

THE FOE OF OUR FREEDOM.

IGNORANT PROTESTANTS THE BEST TOOLS OF THE PAPACY.

SOLEMN WORDS OF WARNING.

Posterity will be sensible of a deep debt of gratitude to the Rev. Principal MacVicar, D.D., Presbyterian College, Montreal, for his determination to alarm the public with regard to threatened dangers from Papal designs. His voice has been that of one crying in the wilderness: the world, intent on its political combinations and wire-pulling, has only been equalled by the Church, occupied in theological hair-splitting, in fatuous indifference to the learned Principal's indications of the perils to which our state and municipal institutions are exposed by the schemes of the implacable enemy of God's Word and man's freedom. The patience with which he has long battled with obloquy, the courage with which he has discharged his duty in the premises, although exposed to accusations of bigotry, are at length beginning to have their reward in the awakening of the national conscience with respect to its accountability for the iniquities of Rome: an accountability which every Protestant elector in the Dominion must discharge at the Highest Tribunal by an explanation of the reasons which induced him to consent to the laws regulating the collection of Romish imposts in the Province of Quebec. In this life political exigencies and business entanglements are sufficient answers to troublesome inquiries on such points—

There is no shuffling; there the action lies
In its true nature, and we ourselves compelled,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence.

When will Protestant electors abandon their shameless hypocrisy which leads many at least of them to pray on Sunday for the speedy conversion of Roman Catholics, and then, during the week, to yield implicit support to the political institutions and parties which abet the Romish hierarchy in keeping millions of our fellow-country-men in degrading spiritual bondage? Here we may be permitted to say that Orangemen are not blameless in this matter. Rome will be speedily overthrown if the brethren of our Order will exert their best energies in enlightening their co-religionists and bringing them to see the need of action; but her downfall will be delayed indefinitely if we confine our efforts to attending lodge meetings and parades. Brethren, what we need is work, your individual work. Gather all

the facts you can about the position of the Papal Church in the Dominion. Think about them, talk about them in your daily conversation. It will be a change from the weather and the crops which is to be feared are often the sole topics of discourse. Most important of all, act upon your knowledge of these facts at the polling-booth.

Men are among us who have understanding of the times, who know what our people ought to do, one of these men is the scholarly writer, who, in Knox College Monthly, speaks out in this vigorous fashion:

It is not very surprising that people generally are ignorant of Romanism. The Church believes in secrecy, and hides her designs and resources and many of her potent doings from public inspection. She denounces secret societies, and then practises what she condemns. It thus becomes extremely difficult, indeed impossible, to gain a full knowledge of her practical movements. And as to her historic past, of which she always proudly boasts, it is to most Protestants a *terra incognita*. They will not waste time, as they express it, over the musty records of bye-gone theological strifes. They have a vague tradition of the intolerance, tyranny and persecutions of Rome a few centuries ago, but cannot be persuaded that in spirit, policy and general beliefs that Church is always the same. Our schools and school-books shed

NO LIGHT ON SUCH MATTERS.

Although Protestant, they must be silent on a system thoroughly antagonistic to their very existence. Few parents, we have reason to think, take care to instruct their children as to the nature of Romanism. They are not told that by that system the Bible is forbidden to be read in the household and school room. It is not made clear to them that the Pope is in no sense the successor of Peter, and that it is blasphemy for that ecclesiastic to call himself infallible, and claim to be Head of the Church. They are not taught it is contrary to Scripture and highly sinful to observe seven sacraments instead of the two instituted by Jesus Christ, and to ascribe to baptism what can be accomplished only by the Spirit of God, and to supplement the efficacy of the Saviour's blood in removing sin by the purifying power of the tormenting flames of a fabulous purgatory. They are not warned against the enslaving and corrupting influence of the Confessional, and the weak credulity engendered by the acceptance of the pretended miracles and numerous fetiches of Rome. They are not told that it is gross idolatry to pray to saints and angels, and to worship the Virgin Mary and a wafer called the Host, which is declared

to be changed by the manipulations of a priest into the very divinity and humanity of the Son of God. So far as family training is concerned, it is safe to say that Protestant children, generally, are allowed to grow up with the impression that there is nothing specially wrong in Romanism, that it is as good as any other form of religion, and that its votaries are usually characterized by eminent piety and zeal. Then as to Protestant pulpits little or nothing is now said in the majority of them touching the theological errors of Rome. A considerable number of ministers even favor some of her distinctive tenets, such as the confessional, the use of incense, altar lights, ornaments, crucifixes, prayers for the dead, the adoration of saints and the sacrifice of the mass. With very many others the theme is unpopular.

Those who wish to be at peace with the political magnates of their flocks, and who are anxious to "draw," i.e., to make inroads on neighboring congregations, and to gather round them easy-going people of all sorts, shun the subject with scrupulous care. Indeed, where wealth, fashion and politics, with their frequent concomitant ignorance, rule, it is deemed in bad taste, narrow, ungenerous and illiberal to expose any respectable error. The popular thing to do, and what is sure to be commended by a certain section of the press, is to express considerate sympathy with errors as "honest doubters," or to give occasional exhibitions of what may be called theological rope-dancing, in which the acrobat shows how skilfully he can play with sacred things, and what risks he can run, without being punished for his temerity. If Romanism is touched at all it is only to show in how many points it agrees with the Reformed Churches, and how much charity and heroic self-denial are manifested by priests, nuns, and Jesuit missionaries. Do we not all believe in the one God—in the Trinity, the divinity of the Son and the Spirit, the inspiration of Scripture, the unity and catholicity of the Church, the necessity of good works, the efficacy of prayer, and the desire to reach the same heaven in the end? Why should we magnify our differences? Men must be allowed freedom of thought as well as action. It is an impertinence to meddle with any man's creed; and, therefore, instead of criticising and opposing Romanism, it is the duty of all enlightened citizens to seek to dwell together in unity and peace in this goodly land which the Lord has given us as our common heritage.

This is one, and a very common way of viewing the matter among those whose ignorance is dense, and who are apparently unwilling to inform themselves. I know a