

THE REFORMATION—WHAT WAS IT?

The practical inconsistency of our High-church, Ritualistic brethren is really remarkable. They are Catholic and yet they are Protestant. They give with one hand and take back with the other. They try to ride two hobbles at the same time. They denounce the so-called Reformation and yet they follow and approve of it. The irrepressible Littledale, late Ritualistic clergyman in England, declared in the Guardian in 1868:—

"I gravely assert it to be absolutely impossible for any just, educated and religious men who have read the history of the time in genuine sources, to hold two opinions about the Reformers. They were such utterly unredeemed villains, for the most part, that the only parallel I know of for the way in which half-educated people speak of them among us is the appearance of Pontius Pilate among the saints in the Abyssinian Calendar."

Yet, he adopted the fundamental principles of the English Reformation and fought for them with all the energy and, as some think, the unscrupulousness of his nature.

A still near, and if possible, more striking, instance of inconsistency is furnished by "Father" Ritchie, editor of our esteemed Protestant contemporary, the Catholic Champion. In the issue of that very singular paper for the current month he has the following striking passage:

"People sometimes ask of the 'Reformation settlement.' The expression is absurd; the Reformation 'settled' nothing. What it did was to unsettle everything which men for fifteen centuries had believed to have been settled by the revelation of Almighty God. If, by any chance, the Reformation did settle or attempt to settle anything not settled at the time, that attempted settlement must have been a novelty, and therefore it must have been false and calling for rejection. If, therefore, there is such a thing as a 'Reformation settlement' it must be looked upon as something evil and to be overthrown as quickly as possible."

Now, can it be believed that the very same man who gave such an emphatic and unqualified condemnation of the Reformation, in the very next sentence could turn right around and give an equally emphatic commendation of the Reformation? Yet that is what our friend "Father" Ritchie does. ... answer to the question: "What are the principles of the Reformation?" he replies, apparently without a blush:

"The principles of the Reformation are the very truths of God. ... God forbid that we should ever depart from the principles of the Reformation. They were excellent. They are the principles that must at last triumph."

But how reconcile this practical inconsistency? It is a very simple, if not a very satisfactory, process. The apparent contradiction grows out of the amphibious, ambidextrous system which our friend is laboring to maintain. He is trying to be a Catholic in a Protestant body. He does not like Protestantism—he hates it, and he hates the Reformation for saddling it upon the English Church. But he is equally opposed to the Pope, and therefore he glorifies in the Reformation because it cast off the Pope's authority and set up on an independent basis. But how justify himself?

The Pope, as the head of the old traditional Catholic Church, represents a settled, fixed system of faith and morals, and a supreme authority for teaching and governing the Church. It is a very serious question how a system claiming to be Catholic can maintain its position in opposition to the Pope and his ancient and universal system. This our friend attempts to do in the following declaration:—

"The one great principle of the Reformation was the appeal to Holy Scripture as understood by the undivided Church as the only sure foundation of faith and morals."

But Mr. Ritchie knows perfectly well that the very question at issue is: What was the teaching of the early Church? The Pope and his followers have no doubt about that, because their system not only embodies, as we have said, the traditional teaching of the Church, but also has an infallible tribunal for deciding disputed cases as they arise, thus furnishing to the faithful solid ground for undoubting faith.

But how is it with the system which "Father" Ritchie represents? If they would make him Pope and recognize his decisions as infallible, there would be some little show of consistency, at least, however baseless the claim might be. But, bless his heart! he is not recognized as orthodox—let alone infallible—even in his own "Branch." His denunciations of the Reformation and Catholic tendencies are considered almost blasphemous by a very considerable proportion of his own co-religionists.

We also may well ask him: "In what are you better than other denominations of your fellow Protestants? Do not the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Methodists, and for that matter, even our Unitarian friends, all claim more perfectly to represent the teaching of the early Church than any other? The Unitarians appeal confidently to the testimony of the Fathers, and they produce some very pertinent quotations. Who shall decide between you?"

If you appeal to the creeds of the Church we simply reply that the dispute is even about the real meaning of the creeds, and if we are not mistaken it is not so very many months since a very serious controversy arose over a declaration of the Episcopal Bishops involving the fundamental doctrine of the Incarnation. We not only have

not heard that any decision has ever been made on the subject, but we know very well that no decision can be made that will carry with it the consent of all parties in the Church. No, dear friends, you can not get along without the Pope—logically, theologically, historically or practically. Without him, you are doomed to discussion "without end, in wandering mazes lost." The Reformation never did a worse thing or made a greater blunder than when it threw the Pope overboard and set up on its own hook.—Sacred Heart Review.

