

and graciousness. Among the many commanding figures in Europe of our days his is one of the most commanding. I have been acquainted with Gladstone, and I have talked with Bismarck and with Cardinal Newman, and I can recall to memory the presence of the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, and I knew Charles Sumner, the great American orator and abolitionist, and I have often seen and heard the late Prince Consort. But no picture has impressed me more than that of Pope Leo XIII.

The Falk Laws

The first struggle which Pope Leo XIII. had to take up was that against Prince Bismarck, 'The Man of Blood and Iron.' That struggle is famous, and will long be famous in the modern history of the world as the Kulturkampf—in other words, the struggle about the education of Catholics within the German Empire. Pope Leo had to encounter in this struggle the greatest Continental Empire of our times, and the most powerful statesman Continental Europe has known since the days of the first Napoleon. The war began in the days of Pius IX. It was brought to a close at an early part of the pontificate of Leo XIII. It ended in the complete surrender of Bismarck and in the triumph of the Pope. The struggle started in this way. The theory of Prince Bismarck was that the worst enemies of the German Empire were to be found in the Papal Court, and he believed (or professed to believe) that the war



From Thaddeus's famous Portrait of POPE LEO XIII.

against Prussia had been set up by the Vatican. A study of the history of the time shows that in this opinion Bismarck was altogether—even absurdly—in the wrong. The Second Empire was a failure, and it was necessary to distract the minds of the people from home affairs. Hence the war with Prussia. Soon after the King of Prussia had been proclaimed German Emperor, Bismarck conceived the idea of getting the education of the Catholics—and especially of the Catholic clergy—of Germany completely under the control of the State. The Catholic States, which the war against France had brought into the German union were weak, and would not count for much in a struggle against the Vatican. It seemed, therefore, to Bismarck that the time was opportune to strengthen the new Empire against the dreaded influence of the Pope and his Court. There was inspired in the German National Parliament a sort of crusade against the educational influence of the Catholic Church. The idea was to make the State supreme over every form of religious teaching in Germany. It was only the repetition of an effort which has been made time and again in every State in Europe and has always ended in disappointment and failure. And so Bismarck—like Oliver—entered upon the war against the Church 'd'un cœur léger'—with a light heart. 'There shall never be peace,' he declared, 'till Rome is crushed.' 'I have no fear,' said the Iron Chancellor on another occasion, 'that I shall ever have to go to Canossa' (alluding to the castle in Modena where the German Emperor, Henry IV. made his submission to Pope Gregory VII. in 1077).

The first hunt of the Bismarckian war was borne by the Jesuits. An Act passed in June 1872, placed them under the ban of the law, suppressed their houses, banished their foreign members, and confined the German members to enforced residence within certain specified

areas. In the following year (1873) an Act was passed depriving the Church in Russia of self-government, prohibiting the reading of papal encyclicals in churches, penalising in various ways the recognition of the Pope's spiritual authority, giving to the Government the right of appointment and deposition of bishops and parish priests, and placing the education, training, and teaching of aspirants to the priesthood completely under the control of the State. A new penal code was, in fact, established against the Catholic Church in Russia.

Eight out of the twelve bishops who came within the law were either exiled or thrown into prison. In one swoop 12,000 parish priests and 600 curates were deprived of their charges and driven into exile. In the law courts the judges held that the new acts were incompatible with the principles of the Constitution. Bismarck soon remedied this by altering or abolishing anything in the constitution that interfered with his plans. Falk, the Minister of Public Worship, who drew up and administered the code, was a strong man. But there were strong men, too, on the other side. The Catholics found an able champion for their rights in Herr Windthorst, the O'Connell of Prussia, one of the ablest debaters in any European Parliament. The law served, as far as the Catholics were concerned, to bind them in a closer stranded union than ever. They absolutely refused to accept a priest on the Government nomination. Rome refused to appoint a bishop under similar circumstances. And the war went fiercely on.

The wholesale imprisonment of their bishops and pastors thoroughly aroused the good Catholics and waked up the apathetic ones. When Leo XIII. became Pope, he—in 1878—opened up negotiations with the Emperor William on lines that disconcerted Bismarck's plans. About the same time two serious attempts were made by the Socialists on the life of the Emperor. This opened his eyes to the dangers of irreligion in the land. 'Religion must be sustained in Germany,' said the Emperor. Bismarck, however, had his own idea as to the brand of religion that should be sustained. He went to the country on the cry of a war against the Catholics and Socialists. The Centre (or Catholic) party came back to the House in increased strength. The Socialist members went into opposition. Bismarck could no longer carry on the Government of the country. He opened up negotiations with the Vatican without the knowledge of Dr. Falk. When Falk learned this he promptly tendered his resignation. This was the end of the first chapter of the Kulturkampf. It saw Bismarck in Canossa. After war peace. The Iron Chancellor was, after all, magnanimous. In 1886, at his request, the Pope arbitrated between Germany and Spain in the Caroline Islands dispute. After the publication of the Pope's award, Bismarck sent him a gracious letter of thanks for his high-minded and perfect impartiality. And among the many decorations that graced the breast of the rugged old statesman, and one much prized by him, was that given him by the Pope after the award made by him between Germany and Spain. Thus ended, in peace and good will, one of the bitterest battles in the history of the Church.

Fast upon the successful close of Bismarck's long war with the Church, came differences with the Belgian Government, that had set about the complete secularisation of the system of primary instruction, and with the MacMahon administration in France, which had begun in 1879, an active propaganda of persecution against the religious Orders, and especially against those engaged in educational work. Things adjusted themselves satisfactorily in Belgium by the complete overthrow of the so-called 'Liberal' Government, which had brought the country to the verge of ruin. Fortunately for Belgium's moral and material progress, they have never since returned to power. In France, however, the Pope's appeal for just treatment fell on deaf ears. Successive Ministers pushed on a policy of persecution which, in varying degrees has gone on ever since, and in the past few months, under the Combes administration, has reached a point of ferocious illegality which deeply embittered the last days of the venerable old Pontiff.

Pope Leo and Ireland

The condition of Ireland also occupied a good deal of the late Pope's attention in the early eighties. The Home Rule movement was in full swing, and, side by side and in union with it, the agrarian agitation of the newly-established Land League for the abolition of rack-renting and other phases of the despotic landlordism of Ireland. The Pope and his counsellors relied, in the matter, a good deal on the representations and advice of prominent English Catholics who were, in politics, Conservatives, and therefore out of sympathy with Irish national aspirations. The land agitation was a strike against an intolerable system. To the counsellors of the Vatican it seemed a rebellion against some of the sacred principles of social law, and to the Papal Court nothing that could happen to Ireland seemed so terrible as that the faithful old land should commit a crime. The Pope intervened and condemned the Land League. It was suppressed by Mr. Gladstone and its leaders thrown into prison. 'No one can doubt,' says a prominent Irish Nationalist writer—'no calm observer among Irish Nationalists ever did doubt—the absolute good faith and sympathy of the advice which the Vatican gave to Ireland. The sweetest affection for Ireland inspired, beyond question, the condemnation, such as it was, of the Land League. But the intervention was a mistake all the same, for it was founded on imperfect knowledge and a misapprehension of the whole condition of the political and social struggle in Ireland.' The Irish hierarchy and priests remained faithful to the national cause, and all alike recognised that this was a