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THE STATE'S BEST POLICY.

(Continued from the Rambler, for June.)

We do not ask a Protestant Government to treat the Pope and his subjects on purely Catholic principles. We do not ask them to recognise the exclusive title to true Christianity which we claim. We ask only to be treated on the system on which all affairs are conducted between individuals, corporate bodies, and nations. We call upon the Queen's Government and the Houses of Parliament to admit that it is better to be at peace with us than to be at war with us; and to manage their relations with us through individuals whose name and character are irreproachable among us; who may be taken as representatives of thorough unflinching Catholicism; and whose first object is, to beware of betraying the cause they are called on to protect. Who does not act thus in his intercourse with other men in secular affairs? If a house in trade would have honorable relations with another house, does it seek to establish a correspondence with the least trusted of all the partners with whom it would be, on terms of friendship? If the English Government negotiates with a foreign Government, does it prefer to communicate diplomatically with some half-hearted traitor to his own country, and not with duly-recognised representatives? If the Emperor of the French were to send over to London as an ambassador some disreputable Frenchman notorious for his disloyalty to France, and a well-known intriguer for his own private advancement, who would not account the English nation insulted by the mission of such a man? Who would expect to perpetuate the French alliance by negotiations with him? Who would place the slightest trust in the representations which he might make of the feelings and the intentions of France herself? Why, then, is the Catholic Church alone to be swindled into friendship? Why is this sneaking, insulting policy to be adopted towards us alone?

That such a policy should practically succeed is impossible. It may succeed in doing us mischief; but it will never succeed in furthering the best interests of this kingdom. No government was ever well served by a corrupted people. Good Catholics are far better subjects to Queen Victoria than bad Catholics. In every lawful and creditable object which rulers can have in view, they will find Ultramontaniam a better ally than Gallicanism. We do not say that Ultramontaniam will serve the cause of despotism as well as Gallicanism will serve it. But if this country is to be ruled by free and liberal institutions, we repeat that the very worst school of Catholics with whom a ministry can ally itself is that debased semi-Catholic party which delights to reduce the Papal power to its lowest practical point; which apes the nationalising propensities of Protestantism; and accounts it a finer thing to be an Englishman, or an Irishman, or a Frenchman, than to be simply a Catholic.

As Catholics, be it remembered, we have no wish to be on terms of hostility with the secular power. If the State must needs plot against us or persecute us, we are perfectly content to take her as our enemy. In fact, moreover, she would frequently do us less mischief as an open enemy than as a deceitful friend. But we have no wish to create such hostility. We accept the truth that governments are of Divine institution, and that as such it is right that they should be on terms of amity with the Christian Church. In every age the Catholic Church has acted on this principle. Universal history shows us, that whatever the Church could conscientiously do to promote a harmony between her working and that of the secular State, she has ever done. We have no wish to inaugurate a line of policy different from that which has the sanction of the past. The Pope has ever been ready to do the utmost to prevent any needless clashing between the two powers. If the secular power had shown one tenth part of the forbearance towards him which he has shown towards her, the records of mankind would have to be re-written for many a century. We desire, accordingly, to be on terms of good-will with every established government on earth, whether Catholic or Protestant, Christian or Pagan. And we allege that this good-will can be best preserved by the fullest, most open, and most cordial recognition of the essentially independent rights of the Catholic Church, and of the supremacy of the See of Rome over every portion of Catholic Christendom. The system of trickery, which is pernicious to the State which adopts it as its policy, is to us who suffer from it. The really wise statesman will neither reject the friendship of the Church, nor will he seek it on other than honorable terms.

In saying all this, we must not be misunderstood as advocating, in our present circumstances, any of those arrangements, pecuniary or otherwise, which are frequently implied in the idea of an alliance between Church and State. We have no wish to

connect ourselves with the government by accepting at its hands any incomes for our clergy, or endowments for our colleges. Still less do we desire any sort of secular rank or honor for our prelates. We want no favors; we demand only an exemption from tyranny and wrong, and that general treatment which men of honor and character have a right to expect in their intercourse with their fellow-countrymen.—What do we desire may be best expressed by indicating a few examples of the manner in which, as matters have hitherto stood, we have been grossly wronged.

