

Protestants, when the virtuous Krasinski, vil and religious freedom, from their hold raised the banner of his country in 1791 although the Reviewer maintains that the Protestants had accepted the God of Russia, and the titles of Princes and Barons. And were not many Roman Catholics, nay, several Bishops, convicted on that occasion of high treason to their country, and two of the latter executed on such a charge?

But, to return from this digression, we may remark that a certain value attaches to this history of the Polish Reformation, which does not belong exclusively to the works of Dr. Mc Cleis. These latter, referring to countries in which the Reformation was suppressed at its very beginning, can only relate the atrocious means employed for that purpose. But there is no scope in them for developing the effects of the suppression of the Reformed doctrine, after they had acquired a dominant authority over the public mind. Their influence, for example, had never been fairly tried in Italy and in Spain, as it had been in Poland. The charge of a persecuting spirit may, indeed, be successfully established against Romanism. Still, to a very limited extent, it can be refuted on Protestant grounds; and it may be made to appear less decisive of the demerits of the Roman Catholic system, by being ascribed to the barbarity of the age as much as to the principles of a Church. On the whole, therefore it is of more importance to show the moral and political effects of the triumph of Romanism over Protestantism, on account of the deplorable exhibition thus made of the loss sustained by any country, when once deprived of the advantages conferred on it by the Reformation. Nor ought we to omit the loss sustained by general and ecclesiastical literature by the religious re-action in question. For, as Count Krasinski assures us,—

"The Jesuits invariably exacted from the families which had relapsed into Romanism, the surrender of all books and documents connected in any way with their former persuasion, and which they always committed to the flames. They even purchased at a high price similar documents wherever they could get them, in order to devote them equally to destruction."

The history of the decline of the Reformation of Poland is very peculiar, on account of the three following characteristics ascribed by Count Krasinski to the tactics of its Romanist subverters:

"1. This extraordinary re-action was not effected by the strong hand of a legally constituted authority, as was the case in Italy, Spain, and some other countries; but by a bigoted and unprincipled faction, acting not with the assistance, but in opposition to, the laws of the country. Such an event is perhaps unparalleled in the annals of the religious world, and is the more remarkable, as the free institutions of Poland, which had greatly facilitated the progress of the Reformation, were afterwards rendered subservient to the persecution of its disciples.

"2. The most invariable and lamentably successful line of policy pursued by the Jesuits in Poland, was to agitate the lower classes, by the means of the confessional and the pulpit, and to insure, by their intrigues with the higher ranks of society, an impunity to the excesses which an intemperate mob committed at their instigation against the anti-Romanists.

"3. Yet these (other) calamities, great as they were, may be considered as less disastrous than the moral effect produced by the withering sway which the disciples of Loyola exercised for more than a century over the rational mind. They clearly saw that the surest means of extirpating scriptural doctrines was to fetter the national intellect, by means of a preposterous system of education; and they consequently introduced such a system into the public schools of Poland, which were for a long time almost exclusively conducted by them. This measure produced its natural consequences, science and literature were almost annihilated; and Poland, which had made rapid strides in every kind of improvement during the sixteenth century, instead of advancing, retrograded with equal rapidity."

Who does not see in the three levers thus employed by Jesuitism—one of them resting on excessive liberty of action, another on agitation of the lower classes, and a third on the education of the national mind—to subvert Protestantism, and with it

of the national institutions, a striking similarity to the means employed by Romanism in Great Britain at this eventful crisis, in order to accomplish the same ends? His story will be written in vain, if so instructive a record of the machinations of Popery, as the one under review, produce no other effect on its readers than that of stupid astonishment. It should rather excite to sleepless vigilance, and suggest systematic plans of counteraction.

