

## THE PAPAL ELECTION.

Already some of our Catholic contemporaries are speculating upon the probabilities in view of the death of the present Pope, which event, in the natural course, cannot be expected to be in the very remote future. Some of our non-Catholic contemporaries are giving accounts of how the next Papal election will take place, the procedure that is to be adopted, and sundry other details of what they consider of great importance. In the former case we consider it very indelicate to be thus presupposing that the great Pontiff, who now reigns, is not likely to continue for a number of years more on the throne of St. Peter. Everything indicates that Leo is strong in body—that is considering his advanced years—and that he is mentally as gigantic and powerful as he has been since his ascension to the throne. In the latter case, we have nothing to learn from the would-be wise and erudite articles concerning the procedure in the case of a Papal election. It is exactly the same as it has ever been, and when the time comes for a successor to be chosen to the present Pontiff, the self-same rules and regulations will be followed and carried out, as in the case of his elevation. It is not, however, to find fault with the above mentioned articles that we refer to this subject; rather it is to preface another of equal importance, and one greatly misunderstood by our non-Catholic friends. We refer to Papal succession.

As a rule the election of a Pope is looked upon as would be the election of a president, or a governor of some state. It must be remembered that a most radical difference exists between the two. The election of a civil magistrate, leader, or potentate is a purely human operation, and in it all the accidents of human fallibility must be considered. Let us take, for example, the election of a President in any Republic. Firstly, there is the consideration of the man—his abilities, his qualifications, and his political record. Secondly, there is the consideration of the particular policy that he upholds or advocates. Thirdly, there is the consideration of all the influences that may be brought to bear in order either to elect or defeat him. Taking all these different considerations into view the result may be quite problematical. Human agencies of all kinds are set to work, every species of election dodge is used, money is spent, influence is brought to bear, and finally the election—be it a victory or a defeat—is carried on according to the rules of all well-organized human systems of legislation. Always supposing that there is no evil influence brought to bear, and that justice is strictly considered by all connected with the election. Of course we make full allowance for human fallibility, for the individual interests and for even more or less corrupt motives.

Frankly speaking, these are the various considerations that affect an election such as the one to which we refer. Here is the point at which we differ from our non-Catholic friends; here our roads separate. They look upon the election of a Pope, that is to say, the appointing of a successor to St. Peter, as Vicar of Christ on earth, in the same light in which they consider the aforementioned election of a President. We are obliged, by our faith, by our convictions and by our knowledge of the vast difference, to contemplate a Papal election from a totally different standpoint. In this case, as in hundreds of others, we perceive how immeasurably far are the non-Catholic reasoners from the standard set up by the Catholic Church. They judge everything by a human—therefore a fallible—standard; we judge the same matters by a Divine—therefore, an infallible—standard. Unless they are willing to come to the fundamental sources of all religion we cannot convince nor yet persuade them. They must firstly accept Christ as the Son of God; they must admit His infallibility; they must acknowledge that His successors are equally infallible; they must recognize the truth of His statements, and therefore the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, working in the bosom of His Church. Unless they accept all these, they can only judge from a human standpoint, and therefore be constantly exposed to the errors that human fallibility must necessarily produce. It is thus that they look upon a Papal election as they would on a Presidential one; ignoring the Divine, and accepting the human. Having pointed out this great abyss that rises, or rather yawns, between our different conceptions, we will proceed to show that none of the three considerations in a civil, or humanly speaking, Presidential election can possibly obtain in the case of a Papal election.

Here are the three considerations in an ordinary election: 1, The man; 2, his policy; 3, the influence, for or against.

As far as a Papal election is concerned we will take up these three considerations, and deal with them as concisely as we possibly can. Firstly, as to the man. In the election of a Pope there is no consideration as to who the man is, what he was, whence he sprung, what record he has made, or what ideas he possesses. Christ took His first Vicar from a gang of ignorant fishermen; and since the days of St. Peter, many a Pope has been chosen from the very humblest walks of society. His inferior or his superior position in no way influences the decision of the Sacred College that elects him. His family influence, his reputation, his learning, have nothing to do with it. The inimitable "Imitation of Christ" tells us that the humblest peasant is preferred to the great philosopher, when the former has a love of God in his heart that surpasses the knowledge of the latter. From out the most insignificant positions have Popes been raised to the throne, while brilliant men high in the ranks of the hierarchy, were overlooked. It is not, we say, a human institution—it is Divine, and "the kingdom is not of this world," no more are the methods of carrying on that mighty kingdom of a human calibre. Consequently the individuality of the one to be elected is only of very secondary consideration.

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In the next place comes his policy. For all Popes, and all individuals who are likely to be raised to that lofty state, the policy is the same. It consists in carrying out the orders of Christ, in the preaching of the Gospel, the propagation of the Faith, and the extension of Catholicity the world over. According as the ages advance, as times change, and as men's views are modified, the accidents of that policy may harmonize with such mutations, but the general policy is the same: it is unchangeable. Horace says in one of his odes:

"Times change and we change with them."  
Racine, in his "Athalie," cries out:  
"Que les temps sont changes."  
Sir Walter Scott exclaims:  
"Old times are changed,  
Old manners gone."

And so do all the great writers of the ages speak of the changes in the circumstances that affect the world. According as these changes occur, the Papal policy—under its Divine Founder and Inspirer—harmonizes with the mutations. But no individual Pope has any policy that does not correspond with the Church's course throughout the ages.

