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THE PRESENT OCCUPANTS OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

A DISCOURSE BY HIS EMINENCE THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.

(From the Catholic Standard.)

His Eminence commenced his discourse by giving a brief sketch of the life of St. Edward, and of the history of Westminster Abbey; and then proceeded to inquire whether those who had obtained possession of that venerable building—glorious even in its decay—could be regarded as the inheritors of the faith which St. Edward professed, or as members of the same Church to which the holy King belonged. His Eminence drew attention to the circumstance, that Westminster Abbey was a monument of St. Edward's devoted loyalty to the Holy Apostolic See, having been erected at the express desire of the Holy Father (in commutation of a vow which the saint had made to visit the tombs of the Holy Apostles), and in honor of St. Peter. "But how is St. Peter and his See regarded?" continued his Eminence, "by those who have now possession of Westminster Abbey? The events of the last two years may furnish a reply to this question, without referring to their doctrinal teaching on this subject. St. Edward was firm in his adherence to the See of St. Peter, and the consequence was, that his people enjoyed that greatest of all blessings—religious unity. The present occupants of the Abbey have substituted an earthly supremacy, a Lay Headship over the Church, for that which was of Divine institution, and what is that result? Have they religious unity? Alas, my brethren, you know that utterly different doctrines are frequently taught from the same pulpit. You may one day hear, perhaps, the practice of Confession extolled as useful and edifying; and the next, or the same afternoon, another preacher may denounce it in terms not fit to be repeated. Some profess to believe as we do as to the effects of the Holy Baptism; others regard the Catholic doctrine on the subject as a 'soul-destroying heresy.' Some will tell you that they believe the real presence of our Lord's body and blood: others declare that the Holy Eucharist is a mere commemorative rite. And so on, with most other doctrines; and if we go beyond the Abbey precincts, and cast our eyes over the city, we shall find that there are chapels and meeting-houses of almost endless sects, to be found in the streets—a further proof of the absence of religious unity in England. But look at the building, my brethren, at the very walls—who will say that it was originally intended for the purpose to which it is now devoted? Were those venerable cloisters erected to furnish residences for a married clergy, a room for abortive Conventions, or a school for the education of youth who recite their Pagan plays within a few feet of St. Edward's tomb? Surely you must all see that they are far better adapted for the solemn chant or pious meditation of the hooded monk; and if we enter the sacred building, we shall find the stalls which these holy religious occupied, and in which they chanted the Divine praises, either empty, or (for the most part) filled by the congregation! And what has been substituted for these glorious services and rites, for which Westminster Abbey was erected? A meagre form of prayer, 'performed,' by a band of paid officials, apparently unqualified in every way for such a duty; and this cold service is estimated accordingly even by those who occasionally attend; for Protestant Cathedrals are proverbial for their unattractive and slovenly worship. And where is the altar? Alas! a bare table is now all that remains to mark the place where it once stood; and the daily sacrifice has ceased. It is true that what is called a communion service—expressly excluding the very idea of a sacrifice—is sometimes read there; and that more rarely still, bread and wine are placed upon it, and mutilated Catholic prayers recited. But who believes that this is a sacrifice (the doctrine being expressly denied by the founders of the new church) or is so simple as to suppose that when all is done and said, any change whatever is effected in the elements?—No, my brethren, their words of consecration are spoken into the air; no angels listen to them; the ear of God is deaf to them; and after they are pronounced, the 'creatures of bread and wine' remain just what they were before, neither more nor less, mere bread and wine; and the great majority of Anglicans, clergy as well as laity, believe accordingly, and do not even pretend that they are anything else. But here, my brethren, within these humble walls, that tremendous sacrifice at which it was St. Edward's delight to assist, is day by day offered, and though it is, of course, a low Mass, said by a single priest, with a simple youth for an attendant, yet we, who are Catholics, know perfectly well that the humble service, with no exterior signs of grandeur, is more acceptable to God—on account of the dignity and worth of what is offered, for it is the Immaculate Lamb Himself—than the grandest display that

