

Hard names were, however, among the commonplaces of theological controversy of the sixteenth and following centuries. They hit like explosive bullets and filled the air of discussion as did the chunks of old red sandstone and 'the remnants of a palaeozoic age' in the lively discussion that ensued among the members of 'the society upon the Stanislaw.'

L'Estrange's 'Dissenters' Sayings' is a mine of the theological slang and Billingsgate of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One of the evil relics of those days of fierce storm and angry strife still lives on among us in the twenty-fifth chapter, sixth section, of the Westminster 'Confession of Faith,' which is one of the standards of the Presbyterian Churches. It lays it down as an article of belief that the Pope 'is that Anti-Christ, that Man of Sin and Son of Perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ and all that is called God.' We are, happily, living in gentler days; and the vitriolic epithets and violent controversial methods of those evil times are being fast collected together and consigned to museums of antiquities, or left to twelfth of July orators and to the tag-rag-and-bobtail enthusiasts whose voice is heard when (to use Macaulay's phrase) 'Exeter Hall lifts up its bray.' Educated and broad-minded Presbyterians nowadays no more believe the Pope to be Antichrist or the Man of Sin than they believe him to be the Man in the Iron Mask or the Man in the Moon. A pleasing sign of the improved temper of our time appeared at the annual assembly of the Free Church of Scotland that was held in Edinburgh in 1894. The Continental Committee incorporated in its report a vote of thanks to one of Pope Leo's predecessors—to the 'kindly personality of Pope Gregory the Great in the sixth century, who sent the Gospel of Peace to our Teutonic forefathers.' And a few weeks ago at Los Angeles (California) the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, by a unanimous vote, struck out of their creed that part of the article which declared the Pope to be 'that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ and all that is called God.' And thus—so far as America is concerned—one of the fierce theological epithets of the Reformation days goes into the museum—passes out of the use of men and into the realm of history.

A Question of Illiteracy

Statistics, like razors, are dangerous weapons and require careful handling. An instance of this is furnished by the June number of the 'Contemporary Review.' It contains an article by a lapsed Catholic (now an avowed agnostic) which professes to show, by the aid of scanty figures of ancient date, that, in the matter of education, Spain is in a very lamentable state. The writer of the article in question has been for some years before the public as the author of some vitriolic no-Popery books and pamphlets. He has never been in Spain. And—perhaps for that reason—he, in the present instance, handles his second-hand information in the frenzied spirit with which the Malay uses his long, keen knife when he runs amuck. The writer's gorge rises at the thought that Spaniards should spend money on the service of God while their fleet is unable to blow their neighbors' fleets out of the water; and a chief object of his envenomed article, with its misleading figures and its second-hand tittle-tattle, is, apparently, to make it appear that, in some unexplained way, the Church is responsible for so much of illiteracy as exists in Spain. We might admit his old-clo'-shop statements in matters of fact, and yet dispute or deny his conclusions. In reality, his 'facts' are false and his conclusions are not true. The whole article is an exhibition of ignorance of the conditions which prevail in a country whose attachment to the ancient Faith is, in the eyes of assailants such as these, the head and front of its offending. Such educational disadvantages as afflict Spain are due to economic and political, and not to religious, causes. St. Teresa, in her day, thanked God for having bestowed

upon her country a rich soil and a glorious climate. She prayed to heaven to add to all this the gift of a good government. This crowning blessing, however, Providence did not bestow. And Catholic Spain's decay, like Protestant Denmark's and Sweden's, and mostly Protestant Holland's, is traceable in part to a succession of inept rulers and partly to other causes that have no more association with religious beliefs and practices than they have with the rise and fall of the tide in the Bay of Fundy. Briefly stated, the causes of Spain's political economic decline were the following:—

(1) The loss of population caused (a) by the expulsion of the Moors from the province of Granada and (b) by the rush of emigrants to the newly-discovered America. By the time of Philip IV. (1621-1665) the population had fallen to about six millions. (Ireland, in little over half a century, has lost nearly four millions of its population.) (2) Another contributing cause to Spain's decay was the serious disturbance of economic conditions created by this displacement of population. It resulted in the ruin of agricultural and industrial pursuits—a ruin that was hastened and aggravated by the heavy taxation and other blundering attempts of a succession of incompetent Governments during two centuries to cope with the economic revolution that had been brought about in a few years by the causes mentioned above. (3) Long-continued foreign and domestic wars exhausted the exchequer and impoverished the country. Without going farther back, between 1800 and 1898 Spain had more 'regular' wars on hand than any other country in Europe, with the possible exception of Turkey. She had two wars with England, two with France, two with Portugal, three with Prussia, and one with the United States, and spent thirty-three years out of the ninety-eight in cut-and-thrust and parry with her foreign foes. In addition to this, she had two Carlist civil wars that dragged their slow length along for eight or nine years, and a series of exhausting conflicts with her colonies. One of these (with Cuba) lingered in deadly strife for ten years (1868-1878) and another (also against Cuba) from 1895 to 1898. During the same period (1800-1898) France had only a total of 27 years' war, Russia 24, Prussia, 12; and although Great Britain was almost constantly burning gunpowder in some part of the earth, her struggles were neither so prolonged nor so costly and exhausting as those of Spain. (4) A reeling blow was dealt to Spain by the loss of her magnificent South American possessions, which followed fast upon the Peninsula war. Between 1810 and 1825 Spain lost practically the whole of South America. Such losses would be a deadly blow to the wealth, power, and prestige of any country. A nation, like a family, that has to struggle for bare existence cannot afford the heavy expenditure on education that lies within the means of its more fortunate neighbors. But it ought to be needless to say that religion has had nothing to do with producing the conditions enumerated above. On the contrary, some of the worst blows inflicted on that ill-starred land were inflicted by a succession of Masonic and anti-Catholic Ministries that, during the nineteenth century, brought her to the brink of financial ruin. The intensely Catholic Basque provinces were, happily, protected by their 'fueros' (or ancient laws and customs) against excessive taxation, and by their mountain ramparts against the horrors of many a war. And their happy and prosperous condition is alone sufficient answer to the calumny that Spain's decay is to be laid at the door of the Catholic Church.

Spain, however, has, in proportion to her opportunities and means, done wondrously well for education, and year by year steady progress is being made. Mulhall credits Spain, in 1896, with 105 pupils per 1000 of its population, as against 95 per 1000 for Europe generally, 125 per 1000 for Canada, 137 per 1000 for the United States, and 160 per 1000 for France. Bavaria (which is seven-tenths Catholic) makes the world's record with an enrolment of 212 pupils per 1000 of its

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