Questions of Pre-Reformation History
—Religious Teaching There—How Instruction was Conveyed by the
Clergy to the Faithful.

One by one the clouds of ignorance

and misrepresentation which encom-pass so many points of Church history in the mind of the average Protestant in the mind of the average Protestant Englishmen are being dispelled by the searching light cast upon them by the able lectures of the Historical Research Society. One more such misconcep-tion was disposed of in masterly fashion at the last lecture of the present series at the last lecture of the present series at Archbishop's House, on Monday night, June 4th, by the Rev. Aidan Gasquet, O. S. B., the distinguished champion of the monastic orders in the time of Henry VIII., a searcher after class to day. truth who has done more to "re make the history of England than almost any man of our day. If there is one idea to which the British mind has hitherto clung with greater conviction than any other, and to which even the Catholic body, as represented by Mr. Lilly, had given its assent, it is that the centuries immediately preceding the so called "Reformation" were essentially "dark ages," in which learning and knowledge were at their lowest ebb, and when the people were ignorant of the very elements of their faith. That such a belief is utterly gratuitous, unfounded and was the burden of Father Gasquet's lecture, his statements receiving confirmation from so imposing an array of facts and authorities as to set his hearers wondering how such palpable misrepresentation could have endured so long. So completely, indeed, did the learned Benedictine turn the tables on his opponents as to elicit from Father Croke Robinson the humorous query, "If those were the dark ages, what must we be living in now?"-a question which seemed to meet with a corresponding echo in the minds of the audience. SOME NEW QUESTIONS OF PRE-REFOR-

MATION HISTORY. Father Gasquet prefaced his lecture with what he himself described as the bold statement that the history of the pre Reformation period in England has yet to be written. As, until lately the secular historian had not merely given us biographies of the rulers of which they took part, without troubl ing himself about the people at large in a similar spirit, the Church annalist only described to us the great Churchmen with the great ecclesiastical events of their time. But now-a days we wish to hear more of the people themselves, and especially more of the religious side of our national What did the people believe were the services carried on What popular devotions were preached How did the priests instruct their flocks? What did the Church do for education, and for the material pros-perity of the realm? But who can answer these queries? The still lie buried under the dust of hitherto un-

explored archives.
THE PEOPLE WERE NOT THEN SO IGNORANT.

Whilst disclaiming anything more than a slight knowledge of the social condition of the Church in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the lecturer proceeded to enunciate the points for discussion. The first duty of the Church after the administration of the sacraments is the instructing of the great monastic orders, we can the people in the doctrines of the Catholic faith. Was the English Church olie faith. Was the English Church mindful of this duty or not? At the outset we must admit that hitherto Protestants have believed in the profound ignorance of the English people, and in this verdict many Catholics have concurred. In 1891, in the Dublin Review, Mr. Lilly wrote of the "lament able condition of the people in the fifteenth century, "knowing nothing beyond the 'Ave Maria' and the 'Pater Noster.'" He, however, offered no evidence in support of his conten-"So far from conjoining Mr. Lilly," continued the lecturer, studies have led me to a directly opposite conclusion. I believe that in pre reformation days the people were thoroughly well instructed by the priests. RELIGIOUS INSTUCTION IN THE EARLY

Religious teaching naturally divides itself into two classes: it can be given either by sermons or by instructions. Sermons undoubtedly were not so frequent as to day, when all teaching of adults is conveyed by them. Plain in structions in mediæval times resembled much more our catechetical teaching. Of these we find most abundant evidence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, to which we must confine ourselves. Already in the twelfth cen-tury Archbishop Peckham had issued elaborate orders, known as the "Con stitutions of Peckham," for the in struction of the people in all the ele-mentary truths of Christianity four times a year in every parish church In the fourteenth century Thoresby of York had an exposition drawn up, and sent to all the priests of his did cese, of the Creed and the Articles of our Faith, with strict instructions to teach them to the people. From the Acts of the Synod in 1461 we learn that frequent preaching was urged on the priests, who were also to see that the children were taught their prayers. At the same time manuals for priests were everywhere multiplied. the earliest books printed by Caxton contained four lengthy discourses covering the whole field of Catholic teaching, which, being delivered according to the rule four times a year, would occupy sixteen Sundays. In the lecturer's opinion these elementary in structions were given quite as much as a matter of course as our catechism

