

trials (as in the case of Dr. Briggs and Rev. Mr. Ferguson) among our Presbyterian friends; and so on. We do not blame them for this, except in so far as they are inconsistent in proclaiming a right and at the same time refusing the exercise of it to its logical extent. For by the nature of things there never has been and there never can be a living organised religious body held together by such a perpetually shifting principle as that of private judgment as applied to the interpretation of the Scriptures. We say a 'living organised body,' and not merely a collection of human particles flung together hap-hazard, without any bond of union or relation to a common centre, or power of united action. The non-Catholic denominations are organised corporate bodies only by virtue of that living code of teaching which they, in theory, repudiate, and which is, nevertheless, a practical condemnation of the principle of private judgment and a tacit, though unacknowledged, appreciation of the great Catholic doctrine of the teaching authority of the Church of Christ.

DREYFUSIANA.

AN ENGLISH CATHOLIC DREYFUS—CARDINAL NEWMAN

In our last two issues we devoted attention to certain English, Irish, and American cases, some of which far out-Dreyfused the now famous Dreyfus affair. The latest issue to hand of the *London Tablet* brings forward another famous modern instance in which the British Press and the great bulk of the non-Catholic population of England united in hounding down Dr. (afterwards Cardinal) Newman. One Achilli, an apostate monk, had been lecturing in Exeter Hall (London), in Birmingham, and other places on his so-called 'escape from the dungeons of the Inquisition,' and indulging in the usual tirade of fierce and foul-mouthed calumny that has made the 'ex-priest' campaign of our times stink in the nostrils of decent people of every creed. As usual with such propagandists of the gospel of lying, Achilli had no other credentials than the good he cared to affirm of himself and the evil he ascribed to his neighbours. This, however, amply satisfied the uncritical mob who listened to his evil tales, and a wave of popular religious passion against the Catholic body swept over the country. Dr. Newman, however, was not satisfied to see the public misled by the wretched renegade. He told the truth about Achilli, the evil liver, the breaker of the moral law. An action for libel followed. The *Tablet* says: 'The evidence against Achilli was overwhelming. The Inquisition had indeed passed sentence upon him, and deprived him of the exercise of all ecclesiastical functions for ever. The women who were his victims came from Italy to confront him in the English court. The jury, notwithstanding, found a verdict of guilty, to the great satisfaction of Lord Campbell, a Presbyterian first and a judge afterwards. The sentence, deferred for six months, was finally pronounced by Sir John Taylor Coleridge, who delivered a little homily, curious now to remember as having then been thought by the Bar and Bench of England proper to the occasion. Dr. Newman, said the judge, did not publish his indictment of Dr. Achilli from personal malice, but "because Dr. Achilli had assailed a religion Dr. Newman had held dear." Still, "it was not to be denied that he had repeated the offensive expressions as if they were matter for exultation and merriment!" On this amazing premiss followed the almost contradictory exhortation: "Whether henceforward you will take any part in the controversy between the churches, it will be for you to determine; but I think the pages before me should give you this warning, that you should engage in it neither personally nor bitterly." The sentence was declared to be a fine of £100, "and that you be imprisoned in the first class of misdemeanants in the Queen's prison until the fine be paid."

In those days the now decadent *Times*, almost alone of all the English Press, espoused the cause of Dr. Newman. Speaking of the result of the trial, it said: 'To Protestants and Romanists the case, truly viewed, is unimportant. Its real significance is the discredit it has tended to throw on our administration of justice, and the impression which it has tended to disseminate—that where religious differences come into play, a jury is the echo of popular feeling, instead of being the expositor of its own view.' Says the *Tablet*: 'We commend the words, applicable to-day in every letter of them, to the notice of those who talk, as a Russian talks this week, of France's having "definitely fallen from the rank it occupied among civilised peoples," because its sense of justice has been "atrophied by the intensity of political and religious passions." France at any rate overruled the judgment against the Jew Captain; England allowed that against the Catholic Priest to stand. It stayed upon our legal records, and, in the irony of events, it was appealed to as a precedent by a Solicitor-General before Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, who twenty-five years before had been a junior counsel for Dr. Newman. "That case," he said in reply to the Solicitor-General, "created a painful impression on my mind, never to be effaced. I was beaten, Mr. Solicitor, but I ought to have been the victor." The *Times* and the Lord Chief Justice spoke; and Dreyfus never had so few defenders. They spoke once, but not again; and Dreyfus in France found men and papers to call out importunately. The usually just and generous English people did not care a button that a man of high honour had been labelled a libeller, and that he had been saddled with debts which threatened for him a life of drudgery akin to that which darkened the later life of his favourite novelist, Sir Walter Scott. And whence came his helpers? The answer seems too ready to hand, too pertinent. It was a French paper, it was the *Univers*, that opened a subscription then for this victim of English religious passion. And if another link were needed for addition to

links that were lately refurbished, and to those that were forged anew, in the chain of mutual support that binds together Catholics in France and Catholics in England, we should seek it to-day in the letter addressed by Dr. Newman, on the Feast of St. Denis in 1852 [the seventh anniversary of his reception into the Church] to the French subscribers to his costs. "I cannot," he writes, "call the charges which weigh on me a misfortune, when they have produced for me the sympathy and generosity of a Catholic nation; and I think I may without presumption believe that the glorious St. Denis, who presided over my reception into the bosom of Catholicism, has, as it were, presented me a second time to the embraces of the Church, by recommending me to the tender charity of the great nation of which he is the apostle."