In the earlier part of these volumes we have a philosophical appreciation of the causes, which, from more remote ages, were gradually paving the way for the overthrow of Romanism in Poland. We will here recapitulate the principal of them. For example; the existence of national churches, in which public worship was performed in the vernacular tongue, and the influence of this custom on the relations of Poland with Rome;—the disputes of the Kings of Poland with the Pope about the right of nominating Bishops, ending in the triumph of the former;—the marriage of Priests stillly maintained, as their Christian privilege, by the Popish Clergy;—the spread as far northward as Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Poland, of the primitive doctrines of the Waldensian churches in Italy;—the influence of Wickliff's "first, formal and decided expression to the evangelical truth;" who, though he did not create, yet gave a powerful impulse to the movement, which renovated the scriptural doctrines amongst the Slavonian nations;—the two important facts, first, that a Pole was amongst the three 1st martyrs of Huss's reformation; and, secondly, that the Polish nobility, present at the Council of Constance, protested against the imprisonment of Huss;—the consequent spread of the Hussite doctrines in Poland;—and, finally, the introduction and prevalence of the Lutheran doctrines. And here we may notice the political influences, which, under Providence, co-operated with the national predispositions engendered by the above causes, to secure the triumph of the Reformation. It was introduced in Poland at the commencement of the reign of Sigismund II.; and as this Prince, who not only gave no opposition to the new doctrines, but also threw the ample shield of royalty over their advocates, retained possession of the throne during twenty four years, time was given it to engrain itself in the nation's affections and institutions. Though Henry of Anjou, the first of the singly elected Princes, and the successor of Sigismund II. was indeed attached to the ancient religion, his reign was too short, embracing a period of five months only, to offer any serious impediment to the progress of the Reformation. During the reign of Henry's successor, a period of thirty-nine years, the new religion was again left at liberty to spread itself without let or hindrance from "the powers that be." This may be safely inferred from the memorable observation of that Transylvanian Prince. "That the Deity had reserved three things to himself,—the power of creating, the knowledge of futurity, and the government of the consciences of men!" Thus ample opportunities were allowed by divine Providence to the Polish Reformers to do all that human foresight could suggest, in so basing their vast undertaking upon "the best and surest foundations, that truth and justice, religion and piety, might be established among them throughout all generations." The elements of dissolution and decay, however, had insinuated themselves into the very foundations of the edifice of Reformed opinions, long before its superstructure began to totter and nod to its fall under the reign of Sigismund III., who, himself educated in the religion of Rome, proved himself to be at once the child and champion of that church, by zealously affording Court favour and protection to the Roman Catholics in their revolutionary projects.

We have now arrived at that period of the history of the Polish Reformation, which is fraught with instruction as to the causes of its decline. After noticing the evils which sprung from disunion among the Reformed, and the jealousies and ill-will which animated the Lutherans against the Helvetian and Bohemian Confessions on matters of minor moment, Count Krasinski thus proceeds:—

"But nothing did so much harm to the cause, as the anti-Trinitarian doctrines, which were among the Helvetian churches of that country. The great

which they infected many Reformed churches, not only altered the purity of their doctrine, and increased discussion among the Protestants, but they deeply injured the most powerful arm, by which the cause of the Reformation was and always will be promoted,—the searching of the Scriptures. Many persons, terrified by the boldness of the anti-Trinitarian speculations, were seduced by the Romanist doctrine into the belief, that the study of the Scriptures ought not to be allowed to all Christians, as being dangerous to the purity of their faith; and consequently remained in the Roman Catholic communion, which they were on the point of abandoning; or even, having already abandoned that Church, returned into its pale, preferring that persuasion, in spite of its acknowledged errors and abuses, to a philosophical school, which reasoned away revelation itself, and reduced Christianity to a mere code of ethics. It is almost superfluous to add, that one unavoidable consequence produced by such a school was religious indifference, and that such indifference was destructive to a party whose followers were constantly tempted to desert it by every kind of seduction on one hand, and persecution on the other, as was the case with the Protestants in Poland."

Thus, in two ways, Rationalism powerfully contributed to the decline and final overthrow of the Polish Reformation; first, by so unsettling the minds of men, and so alarming timorous consciences, as to drive them for refuge into the absolute authority of the Romish Church; and, secondly, by producing such indifference to the vital doctrines, which separated the Reformed churches from Rome, as undid those, who were seduced into these hurtful speculations, to sacrifice their interests or endure persecution for the cause of Protestant truth. The deplorable dissensions introduced by these bold and lawless speculations into the Reformed camp revived the hopes of the Romanists, who gained strength by every thing that weakened their perplexed antagonists. But it was in an evil hour that the Trinitarian Protestants concurred with the Romanists to persecute the Unitarians. This persecution proved the prelude to another, which they themselves afterwards suffered from the very party, with whom they had co-operated for suppressing heresy by violence. Happier would it have been, had the orthodox Protestants of Poland contented themselves with repelling, as they repeatedly did repel, the overtures of the Socinian party to form a union with those Reformed churches, (to wit, the Helvetian, Bohemian, and Lutheran,) which the treaty of Sandomir eventually leagued in defence of great principles held in common, in opposition alike to the Rationalists and the Jesuits.

