THE EPISCOPAL CONGRESS.

The Episcopal Church Congress which closed some days ago in New York gave evidence of a wide divergence of opinion among its members.
The Catholic Church received some attention and comment favorable and otherwise. One of the questions dis-cussed was, "The duty of the churches of the Anglican communion toward Roman Catholic countries."

The Rev. Hall Harrison, of Mary-nd, "thought it would be wrong for the Episcopal Church to intrude into Roman Catholic dioceses, especially as the Roman Catholic Church was not heretical, but only schismatical, and a good Roman Catholic was a million times better than a bad Protestant. Dr. Dumbell, of Staten Island, took it for granted "that the Church of Rome is allowed to be a true branch of the Catholic Church ; her sacraments valid

sacraments; her priests, real priests. We cannot take for granted this intended compliment; for the Catholic Church is in no sense a "branch." She is the divinely planted tree in its totality of root, trunk and branches. Those branches that have been cut off by excommunion or blown off by the wind of false doctrine are sapless and dead, and are only called branches by a figure of speech, just as a corpse is sometimes called a dead man when it is not a man at all.

What he says of the Sacraments and of priests is of course true, but is too old a truth to be called news. He con-

'Any priest of Rome has but to abjure his peculiar errors in order to be

recognized as a priest of our Church."

The Catholic cannot return this compliment; for even if an Episcopalian minister were to abjure all his peculiar errors he would not be recognized as a priest by the Catholic Church, or even the Greek or the Russian Churches. The Episcopal ministers are, as a rule. kind, gentlemanly, scholarly men, but they are not priests - nor are they recognized as such by any but themselves. Their belief that they are priests constitutes one of their "pecu-We do not say this as a retort, but as a mere matter of fact. The doctor struck a nugget of truth when he said:

"The Church of Rome holds the whole truth of God." But he mars it somewhat when he

says:
"She indeed has laid much error on top of that truth; but still all the truth is there.

Now the Church claiming infallibility is at worst as good authority on the question of error as Dr. Dumbell is at best, for he claims to be fallible. She disclaims teaching error, and her disclaimer cancels the doctor's assertion. The doctor adds:

"We are infinitely nearer to her than we can by any possibility in the nature of tnings be to any Protestant

Even if we were to admit this there is little consolation in it. The man who misses the train by one minute is no better off than is he who misses it by an hour. The upshot of it is that they are both left. The doctor goes on thus

"The Catholic Church contains three great divisions-Roman, Anglican and Oriental. Reunion of these three is earnestly to be desired. Many of us have made prayer for it one of the standing petitions of our lifetime.'

These three divisions cannot constitute one Church, for the reason that they differ in doctrine, in principles, and this difference destroys unity or oneness. These divisions are what chemists would call incompatibles, which mutually destroy each other when attempt is made to unite them. We heartily join Dr. Dumbell in his prayers and aspirations for Ch unity, but the only way to realize it is for those wandering in error to return individually to the true fold, the Roman Catholic Church, founded by Christ upon Peter. The Episcopal Church can never get over the bar sinister of its modern origin. The doc-

tor says, further:
"Nothing should be omitted to carry out the plain principle to which our Mother Church held fast at the time of the Reformation, namely, that no separation was intended between herelf and the rest of Catholic Christendom. Rome has erred by excess and Protestantism by defect, and the latter is far more serious. Rome, underneath the errors she has unhappily laid on, has yet the whole truth of God whereas, the innumerable sects of Protestantism have cut off, one this, another that, leading doctrine of Christ's religion, so that there is no one Protestant body in existence but that has destroyed the faith in some one vital point at least. If we intrude where shall it be? Although, indeed, the word intrusion would not apply in a true ecclesiastical sense to any that might be made to bring in our Protestant brethren."

It is not so much what was intended to be done as what was actually done that we have to consider. There is nothing more historically certain than that Henry VIII. separated from that Christendom which he and the English people up to that time professed and to which they were united. When the English Parliament made a civil Magistrate the spiritual head of the Church they turned their back on the Christendom of their time. You may attempt to justify this separation, but the fact still remains that there was a separation, and that the Episcopal Church of to day inherits the defect. Anglicanism is as truly Protestant as Methodism is, though not Anglicans are growing weary of their Protestant associations and would throw them off and claim a Catholicity which they never had.

