

onaries almost persuaded themselves that the Pope had, at least, the keys of *Hell* in a store-room in the Vatican, and that it rested with his mildness of temperament to drown them deeper than did ever plummet sound, and close for ever the Newgate of the spiritual world.

Hopes less wild and fantastic than these, but yet tending this way, have abounded in every part of the globe. That the present Pope is to make concessions in the Irish Church, in the English Church in the matter of the French University, in Russia, in Austria, in Switzerland, in Spain, in Portugal, in the East, and in we know not what division of the western hemisphere—these things have men both hoped and feared. The great question of the day—that of Education—was the great fear of the friends of the Church, the great hope of its enemies. Every country has its Education question, in which the same points, under innumerable varieties of form, present themselves for decision; and we feel persuaded that when the Catholic friends of these Irish Colleges consider the baneful effect that would have been produced all over the world by any appearance of concession to mere secular hopes and notions in the matter of education, they will themselves rejoice most heartily at the result of the Papal deliberations. If their judgments remain unconvinced in the particular case, they will at least feel it some alleviation of their disappointment that no other decision could have been so creditable in every way, so significant of spiritual strength, so calculated to breathe fresh ardour and heroism into the souls of the most zealous defenders of the Church wherever her foes beset and assail her.

In Ireland a not less happy result may be anticipated; for there, as well as elsewhere, have been sufficiently extravagant expectations. There, as elsewhere, the character of the Pope has been misconceived; the nature of his liberality mistaken; the springs of his civil and ecclesiastical policy profoundly misunderstood. There, as elsewhere, dreams have been nursed of a false peace, which can have no place till the Church militant shall have come to an end; a peace, the characteristics of which were to be universal philanthropy, toleration, charity, and the predominance of mere human philosophy, worth, and wisdom, over the doctrine and the character which are generated and preserved by inspiration of Divine Grace: a peace, to attain and preserve which, the odious exclusiveness of Catholicity was to be abolished for ever; and—not merely in civil laws—but in the language of its own claims, and the terms of its own institutions, it was to bring itself down to the miserable level of the sects.

These thoughts, unfortunately, are afloat in Ireland as well as elsewhere, afloat in quarters where the political liberality of the present Pope would

have marvellously strengthened them, and where they receive their best rebuke and most powerful discouragement in this solemn and deliberate decision, pronounced solely on Ecclesiastical grounds, by one whom, for his political career, these very Liberals cannot but admire and reverence, and who, in giving this decision, they know has not been influenced by antiquated social opinions, but deliberately propounds it as proceeding from the unalterable spirit of the Church.

This lesson, we are persuaded, will be worth many sermons and tons of logic. Henceforward it is no longer a matter of mere opinion; no longer a doctrine that is upheld by *this* Divine, and scouted by *that*; no longer a mere topic of dispute. Whatever private opinions each person may hold, there can now be no question about the thing to be *done*. The Bishops—and in them their clergy are included—can now have no hand in fostering, encouraging, or even permitting these establishments. Thank Heaven they are now placed in their true position—*outside* the Church. Whatever the Government may do, it can make them nothing more or less than *Protestant* colleges. They take their stand from this time forward with the Universities of Dublin, Oxford, and Cambridge, in—everything but learning! Catholic parents cannot always be prevented from sending their children thither—if indeed there ever be a thither in existence—but the whole power and influence of the Clergy must be directed against them, and the exceptions to the rule cannot be very numerous. The most latitudinarian adviser cannot, in his inmost conscience, approve of these colleges any longer, because now they are accompanied by no safeguard, offer no security, and present to the Catholic pupil nothing but unmixed evil and danger. No parent can entrust his children to the guardians who is not already careless about their Faith, and indifferent as to their eternal ruin.

But the whole question has now a brighter side; one which, presenting no triumph to either party, enables both to attain the end which both have in view. The Papal decision alters the state of facts upon which the minority of the Bishops have to form and pronounce judgment. The Church, too, has grown within the last fourteen months; and the very prelates who last year were firmly convinced that no better terms could be obtained from the Government must feel that circumstances which have since transpired have placed the Church on a loftier elevation, and enabled her to treat with improved chances of success. The blindest and least informed of laymen cannot avoid seeing that the Pope now speaks to the nations with a voice of greater authority than he did a year hence; that his resolve carries more weight; and that in the affairs of the world his power has been more than doubled in the short revolution of