

CONSIDERATIONS OF CATHOLICISM BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.

Sacred Heart Review.—CCCIV.

The "Presbyterian Witness" of March 19, has the following paragraph:

"Our Irish friends are not by any means happy. They still insist upon Home Rule. They still claim a University with a 'Catholic atmosphere.' They have formed a 'Catholic Association,' which is intended to root out all Protestants from the land; but Archbishop Walsh has expressed disapproval of it, and it may not do much harm."

Here are three gibes at the Catholic Irish, the third accompanied with a great exaggeration. Let us consider them in turn.

The tone of this paragraph, as we see, is that of contemptuous surprise that the Catholic Irish should presume to crave anything which their Protestant countrymen do not wish them to have.

Of course, setting aside the Parnells, and Emmetts, and Lord Edwards, etc., the Irish Protestants, in view of Catholic Emancipation, are hardly desirous of seeing an Irish Parliament, since they lean upon the Westminster Parliament in the hope of maintaining the ascendancy which otherwise their great numerical inferiority would render impossible. Is it not rather unreasonable, though, to expect that the Catholic three-fourths will ever be contented while so large a proportion of public functionaries, of every grade, is taken from the minority, even after making full account of their advantages of education and of the Scottish energy which so many of them inherit. I speak as one that has a little Irish blood, but not a drop of Scottish.

Like it or dislike it, we may depend upon it that "Celtic obstinacy" is not likely to give over until, without doing any wrong to the minority, the general complexion of Irish administration shall have been brought more nearly into agreement with the interests and instincts of the immense majority. Whether the final settlement will take the form of a Dublin parliament or not, of course I do not know, as both islands must agree in the ultimate adjustment. In some form, however, Home Rule is a certainty of the future. As Justin McCarthy well says, the ocean insists on union; the sea forbids identification. It has been reasonably remarked that, should the Irish be removed in a body, and their place taken by unmixed English or Scotch, geographically necessity would soon induce a Home Rule question.

The sneer of our friends of the "Witness" (after all, a not very ferocious one) becomes more pronounced over the Catholic demand for a University "with a Catholic atmosphere." What is there amiss in this? One would think it was the most natural and reasonable request in the world. The Protestant fourth has a University, endowed by the State, with so very decided a "Protestant atmosphere" that one of its Professors (Tyrrell) feels himself free to publish an almost ferocious satire, in verse, upon the Catholic Church of Ireland. Surely Catholic parents may very well wish to be aided by the Government in setting up a school where their sons shall not be exposed to the influence of such teachers.

That pleasant writer, Miss Ellen Thorneycroft, in one of her agreeable novels sets forth with Irish acidity, while declaring herself an unmovable Anglican, the claims which the Irish have in equity to a Catholic University. She has a right to represent the passage of the bill as a thing of the past, for it is a simple certainty of the future. The present Government, it is known, headed by its Presbyterian chief, acknowledges the rightfulness of the claim, although even when it was a government, it had not the nerve to carry it through.

The present Bishops of the English Establishment are men of high character, marked ability, and a sober mind. Their sympathies of course are strongly engaged for Trinity College, Dublin. Yet I believe that the whole body of them, headed by the two Primates, has expressed emphatic approbation of

the Roman Catholic claim. Surely this means a good deal for unprejudiced minds. The "Spectator" too, which is fixedly Protestant, and sometimes more zealously than intelligently so, treats the right of the Irish to a Catholic University as past all question. Indeed, aside from party complications, it does not seem to be seriously questioned by thinkers.

Why is it then, that the Nonconformists are so firmly, indeed so fiercely, against it? We may answer: the present Nonconformists are against anything and everything that will please or profit either Churchmen or Catholics. Bitter religious animosity has a leading part in their programme, and well-advised justice a very subordinate part. They have, through many generations, slowly and painfully wrought their way, first from under flagrant violence, then from under dull oppressiveness, until now, when their numbers have come to rival those of the Episcopalians, they may be said to have entered upon their actively persecuting stage. Indeed, their great leader, the Baptist Dr. Clifford (personally a very amiable man) declares that he is following the example of M. Combes, although, he makes haste to add, he is not against religion! Think of that! A Christian pastor finding it necessary to assure men that he is not an enemy of religion!

"FACILIS DESCENSUS AXER-NO."

When a man has gone so far as to have need of making such an avowal, he, and his followers, are on the way to worse. Indeed, one Nonconformist league has already put out a tract or two sounding not obscurely like a threat to put down all priests in England, Catholic or Anglican. To be sure this has given such offence to the less ferocious that even a zealot like Dr. Horton has withdrawn in disgust from the league. Yet this only exaggerates beyond decency what I may fairly call a persecuting temper of the Nonconformists at large.