ever takes place in Westminster Abbey. Let it be a coronation if you will, with the best that this earth can afford, when the very 'bishops' of the Establishment are not afraid to appear in a Catholic vestment, and when the Anglican communion rite is celebrated with all the splendour that Protestantism can achieve—what is that rite but a mere offering of bread and wine (if, indeed, anything is offered) unchanged by an attempted but unauthorized consecration! You all remember the stone altar controversy; and the decision in that case, like the more recent one on the subject of Baptism is sufficient to show—without any reference to the manifestations which it elicited—that the Protestant church of England rejects the Catholic doctrine on this subject, as much as that of Baptism; or, at best, is content to tolerate utterly contrary opinions with reference to these great Sacraments. I was recently in a venerable minister, myself, and I observed upon the floor an altar stone, marked with the five crosses, to show that it had been dedicated to the holiest of purposes—consecrated by a venerable bishop probably a thousand years ago—cast aside as something vile, and profaned as if from a sense of duty. And so it was, my brethren, or at least that was the profession, for those who called themselves Reformers expressly enjoined that altar stones should be treated in this manner; and it appears that their wishes are scrupulously complied with by their descendants. It is, indeed, idle to suppose that St. Edward or our other ancient saints, would have regarded the present possessors of the consecrated building in which their sacred relics repose otherwise than as intruders; or would for one moment have recognised their religious claims; but amongst us they would find the same Sacrifice and services at which they assisted, still offered and recited; the same doctrines professed; the same Holy See of Peter obeyed; and here alone most assuredly would they find that religious unity which they so highly prized, and which is sought in vain without the fold of St. Peter. Who cares or thinks of St. Edward, in Westminster Abbey, now? Is his festival kept there, as it is by us, or, indeed, in any way whatever? Yes, St. Edward's day is remembered by the Protestant chapter. They know that Catholics are accustomed to visit his tomb on that day, and there show their love and devotion to the Saint of God; and every means is resorted to in order to prevent their doing this. You know that every kind of rudeness (to say the least) is displayed on these occasions; and that devout Catholics of both sexes are roughly pushed from the sacred spot, and that this is no longer a spot for such devotional practices! This conduct was again repeated this year, and it was commented upon in the public prints. We must admit, therefore, that so far St. Edward's day is remembered in Westminster Abbey, though certainly not as it used to be, or as it is still observed here.—And what shall I say of the great festival of the Saint whose name the Abbey still bears—the glorious Prince of the Apostles? Alas! my brethren, these are indeed sad changes. But the Catholic Church, when she has been deprived of her own, and her name is cast out as something execrated, quietly and humbly, in faith and confidence, begins her work over again, and patiently rebuilds the altar of God. She has been cast out of Westminster, which has been given to strangers; and a new faith and new rites have been substituted for those which she taught and performed; but she humbly submits to the will of God, who has permitted these changes, and here on this lowly spot, she rears again an altar to His Name, and a temple for His true worship."

CONFLICTS OF THE CHURCH.

(From the Catholic Standard.)

Events have occurred within the past year fraught with the highest interest, and pregnant with the deepest consequences to the Catholic world. Religious tendencies and evangelical sophisms, excited by natural passions and prejudices, have been working with a vigor and earnestness which have already led, or will ultimately lead, to the re-modelling of earthly constitutions and human laws, and to the re-construction of the pillars upon which the government of society is supposed to rest. In those countries whose rulers arrogate to themselves extreme liberality, arising from an unlimited exercise of freedom in matters of faith,—in those countries which Protestantism has more or less blasted with its presence, and introduced or matured revolutionary principles and anarchical actions,—in Holland, in New Grenada, and in England, measures have been framed and laws passed with the intention of laying down clear and distinctive landmarks as to how far religion shall interfere with human policy. The very foundations of the constitutions of these countries have been, as it were, and arrogating that divine right which the Almighty has placed in the Holy See,—viz., infallibility in determining true doctrine and exemption from error,—

