

on to reform, and blessed with their lips what their hearts knew to be accursed."

A private letter to Mr. Gladstone, written a month before the first meeting of the Council, shows how gloomy were Acton's apprehensions. "Everything," he says, "is prepared here for the production of Papal infallibility, and the plan of operations is already laid down in a way which shows an attentive study of Sarpi's *History of the Council of Trent*. They are sure of a large majority." A majority, however, would scarcely do. Œcumenical Councils, if not absolutely unanimous, are supposed to attain that moral unanimity which the insignificance of a minority implies. The attitude of the French, as well as of the German and Austro-Hungarian bishops, inspired the Vatican with some alarm. Darboy and Dupanloup were names known and esteemed throughout the Catholic world. Bishops Strossmayer and Hefele, the latter a man of prodigious learning, were still more strongly opposed to the Papal policy than their French colleagues. Against the expediency of promulgating the doctrine there was a resolute and well organised mass of opinion in the Council. But there were few prepared to call the doctrine itself false, and therefore ready to resist it in the last extremity. To drive a wedge between the majority of the minority and the minority of the minority was the obvious tactics of the Pope and his Ultramontane advisers. "If the Court of Rome is defeated," Acton wrote, "it can only be by men of principle and of science." He believed that a letter from Mr. Gladstone, dealing with the secular side of the question, and with the effect which the decree would have upon the future of English and Irish Catholics, might do much to counteract the influence of Manning. It was impossible for the English Premier to interfere directly with the affairs of another Church. But he allowed Acton to state what he thought about the effects of Ultramontanism on the prospects of educational measures in England. Acton estimated that the bishops opposed to the expediency of the dogma were about two hundred in