

CONSIDERATIONS ON CATHOLICISM BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.

CCLXVII.

Sacred Heart Review.

Of course, when I speak of the cunning which has been used to regulate what Protestants shall know, my readers will not misunderstand me as having any reference to general knowledge. The connection makes plain that I am speaking of the art shown in keeping from general Protestant apprehension the seamy side of the Reformation. This has been almost a sealed book to us until the disclosures of Lanssen in Germany, and of such writers as Gairdner in England, Andrew Lang and Goldwin Smith, and I know not how many others, are helpers for enlightenment. This cunning, for the most part, has worked instinctively rather than deliberately, but the results are the same. The Reformation and the Reformers have been presented to us as all brightness, and the opposition to them as all darkness, or at the best as unintelligence and moral weakness. The many noble and strong motives and personalities that opposed themselves to the Great Innovation have been hid from our eyes, except as a few of the great Catholic worthies, such as Catherine of Aragon, and More and Fisher, had forced themselves into view and into reverence. Edmund Campion, the great Jesuit, is coming to take place beside these, notwithstanding Froude's wily disparagement of him.

Until lately, so cordial and appreciative an article as that on the Counter-reformation by Bishop Hurst, in the "Methodist Review"—an article nevertheless distinctively and firmly Protestant—would hardly have been possible. However, we are beginning to tire of the merely legendary, and to desire the knowledge of the historical Reformation, with all its good and all its evil.

The result of such a readjustment in the light of fact will be that a very considerable number will return to the elder Church. Why should they not? If they are Protestants only by mistake, not knowing what original Protestantism was, it will surely be a good thing for them to follow their true affinities.

The much larger number, who, as I believe, are likely to remain where they are, will nevertheless learn modesty, and cease to flourish their partisan flag so belligerently over the heads of their Catholic brethren. And growing charityableness is certainly a growth in genuine Christianity. I am far from being a Swedenborgian, but Emanuel Swedenborg's protest in favor of charity, against a fruitless faith, wrought, under an exceedingly aberrant form, somewhat of the same result with the Roman protest of identical tenor. The "Spectator" expresses considerable vexation over a late writer, who declares of the Fathers of Trent that "they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. In other words because they doubted whether Antinomianism is a good thing, even though commended by Martin Luther. However, the "Spectator" would doubtless own that such a talker does most harm to himself.

It is curious, how this instinct of obscuring uncomfortable facts is attributed to some men of whom we should hardly expect it. For instance, we should say that Charles Kingsley, for all his pugnacious dislike of Roman Catholics on the one side, and of Methodists on the other, would insist on having every facility for the knowledge of historical facts thrown open to either party of his antagonists, whether making for him or against him. It seems hardly possible to believe anything else of so frank and outspoken a nature, such a lover, apparently, of the light. Yet it is said, and I judge on sufficient authority, that Kingsley protested angrily against admitting Dr. Lingard to view the public records, lest this careful and dispassionate Catholic historian should disclose that all was not fairy-land under Edward VI. and Elizabeth, and so should prejudice "the cause of the Blessed Reformation."

Such a fault in such a man is humiliating; for if it is true of him, what is to be expected of the rest of us? Yet it is a question whether so extreme a partisanship, even in so frank a nature, is easily consistent with honesty. Polemical intensity too easily passes into malignity, and malignity can never be honest.

It is diverting sometimes to see how the same instinct of hiding disagreeable facts comes out in commoner natures. For instance, the archivist of Cardiff, Wales, chances to be a Catholic. As he was unsuspectingly publishing the town-records, and had come down to the time of Henry VIII., a protest was made in a newspaper against his disclosing the entries of Henry's church-spoilation in Cardiff and Glamorganshire. If people come to know, protests the zealous townsman, the whole amount of the King's confiscations, what will they think of him and his Reform? However, the men of Cardiff, though no doubt good Protestants, remain undisturbed, and the archivist goes on printing the records as he finds them.

To turn to a different matter, Mr. Lansing is much displeased with a Catholic editor who says that Elizabeth murdered Mary Stuart. He imputes this opinion to the whole body of American Catholics as a crime against the Republic. This seems very droll. These two great princesses lived a long while ago, and across the ocean. Our unlucky Catholics, to be arraigned for high treason against the United States because they differ from Mr. Lansing's opinion of a contest decided 3,000 miles and 316 years away, between two claimants of the English crown!