It is problematical how far success would have attended the well-devised treaty of Sandomir, had not its moral influence been weakened by the adoption of the political expedient of attempting to suppress heresy by violence. The Protestant cause was also strengthened by a conservative confederation between the Protestant Confessions and the eastern church. But although evangelical Protestantism might have survived the contest with Rationalism, and not have perished in its own excesses, it is doubtful whether any means conferring equality of civil privileges, could have secured it against its deadliest foe, the Order of the Jesuits.

"The Roman Catholic party having exhausted all the means they could dispose of in the country against the Protestants, and seeing their utter inability of longer maintaining their grounds against the rapid progress of the Reformation, the ultimate triumph of which in Poland seemed to be now quite certain, sought and found assistance from abroad. Cardinal Hosius, the leader of that party, considered with great justice, as the only chance of saving Romanism from its impending destruction in Poland, to call in the newly-established order of the Jesuits, who obeyed that call with alacrity, and hastened to the rescue of their church, reduced already to the very brink of ruin. Their efforts were crowned with a success, glorious to Rome, deplorable to Poland!"

If Rationalism had abased a happy system of mutual toleration, in harmony with the dictates of the Gospel; if such were the Jesuitism professed by the enlarged civil freedom which it enjoyed, by its own means

errors of the Protestant party, Count Krasinski lays great stress on the oversight, which conferred on the Romanists too much political power.—

"The anti-Romanists," says he, "ought not to have desisted until they had rendered their uncompromising enemy innocuous, by taking from him the means of injuring them, and reducing him to an equal footing with themselves; that is, until they had excluded the Bishop from the Senate, and declared, by the voice of the Legislature, that the Roman Catholic church was not the dominant one of Poland, and wrested from the Roman Catholic church these means of exercising influence on temporal affairs, which it possessed in preference to the anti-Romanist creeds."

This witness is true; and something more than "equal laws and a free constitution" is necessary in a Protestant state, if we would maintain Protestant ascendancy, in order to be on an equal footing in a cope with an enemy, whose recognized tactics are the abolition of heresy by every possible means, fair or foul, the perversion of national education to its own miserable purposes, the excitement of popular violence, and intrigues behind the throne.

But by whom is the book before us written? By an exiled Polish nobleman. The very circumstances, therefore, under which he writes, invest his statements and admonitions with a high degree of authority. His mournful recollections of the Augustan age of his country, when Protestantism gave Poland a lofty and influential bearing among the nations of Europe, as contrasted with that terrible overthrow, which has dismembered the empire, and scattered its valiant defenders, not only excite our deepest sympathy, but insensibly impel us into salutary trains of thought regarding the primitive dispositions of the moral Governor of the universe.

"No country in the world," says the Count, "affords a more striking illustration of the blessings which a political community derives from the introduction of a scriptural religion, and of the calamities which are entailed on a nation by its extinction; because Poland rose in its welfare and glory with the progress of the Reformation, and declined in the same ratio as the scriptural doctrines gave way to Roman Catholic reaction."

A more admonitory spectacle, in truth, could not be presented to the gaze of Protestant Englishmen, than the fate of Poland; especially considering that we are periling our civil and religious freedom, as the Poles of a former century did, by excessive concessions to a foe, that retaliates kindnesses like so many injuries. What limitations, indeed, should be imposed on Protestant liberality, it is not our business to define; nor yet to describe by what means the injurious dissensions of Protestants among themselves should be as much as possible circumscribed, and even extinguished. But Count Krasinski's volume suggests many practical hints on both these subjects.

Our task is done. We have said enough, we trust, to awaken the curiosity of our readers to examine the book for themselves. Christian politicians, and even statesmen, can not read it in vain. The author does not sink the philosopher in the mere theorist. He deals with facts, which he groups with skill, "neither aught extenuating, nor setting down aught in malice." He imparts an interest to the most arid details, by subordinating them to the illustration of great principles. His language as that of a foreigner, is remarkably clear, apposite, and energetic. On the whole, he has produced a work, which excites hope, that sufficient public encouragement will be bestowed on his labours to enable him to prosecute the plan he has so much at heart, that of tracing the progress of the Reformation throughout some of the principal countries in the north of Europe.

Provincial Parliament.

DEBATE ON THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT.

The house went into committee of the whole upon the Message of His Excellency and the despatch accompanying, relative to the seat of Government, when Dr. Christie moved the first of the resolutions of which he had given notice, as follows:—

"That it is the undoubted prerogative of the crown, and conformable to the practice