of the electoral circle. Control of a ward means a vote in a larger government; control of a city or a township means control of a city's or a township's patronage; and control of such patronage means strength in County, Congressional and States elections, with superadded patronage in case of success, and a consequent vastly multiplied weight in the great quadrennial election of a President. From a party point of view, therefore, the force and direction of any new gust of political wind requires to be most carefully watched. Hence the uneasiness and alarm, as yet vaguely felt, it is true, but still existing, for which the A. P. A. is at present responsible.

What is the A. P. A.? This seems a simple question, but it is difficult to get a simple answer. It is a secret society, in the sense that it has a ritual and an oath. It is a secret society in the sense also that its members, on being asked as to its character and objects, delight to look mysterious, and important, as with the weight of a vast secret, and to tell you that perhaps some day you will know. But it is not secret in that it is known, and by some members boasted of, that its object is political death to Roman Catholicism, and one of its qualifications for membership, an oath to vote for no Catholic for any office. This at any rate is plain enough. It ought to be plain enough and broad enough, to satisfy even an Orangeman, or a member of the Protestant Protective Association of Canada, which is spoken of as a branch of the A. P. A., the latter being first in the field.

It will now be obvious that if the A. P. A. grows into proportions to justify the present boast of power,—some of the loudest claim that there are a million Knights ready to spring to arms in defence of Protestantism,—a severe shaking-up will be witnessed in the controlling parties as they now exist. What will be the extent of the influence upon the quadrangular skirmishes in the approaching municipal elections, with the old parties still in the field, but their ranks from time to time decimated by defections to other ranks, it would be idle at present to attempt to calculate. For the strength of the new influence will be known, on either side, only by the result which the ballot will show. Then will be seen the course to be taken for the guidance of parties, perhaps for the formation of new parties in place of, or in addition to, the old.

It may here be mentioned that much alarm as has already arisen through the growth of the A. P. A. has been largely caused by grossly-exaggerated accounts of every event of recent occurrence that could possibly be traced, even plausibly, to a religious motive. Religious prejudices are, of all, the most bitter and irrational, and the cause of the most unreasonable exaggeration of events. Every act, therefore, which of late has seemed in any way to indicate the growth of Catholic power, or the manifestation of an anti-Protestant feeling has been seized upon as an evidence of a conspiracy to undermine Protestant power, and as a justification for the protection of that power by an organization formed for that very purpose. And such a tendency must grow, and must seem justified, in its growth, unless the strong arm of the law, which is in America above all creed, makes itself felt in a practical way. This it did recently in the State of Indiana, where the A. P. A. is growing in numbers, and growing fast, if its own boasts are to be believed. In the town of Lafayette, in that State, an attempt was made in January last, upon the life of an ex-priest, one Radolph. There followed an attempt to make political and religious capital out of this by the anti-Catholic party. The civil and judicial authorities took a different and a practical view of the matter, and showed their determination to uphold the civil laws independently of all consideration of religious differences, in the result that of the participants in the affair, two were tried, convicted and sentenced to the State prison, eight more are still to be tried for assault with intent to kill, and about thirty are under indictment for riot.

But the law does not always step in in this practical way; and the harm done is allowed to grow, and to grow by increased exaggeration and by false imputation of motives, purely fanciful. That this must tend to great injury to public morality, is plain; and that this tendency is most carefully watched and most deeply deplored by the best men of both parties and of all religions, is significant of a fear of a result more or less calamitous. It surely would be a calamity, if in that country of all countries, where separation of Church and State is supposed to be a constitutional axiom, Democracy should find itself face-to-face with a contest for political supremacy fought on the lines of a war of religious creeds.

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