True, Mary and Elizabeth have had very important historical relations to our country. So have Caesar and Cicero. I greatly dislike Froude's laudations of Caesar, and am well pleased with Trollope's eulogy on Cicero. Yet I own it never occurred to me, while Mr. Froude was alive, to suggest a demand for his extradition, on the ground of treason against the American people. I claim to be as sincere, but I am afraid I am not as strenuous a patriot as the Rev. Isaac J. Lansing. I had supposed that a man might be a good American, or indeed Englishman, whether he thought, with John Wesley, that Mary was a saint and martyr, and Elizabeth a tyrant and murderess, or whether he reversed the titles. However, as Mr. Lansing, in his book, officiates as Chief Justice and Chief Pontiff of America, I suppose, however it may fare with John Wesley, that we Americans must submit to Lansing's supreme jurisdiction. I would move, therefore, that the Catholic editor in question be beheaded on a scaffold as nearly as possible resembling that on which the Queen of Scots suffered, as being an accomplice of her iniquities.

Why was not Mr. Lansing born earlier? He might have saved universal Christendom from the guilt of esteeming Elizabeth a murderess and Mary a victim. This has been the general opinion of mankind, without difference of religion, race, or age. Multitudes who believe Mary to have been an evil woman still account her to have been murdered. That, for one, is where I stand. The more I read, the more fully I concur with that Italian Jesuit, visiting Edinburgh after Darnley's death and Mary's third marriage, who designates her simply as "illa peccatrix," (that sinful woman.) But I may be allowed modestly to suggest to Mr. Lansing, that the question whether any one is bad or good is wholly distinct from the question whether he or she has been murdered. Had Mary been tried and beheaded in Scotland for the death of her husband, that would have been one thing. In fact, she was neither arraigned nor executed for it. Elizabeth neither had jurisdiction over what was done in Scotland nor pretended to it.

Nor was Mary arraigned as having tried to stir up insurrection in England, and to promote invasion for her own rescue. This she had done for years, and everybody knew it. Her right, as an independent princess, to secure her own deliverance, was not seriously contested by any. Elizabeth did not move to try her on that account. She was

indicted, tried, and beheaded, on the one charge of having plotted against her reigning cousin's life.

"No man may take advantage of his own wrong." Elizabeth's detention of her rival was plainly against international right. Therefore, even had Mary really plotted against the English Queen's life, this could have given Elizabeth no new jurisdiction over her victim, not to say that a plan of self-defence is very different from a wanton attempt at murder.

However, that Mary had plotted against her life was the one thing that Elizabeth could not prove. She declared she found the proof in her cousin's letters, yet these letters she dared not produce. She brought forward only copies of them, and these copies Walsingham did not venture, in plain words, to say that he had not interpolated and falsified. Mary was too easy in withdrawing her charge against him personally. The forgery, if anybody's, was his. She was not allowed to examine her secretaries, although the elder one declared that the charge was thoroughly spurious.

In other words, Mary Stuart was tried and beheaded for a plot of which she was not convicted.

Now let me inform Mr. Lansing that this is what Christian mankind calls murder.

We will consider it further.

Charles C. Starbuck.

Andover, Mass.

TRAGIC DEATH OF A FRENCH PREFECT.

Stricken at Banquet Tablet After Having Officiated at Expulsion of Good Shepherd Nuns.

From the London Catholic Times.

On the 4th of August, early in the morning, the Nuns of the Good Shepherd were expelled from their convent in Pau amidst the universal sorrow of the Catholic population and of the poor and miserable whose home and refuge that convent had been. Of the two men who had shown particular zeal in carrying out this hateful order of the persecuting government, whose slaves they had become, one was M. Franciere, Prefect of the Basses-Pyrenees, Pau that day was stunned by this cruel blow, and all seemed to return to their homes from the scene of departure as if from a funeral. That day, towards 5 o'clock, word came to Pau that M. Franciere had also been expelled from his palatial dwelling, but by an awful hand, for death had seized him suddenly and terribly. Apparently in health whilst his victims were performing their painful journey, one of their youngest members being so sick that she had to be carried on a stretcher, M. Franciere that same day was glorifying at a banquet of lay teachers the awful havoc of which he was the willing instrument. But before the banquet was finished the hand of death was on him and he was hurriedly taken to the city of Bayonne close by. Doctors were brought to him, but the science of this world was of no avail, and within a few moments he fell back dead.

In the hour of awful need, when the body of the Prefect lay at Bayonne, it was not lay folk who were called to perform the services which the occasion demanded. Nuns—those poor, persecuted nuns whose home close by was doomed—were immediately sent for and came to watch beside and implore mercy for their oppressor. Next night the body was borne back to the home in Pau, where other nuns were waiting to resume the task of watching and praying. On arriving at Pau the body of the deceased Prefect followed the same roads which the day before had been taken by his victims. When proceeding to the station the indignant population had insisted on going out of their direct route to protest in front of the well-guarded Prefecture. Fair had been the promises held out to this poor servant of a passing power, who had hoped and had believed he would shortly attain the grand promotion he had in view. But all had reckoned without the only One in whose hands are the ends of the earth. In reply to the hopes and designs the answer which came was: "Give an account of thy stewardship; for now thou canst be steward no longer."

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