

THE WEEK.

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THE CHURCH OF IRELAND.

THE Right Hon. Dr. Ball, formerly Conservative Chancellor of Ireland, has given us a volume on "The History of the Reformed Church of Ireland" (Longmans and Company), combining entire mastery of the subject with an impartiality so judicial that hardly a sign of feeling, much less any sign of passion, escapes. It was well that, after all the agitation, the case should be thus reviewed by authority from the Bench. The melancholy history of the Irish Establishment may be summed up in a few words. It was, and it remained to the end, the Church of Conquest and of the English Pale, and access to the heart of the conquered people was, therefore, always denied it. By no change in its own doctrine could its relation to the natives be improved. Planted by the Norman liegemen and emissaries of Rome, it was at first distinctively Romanist, while the Celtic clans adhered, if to any religion, to that of St. Patrick and Columba, which knew not Rome. But when it became Protestant, the clans, from sheer antagonism of race, threw themselves into the arms of the Papacy, and became the allies or the tools of the Roman Catholic Powers in the deadly struggle between the two religions. Hostility, permanent and hopeless, could not fail to be the result, though an effort to bridge the chasm, and reach the hearts of the natives, might occasionally be made by a man of eminently Christian spirit, such as Bedell, whose form appears like that of a redeeming angel on the bloody field of ecclesiastical strife. Relations became still worse when the Protestants, after being massacred by the Catholics in 1641, and attainted wholesale by them in 1689, seeing, at the same time, how their fellow-Protestants in France and other countries were being treated by Catholic Governments, bound down their enemies with the fetters of the Penal Code. The spiritual life and force of the Establishment also suffered fearfully from the political abuse of patronage, which put at the head of the Church such a man as Archbishop Stone, and generally from its subjection to the State in irreligious and corrupt times. Nor, even without these drawbacks, was a sober, formal, and somewhat cold worship, such as orthodox Anglicanism, likely to find acceptance with the fervid Celt. Methodism made way among the Celts in Ireland, as it did in Wales and Cornwall, and as Presbyterianism, of a specially enthusiastic type has among the Celts of the Scottish Highlands; but Anglicanism is the religious system of the Anglo-Saxon—perhaps we might say of the English gentry. The Protestant clergy were, however,

socially very useful as a resident gentry where the landowners were too generally non-resident. The liberal Roman Catholic Bishop Moriarty, in a passage cited by Dr. Ball, has borne generous testimony to the good done by them in that capacity, as well as to the general kindness and courtesy of their demeanour towards their Roman Catholic fellow-citizens. Socially, Ireland has lost by Disestablishment. Spiritually, we cannot doubt that the Reformed Church has greatly gained by it; and that, if her doctrine is sound and her system good, happier years are now before her. Dr. Ball could render the nation a very great additional service if he would write a history of the Union in the same judicial spirit in which he has written the history of the Reformed Church, and thereby put an end to partisan exaggeration and to wild talk about "devilish engineering," "black-guardism," and "St. Bartholomew." We earnestly commend the proposal to his favourable consideration.

RISE AND CONSTITUTION OF UNIVERSITIES.

MR. LAURIE'S lectures on the "Rise and Constitution of Universities" (Kegan Paul and Company) will be found a comprehensive treatment of one of the most interesting of historical subjects. Mr. Laurie traces the fall of Roman, the rise of Christian, education, and the gradual development, during the ecclesiastical middle ages, of the University system, the prototypes of which were the schools of Salerno and Naples, lights of early morning in a land which, by the adverse accidents of history, was afterwards consigned to a long night. In the days before printing, when knowledge could be acquired only by resort to the living oracle of the professorial chair, the Universities had an importance of which printing has in some measure deprived them; and there is nothing in intellectual history so romantic as the Paris or Oxford of the thirteenth century, crowded with eager students who had flocked from the dark realms of feudalism to the source of intellectual light and hope. The thirty thousand students of Oxford are no doubt a fable, even if we should reckon in the number the servants and attendants, all of whom were regarded as Academic persons, and enjoyed Academic immunities from the common law; but we know that at Oxford the concourse was so great that the bastions of the city wall were used as lodging-houses. That the student population was close packed appears from a case in which, a student having committed a murder and decamped, mediæval justice satisfied itself by hanging his four chums, or "chamber dekyns," as they are called. The turbulence, not seldom attended with bloodshed, which, as well as intellectual enthusiasm, prevailed in that youthful multitude, naturally suggested the idea of gathering the students for the purpose of regular government out of the private lodgings and hostels in which at first they dwelt, into colleges where the discipline of the Monastery was combined with the studies of the secular students. The first real college in England was Merton, founded by the Chancellor of Henry III., and in the quaint old quadrangle of Merton, called, nobody seems to know why, "Mob Quad," the visitor to Oxford sees the cradle of collegiate life. As the foundation of Colleges increased, that of Monasteries declined, and the growth of Universities may be regarded, perhaps, as the most important of those streaks of dawn which heralded the day of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in the statutes of which we find ourselves in full Renaissance, was founded on the eve of the Reformation by a prelate whose first intention had been to found a monastery, but who changed his design in deference to the advice of a shrewd brother bishop, who warned him that the doom of monkery was at hand. At a later period the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge completely absorbed the Universities, though recent reforms have restored to the University its separate life, and revived the activity of the University Professors, who, before 1854, had been completely supplanted by the College Tutor. To Mr. Laurie it appears a grave question whether it will be possible for Universities ultimately to maintain their freedom under a democratic social system. The tendency of the democratic spirit, he says too truly, "is to make all institutions tools of dominant though temporary opinion, or servants of a central bureau." He points to the case of France, where the University has been a mere office of the State, with results which he thinks by no means satisfactory. The New Despot, like the old, deems his own will divine, and tolerates nothing which pretends to exist by any other title.