ETHAN ALLEN'S DAUGHTER.

A Sketch of the Life of the First American Nun.

The other day this little item appeared in the local columns of a New York paper: "Samuel Mallory Allen, son of Ethan Allen, has obtained permission from Justice Pryor of the Supreme Court to change his name to Ethan Samuel Allen. He lives at 580 St. Nicholas avenue. He says that his great-grandfather was Col. Ethan Allen, famed for his conduct at Ticonderoga, and that his own interests will be substantially promoted by the change of his name. His father, who bears the name of their illustrious ancestor, he says, has been employed by P. Lorillard & Co. for thirty years, and is now secretary of the company."

Just seventy-eight years ago last month, Fanny Allen, "the first American nun," and daughter of the famous hero of Ticonderoga referred to in the above item, died at Montreal. Old Ethan Allen's name is yet spoken with emotion by the people of Vermont. It is told of him that on one occasion, when demanding surrender of the enemy, he was asked: "By whose authority?" His answer was: "In the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." One of Vermont's poets, in his "Grave of Allen" says:

"Upon Winslow's pleasant shore
Lies Ethan Allen sleeping,
And there beneath the murmuring pine
Lies freedom's consecrated shrine."

Fanny Allen was born in 1781 and her famous father died when she was five years of age. Her mother married again in 1793. Fanny's stepfather was a man capable of appreciating the high minded young girl, and gave her every possible advantage. A writer in the Vermont Gazetteer says: "She inherited much of the energy and decision of her father's character, controlled by womanly gentleness. In person she was rather above than below medium height and of uncommon beauty in form and feature. Her complexion was fair, her eyes dark blue with a singular depth and calmness of expression, while the dignity and ease of her manners gave quick evidence to the refinement and loveliness of her character."

HER CONVERSION.
The same writer quoted above says: "At this time the gay society of New England was tainted with the species of infidelity introduced and fostered by the writings of Thomas Paine and his disciples, amongst whom Fanny's father had been conspicuous. Her stepfather, Doctor Pennington, was not of that school, but he detested the cant and puritanism of the only religious people he had ever known. He conducted the education of his gifted daughter with the most scrupulous care to avoid entirely all consideration of religion in any form."

When she was about twenty-three years of age she obtained her parents' consent to go to Montreal in order to perfect herself in the French language. Before giving their consent they insisted upon her being baptized by a Protestant preacher. She consented more from a desire to please her parents than from any other reason. The minister who baptized her was the Rev. Daniel Barber, who in after years became a convert himself, as did also Rev. Virgil Barber, who entered the Society of Jesus, whilst his wife became a Visitation nun, their five children following their example by embracing a religious life, four daughters becoming nuns and the son, Samuel, a Jesuit. Mrs. Tyler, a sister of Rev. Virgil Barber, also in later years became a Catholic, her four daughters becoming Sisters of Charity and one of her sons a priest, who was afterwards the first Bishop of Hartford—Bishop Wm. Tyler. While Fanny Allen was being baptized it is said she laughed continually. After reaching Montreal, she became a boarder in a convent school, and on all occasions took pains to let her unbelief in matters of religion be known. On a certain occasion, one of the Sisters, whose heart had been touched by the infidelity of the young lady, asked her to carry a vase of flowers and place it upon the altar, beseeching her to adore her Lord, when she entered the sanctuary. Fanny started to fulfill her request, but fully resolved not to bend her knee in adoration. Three times she attempted to enter the sanctuary, but failed. Overcome by her emotions, she fell on her knees and adored her God, of whose presence there she then and forever became fully convinced. In due time she was instructed and baptized. After making her first Communion, she was anxious at once to become a Sister. Her conversion created great excitement throughout Vermont, and she was at once requested to return home, with which request she complied. While at home every argument and inducement was used to dissuade her from her resolution to become a religious. From end to end of the State the matter was discussed and gossiped about. General Ethan Allen's daughter a Catholic Sister! Was Rome to capture Vermont's most distinguished daughter in this unforeseen way? But Fanny Allen was in downright earnest, and she remained at

home with her parents as long as she had promised to stay—one year. At the expiration of the year she returned to Montreal, and in due time she made her profession at the age of twenty-six. Many of her acquaintances from Vermont were present, and their visit was the means of softening many of their foolish notions about convent life. She spent ten years in devoted work in the convent and at the commencement of her eleventh year of religious life she was seized with lung trouble.

