

Church from the on-flowing tide of Romish superstition, more than an Act of Parliament, which can be only set in force by Protestant zeal, and will be a dead letter where there is Protestant indifference, the tide will flow on until the breastwork is sufficiently saturated to allow of the waters percolating through, until rent after rent is made, and nothing is left but a submerged bar to mark where once the waves were stayed. The English Church occupies a very proud historic and social position, but in both aspects is singularly and fatally open to danger from external attack and internal disloyalty. The historic side is the one which the Ritualists, by sympathy with a great idea, the oneness of the Church, have been led to regard with peculiar affection. Their whole aim may be very justly explained to be an effort to preserve the continuity of ecclesiastic tradition from the pre-Reformation epoch unbroken to this day. The very name of the unfathomable gorge which cuts off not their Church only, but all forms of modern life from mediæval times, is held in abhorrence. They fain would bridge the abyss of the Reformation by a succession of links added to links, as a suspension bridge is built, each growing on towards the opposite goal where the connection is desired, where it will be completed, and, when complete, would re-unite the Churches which this historic chasm divides. A movement like that is not to be stopped by an Act of Parliament, which simply supplies cheap machinery for keeping public worship within legal bounds. Vestments, incense, genuflections, and the like, are merely the outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual life of those who adopt them, and that life, based as it is on what is thought to be religious conviction, however shallow it may be or fanciful, will only be intensified by efforts to repress its outer manifestations, as the vine tendril thickens and the grapes are enriched by the pruning knife. But Ritualism derives a wonderful degree of strength from the social statutes of the State Church, which gives its clergy a well-understood position over those of other Churches. This privilege is very fondly cherished by the clergy. Their untimely assertions and defences of it afford inces-

sant sport to the satirical laity, but it is too sacredly allied to the instinctive vanity of man to be shaken by any ridicule. The growing educational status of the Nonconforming clergy threatens to disturb this caste privilege enjoyed by the ministry of the State Church; hence their morbid hankering after some more distinctive dress and some spiritual functions to differentiate them and their office from their rivals. They see with alarm the tendency to equality in the age, and especially fear the equalization in society of men equal in education, ability and character. That alarm, that fear, have given great impetus to Ritualism, especially amongst the younger clergy, and of them those most stirred by these mean incentives and impulses have been the students from the cheap colleges for training the clergy, which are filled by illiterate graduates seeking to enter the Church's ministry with the least possible trouble to pocket or brain. Take from Ritualism its support derived from the historic aspect of the Church, its division from, and therefore possible reunion with, the more ancient communion of Rome, and the impetus which comes from its social aspect, the craving for distinctive marks of a priestly calling, and the homage paid to one with priestly powers and functions, and it would be a thing of naught. But while men love antiquity; while men yearn more for union with the *old* rather than the *true* Church; while men delight to sit in the chief seats of synagogue and society; while men are swayed by imagination and moved by a childish love of symbol and pomp; and while a Church exists which allows full play to all these tendencies, there must be such developments in worship and teaching as the new Act will be powerless to repress. The Act assumes that every bishop is an Anti-Ritualist. The assumption were more true were it reversed. Recently in Convention one of the best men in the Episcopate, an apostle in zeal, piety, self-sacrifice, the Bishop of Lichfield (he who rebuked the whole Bench for their "sumptuous living and aping the manners," as he said, "rather of Barons than Shepherds of Christ's flock)," moved that vestments be authorized in celebrating the Eucharist. No! Ritualism will not be put down by an Act of Parliament. It will, however, be kept in bounds by some act of the people, or the Church which is disloyal to itself as a Protestant mission and power, will be put down from its high position as a State institution.