

ideal of true Progress. Goethe made it his motto in the great poem which John Morley made his inspiration:

*Wohl sei der Mensch,
Hilfreich und gut!
Denn das allein
Unterscheidet ihn
Von allen Wesen,
Die wir kennen.*

The poetic dream of universal evolution, extending not only to the plant and animal kingdom but even to human thought, ethics, and truth itself, captured the restless world for nearly a century and gave a new meaning to the word Progress. For the dreamers there was no progress without evolution, and the dream became a dogma which was asserted and enforced with a bigotry that outdid the worst that was ever alleged against the Inquisitors of Spain. Evolution meant for people like the forger Haeckel the destruction of Christianity; and thence it was but a little step for the noisy demagogues who acquired their education from bad translations of foreign atheistical works to proclaim that apostasy from the faith was a sign of Progress, that the Church was reactionary and out-of-date, and that it was a monstrous thing to attempt to set bounds by moral or other laws to the activities of the mind or to the desires of the will of that noble creature Man. "Christianity was but a stage in the evolution of thought. We (that is the disciples of the forger and his dupes) are beyond all that now. Wherefore let us throw restraint and religion to the winds and break the Commandments as we will: *Break up those tablets*, said Nietzsche's Zarathustra." Now as the Catholic Church is the pillar and ground of Truth, it could not follow the lead of every forger and of every soap-box orator who thought he had a new revelation to make. The Church had the revelation of an infallible God to guard and it was not going to change its immutable dogmas at the behest of a charlatan who cried aloud in the market-place—even though he cried in the name of Progress. The true meaning of Progress has been changed and a false interpretation given the word. Because the Church would not accept the false she was denounced as the enemy of the true: that sentence sums up the history of the attacks made on Catholics by all the atheists and ranters and bigots of the last hundred years. As St. Augustine says, there is some truth in every error. There is evolution in most things. The boy develops into the man, the seed into the tree, mankind advances in civilisation, the stage-coach is replaced by the express, and the tallow candle by the electric light. Mistakes have made clearer our views on many philosophical topics; many doctrines of faith are better understood and better defined than they were years ago. It is certainly true that there is progress and evolution. But we have no right to conclude that there is evolution in everything and that nothing is fixed and stable. Just as axioms in Geometry are essentially fixed so too there are stable laws in all sciences and immutable truths in moral and dogmatic doctrines. The argument of the moderns against religion is a fair sample of their reasoning powers. It amounts to this: We no longer use tallow candles, we no longer travel long distances in stage-coaches; therefore we cannot believe that Christ became Man or that He founded the Church as the custodian of unchangeable truth. Our political life and our social life have changed; therefore our religion ought to change. We have discovered electricity; therefore we need not believe in God. Divested of all their verbiage the writings and pleadings of the apostles of false progress have no more force than such silly arguments as the foregoing. True progress is only conceivable when the starting point is still kept in view. To say that because we have gone a long way from London there is no London is absurd, but not more absurd than to hold that progress consists in ever abandoning old views and advancing towards new. True evolution is not a continuous remaking, but a continuance in growth, and growth of its nature implies continuity between the plant and the seed, the principles and the conclusions. To quote Goethe again,

the men of the day have read a terrible deal—

Sie haben schrecklich viel gelesen,—

but they have thought correspondingly little. It is the little thought that goes with the reading that is really the *schrecklich* thing. In the lines already quoted at the beginning of this article, Goethe describes the ideal man as follows—

Noble let man be,
Helpful and good!
Thus, and thus only
From all below him
Others can know him

And certainly one would be hard put to it to identify this ideal among the profiteering, sweating, grasping, over-reaching plutocracy, the lying politicians, the loose livers and the materialistic thinkers that are the product of what moderns call Progress. Goethe's lines fit the man who is actuated by Christian principles always, but they certainly do not fit those who have discarded Christian charity, Christian chastity, and Christian justice. The progress of to-day is the kind that has

*Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of
Zolaism, leading
Forward, forward, ay, and downward into the depths of
the abyss.*

It is not a Progress of which any nation has reason to be proud, this vile fruit of godless schools and godless politics which now hangs rotten on the tree of civilisation and mockery of all the fine promises of all the fine reforms that the war was to inaugurate for us. Progress that means overstepping human reason and overthrowing the barriers of faith and morals the world may boast of; and to her eternal glory be it said that this is precisely the Progress against which the Church has set her face resolutely. While she has always fostered real Progress and true civilisation, she has steadfastly opposed and condemned the denial of the truth, the apostasy from God and the retrogression towards low ideals and low standards of life for which our age is now notorious. No, thank God! the ideas of the period are not those of the Catholic Church. She stands alone in the world to-day for real Progress, for the good, the true, the pure, the just, the sane, the wholesome, and for the supernatural virtues which alone can save the decadent world.

Ireland and British Diplomacy

Is British diplomacy deteriorating? It would seem so. Mr. Lloyd George has long been held up to admiration as the "brains" of England, and yet the Irish peace negotiations have badly rattled him. George W. Russell (A.E.), an Ulster Protestant, calls attention to Mr. George's warped mentality in an article published in the current issue of *Pearson's Magazine*, as follows: "Mr. Lloyd George at Carnarvon some months ago rested the objections on naval, military, and economic grounds. He drew a vivid picture of Ireland with an army of 500,000 men and a navy which would be a danger to the Empire. He said also if Ireland was free its income tax would be merely nominal, the duties of commodities so low that the Irishmen could get for threepence the tobacco for which Englishmen pay as many shillings; and because of this low taxation manufacturers would move their factories to Ireland, trade would desert Great Britain and come to the Irish State. I am sure there are many people in Great Britain who wish Mr. Lloyd George would perform these, the miracles of finance, he conceives us capable of in Ireland. He desired to mobilise against Ireland the easily aroused feelings of fear and envy, and knew his public would not pause to ask themselves whether a navy, and a higher percentage of our population under arms than any country in Europe, even the most militarist, had ever dreamed of, were compatible with a nominal income tax, low duties on commodities, and great industrial productivity. Perhaps he did not himself know he was talking nonsense. I felt a thrill of dismay reading that speech, for I realised that the same mentality had been arranging the destinies of Europe."

Tui Street Garage, Taihape

V. Nicholls

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