HER DEATH.
The annals of the Hotel Dieu, Montreal, thus describe her last days: "The disease becoming alarming, she asked of the Mother Superior to be attended by an American physician of her acquaintance who resided in Montreal. The request was granted. The doctor, who was a Protestant, did all in his power to restore her to health, but in vain. Providence permitted that he was present when she died. When he saw all the Sisters bathed in tears, praying on bended knees, when he heard the priest recite the prayers for the departing soul, he was much impressed; himself falling on his knees, remaining motionless in the most respectful attitude. The Sister Superior having requested him to say if Sister Allen had expired, he raised his eyes to heaven and said: 'Yes, she has expired.' The priest then recited the prayer, 'Come to her assistance, all ye saints of God.' The doctor again knelt down to the end, seeming to be much affected with a sight which was new to him. He published in the papers a relation of the death of Sister Allen. He added that he would never more in this world see the Sisters, but hoped to be reunited to them in Heaven. He left the city of Montreal without informing any one of his project. The Sisters, although they inquired much about him, have never been able to learn whether he went, and conjectured that he had gone to Europe intending to join the Church and enter some religious community."

In the account of Fanny Allen's life by Bishop De Goesbriand in his little volume—"Catholic Memoirs of Vermont and New Hampshire"—from which I have taken most of the above facts, he closes his sketch by quoting these words of Montalembert: "Is this a dream, the page of a romance? Is it only history? the history of a past forever ended? No; once more it is what we behold, and what happens amongst us every day. Who, then, is this invisible Lover, dead upon a cross, eighteen hundred years ago, who thus attracts to Him, youth, beauty and love? Who appears to them clothed with a glory and a charm which they cannot withstand, who seizes on the living flesh of our flesh and drains the purest blood of our blood? Is it a man? No, it is God! There lies the secret; there the key of this sublime and sad mystery. God alone could win such victories and deserve such sacrifices. Jesus, whose God-head is among us daily insulted or denied, proves it daily by those miracles of self-denial and self-devotion which are called vocations. Young and innocent hearts give themselves to Him, to reward Him for the gift He has given us of Himself, and this sacrifice by which we are crucified is but the answer of human love to the love of that God who was crucified for us."—R. C. Gleason in Catholic Columbian.

THE NEED OF RELIGION IN DIRECTING NINETEENTH-CENTURY PROGRESS.

The Rev. D. J. Stafford, D. D., the able and eloquent orator, gave a Lenten sermon on "The Need of Religion to Direct the Thought of the Nineteenth Century," in St. Patrick's church, Washington, recently. He said in part:

"Every age has its thought. The thought of Greece was beauty, and that thought pursued made Greece a land of beauty. The thought of Rome was power, conquest, and that thought made Rome the mistress of the world. She took for her motto, to spare the conquered and to humble the proud, and never make peace except after victory. The thought of the early Christian ages was martyrdom, and influence by it multitudes gladly gave their blood for Christ. The thought of the middle ages was manly honor and respect for women, and these infused into society some of the noblest and most elevating sentiments, by which the world still profits. The thought of the sixteenth century was reform, and that thought, rightly understood, culminated in the Council of Trent, one of the greatest events in the history of the Church. The thought of the eighteenth century was liberty, and that thought still moves the world."

"But no age has ever been so absorbed in one idea as ours. It is found everywhere this thought of the Nineteenth century; in art, in philosophy, in science, in literature, in history, in all things. The prophets of the time preach it, the poets sing it, the philosophers argue for it, science speculates upon it, art adorns it, the rich seek it, the poor desire it. What is it, this thought of the nineteenth century? It is not beauty, though the age is not without its creations of beauty. It is not liberty, though that word still moves our hearts. It is not fraternity, though that word is on every tongue. It is not even democracy, though many great thinkers make that word pre-eminently the thought of the century. It is not scientific unbelief, for though many and great minds, too, are influenced by that idea, yet there are many more who walk in the old paths and still accept Christ as Master and model. No, the thought of our time, of this nineteenth century, is something more universal, more comprehensive, more

widespread than any of these. What is it?

"The thought of the nineteenth century is progress. Progress in art, progress in philosophy, progress in science, progress in morality, progress in religion, progress in all things. If you ask the age what is progress, the age is startled: the exactness of thought necessary for a definition being required of it. Whence does progress come? Whither does it go? What is its object, its law, its final termination? These questions it cannot answer, does not profess to answer, for its progress alone is enough. It comes we know not whence; it goes we know not whither. It comes from the mystery of beginnings, and it goes to the mystery of the end, and, like God, it always was and always will be. These questions we cannot answer; for us the thing itself is all."

