

allowed to vote, and also complained, in words furnished by Acton himself, that the claim to enact dogmas by a majority endangered the freedom, as well as the universality, of the Council. But "the minority were in great confusion and uncertainty, and disposed to rely on external help." That help they never received. Acton put the danger as strongly as he could. Catholics, he declared, would "at once become irredeemable enemies of civil and religious liberty. They would have to profess a false system of morality, and to repudiate literary and scientific sincerity. They would be as dangerous to civil society in the school as in the State." But between Catholics who held that with such matters it would be profane for any Protestant to meddle, and Protestants who rejoiced that now at last the Catholics were coming out in their true colours, the Cabinet, if they had taken Acton's advice, would have had an uneasy, and barely defensible, position. So what he calls "this insane enterprise" of conferring upon the Pope an unconditional and unlimited infallibility was suffered to proceed without any political remonstrance from England. Mr. Odo Russell, afterwards Lord Ampthill, Lord John's nephew, was instructed to keep the Foreign Office informed of what happened at the Council, but his information was much less copious than Acton's. He was instructed to do anything more, and officially he was a member of the Legation at Florence. While other governments did nothing, the Italian Government, in Acton's opinion, made matters worse. Their measures of what he called confiscation against the property of the Church would, he thought, prevent some Italian bishops from voting in the minority who would otherwise have been disposed to do so. Yet, if Acton were right in his description of the Papal policy, he could hardly have been surprised that Liberal governments in Catholic countries should regard the Church as an enemy.

On the 15th of March 1870, a curious protest was presented to the Council by some bishops of the United