

JOHN WYCLIF IN HIS TRUE LIGHT.

The Alleged Protestant Martyr Shown to be a Mere Captious Sorehead.

(CONTINUED.)

But the most important part of Father Stevenson's researches is undoubtedly that which portrays the religious condition of England during the two centuries that preceded the Reformation. Wyclif's work did not expire with him. In Norfolk and Suffolk, in Essex, Kent and Lincolnshire, in London, Salisbury, Rochester, and many other places, episcopal visitations brought to light numbers of Wyclifites, secretly engaged in corrupting the faith and morals of their Catholic neighbors. Apostate Wyclifite priests have been known to give the consecrated host to be devoured by mice. Of all the perverts to this heresy, the most celebrated, by reason of his exalted position, was Reginald Peacock, Bishop of Chester. In his early career he had been a vehement defender of Papal authority, but seems to have always succeeded, by an imprudent and hot-headed style of disputing, in embittering every controversy in which he had the misfortune to engage. Nothing is more common than to find men of this calibre eventually in arms against the cause of which they had once been hot defenders. We could quote living instances by the score. So Peacock drifted into Wyclifism, and on the 28th of November, 1457, was condemned as a heretic by the primate. He retracted at St. Pauls Cross, and for the rest of his days was committed to the custody of the abbot of Thorney, in Cambridge-shire. He was but one of many condemned by the ecclesiastical courts for Lollardism, the result of whose history our author sums up as follows:

"We begin to understand at length the cause of that startling rapidity with which Henry VIII was able to carry into execution his plans for the establishment of the Reformation. England was prepared for it, and had for long expected it. Cranmer offered scarcely any doctrine to his countrymen which was a novelty to them. They had long maligned the Holy See, they had long renounced the doctrine of the Sacraments; the supremacy of the throne had long been familiar to them, and every other innovation as it followed was welcomed as an old familiar friend. For long the eyes of the crown and the greater lay lords had been fixed on the property of the religious houses. We wonder that the Reformation did not happen a century before the time when it really occurred. England seems to have been ripe for it, and, if it may be permitted us to speculate, we should probably have had it during the century previous to that in which it burst upon us, but for the turmoils connected with the wars of York and Lancaster. When Henry proclaimed war against the Head of the Church, he must have had the conviction strong upon his soul that in the struggle upon which he was about to enter he would be supported by a very large body of his subjects by whom the announcement had long been anticipated."

We recognize in Father Stevenson's conclusions a truth that, if not wholly unknown, has at least been hitherto but imperfectly realized. When we realize it, we feel that we see more deeply into the history of medieval England. She had done much to earn the awful punishment of a national apostasy.

Among minor points, the book we are reviewing brings out in an unexpected way the bad faith of Foxe in his "Book of Martyrs." He had access to the same sources of information on which the present volume has been compiled, and deliberately suppressed the portions which showed what abominable crimes his "martyrs" were guilty of, and how richly they had deserved their well-earned fate. The vigorous, if somewhat unparliamentary epithets applied by Cobbett in his "History of the Reformation" to the author of the "Book of Martyrs," are proved not to be a whit exaggerated. Another point incidentally dealt with is Wyclif's claim to be the English translator of the Bible. The claim cannot be admitted for a moment, and is disallowed even by his recent Protestant editors. It is possible, but not certain, that he translated the New Testament, as others had done long before him. And here we must conclude our notice of a truly valuable work, congratulating ourselves that the efforts of a Protestant society to glorify one of the most unattractive of Protestant heroes has been the occasion of such an important contribution towards the historical vindication of the Catholic Church.

A liquor seller presented his bill to the executor of a deceased customer's estate asking: "Do you wish my bill sworn to?" "No," said the executor; "the death of the deceased is sufficient evidence that he had the liquor."

FREDERICK HARRISON ON IRELAND.

A Broad and Philosophical View of a National Quarrel—Restitution Strongly Advocated.

Frederick Harrison, the famous English philosopher, made a speech recently in Holborn, London, in which he avowed himself an advocate of Irish legislative independence.

