

masses of the people in Europe and America, during an age like the present, pre-eminent above all that have preceded it for inquisitive intelligence and free thought. If the Catholic religion were like Mormonism; or even some of the more intellectual forms of heresy which gratify the sensual appetite, or foster intellectual and spiritual pride, the explanation might be easy. But seeing that the Catholic religion is so well calculated to mortify the senses, and to humble the pride of man, the explanation is not so easy. Lord Macaulay studied the history of the Papacy, deeply. He has told us what he thinks of it. He points out that Protestantism advanced rapidly for about fifty years after its birth, and then came to a dead halt. It not only never gained ground after that, but it lost it, and has since continued to recede. France, one of the most enlightened nations in Europe, renounced the Catholic faith, some eighty years ago; but she did so, only because she renounced the Christian faith altogether, and even the belief in a God. She subsequently returned to the Christian faith; but it was to the Catholic and not to the Protestant form of it. All this was not as many fancy from ignorance. The leaders of the anti-Christian movement, or anti-catholic movement in France, were learned men; some of them had been even educated as Protestants. Lord Macaulay considers that there is no necessary connection between the Catholic religion and popular ignorance. That form of religion has been professed by men eminently distinguished for their intellectual power and extensive learning; and he instances Sir Thomas More as one proof of this. At the close of last century, the Catholic Church, to all human appearance, was swept from the earth for ever. The Pope was dead, and his successor for some time did not appear. Everywhere throughout Europe the Church had been robbed of her property. Her priesthood were proscribed, exiled, or sent to the scaffold. But the storm blew over. A Pope was duly elected, and the Church everywhere began to regain her influence. Again a storm has arisen against the Pope and the Church in our day, but only to prove their vitality and irrepressible power. Explain all this on the supposition of mere human agency, ye Dunedin philosophers.

### FRITTERING AWAY POWER.

It often occurs to me that by lay Catholics having too many distinct separate societies for the promotion of Catholic interests, they fritter away their power. We have Hibernian Australian Benefit Societies, Father Mathew T.A. Societies, Christian Doctrine Societies, &c. These are all good. Yet only a very few of the Catholic community in each place join them, and they maintain but a languid sort of existence, showing but small energy or enthusiasm. It is numbers that give life and enthusiasm to any society, as a general rule. Why cannot we have some general Catholic lay association to suit all tastes—religious, intellectual, and political—wherever the Catholic body is sufficiently numerous? This general association should be subdivided into "sections" like the "Social Science Congress" at home, each section to manage its own "department."

The entire "congress" would no doubt like some degree of interest in all the various sections. A leading object of such general congress should be to promote innocent amusement, especially by books, music, and theatricals for the young, and ladies might be expected to take a leading part in all this. Next to the priesthood, the Catholic ladies are the most powerful for good whenever they put forth their hand among their own community. Shakespeare tells us that they who have no music in them are fit for anything bad. Of course contrariwise, they who love music or promote it is others must be fit for every good thing. Music and theatricals and amusements generally, like every good thing else, may be misused and made subservient to vice in some shape; but if conducted under ecclesiastical supervision, there would be little danger in that. The nuns have innocent "dialogues" in their convents, and capital fun they give to old and young. Why should not we ourselves have the same?

There are suitable dramas published in England for Catholic schools, and these not of a very tame kind either; and amusing Catholic "illustrated" periodicals are now being also supplied by the Catholic press at home and in America. A congress or Catholic association might do a good turn by importing these to furnish a good reading room and circulating library for the young, to be open two or three days a week, or even every evening. We Catholics are often slow to begin a good work, but when once we do set about it, we do it thorough; at least so it is in the old country, and ought to be so here too. In Dunedin I see you have a Catholic circulating library. The same should exist in all the chief centres of population in the colony, at the Thames and Auckland more especially. No doubt this is only a question of a short time. Stir up your readers. In this as in everything with good Catholics the clergy must lead us and originate. They are *fons et origo boni*.

L.A.C.

### THE ENGLISH PROTESTANT PRESS, AND THE BISMARCK POLICY.

ONE benefit to the Catholic cause is ensuing from the furious Bismarckian persecution. It is driving some of the most able and respectable members of the London Protestant newspaper press into the Catholic ranks. They see and are honest enough to say that if Bismarck succeeds in his ecclesiastical policy, a deadly blow will thereby be inflicted on religious liberty in Germany, and indirectly in every part of the world. When religious liberty is struck down, civil liberty must soon go too. To freemen in every country, therefore in New Zealand as elsewhere, this Bismarckian war against the Church must possess the greatest interest. Substantially, a similar struggle is being carried on here, though in a different and milder way. Our Provincial Governments by their education 'policy,' identify themselves with Prince Bismarck, and the press urge them on—notably, the Dunedin and Auckland Press. But I have no doubt that ere long some members of the New Zealand Protestant Press will come over to our side like the London 'Spectator.' That able and fearless champion of legitimate liberty, thus expresses himself on the character and tendency of the present Bismarckian attempt to place the Catholic Church in