This desire on their part is a good

sign, however. They are anxious, uncertain and restless, and the first step to a cure is to know that one is not well. All their talk about Rome erring by excess is in the nature of a hypnotic to soothe to sleep a disturbed conscience. Like the consumptive, they are the last to admit the inward cancer that is sapping life away. Having rejected the principle of authority and accepted private judgment, the cancer of Protestantism, they now attempt to assume an authority they never received. Anglicanism is a theological hermaphrodite-neither Catholic nor Protest ant, and consequently looked on with suspicion by both.

It is astenishing what an amount of truth and error Dr. Dumbell manages to mix up together. For instance, here are a few truths worth remember-

ing. He says:
"It is idle to invite the Romanist into the Episcopal Church, for, as a rule, the former can learn nothing from the latter."

Again:
"The average Romanist knows as much of the faith of Christians as any of our own people. I never knew any proselytes from the Roman Church who had not neglected their duty in their

own Church." It is needless to say that Dr. Dumbell was caustically criticised by some of the brethren.—Philadelphia Catholic

THE BELLS WERE TOLLED

At the Catholic Cathedral for Ireland Protestant Lord Primate.

The extract given below is taken from the Derry Journal, of Ireland, and is a comment on the feeling manifested by Catholics on the recent death of Dr. Knox, the Protestant Lord Primate of Ireland. The Journal quotes at length and with the strongest approval from the Irish Catholic, a

National paper.

In addition to the written expressions of sympathy when the news of Dr. Knox's sudden death was made public the bells of the Catholic cathedral were tolled at intervals through-out the day and Cardinal Logue sent a message of condolence to the episcopal palace. This is the way Irish Catholics treat Protestant neighbors who are Christian gentlemen and not brutal and unreasoning bigots. Says the

Derry Journal:
"The Irish Catholic has a gracious and most kindly word to say of the deceased Protestant Primate of Armagh-a grateful thing to the suscep tibilities of many weary of the sectar ian bitterness that so much discredits

and degrades the name of Ulster. " 'The death of the Protestant Lord Primate of Ireland inflicts,' says the Irish Catholic, 'a loss of no small moment on the religious organization of which he was titular chief. Largeminded, learned and courteous, Dr. Knox belonged to a type of Protestant ecclesiastics of which, we are glad to acknowledge, Irish Protestantism has produced numerous representatives. In his cathedral city the deceased pre late enjoyed the friendship of Catholic and Protestant alike, and by none was he more thoroughly esteemed than by our own Lord Primate, His Eminence Cardinal Logue. The almost tragic suddenness of Dr. Knox's death adds intensely to the sorrow which its tidings must bring to his relatives. friends and co-religionists, and we only voice the sentiment of countles Catholics when we say that their warmest sympathy will be with those who mourn by the grave of a gifted scholar and an honest man.

"This is a merited tribute nobly expressed, and there is quality in it that should gladden the hearts of all who hope for days in Ireland when the wrath of sectarian strife will no longer divide our countrymen. What man ner of man was Dr. Knox in the view of the Irish Catholic? 'Moderate in controversy, tolerant in practice, earnest and sincere in his friendships, the memory of the dead Primate will, says this Catholic Nationalist journal, be long cherished as that of a kindly gentleman, benevolent of heart and patriotic according to his lights.
"Although Dr. Knox had not given

any adhesion to the Home Rule cause, Ireland noted with gratification the outspoken protest which he uttered not so long since against the attempt which was being made to utilize the University of Dublin as a species of pocket borough for the convenience of the legal policemen of the Unionist Ministry. 'Still better and nobler expressions of opinion might,' the Irish Catholic thinks, 'have come from the Ministry. lips of Dr. Knox had he been longer spared; but be this as it might have been, we can pay his memory no higher tribute than to express the hope that his place in the hierarchy to which he belonged may be filled by a Protestant gentleman as high minded, as learned, and as free from bigotry and

sectarian hate as he was. "That hope will be shared by every one who reads this comment and is im bued with the high desire that pervades it. We will only add that this wealth of Catholic admiration laid on the dead Protestant Primate's bier, comes in timely and stately rebuke to those who devote their energies to defaming our countrymen by charging them with yearning for power to be intolerant, and to persecute Irishmen who differ from them in religious be

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FREEDOM OF THOUGHT IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Very Rev. J. Hogan, S. S. in Donahue's Mag-azine for December.