teaching is given to-day, and hence it is that there is so little direct evidence of them. Yet sufficient material has been discovered to satisfy most people. A few of the old parish registers and visitation papers have luckily escaped the almost universal destruction of the almost universal destruction of papers and archives that took place at the Reformation period, and these show us the facts. Here we have the sworn depositions of the parishioners regarding their priest, and most of their testimonies are eminently satisfactory. These papers show us, too, that the parish priests were regularly reported on to the Bishop, and they also manifest very considerable intel-ligence and knowledge on the part of these jurors, which, in spite of our board schools, it is doubtful whether we could see surpassed in a similar

by the way, is singularly clear and pleasant, then passed on to a rapid survey of the principal manuals issued for the use of priests on their clerical duties, which were very numerous at this period, and copies of which are to be found in the British Museum One of the most popular of published at the end of the fourteenth entury; another, evidently much in demand, having been reprinted several times, was the "Pupilli Oculi." Most important of all, however, was the "Speculum Christiani," one of the earliest books ever put into type, and containing some beautiful prayers on the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary, which the lecturer would very much like to see reprinted. Passing on to the subject of preaching proper, Father Gasquet explained that the work of instruction belonged mainly to the secular clergy, so that of preaching belonged chiefly to the re-The Dominicans and igious orders. Franciscans were essentially popular preachers, and plain, unadorned speaking was their forte. They always spoke in the vernacular, interspersing their sermons with anecdotes and fables which helped to insure their success It must be remembered that many of the sermons which were written and have come down to us in Latin, were nevertheless delivered in English. Many courses of sermons were drawn up for the use of priests; one of the best known of these is the "Liber Festivalis," first printed by Caxton and reprinted many times before the close of the century. Many aids to preaching were also issued containing a mass of information and pre-supposing a very profound knowledge of both by priest and people. The value of indexes also was realized at this time for tabulating knowledge. Con-cordances were multiplied, and a great catalogue was drawn up by a monk of

glance in what monasteries every work of importance was to be found. The most celebrated pulpit in all England was at St. Paul's Cross, where ondoners had the opportunity of hearing the greatest preachers of the day. Two hundred and fifty of these sermons have come down to us; they are often very topical and full of manly vigor. For one single period manly vigor. we have a list of no less than two hundred sermon writers. As the majority of these are Carmelites, by

important information, Father Gasque remarked that a long period must elapse before a complete sketch of this period can be written. But we have discovered enough to know that it is untrue that religious instruction was neglected. It is a question whether at present Catholics have as good a grasp of simple religious truths as

His Eminence Cardinal Vaughan was prevented from taking the chair at the lecture, and only entered the room towards the close of the proceedngs. Father Croke Robinson, there fore, presided; and amongst those pres-ent were also Canon Moyes, Mgr. Howlett, Father Breen, O. S. B., Father Luke Rivington, Mr. George Blount and Mr. Lister Drummond.—Catholic Standard.

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An English Protestant's Explanation— Wonderful Growth of Catholicism— The Causes.

The following statements of a London correspondent of the New York World are well worthy of attention. His remarks in regard to the decline of Protestantism and the increase of Catholics, both in England and the United States are confirmed by feater The following statements of a London

Catholics, both in England and the United States, are confirmed by facts that are of daily occurrence. He says:
"A good deal of alarm is expressed in England just now concerning the rapid progress made by Roman Catholicism. Nor is this alarm groundless. Comparatively a few years ago there was scarcely a monastery or a convent to be seen in England. Now the country is dotted with them. Catholic schools and churches were ols and churches were comparatively few. They now abound all over HOW INSTRUCTION WAS THEN CONVEYED. The learned lecturer, whose delivery. the land.

He then expresses the opinion that the Episcopal Church in England " has never recovered from the secession of John Henry Newman," and that the influence which his example exercised over young men of all classes is still He also regards "the loss" Manning as another severe blow, and says that the ablest upholders of "the cause of Papacy in England are seceders from the Protestant Episco Church. The proselytes are to Protestant Episcopal numbered by thousands.

By way of arresting this current toward Rome, he says many members of the English Church adopt "certain forms and ceremonies peculiar to the Papal religion." He then comments as follows:

"The ministers of the Established Church will scarcely check the progress of the Papacy by borrowing its clothes. They have themselves largely to thank for any loss which they may recognize in their own power. But it would be wrong to throw the blame entirely upon them. The whole body of which Catholics hold to each other for the benefit of their religion ought to teach many a Protestant a lesson."

