

against the authors of the Vatican decrees. He wrote a pamphlet, and informed Lord Acton from Hawarden in October that he meant to publish it. Lord Acton deprecated this step. He was far nearer to Mr. Gladstone in opinion than he was to the Vatican. But he had no desire to see the subject reopened, knowing that the withdrawal of the decrees was impossible, and fearing that public opinion might be dangerously excited against his fellow-Catholics by so powerful an onslaught. He did not sufficiently allow for the great progress in the direction of tolerance made since the passing of the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, which Mr. Gladstone himself had repealed three years before. The pamphlet appeared in November 1874, and more than a hundred thousand copies of it were sold. The English Catholics were disturbed. Some were indignant, and some were alarmed. But in the end they were none the worse. On the contrary, Mr. Gladstone did them a service by giving them an opportunity to declare that they were, and always would be, as loyal and patriotic as their Protestant countrymen. It is impossible not to trace in Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet, as in the passage already cited from the *Contemporary Review*, the effect of Lord Acton's letters from Rome in 1870. The substance of the argument is that the Catholics obtained emancipation by denying that Papal infallibility was a dogma of their Church, and that the Power which had changed their faith might change their allegiance. The Vatican decrees reversed the policy of Clement the Fourteenth, who, by overthrowing the supremacy of the Jesuits, had "levelled in the dust the deadliest foes that mental and moral liberty had ever known." Equality of civil rights should be maintained without regard for religious differences. But Mr. Gladstone thought himself entitled to ask the Catholics of England and Ireland whether they would assist in the re-erection of the temporal power by force. Many were the answers to this famous pamphlet. The most eloquent was Newman's. The most hostile was Manning's. The most interesting was Acton's. It is characteristic of Lord Acton's courage