Forty years ago it was a prevalent notion among Protestants that Catholics had no independent right to think for themselves on almost any subject that whatever liberty they enjoyed was merely on tolerance, and that their Church might step in at any time, and, on the plea of religion, prescribe to them at her discretion, in every sphere of thought, what to believe and what to discard. "What else," they were wont to say, "had she done in the past but cramp and cripple the minds of her blind and benighted followers, reducing them to a condition of intellectual slavery of the most ab-ject and pitiable kind? Happily Protestantism arose, and, bursting the bands which had held the human intellect captive for ages, gave back to man his forfeited rights, and to mind

its native liberty."
Gradually these rhetorical flourishes have ceased to sound in our ears. Even Protestants have come to see things in a different light. Especially within the last generation they have read history to more advantage, and learned to discriminate between reckess assertion and solid fact. have looked around them too, and lis tened, and the plain fact has steadily forced itself upon them, that in the various paths of human thought and conduct, Catholics seem, after all, to be very little hampered by the authority of the Church, and to act pretty much on the same principles as the

rest of the world at large.

In a word the prejudice is fast disappearing. Yet it lingers still in narminds and in remote placessometimes even in our cities, among those who seldom come in contact with Catholics. It is still occasionally heard n the excited utterances of some 'minister of the Gospel," or it meets the eye in the columns of the so called religious newspaper or review. Some thing of it lingers even in the most enlightened minds outside the Church, and, what concerns us more, some of their Catholic hearers or readers are now and then disturbed by their statements, and actually led to fear that, somehow, they can be loyal to the Church only at the cost of a considerable narrowing

of their mental liberty.

For the benefit of such, and as a subject of which all enlightened Catholics should possess an accurate conception, it may not be amist to recall in a few words the true condition of things.

It is not in her own name, as all know, that the Catholic Church claims to guide in any measure the thoughts of men. It is as the bearer and authorized interpreter of a divine message. Religion and religion only is her sphere. Outside and beyond it she assumes no authority. Yet outside and beyond it lies almost all that man can For religion, although the highest and most necessary form of human knowledge, is only a very narrow portion of the area to which the mind of man extends. In reality, the range of the human intellect is almost boundless. Through the senses it reaches the ends of the earth, and explores the depths of the heavens, em braces the phenomena of the whole visible world, and builds up in its various forms that ever-growing science of nature, of which the present age is so justly proud. By its improved methods of historical research, it sees into the most remote past of the human race, brings back to life peoples and civilizations long since disappeared, and dwells, as it were, among them. It sees beyond all civilization and all appeared on its surface, and foretells, with assurance, changes which will be witnessed only after countless ages. It ascends into the higher world of thought; wanders with delight through the paths traced by the greatest think ers of all ages; or it ventures into un explored regions, to bring back from them new and beautiful principles and truths. Above all, it concentrates its powers upon that intermediate and inexhaustible world, man himself, body and soul — his manifold life, physical, intellectual, moral, political economic and social, each one the ob ject of distinct and elaborate sciences

Such, in brief, is the range of the human mind; fields of knowledge opening up in every direction, each so vast that no single intelligence can take complete possession of the least of them. Yet to the Catholic they are ali open and free, as they are to the rest of mankind. The Church claims no superior knowledge, and assumes no special anthority, in their regard. Like God Himself, and because He has chosen to do so, she leaves all human science to secular investigation, and to the varying and conflicting views of "Tradidit mundum disputamen; tioni eo um." (Ecl. iii., 11.) There is no such thing as a Catholic physiology or astronomy, nor even, in a true, technical sense, any such thing as a Catholic philosophy or a Catholic his tory. In all matters, in a word, of purely human knowledge, the Catholic thinks and speaks, like his fellow-man, with a full and unlimited sense of freedom.