Protestants do occasionally learn the lesson, but they are unable to practice it. Catholics hold together, not by natural bonds, but by relation to the Catholic Church, whose unity is a divine unity, growing out of her abiding, constant union with Peter, who lives in his successors, the Soverign Pontiffs of the Holy Roman See, and who by divine appointment constantly strengthens his orethren in faith and charity. testantism, not possessing this unity, but being pervaded by the the spirit of division and self contradiction, cannot give any power to its adherents. to unite together; but causes them, in proportion as it animates them with Edmundsbury of all the monastic librats own spirit, to fall asunder and ries, with which, through a system of contend with each other, in spite of numbers, it could be ascertained at a their own efforts to the contrary. The writer continues:

"Then, too, the religion of Catho lies is made a living reality to them. The doors of their churches are not closed during the summer. Our Protestant ministers cannot stand summer work. Catholic priests can. They never run away from their posts I may be said that if Protestant churche were open just now, very few would attend service in them. But is there not a promise made in the Bible even o "two or three" who "meet together ences, without which it refuses to perform its services. The system is killing the Protestant religion."

'It is a curious feature in the case that Roman Catholicism is making no progress in lands where it is said to be indigenous. In Italy it has for years been on the wane. ascendancy is entirely a thing of the past. In most other parts of Europe it is on the decline-in Germany, for instance, it has received fatal blows within the past few years.'

This last remark expresses the popular notion, but it is a great mistake, says the Catholic Standard. In Italy the Catholic Church appears to be decidedly on the increase in activity, energy and devotion. The number of nominal Catholics may not be on the increase, but the number of devout, earnest, practical Catholics is certainly increasing. Their attendance upon the Church devotions, the pious works among the laity, the deputations and addresses to the Holy Father, all show this. It is true that the Government is in the hands of nfidel revolutionists, but that proves nothing as to the Italian people.

The same remark holds good, to

some extent, of Spain, and to a still greater degree of Germany. The Catholic religion, instead of declining, is vigorously growing in Germany Never were people, priests and Bishop more full of faith, of heroic courage and devotion; never more firmly fixed upon the unmoving and immovable cock than now. And in no Catholic country is Protestantism making any progress. In Spain and Italy it has ot even a foothold.

What is commonly regarded as Protestantism in those countries is really rationalism, pantheism, or athe In German the same ism. In German the same remark holds good. Those who wish to ac-quaint themselves with the extent to which German Protestantism has 'developed," theoretically and practically, into materialism and other forms of infidelity, can do so by read-ing published letters of the late Dr. Bellows—a distinguished New York Unitarian preacher—who traveled extensively in Germany, visited the universities and chief centres of thought and who was evidently a close and

DECLINE OF PROTESTANTISM. accurate observer. The World correspondent continues as follows: "Its increase of strength (that of the

Catholic Church) is chiefly in England and the United States-communities in which the doctrines of the reformation ought to be most powerful. Catholics are willing to make greater sacrifices for their religion than Protestant ordinarily make for theirs. Look at the cathedrals and churches now growing up on servant girls' pennies. Have Protestants any like it to show? It is, moreover, tolerably certain that the outward observances of the Church are pretty faithfully adhered to. Most of us are brought into contact with this fact some time or other-if only on Sunday, when Bridget goes to early church through all sorts of weather Protestants are seldom so scrupulous on that point. At confession, also, the attendance of our Catholic fellowattendance of our Catholic fellow-citizens is said to be very regular. It cannot, therefore, be said that Roman Catholicism is declining in this country. We are satisfied that it is yearly gaining ground."

The correspondent of the World might have added that not only does
"Bridget" "built" churches and cathedrals which "she attends in all kinds of weather," and goes regularly to confession, but by her virtue and I never saw that blue-eyed girl again chastity she sets an example of womanly purity, which thinking, pureminded persons observe and appreciate, and which commends the Catholic religion to their judgment; and, we doubt not, also exerts a powerful influence in directing attention to the Catholic religion as the only barrier against the growing demoralization and corruption of the times.

WHAT WE OWE THE CHURCH.