might place themselves in a position of fancied security, so as to be able to say to the Church, advancing in the strength of her divine commission, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further." The kingdom of Holland was in the beginning of this year moving quietly on in its usual course, but, ere many months had passed, a cry was raised, and echoed, and re-echoed throughout the length and breadth of the land,—a cry which awakened religious passions and prejudices that had long slumbered and slept,—a cry that led to the dissolution of a Ministry under whose rule the country prospered, and established another Ministry whose fanaticism had led them to remodel the laws of the country professedly to prevent the very constitution and the dignity and independence of the throne, being entirely and utterly overthrown, but really for the purpose of persecuting and afflicting the Church of God. In New Grenada, the faithful and devoted sons of the Society of Jesus were banished from the country, and the Archbishop and Bishops expelled; and not many months since a new constitution was framed in that republic, which, while it professes to be the most liberal of all liberal constitutions, is in reality constructed with the view of persecuting the faithful. And it is necessary to speak of constitutional England to show that men, under the pretence of religious zeal, have taken their "glorious constitution" almost to pieces, in order that they might so re-model and so reconstruct it as to hinder the working of the Church and destroy her organisation? The "Ecclesiastical Titles Bill," the "Maynooth Commission Bill," the "Recovery of Personal Liberty Bill," will indelibly imprint upon our Statute Book the character of everlasting disgrace.

But this is only the natural working of that human system commonly known as Protestantism. It is human in the beginning and human in the end, and therefore must be opposed to that divine religion whose true followers must either conquer or suffer martyrdom. We have stood on the summit of the mountain and seen the glorious orb of day rising majestically in the east, pouring a flood of bright effulgence all around, but, in a little while, small and apparently insignificant clouds of mist rose imperceptibly from the cold and heather-clad earth, gradually waxing larger and larger, until the whole gathered and concentrated into one impenetrable cloud of mist, darkening every object around, and impervious to the rays of the sun. So is it with Protestantism. Small mists of error at first begotten in the heart and intellect of one individual, were communicated to others over whose minds similar mists hung, until they have gathered and concentrated into one mighty cloud, darkening the intellect, and making the soul impervious to the beaming rays of truth, so that the light of Scripture and tradition penetrates not the darkness, and the illumination even of supposed damned spirits, speaking through the agency of table-moving, is preferred to the living voice of the Spirit of truth speaking in and through the Church. Begotten of earth, it is earthly, and hostile to that which is divine, hostile in its principles, its maxims, its laws, its very constitution.

The Church seeks not and needs not the toleration of the world. She will enter into no compromise with her. Human laws will not stay its progress: she is guided by supernatural laws, and respects not the reason of man. It must submit to her authority. Therefore she stands immovable amid all the storms and tempests through which she passes in her onward course. Immutable as the pillars that support the throne of the Eternal, she makes her way irrespective of the malignity and machinations of men. While monarchies appear on the eve of dissolution, and human dynasties sink from view, she remains the same "yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever." Men frame measures and enact laws against her; and while they are engaged in their deliberations amid wrath and fiery words, her representatives meet together, but their consultations are pursued in peace and brotherly love and kindness. That charity without which the richest are poor, which dries the tear of sorrow, which lights the fading lamp of hope, which distils its precious balm to the hearts of the weary, and which is a pure emanation of the Divinity, fills the hearts and souls of the faithful, and enables them to conduct their deliberations under the influence of its cheering spirit.

THE VIRTUES OF THE IRISH.

(From the Catholic Telegraph.)

A short time since, we published an article on the "vices of the Irish," in which the dark side of the Celtic character was brought on in clear relief; as an act of justice, therefore, we add a few words designed to present the other and the fairer side of that much maligned character.