Yet even such unfettered and seema higher law to which it owes absolute to listen to her? submission. The sovereign law of This indeed is a difficulty to many, submission. The sovereign law of to be wrong. He may have a right pose of it.

not to be dictated to by this or by that one; but he is bound intellectually to truth, as he is bound morally to goodness. He is, in a true sense. answerable for his convictions as well as for his actions. He is bound to regulate both by the rules of wisdom. Indeed, evident truth, common sense. or universal experience are limitations of thought which no sane man thinks of setting aside. Were he to attempt it, he would be soon brought to order by his fellow-men; and if they failed,

they would simply cease to hold intel-

lectual intercourse with him. In a much wider degree, though in less peremptory manner, freedom of thought is hemmed in by the unceas ing pressure of intellectual and moral agents, such as public opinion, estab lished manners and customs, popular prejudices, and the like. The great majority of men obey all these as they submit to the order of nature, never questioning their author nor doubting their wisdom. They believe them-selves free, because they yield without effort; in truth they are only unconscious slaves. Only those of stronger build feel the yoke and attempt to cast it off, and even they succeed but in a limited measure, and at the cost of much effort and trial. Such were preeminently the great political and social reformers; such, the great discoverers and the original thinkers of all ages— Columbus, Galileo, Newton, Socrates, Descrates and so many besides. Such, n another and a higher sphere, wer the early Christians, who, through the thick mist of Jewish prejudice or of Pagan error, recognized and followed the divine light of the Gospel. in our day those generous converts, born outside the Church, and trained to distrust or despise her, yet discerning the divine truth in its Catholic fullness, despite the almost irresistible pressure of ancestral tradition and social prestige; or, again, those noble souls who, rising in our midst, superior to the worldliness of their surrounding, and in opposition to the wisdom of those who have guided them in all else, enter, as it were, alone and unsupported on the narrow and rugged path of the higher Christian life.

In all these, there is the noblest and appiest exercise of freedom of thought. But they are exceptions, and meant by Providence to be exceptions. truth is, that for the vast majority of men, independence of thought can never be much more than a They are too devoid of knowledge and of original power to be capable of emancipating themselves from the bondage of prevailing judg-ments and beliefs, and, as a rule, too conscious of their weakness to attempt it. Their liberty of thought is confined to the common objects of Indeed, when we come to con sider things more closely, we find that it is very limited even in the most cul tured. To many departments of human knowledge, those who know most are entire strangers, and of what remains outside their own speciality, they can possess but the barest ele ments. They might, if they chose, go beyond in any special direction, but so long as, for lack of time or of taste, they have failed to do so, they are entirely dependent for what they think on the authority of others, and the only freedom of judgment they can

practice, lies in the choice of the guides they decide to follow. Now this is exactly what happens in the matter of religious belief, with which principally we are concerned here. Religion, that is, the knowledge of man's true relations with God, his duty and his ultimate end, is what all men need equally to possess, yet most gifted, as well as the dullest and the most debased. God, we know, vouthsafed to supply to all that neces-sary form of knowledge by a special revelation. Revelation when it came, was like a light, struck in a dark and intricate passage, where men went groping their way, and were constantly losing themselves. For all those to whom that light unmistakably shines, there is an end of seeking and of guessing. Once they behold it, they know what to think, and cease to inquire any further, unless to ascertain the full meaning of the divine message which has reached them.

So far the condition of all believing Christians is exactly the same. Where God speaks there is an end of all independence of thought for Protestant and Catholic alike, with this difference nevertheless, as history shows, that the burden of authority presses much more gently on one than on the other. For as long as Protestantism held together in any tangible shape of doctrine, it placed the minds of its followers at the mercy of fallible teachers, varying creeds, irrational dogmas, or of their own ill-regulated fancies, whereas the Catholic rule, even irrespective of its divine origin, was made acceptable by the very fact of its imposing only what had been held by the civilized world for ages.

