

The Passing of the Fanatic

No-Popery fanaticism, at least of the Orange and kindred types, is happily passing. Its agony may be long, but its death is sure. The world is not likely to witness again such scenes as disgraced the United States in the Know-nothing days and England in the perverted times that followed the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in 1850. Lodge-chaplains inciting directly to riot and bloodshed—like the Revs. 'Johnny' McCrae, Drew, and the two clerical firebrands that, on the judgment of a Royal Commission, were responsible for the Belfast civil war of 1857—would probably meet nowadays, outside the yellow plague-belt of Ulster, with scant mercy from a Protestant judge and jury. Times have changed and people are busy shuffling off the wild and insensate views of the Catholic Church that were propagated in the stormy period of the great religious revolution of the sixteenth century.

'The world goes up and the world goes down,
And the sunshine follows the rain;
And yesterday's sneer and yesterday's frown
Can never come over again.'

A few days after the death of Leo XIII. the New York 'Sun' referred to the 'change in the attitude of Protestantism towards the Roman Catholic Church' as 'one of the most remarkable religious developments of recent years.' 'Harper's Weekly,' another non-Catholic publication, also voiced in a recent issue this change of feeling towards the Catholic Church and the coming dissolution of rankling bigotry. 'There is ground for thinking,' it says, 'that the disposition of civilised mankind to desire the upholding of Catholicism as a force conducive to the commonweal is likely to wax rather than to wane. From both a religious and an economic point of view the Catholic Church is coming to be regarded as a sheet anchor of society. What else is there to be found a rampart against scepticism on the one hand and against Socialism on the other? We are not amongst those who expect that the twentieth century will witness a reabsorption by Catholicism of many, if any, of the Protestant sects that seceded from it some four hundred years ago. It is quite possible that individual members of the High Church wing of the Anglican communion may in increasing numbers go over to the Church of Rome. It is also possible that like sporadic conversions may take place in those Continental countries in which Episcopal hierarchies were established by the Lutherans. The Anglican and Lutheran bodies, however, will, no doubt, retain for a long period their separate organisations, and this may be predicted with an even closer approach to certainty of the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, the Baptists, and other minor Protestant sects. But while no reabsorption on a considerable scale is probable, there will be evolved a tolerance, and even a sympathy, for Catholicism of which in Protestant countries there was no trace a hundred years ago.'

Some Journalist 'History'

In one of his essays, Macaulay breaks out into the strange dictum that the ideal history is a compound of poetry and philosophy—something that 'calls into play the imagination quite as much as the reason.' Macaulay himself wrote rather to interest than to instruct, and rounded periods and flowery cadences counted for more with him than touching the kernel of truth in his narrative. In some respects he stands little above Herodotus and Tacitus, who—like our New Zealand 'Hansard'—sometimes put into the mouths of their heroes speeches which these never delivered. Imagination likewise played an overwhelming part in the great portion of the Conclave 'history' that was recently supplied to the world's secular press by wild-eyed and inventive correspondents and cable-agents in the Eternal City. Reason was for the moment relegated to the cowshed—it had nothing to do with the sounding nonsense which they supplied to their respective jour-

nals, and goodly portions of their Conclave narratives hold the same relation to fact as do the adventures of Humpty-Dumpty and the exploits of the cow that jumped over the moon.

Nothing could leak to the outer world past the well-guarded portals of the Conclave. And thus for lack of fact the inventive correspondents and the cable-demon had to fall back upon their imagination, and upon guesses, surmises, idle gossip, floating fiction, and the venomous mendacity of the Italian anticlerical press for something to give a 'snap' to the breakfast-cup of expectant foreign readers. It was thus that we heard of the grave, learned, and courtly Spanish Cardinals defiantly puffing fat cigars throughout the halls of the Conclave. Again, we were told that Cardinal Rampolla became livid with disappointed rage when a veto was made against him by an Austrian Cardinal. The real fact was, that Cardinal Rampolla's habitual calm never deserted him, that he all along protested to his friends against the heavy burden of papal care being thrown upon his shoulders, and that he canvassed actively and successfully in favor of Cardinal Sarto. It was, of course, inevitable that we should hear the usual ringing of the changes about 'candidates,' cabals, caucuses, and intrigues. There is not, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, any such thing as a 'candidate' for the papacy. There is no nomination. No man may vote, or solicit votes, for himself. The electors at the late Conclave were men of learning, prudence, virtue, zeal. They come from every sphere of life, they represent the Church's democracy, and they owe their position to personal worth and distinguished service. There are few, if any, in that august assemblage who desired to assume the papal tiara, which, at least in the present circumstances, is a crown of piercing thorns. The work of the Conclave, too, was an act of religion. And its best comment is the overwhelming choice, after a few brief sittings, of the peasant's son whose rise to the Chair of St. Peter is welcomed by the Christian world.

The London 'Times' was fortunate in being served during and after the Conclave by a singularly well-informed correspondent in the Eternal City. In one of the latest issues of the 'Times' to hand this non-Catholic writer 'pinks' imaginative journalistic tattlers and gossip-mongers to the following tune: 'Now that the Conclave is over, it seems only just to say something of an old misconception, fostered chiefly by the Continental newspapers, concerning the conduct of the Sacred College before and during its deliberations. Many people will remember the Conclave of Leo XIII., and the strange tales then told of intrigues and counter-intrigues, of private rancors, and petty feuds. And many people will remember also how little the true history of that Conclave, as it came to be revealed in the course of time, corresponded with the sensational version which the public had first received. Much of the same process has been taking place during the Conclave of Pius X. One seemed to be witnessing the reproduction of the old play, in which all the antiquated stage properties were once more brought to light. Stage Cardinals acted as stage Cardinals should act; bickered, quarrelled, intrigued, and entered upon dark conspiracies for the confusion of their enemies; while in the background there stalked mysterious figures, the counterfeit presentment of kings, emperors, and potentates. That, at least to judge from some Continental papers, is the picture of this last Conclave as it is painted for a world, which, having read old history and modern novels, knows exactly how Cardinals should behave. It would probably be quite useless to protest that it is not a true picture. There is always somebody who knows somebody who has heard from somebody a very different tale. The old traditional conception of a Conclave, being the growth of centuries, is likely to endure for centuries more. Also, it must be confessed that, by the side of the stirring sensations of melodrama, the reality of the decorous