Take first, the subject of education, and especially in Ireland. Of the "National" system we say nothing, especially as the conduct of the present ministry, on a recent important occasion, was an exemplification of that just and honest spirit whose universal adoption we call for. We should have little to complain of, if the tyrannical duplicity of our enemies was always as satisfactorily thwarted as was the escapade of Dr. Whately, the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, when he took huff because he was not allowed to turn the national system into an engine for corrupting the Catholic children of Ireland. The "godless colleges," on the contrary, furnish an illustration of that very system of trickery of which we so loudly complain. No man who will tell the truth can pretend that these establishments do not directly tend to shake the faith of all Catholics who receive their education within them. You might as well profess that the study of the daily London newspapers tends to make people Catholics, as that the education of young men, when conducted by Protestants does not influence them towards Protestantism. It is an insult to our common sense to tell us that history or moral philosophy can be taught apart from some religious opinions. The ministry of the day, however, thought fit to establish certain colleges for the education of the middle and upper classes of Ireland, with the special view of including Catholic youth. What, then, would have been their conduct, if they had been sincere in their professions that they sought only their education, and not their conversion to Protestantism? Clearly to consult the Pope on the subject. They know perfectly well that, without his consent, the colleges never could be really acceptable to Catholics as Catholics. But what was their conduct in fact? They attempted to cheat the Pope into giving his sanction to a scheme which they dared not propose to him in a straightforward, candid way. They were aware that differences of opinion existed among Catholic bishops, priests, and laymen on the question, and their notion was to play off one bishop against another; to negotiate, to talk, to utter bombastic expressions, and to frame crafty regulations, by which they trusted to hoodwink his Holiness; or to place him on the horns of so awkward a dilemma as to drive him at least to tolerate a scheme which he yet would refuse to uphold. So far as creating division among Catholics went, they unhappily succeeded. But what have they gained? Nothing. Literally nothing, so far as the good of the State is concerned. They have irritated old sores, and actually perpetuated the wounds they fancied they would heal. Their colleges are undeniably a failure, and will sink lower and lower every year that goes by. The few unfortunate youths whom they will educate will prove neither good Protestants nor good Catholics; but unbelonging, conceited striplings, the enemies of all earnest, and the very worst possible specimens of loyalty which a deluded government can hatch for its own future punishment. All this evil simply comes from the desire of the Government to dupe the Pope into acquiescence with their schemes.

Another infamous wrong has been the usage of Catholics in gaols, and in the army and navy. A partial redress of this wrong is at length promised, but only a partial one; and doubts are now thrown upon the fulfilment even of this. As it is, thousands and scores of thousands of poor Catholics are turned into godless infidels, so far as the secular power can affect them. It enlists them in its ships, and allows no religious aid but those of Protestantism; while in its regiments, both at home and on service, its treatment of them is disgraced by every species of petty insult, niggardliness, and persecution. And what is true of the army and navy is, true also, for the most part, of our gaols and workhouses. If the Government were to do its duty, and treat us as honorable friendship between the Church and State would require, all this would cease in an instant. The question would not be whether Catholic chaplains are paid as much as Protestant chaplains; but whether Catholic soldiers, sailors, paupers, and prisoners, have every religious aid which their faith requires. We care nothing about what is done for Protestants. They may want more or they may want less than we do. Their clergy may expect three times the salary that ours expect. What is that to us? Let the State

do its duty to them in their way, and to us our way. Let it provide that every poor Catholic whose liberty it controls shall have the means of fulfilling the first duties of all Catholics. Let Catholic soldiers, sailors, paupers, and prisoners, hear Mass every Sunday and day of obligation. Let them have priests to hear their confessions when they wish it, and to minister to them in sickness and death. And let no Protestant tricks be played upon their souls, under cover of those secular regulations to which the necessities of their cases have forced them to submit. Until we have all this granted to us, without stint or deception, we shall justly regard ourselves as ill-used and tyrannised over by the Government, which we really wish to uphold, if only it will deal fairly with us.

Equally unwise, on all principles of sound policy, has been the usual choice of Catholics made by different governments for office under the crown. Whenever they have conceived it desirable to appoint a Catholic to a "place of any kind," and still more so to an office in the ministry, their ordinary system has been, to select those who have the least title to represent the spirit of living and thoroughly Papal Catholicism. The less a man has been of a Catholic, the more agreeable has he been in a Premier's eyes. Or if he has been a Catholic in reality as well as in name, his character has been hampered with a past history which utterly forbids his appointment from strengthening the morale of the government which allies itself with him, and in no way tends to inspire the Catholic body, as Catholics, with confidence in his patrons.

This same fatal blundering has infected the present Ministry almost as perniciously as its predecessors. Lord Aberdeen, on entering office, wished, like a man of sense and statesmanlike views, to enlist some few Catholics among his supporters. That he found it not peculiarly easy matter to do this to his satisfaction we readily admit. Unhappily, we have so few men of political capacity and character amongst us, that had Lord Aberdeen been a devoted Catholic himself, he would have been compelled to search pretty keenly for such Catholic aid as he need not have been ashamed to invoke. As it was, he committed a most serious blunder. Of three Catholics whom he named to political office, two were wholly unfitted by their antecedents to give real strength to his ministry. In every respect Mr. Monse's appointment was a wise and unexceptionable one; the other two, those of Messrs. Keogh and Sadleir, were simply suicidal. Of those gentlemen, as personally fitted for office, we have nothing to say; but they had just pledged themselves in so emphatic a manner against any such government as Lord Aberdeen's, that it was impossible that they could enter office with a single rag of political reputation. How far Lord Aberdeen was aware of their previous history we cannot tell; but we much doubt whether he knew anything more of them than that they were Catholics, and that Mr. Sadleir was a man of property and local influence, and Mr. Keogh a clever lawyer and effective speaker.