IV.
But, it will be asked, if all this is true; if the Catholic Church confines herself to the teaching of religion; if she simply echoes the divine message, and at most explains its true meaning to her children, how comes it to pass, that we find her concerned with all ingly boundless liberty has its natural and necessary limitations. When we constantly with historians, scientists, sorts of human knowledge, interfering speak of freedom of thought, we mean philosophers, economists, statesmen, exemption from any interference from attempting to dictate to them, and loud without ; but thought, like action, has in her denunciations when they decline

thought is truth. No man has a right but a few remarks will suffice to dis-

Religion, of its nature, particularly revealed religion, touches on many things outside itself; it deals with many subjects accessible to the mind of man, and upon which it has been busy before and after God had spoken Revelation, for instance, is a historical event; it mingles itself with a series of events extending over many ages it becomes thus a part of human Again it contains a doctrine of God, of the soul; it tells of the origin of things, thus touching on philosophy at various vital points. It is, above all, a law of life, following human action in every phase and at every stage of existence, individual and col lective. Religion proclaims the funda mental laws of human society. It has always had something—a good deal in fact-to say about marriage, education property; about the duties of those in power, and the mutual dealings of men n a word, about everything in which the practice of justice or of charity is involved. It is the mission of the Catholic Church, as God's messenger, not only to proclaim, but to defend, and, so far as depends upon her, to enforce the fundamental laws and truths upon which things divine and human ultimately rest. There are facts and principles which she cannot permit her children to deny, because they are of the essence of religion, natural Christian. If they claim to be Cath lics, or even Christians, they cannot be materialists in philosophy, nor fatatists nor sceptics. In presence of revealed truth, they have to relinquish certain speculations, in which, if left to them-

mate end of the human race. They may not believe in the lawfulness of godless education or of crooked poli tics, or of transactions either unfair or heartless with their fellow-men. In such things the Church allows no freedom of thought, because divine truth permits none. Who, if he be a Christian, can complain of this? Who will not rejoice that, in matters of such importance, the steady, clear light from above supersedes the faint and fitful gleams of natural reason? In genious speculations and theories may interest and amuse the seeker after truth; but (if he seek it sincerely) how promptly and gladly he drops them all, when positive, certain knowledge stands revealed before him! Such is the condition of mind of a Catholic in presence of the teachings of his Church. He rejoices to find in them the sanction of his anticipations or the correction of his mistakes. Instead of narrowing his mind, they give him a broader base of solid truth to build upon. They make him stronger and bolder in thought, and, to use the comparison of St. Augustine, like the wings of the bird, far from weighing him down, they permit him to soar aloft, and reach the skies. Under the watchful eye of his divinely appointed guardian. he is only tempted to more daring flights, and thus it has come to pass that some of the noblest efforts and boldest speculations of human though are due to the most dutiful and docile sons of the Catholic Church.

selves, they might have indulged about

the origin, the history, and the ulti

Such, then, is the liberty, and such the limitations of thought among Cath olics. To think for one's self; to see things with one's own eyes, and to judge of them as they appear to one's own judgment, is the privilege, in some measure, of all rational boings. It shows itself as an instinct with the earliest manifestations of thought; it grows with the increasing strength of the mind; it assumes in some of its acts the solemn character of a duty. Faith is an act of this kind. It is an act of independent judgment, by which a man does, of himself, what no earthly power can compel him to do, believe in God's word, and trust himself to the history. It contemplates this earth of ours millions of years before man what, left to themselves, they have insulating and trust himself to the guidance of the Church. A Catholic variably missed—the brightest and the who does this uses his independ as fully, and acts as freely as the client who chooses his lawyer, or the patient who puts himself in the hands physician. But the choice once delib-erately made, the wise man abides by it, and only a fool claims to control in detail the decisions of physician or lawyer in matters of which he knows next to nothing. The Catholic believes absolutely in the solemn decisions of the Church; he relies on the wisdom of her guidance; he follows it even when not strictly binding, because he knows that it is his best chance to be

right. In return the Church is usually slow -very slow - to repress or to narrow the intellectual liberty of her children. So long as they are respectful toward her authority, and ready to abide by its rulings, she is in no haste to cen-sure, even what she knows to be unso and, preferring to see things yield to friendly influences, or right them selves, rather than inflict the humiliation of rebuke on those she loves. The general good may compel her some times to more prompt action, because

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error is often contageous : but it will be remarked that long after theologians have censured, the Church remains silent, and that, in her dealings with her children, and with the world at large, there is a combination of patience and gentleness with authority and energy which is more than human, and lifts the mind of the true believer to the divine source from which she originally holds her power and ever learns how best to use it.



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