

ease." (Vol. III. page 80.) The writer's points are well taken, but with the blindness of his race he attributes the "trampling under foot" of his nation to a political origin and defect, instead of to its rightful cause, a theological one. The "National Policy" did not exist in 1721, but the same heel of despotic religion did. One hundred and seventy years have not altered or changed one iota its sway over its serfs. Have we not here the true cause of Canada's backwardness? What nation, where half one's short lifetime is spent in Church or under the leading strings of clerical administration, has ever made the material progress that is to be seen where Church is made subservient to the people's pleasure? Material progress did not exist during the Puritanical reign over New England. It was with the dawn of liberty in religious as well as political observances that the greatness of New England began and was developed. We have only to look at and contrast dark, lethargical, priest-ridden Spain and Portugal with free, open, active, energetic England; or restrained, nihilistic, autocratic, patriarchal-governed Russia or Catholic Austria with honest, enlightened Germany; or, better still, our own bright, active, opulent and happy neighbours, where liberty of conscience is synonym with liberty of action, as compared with that dark, unhappy, poor and miserable French race occupying our own territory, whose every action is subservient to priestly orders, to find the full force and effect of this religious dominancy—priestcraft *versus* enlightenment, toleration, liberty of action and consequent material progress and happiness, the latter, of the body as well as the soul, which former priestcraft fails to view as of any consequence in this world. Have we not the same bitter experience to deplore in such ecclesiastically governed countries, where the state is subservient to the Church, as Mohammedan Turkey, Persia and Morocco contrasted with India, Egypt and Algeria? Have we not also China and Japan, as illustrating in the former the detrimental influence of the Buddhist priests ruling the people and state?

All the world over it is the same tale: wherever priestcraft rules there is darkness, illiteracy, poverty, slavery and consequent misery to be deplored. Even ancient history furnishes similar parallelisms. To this day the Jews bewail the loss of their national existence and capital, the cause of which was the religious ascendancy and domination of their priesthood over the temporal power. The Jews, like the Roman Catholics of the present day (whose many forms of religious and political government, the latter closely copied, but failed to prototype their good qualities), were an all absorbing hierarchy, whose chief priests, with armies at their bidding, kept the people in subjection, ignorance and slavery until their temple was destroyed, their God-given city of Jerusalem demolished, as the outcome of their misplaced power, sedition and blindness, and they were dispersed as the outcasts of the earth. France, while not offering altogether a parallel, owed much of its rebellion and misfortunes to the clerical ascendancy, until in like manner they were dispersed and unfortunately found a harbour of refuge in Canada and America, the evil effects of which are clearly visible to all not affected with Amaurosis. Let *L'Electeur* take warning, as the supporter of a clerical government, over which the clergy have not only full control, but an actual voice in its councils, to halt in time, and not seek to find its evils and shortcomings in the political state of the people, but in its religious and national aspect, the latter feature of which I will discuss in my next.

COGNOSCENTE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

GLADSTONE AND HOME RULE—II.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

The Catholic Relief Bill of 1793.

SIR,—In 1793 the Irish Parliament passed a bill giving the Franchise to the Catholics, abolishing the remains of the old Penal Code and freeing them from almost all their disabilities. It stopped short of allowing Catholics to enter Parliament. This measure gave them a great majority in the electorate, and it was reasonably certain that if they were allowed to sit in the House, they would soon have a clear majority there, and that the land settlements of the preceding centuries would be attacked—which, if persevered in, would result in civil war, and the interference once more of Great Britain.

Wolfe Tone.

Wolfe Tone, who was, although a Protestant, rabidly opposed to the British Government, and was conspiring to separate the nations, was disgusted at the passing of this relief measure, and very indignant with the Catholic Episcopacy for accepting it. It must ever be borne in mind that the standard of truthfulness among the Celtic Irish is not the same as in Canada, the United States, or Great Britain. More especially is this the case among the professional patriots—men who make a good living out of the business. Wolfe Tone's life, by his own son, with the exact rendering of his diary, written from day to day, is widely different from modern patriotic biographies. From his own statements it is plain that the rejection by the British Government of a hare-brained plan of his, which he had submitted to them, was the foundation of his plotting and so-called patriotism.

In the *Nineteenth Century* for May the Duke of Argyll quotes largely from this authentic life. It shows exactly

what the Irish so-called patriots of that day were. To adapt from a Chinese standpoint, they were men who would set fire to their neighbour's house, and thence to the whole town, to roast their own pig.