THE JESUITS AND THE DREYFUS CASE.

Some time ago—in our issue of September 21, 1899—we gave signal disproof of the foolish tale that the Jesuits were, in some unstatesd way, at the bottom of the troubles of Captain Dreyfus. The distinguished Jesuit Father, the Rev. Sydney Smith, contributes a lengthy letter to the discussion in the *London Times* of September 26. After pointing out the inaccuracies of a so-called 'interview' with him by the *Monitor*, he goes on to say:—"So far as I could make out, for I could not follow the reports very minutely, the prosecution relied chiefly on an intelligible but somewhat thin scheme of circumstantial evidence, which was contested at every point. Hence I anticipated a verdict of acquittal, and certainly I hoped for such, the letters of the accused, his bearing, and some other things seeming to me to mark him as innocent. When the verdict of guilty came out I was surprised like other people, and wondered how it was to be explained. It certainly looked, if one could rely on the English reports, like a miscarriage of justice. At the same time it did not appear to me so psychologically intelligible that the members of the court-martial were miscreants who had acted in sheer callousness of heart, condemning a man whilst convinced of his innocence, out of Anti-Semitic hatred, or in the improbable expectation of thereby the better securing their promotion. An easier theory seemed to be that there was something in the evidence more impressive than the reports had allowed us to see, and which, even if insufficient really to prove guilt, might have appeared to be sufficient to the Judges; for this seems to me one of the important lessons to be learnt from the Rennes trial, that it is a downright absurdity to entrust the decision on such highly-complicated evidence to a few majors and captains, under one colonel, none of whom had received a legal training. This, at all events, is my humble opinion on the subject, and I suspect it is also the opinion of a good many others in this country who are neither Jesuits nor Catholics, but merely plain men who strive not to lose their heads in times of general hysterics.

'In any case—allow me to repeat it once more—the Jesuits have had nothing to do with the matter, neither they nor their military pupils, for none of those who have figured in the trial, or at all events, have figured in it at all prominently, have belonged to this category. Possibly there is one exception to this general statement. I have been told by a French friend, who, however, could not speak for certain, that one of the members of the court-martial had been brought up in a school with which the Society is connected. He was noticed to spend much time in prayer in Rennes Cathedral during the intervals of the sessions, and I daresay our assailants would take that as a decisive proof that he was nerving himself to do an injustice. I should take the opposite view. I may add that some of the special correspondents—your own among them, I think—conjectured that he was one of the two minority voters. [The exception here referred to is Major de Bréon. He is a devout Catholic, and, according to the *Petit-Bleu*, voted against the condemnation of Drefus.—Ed. N.Z.T.]

'As for Mr. Conybeare's insistence that, in spite of our formal denials, we were at the bottom of the whole business, and are even the founders and conductors of the *Libre Parole*, I would invite your readers to notice how entirely incapable he is of proving his point. "Most persons abreast of the facts declare" it to be as he says. "Every one in France knows that the *haute armée* has of late been in the hands of the Jesuits and clericals." It is on these vague phrases that he has to rely, and on one or two anecdotes told in a form which they have assumed after passing across three or four or more malicious tongues. If it is distressing, as it certainly is, that so much hearsay evidence was admitted against Dreyfus, why is it so reasonable to base solely and entirely upon it not less serious charges against the Jesuits?

'Mention has been made of our Jesuit periodicals. Well, try us by our periodicals, but go to them direct, and do not study them in the distorting medium of pages like Mr. Conybeare's. They are the *Etudes Religieuses* in France, the *Civiltà Cattolica* in Rome, and the *Month* in this country—these, and these only. I emphasise the word "only." You will be surprised to find how little they have said on the subject—how much less, in fact, than one might have expected, seeing how the question was before the public; and again how quietly they have said what they have said. You will find, too, that they have observed the wholesome rule of not commenting on a trial while it is in progress. It is long certainly since the *Etudes* had an article even on the remoter bearings of the case, and it passes the conclusion of this second court-martial, as I think, it passed over all the preceding trials, without any comment at all. In the *Month* I wrote three articles, purely in self-defence, at the beginning of this year. Mr. Conybeare has on former occasions quoted, or professed to quote, some passages from the *Civiltà*, and when I first read them in the *National Review* I felt annoyed that the *Civiltà* should write like that. On looking to the *Civiltà* itself I found that all these quotations, or rather the originals which he had summarised in his own way rather than quoted, bore a very different construction to what he gave them. And, besides, they were not in the body of the paper, but in its French correspondence, being mostly colourless chronicling of the different