In considering the virtues of the Irish, we leave

out Ireland's great men. Her long array of canonised Saints, and Martyrs, and Doctors, her incorruptible Statesmen, her devoted and disinterested Bishops and Priests, have a history written, which needs from us no comment. We speak only of the virtues of Ireland's wretched and down-trodden masses, of the Railroaders, the hod-carriers, the day-men, with whom our country swarms.

In the first place, these common men will not be denied, even by their enemies, the virtue of Faith.—They have held to the faith in the midst of trials greater than those to which the Anglo-Saxon succumbed. Terror and flattery, proscription, confiscation, and outlawry, have been tried in vain upon them. For their faith they have suffered poverty, insult, contumely, exile. Their enemies make the constancy with which they have adhered to the Faith of St. Patrick a subject of reproach to them. Faith, therefore, with its accompanying virtues of reverence towards holy things, of obedience to their pastors, of deep and abiding desire not to go permanently wrong, belongs, undoubtedly, to the Irish.

Secondly, we presume no one acquainted with them will refuse to accord to the Irish their virtue of honesty. The scrupulous exactness with which they strive to pay their debts, the fidelity with which they use the money entrusted to their care by their employers, the simplicity with which they make known their real circumstances to those from whom they desire credit, are too well known, to need that we should expose them as virtues of the Irish.

Thirdly, the Irish are distinguished for the virtue of charity towards their neighbors, both in word and in deed. No true Irishman ever refused his mite to any one in distress. No true Irishman was ever a deliberate calumniator of his neighbor. An Irishman could not, for money, be induced to write, and re-write, and publish again and again, refuted calumnies. The children of Irish Orangemen will do that or any other dirty work, whereby they may turn a penny; but the true Irishman seems to live by such vile means, as the injury of his neighbors.

Fourthly, a trait that shines bright in the Irish character is, fidelity to kindred. Those who have witnessed the sacrifices of poor servant girls, to get together enough to buy a bank check for the poor old mother or father, or sister or brother, in the old country, need not be told how attached are the Irish to those to whom nature binds them. We have seen men who denied themselves even the necessities of life in order to relieve the wants of their kindred in Ireland. One man who lived in the country, walked forty miles in order not to diminish by the stage fare the sum of fifty dollars, necessary to purchase a ten pound check for his old mother. Another would not join in a pleasure excursion, because he remembered the dear ones awaiting at home the fruit of his labor in America. And so a thousand instances of poverty endured, of inconvenience suffered, and of insult disregarded, might be cited, showing the fondness with which the Celt clings to his kindred and his home. Contrast this with the indifference with which the Yankee wooden-nutmeg vender, or schoolmaster, or book agent speaks of the "old man" and "old woman" at home in Connecticut, and you will appreciate the natural virtue which in the midst of such untoward associations, preserves undiminished the fire of domestic, or, as St. Paul calls, "natural affection."

Finally, (for we should be endless were we to enumerate all the virtues of the Irish), the true Irishman retains, with all his desire for the prosperity of the land of his adoption, an ardent love for the land of his birth. There is not an Irish heart now but leaps at the prospect of England's coming downfall, and rejoices in the thought that the Green Isle is again to lift up her head and throw off the Anglo-Saxon chains that have so long fettered her.—God grant that their desire may be soon accomplished! But in the meantime, the love of the Celt to the land of his birth will not miss the reward.

SUPERSTITION IN IRELAND.

(From the Catholic Miscellany.)

It cannot fail to strike the most superficial observer, that fanaticism, though it is never completely inactive, discharges its virus more copiously at certain periods. The Saints at Exeter Hall, and the *Ratundo*, have these periodic discharges, and the late famine in Ireland stirred it up and brought it forth. The idolaters were chastened down to seriousness of spirit; this was their day of visitation, and the Saints determine not to let it pass by. The standard of the market measures their prospects of success. The *Times*, that great mouth-piece of English bigotry, cries out in hoarse tones the signal of attack. There is distress in Skibbereen! There is starvation in Conemara! To your tents O Israel. And forth-