Their chief immediate displeasure, naturally, is turned against the Episcopalians, but they are relentlessly hostile to the reasonable and equitable proposal to secure for the Irish a university "with a Catholic atmosphere," but under lay administration. Mr. Arnold White has reason to say, that their wish is not for religious equality, but for Protestant ascendancy.

They are not content with the measure of ascendancy which is necessarily involved in an overwhelming Protestant majority of the whole kingdom. They are not willing that the Catholic three-fourths of Ireland should have that higher education which is secured to the Protestant one-fourth, unless they will take it under Protestant auspices, including, of course, the auspices of Professor Tyrrell. Therefore the brilliant-minded Irish are so handicapped in the race of life, that fair-minded Viceroy and Secretaries lament that they can not give that measure of public employment to young men that they cannot find a sufficient portion that are suitably trained. This unhappy fact seems to give the Nonconformists not an ounce of concern. "Take your intellectual bread from Protestant hands," they say, "or go without it. At least you shall not, with our good will, have a penny out of the treasury to assist you."

These men do not seem to see that, even from their own point of view, the higher education, besides being a natural right of the major, if it is of the minor part, naturally tends to train independence of mind, and to reduce undue subservience, so that educated men and women, retaining their religion are easily raised above superstition, or mere unreasoning adulation. It is true, however highly educated, they are almost sure still to merit the reproach of Dr. Clifford's exemplar, M. Combes, by continuing to dislike divorce, by holding aloof from lodges, and by detesting necromancy. Yet these are forms of Protestant enlightenment for which we can hardly suppose that the Presbyterian Witness is very enthusiastic.

There are men among the Nonconformists, such as Dr. Fairbairn

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Dr. McKennal, Dr. Shakespeare, who, in thoughtfulness and piety, are equal to the best of the Anglican bishops. Yet forty years ago, I began to have misgivings whether the English Dissenters were not falling into practical atheism, so that I was not greatly surprised to hear subsequently the complaint of a Welsh congregationalist, that the churches of his persuasion were becoming mere infidel clubs. Now, too, I observe complaints from Baptists and Independent ministers and deacons that their churches are becoming mere associations for assailing the prevailing religion of England. Can it be that hatred of Religion, finding in England too many impediments to avowed organization, is making its way, more or less, into the Nonconforming churches, in order, under the name of a warfare against priestcraft, to carry on a

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STINGINESS IN EDUCATION.

The following thoughtful editorial of which we have taken the liberty to make the title more specific, is from the Montreal "Star" of June 18:—

"Amongst the changes that have come over society within fifty years or so, is one that does not seem to be for the better, to say the least. The very poor two or three generations ago, were prepared to make sacrifices to give their children education. Their money was hard earned—harder earned on the whole than it is today—and yet when it came to a question of giving an education to their children, the carefully saved pennies and shillings came out. Today there is probably no expense that is so much grudged—and this not by any means among the very poor only—as expense for education. Money is readily forthcoming for pleasure in its various forms; it is never grudged for tobacco or whiskey by those who make use of these material means of consolation; nor for various little expenses suggested by social rivalry rather than by actual need. When it is wanted for school books, or for any other purely educational purpose, the case is quite altered. Never does fifty cents seem so huge a sum as when its destination is the purchase of a school book, just as it never slips through the fingers so easily as when it is wanted for some favorite indulgence. The old feeling, that used to be associated with the efforts of parents to get their children educated is a thing of the past; and yet in its day it was one of the most distinctly elevating influences that existed in society. It benefited the parents, as all worthy sentiments do those who entertain them; and it benefited the children whose home affections were strengthened by the knowledge of the sacrifices made on their behalf. Has modern progress given us anything that quite replaces what was at once a household bond and a lesson in the higher meanings of life?"

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One of the pictures is called

"Heart Broken"

We will not let the reader into the secret of what has happened, but one of the merry little companions of the woeful little maid who has broken her heart is laughing already, and the other hardly knows what has happened. Cut flowers nod reassuringly at them, and a bright bit of verdure covered wall stands in the background. There is something piquantly Watteauesque about one of the petite figures, suggesting just a touch of French influence on the artist.

The other picture presents another of the tremendous perplexities of childhood. It is called

"Hard to Choose"

As in the other picture, we will not give away the point made by the artists before the recipients analyze it for themselves. Again there are three happy girls in the picture, caught in a moment of pause in the midst of limitless hours of play. One of the little maids still holds in her arms the toy horse with which she has been playing. Flowers and butterflies color the background of this, and an arbour and a quaint old table replace the wall.

The two pictures together will people any room with six happy little girls, so glad to be alive, so care-free, so content through the sunny hours amidst their flowers and butterflies, that they must brighten the house like the throwing open of shutters on a sunny morning.

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