Germany at the mercy of the civil power. "There has," he says, "been no legislation in Europe more destructive of civil and religious liberty than the Prussian ecclesiastical laws of last year. If they were enacted in this country they would deprive the dissenters of their hard earned freedom, and reduce the Roman Catholics to a spiritual bondage far more galling than that which they endured in England before the Emancipation Act." The 'Spectator' is no Papist, nor a friend of Popery. Yet in spite of all, he says many of the so-called liberals of England and the pretended friends of toleration and religious and civil liberty, are not ashamed to express their "sympathy" with Bismarck in his ecclesiastical policy; or at least to excuse his violent and unjust acts towards the Catholic Church, if they cannot positively approve of them. Prince Bismarck will ere long discover what the Government of Protestant England have now well learnt, that it is vain to attempt to arrest the progress of the Catholic Church, or in other words, permanently to check her power and influence by any sort of repressive laws whatever. As well try to arrest the flowing tide of the ocean. Bismarck will soon find all his "Ecclesiastical Bills" swept away into the limbo of vanities, like the "Ecclesiastical Titles Bill" of Lord Russell—the last of that series of penal laws against Catholics, which so long disgraced the Statute Book of England. When the Catholic hierarchy was re-established in England by Pope Pius IX., some twenty-five years ago, the London 'Times' in his usual vaporing and bullying way then boasted that if we had seen the first we had also seen the last of such Bishops. Government, he said, would take care of that; and "The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill" followed. We have seen the last of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, but not of the Catholic Bishops in England. Curiously enough, Lord Russell, the father of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill which was to crush the Catholic hierarchy in England, now comes out in his dotage to urge on the Protestant friends of liberty in England, to express "sympathy" with Bismarck in his attempt to place the Catholic Church in Germany in chains. Folly will not depart from some great men, though you bray them in a mortar, and wisdom is not always found with grey hairs.

It is difficult for any at a distance to understand the real motives of Bismarck in his present desperate anti-Catholic proceedings. One thing is certain: he must be terribly afraid of the power of the Roman Catholic priests and the Pope. His acts are a testimony to their power, which it is impossible to misunderstand. But for such acts, few at a distance could ever have dreamt that the Pope and the Catholic priesthood held such a tremendous power in their hands in Germany. Bismarck has let the world into that secret, and the Catholic church will be the gainer by his having done so. It is power against power in the highest sense. No one can doubt that as regards material or military power, Germany stands in the first rank. If, then, she thus trembles before the spiritual power of Rome, and resorts to such desperate means to crush that, what terrible power must not Rome possess? But the power of Rome penetrates everywhere; and Bismarck is not the only public man who looks on its prayers with anxiety and alarm. It makes its way even into New Zealand, and troubles the great and patriotic mind of the editors of the Dunedin 'Guardian' and 'Bruce Herald,' men like-minded with Bismarck himself. They would fain repress the papal power in this colony if they could or durst, and would probably not hesitate to support a policy identical with that of Bismarck, if Mr Vogel had a mind to propose a few good stiff Bismarckian bills at the next meeting of the General Assembly. What though Bismarck be supported by all the infidels and scoffers at religion in Europe? Never mind that; he is the arch enemy of the Pope and the Catholic church. That is quite enough for the Dunedin 'Guardian' and 'Bruce Herald' and party. This would be little were the power of the Pope and the Catholic church a waning power, fading away before the light of modern knowledge and intelligence; but it is the reverse. It is fast subduing the educated Protestant mind in England, and still more in America, and to some extent in New Zealand, and even in Germany itself. It is probably the rapid progress of Catholicism among the educated and higher ranks of Protestants in Germany that fills Bismarck's mind with such burning indignation against the Catholic church, and makes him so nervously anxious to put her in fetters. One would fancy he had never looked into the history of England, and knows nothing of the troubles England brought on herself by her vain attempts to stamp out the Catholic religion in Ireland—troubles by no means yet over. When we see Bismarck recklessly exasperating the Catholic subjects of his master—13 millions in number, and the whole of the Catholics in Europe and America who share in their feelings, and even exciting the alarm of sincere Protestant friends of liberty in Germany as elsewhere—we cannot hardly help concluding that he is struck with a judicial blindness, preparatory to a terrible downfall to himself and the formidable empire which has been founded and reared under his auspices—by "blood and steel, by terror and brute force."

L.

### THE NECESSITY OF CATHOLIC UNION.

At a meeting of the Catholic Union of Ireland on December 3, Mr J. P. Smith, M.P. said:—"The existence of the Catholic Union needed no justification (hear, hear). Rather, if it did not exist, men might wondering ask, has the spirit of the age touched the land of St. Patrick—has the shamrock withered and have the holy wells dried up? When, ten years ago, Poland was in arms, and there ran along the Carpathian heights, 'There is hope for Poland whilst in Poland there is a life to lose,' Ireland sent forth a voice of sympathy and cheer (applause). Should she now be silent when Polish prelates assert, in the face of the German tyrant, the liberty of the Church, and brave imprisonment and death rather than surrender the trust committed to them by a persecuted Pontiff? Ireland had protested against the dismemberment of France; and should she be silent, he asked, when the audacious conqueror asserts a dominion over not only the bodies but the souls of the faithful people of Alsace and Lorraine? (applause, and cries of 'No'). Should Ireland fold her arms while the head of the Church is bound a prisoner in the Vatican, and the capital of Christendom is made the centre of a destructive propaganda