

CONFESSION OF AN ULTRAMONTANE.

BY THE REV. E. RANSFORD, LL.B.

MR. MIVART, a distinguished Roman Catholic layman, with a candor that must be extremely disagreeable to his ecclesiastical superiors, brings forward reasons that militate against the "re-conversion" of England to Romanism. Having shown that, notwithstanding the notable increase in *materiel*, the cause goes back rather than forward, he endeavours to account therefore on the ground that the conditions of English society are now so changed as to render the furtherance of any religion well nigh an impossibility. He insists that a wave of unbelief, or at least, of irreligion, has swept over the land. This he lays to the door of scientists, whose theories have tended to upset men's preconceived reverential notions as to the connection between science and revealed religion. But granting that this unbelieving wave has really flooded society, a point on which there may be some doubt, is not its cause to be looked for, rather in the re-action from Papal dogmatism, than in the skeptical arguments of scientists. For one person that reads the works of the modern scientific writers there are scores whose religious views are founded on Renan and those of his school, who have broken away from Romanism and sought refuge in avowed infidelity. But all these writers were in their youth influenced directly or indirectly by the training they received in Jesuit and other Roman Catholic seminaries, from whose restrictive and depressing system of mental thralldom they revolted in their riper years. Nor can Mr. Mivart deny that the dogmatic definition of the personal infallibility of the Pope has not only proved fatal to the future of proselytism in the ranks of educated students of Church history, but that it has also alienated from that of Romanism many of its former adherents. Of these the majority have betaken themselves to the camp of unorthodoxy; a small minority only having joined or rejoined the Church of England. Such a wave, proceeding directly from Rome herself, has had more to do with thwarting of her schemes of making her borders narrower in England and America, than all the speculations of scientists. As a rule, especially in America, men of the world have now-a-days no time to devote to the vision of theories of a science that may to-morrow be proved to be baseless. They chiefly study how to get rich quickly, how to live lives of luxury and ease, and how to make the best of this world at the least possible sacrifice of self. Wherefore any system that promises them the fulfilment of their desires is that of which they become enamored. This is offered to them in free thought, which abolishes every standard of faith, and encourages them to live for the day only, apart from dogma in any form, and disembarassed of any such hampering doctrines as responsibility to a higher Being, or retribution hereafter for a life led not in accordance with His behests. And this is taught by the disciples of the free-

thought school, whose leaders draw their inspiration from the open infidelity of Renan, or the mere hidden, but not less dangerous skepticism of the "liberal" Roman priest—the hybrid offspring of the mysticism of the School-men and the history-falsifying dogma of the personal infallibility of the Pope, the union being the ecclesiastic of the Voltaire-Renan class.

Nor does Mr. Mivart hide from his readers another hindrance to the spread of Romanism among the Anglo-Saxon race. With all the sturdy feelings of his nation against childishness in religion he protests, against its disciples being turned into babies. As an Anglo-Saxon he lifts up his voice against foisting on his countrymen an alien cult, and grafting on their worship, foreign excrescences. He levels his shaft of censure at such men as the late Father Fabes and his oratorians, who by Italianizing the ritual of the Church and introducing into its temples strange adornments and stranger forms, have exoticized them into doll's houses and transformed the stayed old devotions of a former generation into the rampant and ridiculous excesses of Italian and Spanish Mariolatry, have perverted the decorous and sober formalism of the Roman Catholics of thirty or forty years ago into the "bad dream," over which Cardinal Newman so pathetically laments in his "Apologia." Mr. Mivart, prudently ignoring the doctrinal points at issue, objects to this denationalizing of his co-religionists, to this substitution of sensationalism and emotionalism for the simpler and more man-making ritual of his forefathers. His aspirations are clearly fixed upon a liturgical form of worship, founded upon the Anglican Prayer Book. His own words are striking:—

"The love of Anglicans for, and the beauty of their services, has greatly increased, and their Book of Common Prayer—truly admirable in so many respects, however tainted with doctrinal error—is mainly a presentation of the old Catholic liturgy in the noblest and most magnificent form of the English tongue. We may perhaps be allowed to throw out the suggestion that in view of so great a gain as would be the conversion of the English-speaking races, it might perhaps be not altogether unwise to provide authoritative strictly liturgical services in the English tongue."

Mr. Mivart's bias is all in favor of an Anglo-Saxon—a national church, with a national liturgy, said in a "tongue understood of the people." Why it should not be so, considering that Rome already allows many of the communities in the East who have aggregated themselves to her to retain their national liturgies in the vulgar tongue, is a point which he does not urge. He would have it so, indeed, but only with the consent of the church. She, he observes, "Authorized the change in church service from Greek to Latin, and created the 'Vulgate' to meet the wants of a Latin-speaking people. If we are not greatly mistaken—the English tongue will by and by have claims yet greater than had the Latin, and it would be well to recognize this in good time."

In like manner he would de-Italianize the ritual and the churches, and would bring them back to that standard of the decency and order of a past age, which is to be found only in a few churches and chapels of the present day. Thus would be avoided the scandal given to the more sober-minded of the Anglo-Roman Communion—a scandal which so powerfully moves Mr. Mivart as to extort from him the following protest:

"It is not to be denied that our feelings are sometimes painfully shocked by the objects of piety in our churches, *degradations apt to excite the contempt or pity of non-Catholics, and to call up the flush of shame on the cheek of the Catholic layman who cares for his religion.*"

These are brave and stout words, wonderful in the mouth of a layman, not less wonderful when it is remembered that they are found in the pages of the *Dublin Review*, an organ looked upon, even by many Roman Catholics, as the most Ultramontane of the Ultramontanes.

A "WOMAN'S RIGHTS" BIBLE.

IT appears that the learned (and sterner) ladies of America are dissatisfied with the revised translation of the Bible, as unfair to the weaker and downtrodden sex, and a committee of their number are now busily engaged in New Jersey in making a translation for themselves. This will probably be known as the Woman's Version. A correspondent of the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* was recently allowed to peep into the sanctum where this great work was in progress. It was a richly furnished drawing room. Half-a-dozen ladies, "with intelligent faces and busy pens" sat around a broad table. Each was reading a "cheap Bible," and ever and anon a verse would be snipped out and pasted at the top of a long sheet of white paper. Then the revisers would coroners jury like, "sit upon" the offending verse, and the ladies—one an excellent Greek scholar, another deeply versed in Bible criticism, and a third learned in "great commentaries like those of Henry, Scott, and Adam Clarke"—would write on the white paper all they knew about the verse, and pass the paper on to the secretary. In this manner it is hoped that the hitherto unsuspected wrong which woman has received from the tyrant man will be righted. The eldest lady of the group was kind enough to explain the *raison d'être* of the committee to the puzzled correspondent. "You men," she said with a merry twinkle in her eye, "have for centuries revised the Scriptures after your fashion, and now we intend to do the same thing after our fashion. We have gone over the Old and New Testaments with great care, and we find that about one-tenth of the Bible touches in one way or other on women. Now, we want to know whether male translations, interpretations, and commentaries have been made in a spirit friendly to our sex. We, and a great many other women have our doubts on this point—in a word, we propose issuing what may be called 'The Woman's Bible.'" Dean Burgon may

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