"Since this is the case it is necessary to understand this word and this movement which has fascinated the age, and see wherein and how far it is good and what are its dangers. The thought of progress is indeed the most legitimate and the most fascinating of all. Man is a perfectible being, and having ever against him the idea of the infinite and the perfect, he tends constantly towards it. Prisoner of time and limited by space, he rebels against both. God, as a matter of fact, reveals Himself to man from the very dawn of man's intelligence. Man cannot live in and of and by himself; he seeks happiness outside himself, and even in his passions is still seeking God, since God alone can satisfy his soul. Progress, rightly understood, is no other thing than man's pursuit of the ideal, which ultimately is God. It is the passion of generous souls, noble hearts, great intelligence, and it makes man great in every sphere and department of life. It is the pursuit of the ideal which makes immortal poets, profound philosophers and heroic saints. It is the most fascinating of all thoughts, of all ideas, and is peculiar to our age, not in the sense that it is new, but in the sense that it has become its leading, all-absorbing and absolutely preponderating thought."

But progress may be perverted. The Greeks perverted beauty into sensuality; the Romans perverted power into tyranny; the sixteenth century perverted reform into religious revolution, which broke the unity of Christendom; the eighteenth century shed blood in the name of fraternity and established absolute tyranny in the name of liberty. What are we going to do with progress? There are even now men who err on this side—men who hate the past, despise the present, and live only for the future: men who want to break all historical, literary, philosophical, religious tradition, and begin anew, as if chaos had come and the eternal foundations of the world fallen into nothingness: men who say we have outgrown Christianity, Jesus Christ, and the Catholic Church. We have outgrown your old morality and must have a new morality and a new religion suited to the age! And, oh! the sadness that fills one's heart to see a thinker like Herbert Spencer spend his last days in an effort to de-Christianize his country. And oh! the pity of it all when we see Prof. Huxley, with all his learning and all his philanthropy, spending his time and energy arguing against Christ, living, as Goethe says, in the tombs and charnel houses of physical science, and crying out: 'What have we to do with Thee, thou Son of God?' Is not this to pervert science and progress to turn it against God and His Christ? And is it not true that all is noble, sublime, tender, gentle, or elevating in modern life comes from Him? Oh! no wonder that even the infidel Renan is forced to exclaim, when contemplating the world without Christ: 'Ah, what would we be without Him? What dryness of heart would seize on the world? Yes, and what lack of charity, of kindness, of consideration for the weak and the poor and all things that make our civilization glorious!'

"Shall we turn our progress against Christ, against the Church? Shall we misunderstand it and pervert it? That is the supreme question of the time for every one who thinks, feels, or has at heart the good of mankind. What this age needs is some one who can tell us what progress really is and what it means, whence we come and whither we go, and that is the mission of the Catholic Church, and there never was an age to which that Church was more necessary. Ye men of the nineteenth century, in looking through your systems and philosophies, I found there an unknown god, whom you all praise, worship, glorify, but understand not. This desire for progress, and this tendency of progress, is no other thing than the Divine in man, a principle, an instinct which God Himself implanted there and which is to lead us to Him. The Infinite, the Infinite, only the Infinite can satisfy man. Not glory, nor art, nor science, but God. 'Thou hast created us for Thyself, Oh God, and our hearts are not at peace till they rest in Thee.'"

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Father Ryan's Autograph.

These hitherto unpublished lines of the poet-priest of the South were written under the following circumstances, according to the Sacred Heart Review: In the year 1889 the late Father Ryan visited Wilmington, North Carolina, as the guest of the Hibernian Society and the especial guest of Mr. D. O'Connor. Whilst there he lectured to the Confederate Memorial Society; and many ladies requested his autograph. Among the number was Mrs. L. V. Darby. "Father," she said, "I have no album, will you write your name in my prayer book?" With a smile, the poet-priest took the book and wrote:

My name is nothing
And my songs are less;
The poet passes
With his songs away;
Echoes of earth:
And little worth
The priest's sweet Masses
And his fervent prayer
When all song passes
Live for ever and ever
And I will pray for thee:
How much more strong
Than any song
Is prayer which moves eternally:
May God's grace
Come to thy way
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To Heaven's Eternal Day.
—Abram J. Ryan.

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