At Vol. I., p. 99, this Irish patriot grumbles (how like some of the present day) that "every complaint recited had been attended to—every grievance specified had been removed" by the Act of April, 1793.

When Wolfe Tone went to France, he importuned the Directory to send an expedition to Ireland—and at that very time the Duke of Argyll (quoting from Vol. II., p. 159) shows that he actually attempted to blackmail Carnot, the most respectable man out of the five Directors. While to his face assuring him of "the unanimity of the Irish people," he stated (Vol. II., p. 27) to a compatriot high in the service of France, "that the whole Catholic clergy might be regarded as hostile," and that "a large French force was absolutely requisite, since the people would never move without it."

As the Irish R.C. clergy were well aware of the wholesale murders of the French clergy by the French Republicans, and of the horrible excesses and outrages committed by the French armies in La Vendee, their hostility is easy to understand. On November 10, 1796, Wolfe Tone attended a review of the "Légion Noire," 1,800 strong—who had been foremost in perpetrating the La Vendee horrors, the wholesale murder of men, women and children. He says in his journal, "They are the banditti intended for England, and sad blackguards they are." "They put me strongly in mind of the Green Boys of Dublin."—(the toughs of that day). He also complained that the ranks of the new Irish militia were being filled by Catholics. And again, June 18, 1798, of their loyalty, although he calls it "rivetting their country's chains." The following will show the nature of the man: referring to a proclamation of the executive body of the conspirators, "that all Irishmen in the British service taken with arms in their hands shall be instantly shot," he observes (Vol. II., p. 509) "that it was exactly what he had urged on the French Directory for the two years past." Thus he was desirous that thousands of his fellow-countrymen—the great majority being Catholics—should be refused quarter. And this of men who were simply faithful to their duty! This helps to explain many of the Loyalist reprisals. The majority of the Irish Government embodied forces being Catholics, it follows that some of them were murdered by men of their own creed after the rising began, and their Catholic comrades with arms in their hands retaliated. These are some of the horrors of civil war that many of the Irish Americans have been seeking once more to bring about.

The Duke of Argyll observes that it shows the mildness of the Irish Government that for fifteen months after they knew that Wolfe Tone was treasonably communicating with the French Government, he was allowed to remain in Dublin, and that repeatedly they tried to reclaim him. In April, 1795, he was finally told to go or be arrested.

The Excesses of 1798.

It is the fashion among professional Irish patriots to lay all the excesses committed during the Irish Rebellion upon the Protestants. Nothing can be further from the truth. Those who began them were the worst. Only seventeen years earlier, during the fighting in Virginia and the Carolinas, great excesses were committed on both sides. The Loyalists were in a minority there, and when the Republicans burnt their houses they often retaliated, until some counties were nearly wasted. To show how the wilder spirits excite to crime with the object in view of Absalom's counsellors—to make the quarrel irreconcilable—only about five years ago news came from South Africa of a great crime that these bogus Irish patriots sought to carry out. During the Boer war an emissary of the League found his way to the Boer camp. They had captured a few prisoners, mostly wounded men. He strongly advised that they should be murdered in cold blood; but the Boers, being Christians, refused to do so. Had they acted on his machivellian counsel, not all Gladstone's oratory would have caused Britain to fall upon her knees to the slave-hunters, and the Boers and their then system of outraging the natives would have been put down forever.

The Dangers Caused by the Two Parliaments.

During Grattan's Parliament (1782–1800) there were several occasions when great dangers ensued therefrom. We must bear in mind that the Irish were then, even more so than now, an excitable race, and not a phlegmatic people like the Germans.

In 1782, when England, over-matched, was struggling with the United States, France, Spain and Holland, it was actually proposed in the Irish Parliament to request the King to declare war against Portugal, our only ally. The proposal, fortunately, was not voted upon.

Free Trade Rejected by Ireland.

In 1784 the Irish Parliament presented an address to the Crown for the purpose of getting free trade between the two nations. In those days Protectionists flourished in England almost as powerfully as they now do in the United States. Pitt, in pursuance of the Irish request, accordingly introduced the necessary measures into the British Parliament. There was great opposition to the proposal in the House of Commons, and also among the manufacturers. But that great minister, Pitt, stood firm, and he carried it through, granting all that the Irish Parliament had asked for. Accordingly a Bill was laid before the Irish House of Commons to carry out the measure on

their side. Remember that Ingram, the historian, is an Irishman: "The Bill was received with an Irish howl. Ireland was determined to resent an offence that never was intended—to repel an injury that never was offered." After a long and heated discussion it was rejected, notwithstanding the strenuous exertions of a common sense minority. Where does the "sweet reasonableness" of Irish patriots come in? Is not this a typical rendering of the Irishism, "I will be drowned, and no one shall save me"—and then to denounce the bystander as a vile criminal for acceding to the earnest demands of the deceased?

