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AT HOME & ABROAD.



DE are happy, and, more than happy, thankful, to learn that an evil which threatened has been averted. Father Curci has retracted all that was published by him contrary to the teaching or protests of the Pope. It was not that we feared for the Church; this never enters into the mind of any Catholic, let what will happen, but we feared that another name had been added to that sad list which contains those of Loyson, Lamennais, and of others who rebelled against authority, and in their obstinacy were lost. For, if a man's own soul be more precious to him than all the world beside, surely charity demands it of him that he should at all times hear with deep concern that the souls of others are in danger, and rejoice to learn that the danger has been overcome. We had no fear, indeed, for anything that might happen to the Church; even apart from the sure promises of God, it is evident that the errors of her unfortunate sons who resist her are impotent to work her the slightest ill. We have before our eyes in saying so the example of Dollinger, and of the pitiful Loyson; and amongst the memories of others we have that of Lamennais. What fruits of his teaching now remain to justify Béranger's verses addressed to him?

Paul, où vas-tu?—Je vais prêcher aux hommes
Paix, justice et fraternité.

If there be, indeed, any fruits of his teaching, they must be sought amongst the mass of evils that have been engendered by the doctrines and deeds of all the enemies of Christianity, that cannot injure the Church, but destroy the hopes and happiness of thousands for time and eternity. These are the peace, justice, and brotherly-love engrafted by the preaching of such "Pauls" as this;—miserable "Pauls" who, instead of flinging off the viper that has seized hold of them, cherish it, and allow its virus to poison their hearts, and make them such as to infect all that come into contact with them. We sincerely rejoice that Father Curci has not refused to hear the voice of religion and wisdom, but that he has had the manliness to acknowledge his fault in the face of Europe. It is easy to understand how a man, even a man holding the Faith in all sincerity, may be led away into such an error as that committed by this ecclesiastic to whom we refer. A man of intellect becomes very much attached to the plans and theories invented by him; the greater his mental powers the easier it is to him to smooth for himself all difficulties that lie in the way of that which he has devised, and the more plausibly he is able to state the matter to himself. His work gains upon him as it grows, and becomes like a part of himself,—a point which we remember to have seen well brought out by the late Anglican Bishop of Ossory, Dr. O'Brien, in a charge delivered by him to his clergy at the time the publications of Dr. Colenso, respecting the Pentateuch, were creating such an excitement. Knowing, besides all this, the weakness of human nature, we can understand the error of Father Curci, and make due allowance for it, and we feel that we should not be acting quite fairly if we were not also to acknowledge the worth of the effort made by him in confessing his fault, and the mistaken tenets of his work. It is not an easy thing for a man to bring himself to this: the victory of duty in such a case is signal; the acknowledgment to be made is not that an error has been committed through thoughtlessness or any kind of neglect. It is that judgment has been at fault during a lengthened period, that study has failed to clear up doubtful points, that facts and doctrines have been misunderstood and perverted; it is, in short, to confess that the mental powers have been put to their proof and found wanting. To confess all this publicly is not an easy task to any one; it is a particularly difficult task to be performed by a man who has attained to anything like a high reputation for intellect and literary ability; and it is no ordinary humility, and no half-repentance that could lead to such an acknowledgment at any time. But the merit of the act is much enhanced when we consider that in the world of intellect there were numbers of spectators watching with breathless interest the turn that matters

would take, applauding loudly that which had already been done by Father Curci, and ready to hail as an act of heroism and consummate virtue and wisdom his final determination to resist the Pope. For the moment he seemed the brightest star in the anti-Papal firmament. It depended on himself to have remained fixed there, a guide to the enemies of religion, and with full homage paid him by them, but, fortunately, he has chosen the evanescent career of a meteor, and has settled swiftly down into the obscurity that awaits him in obedience and fidelity to the chair of Peter. It is fitting that a tribute of admiration should be paid to the humility and strength of the man who had the moral courage to choose so difficult a path; but, at the same time, we cannot doubt that he has chosen well, not only for his eternal welfare, but also for his temporal happiness and peace of mind.

THE time is apparently drawing near when that which Robespierre said of God will be repeated of the Catholic Church, and men will acknowledge that if such an institution had not existed it would have been found necessary to invent it. Everywhere the fact is becoming evident that the safety of society is bound up with the obedience rendered to the Church's teaching and that the reverence due to this cannot be interfered with without entailing the utmost mischief to the well-being of the community. Had the condemnations so frequently passed by our late beloved Holy Father on secret societies and especially on the parent of them all, that Masonic body, where so many respectable Englishmen are proud of allowing themselves to appear conspicuously, and to form, as it were, the ornamentation by which the whole is made to have a decent appearance in the sight of reputable men; had these condemnations been attended to, we say, the world would not now be on the verge of convulsions whose end it is impossible to foretell, but of which it may be safely predicted that they will cause dire distress and innumerable misfortunes. We need not speak of German Socialism which to-day, it is true, openly pursues its aim, but which has been hatched and fostered, and advanced to its present standing by means of such societies as we refer to; it is more to the point for us to turn to America, where the state of things is acknowledged to be so threatening and where secret societies abound. America seems to be on the verge of revolution, and if a revolution, in fact, take place there it will be intense and desperate, with a concentration on every horror of those energies that are now divided by so many objects. The Catholic Church is, however, in America, as elsewhere, the one power that even as it is, may to a certain extent modify the evil; it would, were it in the ascendant, altogether avail to overcome it, but, unfortunately, that is not the case. There, also, it has been resisted, its lawful office of teaching obstructed, and its rights and privileges in every conceivable way interfered with and molested; for there also, it has borne the brunt of opposition and prejudice. But now there is a consideration which strikes us with regard to this attempted repression of the Catholic Church which is so general, and which we know to be so wicked. It is that its folly should be clear to every one who will use his perception and reasoning powers, at least in countries where the Irish Catholic element obtains to any extent. There can be no doubt whatever that in all such countries there will be found Irishmen or men of Irish parentage who, owing to some cause or other—it may be to the "subtle spell of the Irish mind," of which we have heard tell,—perhaps without any apparent merit or particular talent, will attain to a leading position, and be found to influence large bodies of their fellow-countrymen or others. Here in New Zealand, for example we have an instance of this, acting beneficially, in the person of Mr. Sheehan who, like music,—that of the tomtom we suppose,

—hath a charm to soothe the savage breast."

But, what is more to the purpose, we understand that one Denis Kearney, a man of Irish birth, an ignorant, unkempt lump of a fellow, with nothing on earth to recommend him to the fancy of the public, unless it be that same "subtle spell" we spoke of, has attained to the leadership of the dangerous classes in San Francisco. Now, no influence whatever can reach these men, except that of the Catholic Church; if it cannot soften them it can at least thwart them,—we do not, of course, allude to Mr. Sheehan, for we don't suppose anyone connected with the Church could for an instant think of thwarting him, and as to softening him, we imagine he is soft enough. There is indeed one point on which he appears mighty hard, but we don't