"The views I hold about Ireland," he says, "fire not of yesterday. They were not formed with reference to this election. No, nor with reference to the legislation of the last Parliament, or the debates and measures of recent years. Long before Mr. Gladstone proposed the abolition of the Established Church, long before the debates on the Land Bill or the Coercion Bill, as far back as twenty years ago, those with whom I acted and still act appealed to the English people on behalf of Ireland. As neither I nor the party with whom I act at Newton Hall have ever during twenty years swerved one jot from that platform, and as I told them to be even more right and necessary now than they were even then, I will ask your forbearance if I call your attention to the nature and justification for these principles. In the first place, I hold it to be the fundamental truth which underlies this civil war, and which is too much forgotten by statesmen and parties in the debates about Land Acts and leases and rent, that no conditions of permanent settlement are possible till we recognize the just claims of Ireland to a national life of her own. Ireland is a nation and must have her own free career as a nation as much as England or Scotland, and till that most just and national and honorable claim of hers is unbegrudgingly satisfied there can be no peace between the Irish and the English people.

Enlarging on the subject, he points to the fact that Ireland has a past full of pathos and full of interest, and he says: "She has yet a glorious future, and till that sentiment, that noble sentiment, of national individuality has been admitted by Englishmen in deed as in word, it is to no avail to expect a settlement by alterations in the detail of the law of leases. Secondly, this sentiment must be carried into act by recognizing for Ireland a real legislative independence. We are not talking here about separation or any visionary idea of an Irish republic. It would be time to talk of that when any one is prepared to talk (what no one here does) of an English republic. But to keep ourselves to practical politics within measurable distance of political realities, we must accord to the Irish people a bona fide legislative independence."

Continuing, he said: "The third great principle on which we insisted, and on which I still insist, is that the soil of Ireland must be secured to the Irish, who have tilled it for centuries and who, by a succession of these historic confiscations, have been ousted from legal possession of their holdings. I add a fourth principle—that the education of Irishmen, their sons and daughters, should be freely entrusted to the Irish people. And, lastly, there are great arrears to be made up by the English people for the long succession of evils which, partly by oppressive legislation and partly by vicious economic institutions, have been forced on the industry, on the commerce, and the agriculture of Ireland. And if to sustain the balance of that oppression and selfish legislation, it be found essential to assist by material measures the development of Irish industry, the means must be found by the wealth and enormous resources of England. Gentlemen, these principles must underlie any settlement of the long secular struggle between England and Ireland. They are as essential to the honor and peace of England as they are of Ireland."

A Notable Invention.

Our representatives at the Court of Pekin were heretofore, for the most part, obliged to express their wants and wishes by pantomime, owing to the difficulty of the Chinese language, whose 40,000 characters had to be mastered before a foreigner could make himself understood. We have heard of a diplomatic representative from this country being invited to dine at the house of a Mandarin, and inquiring if a certain dish set before him was fowl by giving an imitation of mother duck's quack, quack; whereupon the host gravely replied by an unmistakable bow wow that the dish in question was dog meat. The days of Chinese pantomime speech, however, appear to be numbered, and Europeans will no longer have to devote a life time to the acquisition of the Celestial tongue, thanks to the labors and invention of Bishop Cosi, Vicar Apostolic of Xan-tong. This great and good missionary invented an alphabet of 34 characters by which all the

sounds in the Chinese language can be expressed, and he supplemented this remarkable work by printing in the new characters with a press sent him by the Emperor of Austria, two books of devotion, "The Month of Mary" and "The Month of the Souls in Purgatory." He also undertook to write a grammar and dictionary of the Chinese language, the characters he invented being employed to represent linguistic sounds, but his unremitting labors were too severe a strain on his constitution and resulted in the death of the zealous and learned bishop in the early part of this year. His invention will form an epoch in the history of Chinese literature and will smooth the way for missionary labor and intellectual development in the Celestial Empire.—Providence Visitor.

The Year 1886.

Nostradamus, in a prophecy, which, was written in 1556, thus foretells the future:

When George, God shall crucify,
When Mark shall him resuscitate,
And when John shall carry him,
Then the end of the world shall be,

In 1886 St. George's Day will fall on Good Friday; St. Mark's Day on Easter Sunday, and St. John's Day on Corpus Christi. The remarkable prognostication will then be fulfilled as to its conditions and thoughtful people are filled with wonder whether the world will really be brought to an end in 1886. The advanced thinker is impressed with a different idea, and he explains the end of the world, as understood by the soothsayer, as meaning the overthrow of existing human governments.

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