

as her first bishop; and the Church whose centre was in the city of the Caesars, and that Church alone, claimed, and (as St. Clement's writings show) exercised even at the very verge of the Apostolic days a true primacy of jurisdiction. (2) There is no contention, however indefensible, in history and in science but will find supporters. Witness, for instance, the body of eccentric literature that has sprung up in connection with perpetual motion, and the labored pamphlets that have appeared during the past few years in demonstration of the flatness of the earth. The denial of St. Peter's residence in Rome is dictated by the exigencies of controversy, not by a calm and unprejudiced survey of the facts of history and Christian archaeology. St. Peter's stay in Rome has long passed beyond the realm of sober dispute. It is asserted by all Catholic authorities and by the overwhelming body of Protestant and rationalistic testimony as well. Dr. Ellicott, an Anglican Bishop, has, for instance, studied this subject far more deeply than the Right Rev. Dr. Nevill. And this is what Dr. Ellicott says: 'Nothing but Protestant prejudice could stand against the historical evidence that St. Peter sojourned and died in Rome. Whatever theological consequences may follow from it, it is as certain that St. Peter was at Rome as that St. John was at Ephesus.' A little further on, he adds that it is as certain as the evidence 'on which we believe that Hannibal invaded Italy.' Whiston, the translator of Josephus, averred that 'it is a shame for any Protestant to confess that any Protestant ever denied it' (that St. Peter was in Rome). Other learned Protestants could be quoted by dozens to the same effect. And a perusal by Dr. Nevill of the recent works of the noted Roman archaeologist, Orazio Marucchi, would give the coup de grace to his Lordship's last lingering attachment to a historical figment that was never heard of in the Christian world till the fourteenth century.

The Roman episcopate of St. Peter is likewise one of the accepted and settled facts not merely of Catholic, but of the foremost non-Catholic, scholarship. Among many others that might be quoted, it is affirmed by non-Catholic writers of such eminence as Lipsius, Pearson, Palmer, Schaff, Zahn, Harnack, and Dr. Lightfoot, and is proved by archaeological and other evidence (such as that of Caius, Tertullian, etc.) far back past the days of St. Jerome. Moreover, we find that the Primacy of the Bishop (or Pope) of the See of Rome was in active exercise in the days of Pius, who reigned from A.D. 142 to 157, and as far back as about the year 95 by St. Clement in the famous Epistle to the Corinthians which Dr. Lightfoot (a co-religionist of Dr. Nevill) describes as 'the first step towards Papal domination.' Such, in the most general and summary terms, are the title-deeds of the supremacy of the See of Rome. They are based on the Word of God. They are borne out by the lessons of history. We might, in the circumstances, legitimately ask his Lordship the Anglican Bishop of Dunedin to produce the title-deeds of the Royal Supremacy which, at the Reformation, was substituted in England for a form of Church government which had in its favor the long prescription of fifteen hundred years. Let him produce one text of Scripture, one phrase from the writings of the early Fathers or the decrees of the Councils of the Church that will justify the sweeping changes which in the sixteenth century (to use the words of the Anglican Bishop Andrews) 'transubstantiated Henry VIII. into the Pope' and (as the great Anglican historian, Dr. Brewer puts it) 'converted the Church from an independent rival into a ready and submissive dependent on the State.' We pause for a reply.

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Notes

A 'Chestnut' Adapted.

Here is a 'recent' and 'true' story which has found its way into two New Zealand daily papers:—A certain Cardinal at an evening party, when pressed by an admiring circle of ladies to say whether he had ever received any startling confessions, replied that the first person who had come to him after he had taken Orders desired absolution for a murder which he confessed to have committed. A gentle shudder ran through the frames of the audience. This was turned to consternation when, ten minutes later, an elderly marquess entered the apartment, and eagerly claimed acquaintance with the Cardinal. "But I see your Eminence does not remember me," he said. "You will do so when I remind you that I was the first person who confessed to you after you entered the service of the Church."

Catholic readers do not need to be told that the story is, from beginning to end, a fairy tale. 'Ladies,' whether Catholic or non-Catholic, could not be guilty of such an outrageous exhibition of bad taste as to press any Catholic ecclesiastic, much less a Prince of the Church, for disclosures—'startling' or otherwise—regarding his experiences in the confessional. There are subjects that, by the common consent of mankind, are protected by a perpetual close season from the arrows of the jester. Such are suffering, infirmity, death, and the sacred things of religion. And such, to Catholics at least, is the sacred tribunal of penance. No priest, no Catholic ecclesiastic, would for a moment tolerate, even in jest, much less in earnest, the odious and unpardonable impertinences which 'an admiring circle of ladies' are represented above as having addressed—and successfully addressed—to an elaborately anonymous Cardinal 'at an evening party' in an elaborately anonymous place. Some years ago we recounted a number of instances, from the days of St. John of Nepomuk to our own, of Catholic ecclesiastics having endured stripes, imprisonment, torture, and death rather than reveal the sins confessed by a penitent in the sacred tribunal. There is no known instance of any priest—even an insane or excommunicated one—having betrayed the confidence reposed in him in the confessional. The story told above is merely an adaptation of a venerable 'chestnut' that was probably told by our grandfathers over the walnuts and wine or in the chimney-corner two generations ago. The story runs as follows:—

A successful barrister, having been raised to the knighthood, was entertained at dinner by a wealthy friend. In responding to the toast of his health, he ran briefly over the chief events of his career. In the course of his remarks he said: 'I was very nervous over my first case. My client, though of good family, was a man of disreputable character. But, if he had been convicted, the good name of his family would have been hopelessly tarnished; so I took up the case, threw my coat off at it, and got the scoundrel off.' After dinner a wealthy friend of the host entered and was presented to the newly-made knight. 'I see you do not remember me,' said the newcomer; 'but I hardly need an introduction to you, for I was your first client, and, I may say, gave you your successful start in life.' And the newcomer wondered where the laughter came in. So the ancient story runneth. 'Tit-Bits' of May 16, 1903, repeats it with slight variations, laying the scene in America instead of England. It is, we fancy, one of the harmless and not 'over-true' legends of the legal profession. But harmless tales commonly get an evil tinge when they pass through the alembic of the mind of a bigot or a rouse.

NOTICE

Owing to the special demand made on our available space this week by the editorial article on the Conclave, we are obliged to condense several reports, hold over others till next issue, and print the diocesan news in a special supplement.

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