

England's Future. *

BY REV. EDMUND HILL, C. P.

HEARD a voice : " Ha ! now shall England fall—
 Her empire reft ! God's judgment-hour begins.
 He strikes ; and, mindful of her many sins,
 With blow on blow shall well repay them all !"
 Here Faith join'd chorus, bidding me recall
 Apostate power that snatch'd the bread of life
 From countless souls, and raised fanatic strife,
 And sought to butcher truth—like blinded Saul.

" Then serv'd the cult of Mammon," quoth the voice :
 " And work'd so well the logic of her creed,
 She grew, among all lands, the archfiend's choice
 For richest fruits of selfishness and greed.
 His gift of empire she accounts the sign
 Of Heaven's own sanction—recompense Divine !"
 I heard ; and knew a moment's flush of shame :
 But breath'd an *Ave*, and made calm response :
 " Let stand thy harsh indictment, for the nonce.
 Tho' where, O prophet, on the roll of fame,
 Dost find one people of unsullied name ?
 Or thinkest thou God slumbers for a day—
 Ay, for an hour—the while His creatures play
 Their suffer'd parts in crafty Satan's game ?

" But should, forsooth, the treasured ire descend
 On England's head—I bow my own, and say :
 ' Just are thy judgments, Lord—benign their end !
 For larger mercies they but pave the way '
 Let Albion's empire dwindle to a wraith :
 Small loss, I trow—regain'd her ancient faith !"
 Then spake a gentler voice : " Apostate power
 Tore, vulture-like, thy nation's Catholic heart
 From out her bosom. Her's the *victim's* part
 In current lies have duped her to this hour.
 But shall she perish—erst ' Our Lady's Dower ' ?
 Her saints,' her martyrs' cry is pleading still.
 The Giver of life is breathing where He will : (1)
 A ' second Spring ' nigh bursting into flower.

" Then may not Heaven permit her to retain
 Her world-wide sway—no more for lust of gold ;
 But to extend a truer freedom's reign,
 And ever widen the One Shepherd's Fold ?"
 Is this impossible penance, dear my Land ?
 I watch—I trust—" the change of God's right hand " (2)

* Written in the early part of the South African war.

(1) St. John 3:8.

(2) Ps. 70:11 (Vulgate reading, following the Septuagint.) It means the change wrought by God's right hand.