At the same time, it is of this very ignorance of the comparative merits of different Catholics, on the part of Protestant statesmen, that we loudly complain. They take no pains to ascertain our real internal condition and mutual relationships. They start by regarding us as natural enemies to the constitution and government of the kingdom; and if they employ us, it is on the principle of dividing us one against another, and so weakening our strength. Seeking to rule us through our infirmities and passions, all they care to know is, who is to be bought. That Catholic members of Parliament have given successive governments too much reason to imagine that we are all of us in the market, and that there exists no other and better spirit among us than what is displayed in violent personalities and clumsy intrigues, we are forced to confess, with no little shame and mortification. But we protest against its being supposed that we are really "represented by men whose sole object is *place*, and whose chief occupation is fiery abuse of one another." And we venture to assure Lord Aberdeen, and every other Protestant who desires to know the true state of English and Irish Catholicism, that for the most part these noisy and disreputable place-hunters, whether in Parliament or out of it—these hangers-on upon every Whig administration that would throw them a bone to stop their howlings,—are Catholics of the lowest Gallican school, who care very little more for the Pope than for the Archbishop of Canterbury; and that they are the very last persons who can be taken as representing that living, energetic spirit of Catholicism which it ought to be the policy of every government to conciliate by honorable treatment.

In pressing these considerations on influential politicians, we have all along assumed that it was their principle to seek, by some means or other, to be on

good terms with the Catholic portion of the people. That any man, with the slightest pretensions to the character of a statesman, should deliberately prefer a state of open hostility towards an immense section of the nation, would, apart from experience, seem simply impossible. Yet, unfortunately, there exists a class of men, not without their influence on the national councils, whose stupidity so fatally predominates over their capacities, that they make it a first element in their policy to torment, to thwart, and to victimise us, by every possible engine they can set in motion. With these men, to be a Catholic is to be guilty of deadly crime against the State. A Catholic is a traitor, an outcast, a villain, to be scorned, crushed, and exterminated.

To argue, then, with fanatics like these, is bootless. They cannot argue with us; and knowing this, they prefer to scourge us into silence. For them there remains but the single motive of fear. Nothing will touch them but the dread of the consequences to themselves. To them, therefore, we say, what will you gain by refusing us our rights, by robbing us of the social and political advantages of which we are in possession, by bullying our nuns, by insulting our clergy, by trampling upon the consciences of our poor, by turning with a silly shudder from our aristocracy and gentry, or by denouncing us, in public and private, as liars, swindlers, traitors, intriguers, Bible-haters, and heretic-burners? We are several millions in number. We have property, influence, education, respectability, and intellectual power which you envy, even while you profess to despise. All the laws you can enact, all the underhand and cowardly devices you can enforce in the relations of society, cannot turn us into Protestants, or reduce us to insignificance. Why, then, are you so senseless as to drive us to abhor you; to make attachment to the British Crown impossible; to convince that British freedom in our case is an insulting mockery; to force us to desire the degradation of the English power, and to conclude that, as Catholics, we should gain by those chances of war which would convert Great Britain into the tributary of some foreign state? Do you call it doing service to the Crown and Constitution to convert millions of the nation into silent favorers of what you would call treason; to turn that very class of the people whose creed peculiarly disposes them to revolution, into a justly irritated anti-national party, whose joy will be in your humiliation, and whose discontent will be a cutting thorn in your sides? You cannot convert us; you see you cannot do it. We will not disown the Pope; we will not acknowledge the Queen's supremacy over our consciences. If you make laws against our religion, we will defy or evade them by every means in our power. Come what may, we will uphold the indefeasible rights of our consciences amidst contempt, mockery, chains, or even death. Are you mad, then, that you will go out of your way to create this opposition between our allegiance to God and our duties to the State? Are you in love with popular discontent, disloyalty, and an abhorrence of the English constitution on the part of those who have to submit to it; that you must needs treat us worse than you would treat Turks, pagans, and infidels?

To you, in parting, we say: Read, if you can, the signs of the times. Forget your nursery prejudices, your apocalyptic manderings, your personal antipathies, and look abroad on the map of Europe, and into the dark places of the English social system. Can you foresee what is coming? Can you imagine that this nation is not now commencing a struggle in which no human eye can perceive the shocks she will encounter? Remember that in the mutations of a long war England may be opposed to some power essentially Catholic; and that if there is one thing which such a power would desire, it would be the prevalence of discontent among the Catholic population of these kingdoms. You count all this as of little moment now that events are far off, and that a straight forward advance to conquest seems all that is required of the British nation. But we venture to break in upon your agreeable speculations by reminding you that in the time of your distress, with an exhausted treasury, with upper and middle classes rent by political divisions, with peasantry and operatives ground down to starvation and flaming with irritation, with diplomacy at fault, with fleets burnt and armies slaughtered, and with pestilence at your doors,—and all these things *may be*, and perhaps *will be*,—you will rue the day when you draw the sword against your Catholic fellow-countrymen, and made loyalty an impossibility amongst us.

FREEMASONS IN THE MAURITIUS.

(From the Tablet.)
Liberty of conscience is one of the most powerful and precious doctrines in the world. It is impossible to find before-hand where its professors are to be found, and