Then, finally, comes the question of the influence brought to bear. The only influence is that of the Holy Ghost, acting upon the minds of those who have it in their power to appoint the successor to the departed Vicar of Christ. All worldly influence is as naught! The only power that is brought to bear is that of prayer, and that alone governs the decisions of the Cardinals assembled for the purpose of electing a Sovereign Pontiff.

Therefore, we conclude that the election of a Pope must not and cannot be considered from any human standpoint. To do so would be to entirely ignore the Divine element that permeates the Church from the beginning of Christianity. Consequently the men who speculate upon the accidents that might affect a Papal election are entirely astray. They judge from the purely human standpoint an operation that is conducted under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and that is as free from all human influences as were the actions of Christ Himself, when He established that Church and selected His Apostles and successors.

## IRISHMEN IN POLITICS.

We are anxious to say a few words to our fellow-countrymen, in this issue, and we trust they will take our remarks in good part. The fact is that if each one would look down into his own breast, conjure up his past experiences, or else honestly consider the different attitudes which he has assumed, from time to time, in political affairs, he will find that what we are about to state corresponds with his experience.

We look about us and we behold with admiration, not unmixed with envy, the conduct of people belonging to other nationalities—especially in the political field. We find them divided upon certain questions of policy, or upon the respective merits of different leaders; but the moment there arises a question of their own national, or individual interests, they are to be found united. It has ever been otherwise with our people. If one of them is in business and not succeeding, they will say, "poor fellow, it is a hard world," but will go next door to do with the very man that is their fellow-countryman's strongest competitor. If that Irishman is successful in his business, they will at once come to the conclusion that it is time to check him and that he must not be allowed to climb the ladder. Every fault he ever committed, or that was ever—rightly or wrongly—reported about him, is brought up, and of course some bitter opponent of Irish interests is supported and encouraged, in order to place some obstacle in the way of the heretofore successful Irishman.

As it is in business so is it in the political field. The bitterest, most useless, most harmful, most nonsensical reasons are advanced for opposing an Irishman. If he happens to be a Liberal, the Conservative element is dead against him, and will use every imaginable means to injure his future and to prevent him from doing all in his power for the good of his fellow-countrymen. If he is Conservative, the Liberal element becomes so intolerant that it would prefer to see an Orangeman supported than one of honest Irish convictions—simply because there is a disagreement as to the question of Liberal or Conservative.

In God's name, when will our people learn that the difference between one political party and the other, is a mere feather in the balance, weighed against the ostracism that is imposed upon our people through the instrumentality of their petty divisions? It is full time that all this should cease. We are sorry to be obliged to thus speak out frankly.

but the circumstances demand it. We care not to what political party a man may belong (and parties change so rapidly now-a-days, that they are merely kaleidoscopic) provided he is prepared to do his utmost for our people, collectively and individually. We are sick of seeing our political Irishmen playing into the hands of every element that will keep them in the background, simply on account of some pet political idea, some individual jealousy, or some ill-conceived appreciation of their position.

We once read of how the Indian boys shoot arrows in the air and measure the flight of the arrows by the depth they stick in the ground when they come down. It appears to us that our people generally measure the extravagant height to which they raise their own men, at a given moment, by the manner in which they sink them when the whirl of political excitement causes them to turn upon them later on. After all, what difference does it make to us whether a man styles himself a Liberal or a Conservative, provided the course he follows is directly in the interests of our people? It is full time that another stand should be taken, that we should learn to lay aside our smaller and meaner personal interests, and combine to form a balance of power in the country. Until we are ready to give and take, to accept the situation as it presents itself, and to support our own people—when worthy of such support—we may expect to remain forever as we are to day. These words may not sound very pleasantly in the ears of certain politically-inclined persons, but we cannot help that. We are here to do a duty towards the Irish Catholic element, and we will perform that duty to the best of our ability, without any consideration as to consequences. Our people must unite; they must learn to protect themselves; they must sample under foot all merely local political considerations; they must show the powers—no matter what party is in power—that they have their influence and that they purpose making use of it; they must, above all, teach the country the lesson that Irishmen cannot be set against each other and will not tear each other to pieces for the sake of any party, faction, political organization, or other body of interested individuals. Canada. We are opposed to any movement that may tend to divide the ranks of our people, and opposed to any individual—be he Liberal or Conservative—who attempts to gain his personal ends at the expense of the harmony (and consequent strength) of our Irish Catholic population.

Bishop Metz, whose resignation of the Denver episcopate is reported, is a native of Munster, Germany; but the most of his life has been spent in this country. He studied at St. Mary's of the West, and has many friends and admirers in Ohio. He filled several important pastorates in the Denver diocese before he was appointed, seven years ago, coadjutor to Bishop Machebeuf, the first Denver prelate, on whose death, in 1889, he succeeded to the title. His diocese has a Catholic population of about 60,000, with something over sixty churches and about ninety priests.

Rev. William E. Bartlett, pastor of St. Anne's Catholic Church, Baltimore, in his sermon a few weeks ago said that Bismarck was now a disappointed old man. Once he was the man of iron and blood, but his power was exercised against truth. His faith was the same as all others who make war against the spouse of Christ. The oppression of the Church in Germany, he said, resulted in good, for it brought forth in bold relief the true Catholic. It separated the chaff from the pure grain, and left the Church in a healthier condition than it was in before.