The Regency Question in 1789.

In 1789, King George III. suffering from temporary insanity, it was deemed necessary to appoint a Regent. In England the ministers contended that the Parliament alone had power to settle the terms and power of the Regency. But the Opposition (Fox, its leader, being on intimate terms with the Prince of Wales) contended that the heir apparent acquired it absolutely without any authority from Parliament. Ultimately the British Parliament decided that if necessary the Prince of Wales should be Regent, with certain restrictions.

Anyone with the slightest pretension to statesmanship ought to have known that the rule should be the same in both countries. As a matter of fact the restrictions on the Prince's power were to prevent future troubles in the royal house in the probable event of the King recovering; and, so far as Ireland was concerned, it would have prevented jobbery.

What course did the Irish patriot party pursue?

To adopt a Western pithy, forcible and inelegant phrase, they, "out of pure cussedness," without waiting for full information, and refusing the Government's urgent request for a few days' delay, actually on the very day that the King was declared convalescent by the *London Gazette*, passed a resolution conferring the Government of Ireland upon the Prince of Wales without any restrictions whatever. This would have opened a sluice gate of jobbery for the Opposition. Had this been carried out there would have been different governments in the two countries. In England a Tory, free trade and progressive government, headed by Pitt; in Ireland a Whig, anti-free trade and behind-the-age government, ruled by Fox's friends. This is a striking instance in support of Dr. Goldwin Smith's articles on the evils of partyism.

The Irish votes ended in a practical bull. Of course, between the time of the vote and the arrival of the deputation, news of the King's recovery must have been received, but no one seems to have thought of harking back to common sense. When the Parliamentary Commissioners arrived in London they found the King restored to health, yet keeping their countenances like Cicero's augurs, they duly had audience of the Prince of Wales.

Superiority of the Irish Suffrage.

The Act of April, 1793, vastly increased the Irish electorate. In proportion to the population it numbered over fifty times as many as Scotland possessed up till 1832, and it far exceeded the proportion in England until Disraeli's Reform Bill in 1868. We have no accurate data of the English electorate in 1793, but in proportion it certainly was not near one-half what it was in Ireland.

The Growing Necessity for a Union.

The French Revolution adversely affected Irish history, as it did that of most other civilized nations. The French rulers sent emissaries to spread sedition, to incite to crime and to raise the Catholics. The attempts by those who had publicly proclaimed Atheism, and who had outraged and murdered the clergy, to win over the Irish priesthood, utterly failed; not half-a-dozen were won over.

But it began to be felt that the union was necessary; the Rebellion of 1798 proved it. The Protestants were at first adverse to and opposed to it. It was generally believed that a union would interfere with many private interests—especially of those of political adventurers, which Ireland has always abounded in. These adventurers had great opportunities by getting into their House of Commons, and as two-thirds of them would be shut out of the Imperial Parliament, their chances would be vastly reduced.

Having granted the Franchise to the Catholics it was felt that there would be always smouldering civil war until they were admitted into Parliament, and that then in a few years the Catholics would virtually rule Ireland, and the property of thousands, with titles of centuries, would be endangered. That on the other hand, with a Union, there would be no danger of the Catholics ruling—no one foresaw then the possibility of a Protestant Jesuit as a Minister.

Therefore for the Protestant ruling minority there were only three courses:—

1. To let things drift—refusing admission to the Catholics—with a reasonable certainty of fresh revolutionary attempts, and a state of general insecurity.

2. To admit the Catholics to Parliament, be ruled by them, with the certainty of an unsettlement of titles, dating from the 16th century.

3. A Union with Great Britain. It was generally believed that the Catholics would shortly afterwards be admitted into Parliament, as would have been the case, had not the then Lord Chancellor, afterwards, unknown to Pitt, poisoned the King's mind on a point of conscience. Pitt could make no promises beforehand. Had he done that, he would have postponed the Union for years, while the Empire was engaged in a life-and-death struggle with France and her allies.