

Current Catholic Thought.

THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND.

"Signs are not wanting of a return from the apostasy with which the land has so long been cursed. Foremost among these is the adoption, one by one, of the truths and practices that were discarded. The dead bones of the plain have come together, and sinews and flesh shall come upon them. We await in hope the day when they shall receive their life from the Spirit of Truth and shall rise again a Catholic nation. Meanwhile, what is our duty? It is to be thorough Catholics—Catholics not only in name, but in deed; practical Catholics, fulfilling all our duties to God and to our neighbour, praying, hearing Mass, frequenting the Sacraments, keeping the days of fasting and abstinence, avoiding sin, practising virtue, loving God—this is the way for us to assist in the conversion of our country, and there is no other."—*Lenten Pastoral of the Bishop of Nottingham.*

CARDINAL MANNING.

Henry Edward Manning is to-day the most influential and popular ecclesiastic in England, and though surrounded by a Catholic aristocracy numbering in its ranks dukes, marquises, earls and viscounts—not to speak of barons, baronets, knights and esquires, with a host of titled ladies—he yet has ever been the friend of labour and the father of the poor. On every occasion and at any sacrifice Cardinal Manning has thrown himself heart and soul into every movement for the amelioration of the working classes, whilst his efforts in the cause of temperance have been superhuman. At enormous sacrifice to his high and holy office he gladly accepted a position on the commission to improve the condition and dwellings of the working classes in London, and, regardless of aristocratic influence, has upheld the people of Ireland in their mighty efforts to regain their lost Parliament.

Well may Cardinal Manning exclaim: "We are at this day the mother, friend and protector of the people. As the Lord walked among them, so His Church lives among them."—*Catholic Mirror, Baltimore.*

RITUALISM.

It is undoubtedly true that among the Ritualistic clergy there are many intellectual and thinking men. We do not believe that the great mass of Ritualists, those who make up its congregations, and constitute its numerical strength, are brought into it by a conviction of its historical truth, or by a belief that its position is logically impregnable. If such were the case, it would be perhaps a strong argument for such persons as take their religion on trust, because other people who are intellectual and clever, believe in or profess it. But we cannot admit even that moral support for our correspondent. We believe that the explanation of the progress and present strength of Ritualism (whatever they may be) is very simple. Ritualists who are clergymen, are men whose intellectual needs and spiritual longings are not satisfied with bald Protestantism; who want to be Catholic, but who cannot bring themselves to be Roman Catholic. They are irresistibly attracted by the Catholic spirit; they are repelled by the principles and practices of Protestantism, they go as far toward one and as far away from the other as they can. The inconsistency, the fatal weakness of their position is in the fact that they halt between the two, refusing to carry out their principles of revolt against Protestantism to their only logical conclusion—Catholicity.—*The Catholic Review, Brooklyn.*

CARDINAL GIBBONS ON THE KNIGHTS OF LABOUR.

Doubtless, among the Knights of Labour, as among the thousands of other workingmen, there are to be found passionate or even wicked men who have committed in-

excusable deeds of violence, and have instigated their associates to the same; but to attribute this to the association would, it seems to me, be as unreasonable as to attribute to the Church the follies or the crimes of her children, against which she strives and protests. I repeat that, in such a struggle of the great masses of the people against the mail-clad power which, as it is acknowledged, often refuses them the simple rights of humanity and justice, it is vain to expect that every error and every act of violence can be avoided; and to dream that this struggle can be hindered or that we can deter the multitudes from organizing, which is their only hope of success, would be to ignore the nature and forces of human society in times like ours. Christian prudence evidently counsels us to hold the hearts of the multitudes by the bonds of love, in order to control their actions by the principles of faith, justice, and charity; to acknowledge frankly what is true and just in their cause, in order to deter them from what is false and criminal, and thus to turn into a legitimate, peaceable and beneficent contest, what might easily, by a course of repulsive severity, become for the masses of our people a dread volcanic force, like unto that which society fears and the Church deplures in Europe.—*Letter to Cardinal Simeoni.*

CATHOLICS AND CURRENT LITERATURE.

It is not easy to grasp the enormous change that has, during this century, come over the character of the current periodical literature in its treatment of religious and philosophical subjects. Eighty years ago, in the youth of the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly*, when those now venerable Reviews enjoyed an unassailed monopoly of public favour, an essay openly attacking religion would have met with strong disapproval, if not some more pointed expression of the rebrobation of the community. Now, however, the title pages of the most fashionable periodicals are not considered complete without an article or two devoted to the eradication of some fundamental principle of natural or revealed religion. It is of vital importance that the gravity of this fact should be promptly realized by Catholics. The *Nineteenth Century*, the *Contemporary*, the *Fortnightly*, and a host of other such works are daily extending the field of their operations, and their philosophy, just as well as their politics and their science, is becoming the intellectual pabulum of the general public. In the past, a Catholic layman could, without much trouble, keep himself out of harm's way, and leave doctrinal and philosophical controversy to the theological specialist, but that course is now no longer possible. The contagion is in the atmosphere, and unless the educated Catholic has received a strong antidote, his faith will run great risks of being damaged, if not altogether destroyed. The only real safeguard is a solid grounding in the principles of sound Catholic philosophy.—*London Tablet.*

CATHOLIC AND LITERARY NOTES.

Archbishop Williams, of Boston, sailed for Europe last Saturday.

Among the presents to be sent to Pope Leo XIII. for his jubilee, France will send a splendid tiara designed in Italian sixteenth century style.

It is reported from Montreal that Louis Honore Frchette, the Canadian poet, who has just gone abroad, intends henceforth to reside permanently in France.

The forthcoming number of the *Scottish Review* will contain an article on French Canada, from the pen of Mr. John G. Bourinot, Clerk of the House of Commons, Ottawa.

"Ancient Legends of Ireland," a new book by Lady Wilde (Speranza), has appeared. It is said to be the most notable of this great Irishwoman's works, and to be pervaded by all her old spirit and patriotism.