We may all own and be grateful for the many benefits that we enjoy through the religion and the religionists of the middle ages. To them we Protestants ought to share it. They do not work together. The way in architectual works, even in their present state-our cathedrals: and to them we may owe the knowledge how to restore these buildings to their pristine splendor, when not architecture only, but sculpture and paint lavished their wonderous ing also, skill upon the houses of God: we may also owe to them, if we will, the de hosts of worshippers, who voted ought to be constantly seen in them, rich and poor, noble and laborers, in discriminately mingled together, all touchingly acknowledging a commor

origin and end. To them we owe the cultivation of the love of music among the people by familiarizing them with it through all the services, processions and festivals of the Church; and to them we may owe a better state of feeling than that which has often allowed the performances of our cathedral choirs be mutilated on the paltriest grounds. We owe them our drama, which sprang out of the early Church mysteries; and it would not be amiss f we were to owe to them a somewhar loftier notion than at present prevails of the objects that theatrical representa tion should aim at. To them do we owe the revival of learning, and in great degree our grammer schools, and to them we may owe the multitudes of students that ought to be able to flock to them, as of old, when Oxford University alone is said to have had its thirty thousand scholars. We owe to them many a noble work of charity that still here and there stud the country over, the relics merely, scheme of benevolence, unrivalled for magnificence and completeness; and to them, again we may owe the right system to some extent good, but the bsence of which must leave the best system worthless. In a word we owe, or may owe, to them a sympathy with the poor that must exhibit itself in practical efforts for them. Lastly we owe to them an unending

depth of gratitude for their services in the cause of literary and science. For ages who but the monks and friars were the literary and scientific laborer of England?—its poets, its physicsans, its educators? Where but in the its educators? libraries of the monasteries were the collections of the accumlated wisdom of ages to be found, each day beholding additions to the store, through the labors of the Scriptorium. And when at last printing came to revolutionize the entire world of knowledge, who but the monks themselves of West-minster and St. Alban's was it that welcomed the new and gloriousthings in the most cordial spirit, providing at once for the art and its disciples a

Like a ship without a rudder is a man or a woman without health and the necessary strength to perform the ordinary duties of life. When the appetite fails, when debility, and a disordered condition of stomach, liver, kidney, and bowels assail you, take

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NOW A NUN.

Col. Sparks, of Tennessee Visits His Sister in a Baltimore Convent—Had Not Seen Her Since the War.

They say the reason that President Cleveland appointed Col. Jesse Sparks, of Murfreesboro, Tenn., to a Mexican consulship was because the gallant old Confederate officer during Cleveland's former term sent him a present of a couple of fat, juicy, Tennessee oposums, which Grover seemed to heartily relish. To show his gratitude for this unique present Col. Jesse was tendered a consulate. the writer a story related to him by Col. Jesse when they were enroute home from Washington last spring.

"During the war," said the now grizzled colonel, "when things were a little shaky down in old Tennessee. sent my fair young sister, about sixteen years old, and budding into lovely womanhood, to a Catholic convent in Baltimore, for the double purpose of being educated and out of the way of the dark and bloody scenes that were transpiring around our own

home."
"Well, he continued, and a tear rolled down the bearded cheek of the until last Tuesday?"

The writer expressed surprise at this statement, when Col. Sparks con-"Yes, I saw her last Tuesday, Fitz.

and it was in a beautiful convent home. I called, gave my name to the Sister who received me in the parlor, and enquired if Miss Sparks, of Mur freesboro, Tenn., resided there. The young Sister said she would see. few moments I heard returning footfalls and then a beautiful, sweet-faced Sister, about forty-eight years old, entered. She paused, gazed for a mo-ment into my face and her blue eyes filled with tears as she came quickly towards me with the cry of brother upon her lips.

'Yes, Fitz, this was my sweet little sister of the long ago, whom I had not seen in thirty one years. mained in the convent until after the war, and during this time became a convert to Catholicism, the only member of our family who belongs to that The pure, beautiful lives of these noble women charmed my young ister so that she determined to one of them. She is now the Mother Superior of the convent, and a noble happy, contented woman."

The Colonel and he never fully

realized how little men in the busy whirl and strife of business life thought of God and the future as he did during that hour spent with his FIGURE WINDOWS } FOR CHURCHES.

AVERTING PANIC.

The Business Men of Portland are Grateful to Bishop Healy.

At the services at the Catholic cathedrai at Portland, Me., on Sunday, the members of the congregation were advised from the pulpit not to with draw their bank deposits, as such an act would tend to destroy confidence to aggravate the monetary The business men o stringency. Portland are greatly gratified at the disposition of the clergy to avert causeless runs on the financial institu tions. The advice was all the more welcome and salutary because the Catholic Church rarely makes a topic of anything but religious subjects of a While sensationalism in the pulpit is to be depreciated in all denominations, in national and business crises wholesome admonition from the clergy principles of dealing with the poor—
is advisable and profitable to the principles which can make a bad community.—Public Ledger, Philadeleters

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