

CARDINAL MANNING'S "PROTEST."

(From the Sydney Express.)

PERHAPS nothing has happened during the present year of greater significance than the "Protest" which has just appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* by the hand of Cardinal Manning. It deals with the highest interests of humanity, and is, as the Cardinal calls it himself, "An Englishman's Protest" against the admission of atheists into the British House of Commons, and against the consequent disruption of law, order, morality, and religion which follows logically from the denial of a Supreme Ruler and Creator of mankind. Coming as it does from a Catholic Cardinal Archbishop, and being addressed to the English-speaking people throughout the world, who still hold the fundamental doctrines of Theism, his Eminence's "Protest" opens out to the thoughtful mind a thousand painfully profound considerations which are intimately connected with the most essential interests of our race.

It is a startling fact that such a Protest should be called for at all. It shows that the progress of Atheism has been rapid and widespread in England during the last twenty years. It clearly indicates that the governing power in the country has been affected by the ubiquitous presence of that kind of paralysis which proceeds from scientific doubt and practical misbelief; and that the old master-beams and king-posts which at one time supported the vast fabric of the British Constitution—that Christian civilization and natural religion itself—are suffering from the dry-rot and have been shaken considerably in their stability. Whilst Catholic France is suffering in all her nerves and organs from the tyranny of diabolical despots who have lost their faith; whilst Catholic Belgium is honeycombed by the secret sect; whilst Germany is thrusting the spiked beel of persecution into the Catholic Church, Protestant England is being gradually undermined in her fundamental beliefs, and a Roman Catholic Archbishop feels it his duty publicly to protest—not so much as a Churchman, but as an Englishman, against the collapse of that civil power, and that remnant of spiritual belief, which are intimately connected with the doctrines of Theism. He perceives, clearly enough, that when once the dogma of the existence of God is held to be an open question, the very joints and sockets of the body politic become as if mercury had entered into and shaken them asunder; and that human society ceases to possess any stability, or to have any power to appeal to a higher authority than itself, against the pride and the passion possessed by brute force. From the days of Alfred to Henry VII., and from Henry to Elizabeth and William, down to Victoria—until the case of Bradlaugh opened up new abysses of peril, the Empire's stability and security were based upon a rock-like Theism, and on all those sanctions which had their efficacy in the profound belief of the national heart. With the admission of Atheism into Parliament, the whole of this basis of a Divine order is quietly removed. The nation sinks lower than the pagan nationalities of old. The principles of religion, morality, truth, temperance, and justice become mere empty words, meaning something or nothing, according as the passion and pride wielded by brute force attach to them a meaning. Law ceases to possess its sanction for the Law-giver, who alone has a right to impose restraints, is ignored or denied, or, at all events, is not affirmed; for were He really believed in, with a lively faith, the English House of Commons would no more admit an atheist to its deliberations, than they would a man who had denied the existence, and, therefore, the authority and rule of Queen Victoria herself. There are some questions that cannot be allowed as open questions without opening the floodgates of anarchy and destruction. And one of these is, pre-eminently, the doctrine of the existence of God. Once allow that great tenet to be a matter of indifference, and the world is thrown back not so much into barbarism—for the lowest savage has a god of some kind—but into brutality. Into the condition of monkeys, pigs, and dogs. The monarchies of Assyria and Persia, the civilization of the Greek race, and the sway of the Roman authority, were, each and all, based upon the great doctrine of Theism; and they held, they did not deny, that God exists, that He is good, wise, just, and holy; and that His law, written in the conscience, in the natural order, is the rule of human life and the guide of all just and upright men. It was left for our moderns to invent a system of civilization based, simply, on the caprice of shallow philosophers; to discover sanctions where none could possibly exist; and to proclaim the distinctions of right and wrong, and the duties of subjection and obedience, after having denied His existence who alone could lend such distinctions and such duties any force. "Without God," exclaims the Cardinal, "there is no law-giver above the human will, and therefore no law; for no will by human authority can bind another. All authority of parents, husbands, masters, rulers, is of God. This is not all. If there be no God, there is no eternal distinction of right and wrong; and, if not, then no morals; truth, purity, chastity, justice, temperance are names, conventions, and impostures."

The present perilous condition of society in England can be easily accounted for. For years past, the seeds have been sown which are now producing their flowers and their fruits. The masses of the people have been gradually poisoned by the apostles of the denial of Christ and of God. What so-called scientific men have been doing amongst the upper classes, that the demagogues have been doing amongst the multitude. The tenets of Tom Paine, George Combe, and Volney, have been popularised, and thrown into such form as to meet the especial character of the uneducated intellect. Mazzini, and Congreve, and Mill are names familiar to the artisans of Liverpool, Sheffield, and Birmingham; and the education of half-educated people has been pushed rapidly along by those who possess a mania for upsetting the doctrines, not only of Christianity, but of natural religion. For years past, Mr. Bradlaugh has been educating the people in his own especially diabolical creed. Freethought meetings are held in almost every considerable town in England. In London and Newcastle and Glasgow, in Northampton and Huddersfield and Bradford, in Leeds and Halifax, in Liverpool and Birkenhead and Birmingham, the theatres or halls are crowded to hear the

lectures of Freethinkers, whose main object it seems to be to upset the basis of Christian civilisation, and to introduce anarchy and confusion in its place. And, besides lectures and public addresses, pamphlets and tracts, without number, are published and distributed amongst the masses of the people. The immense circulation of these poisonous productions is proof enough of the avidity with which they are devoured. "Has Man a Soul?" and "A Plea for Atheism," and "Is there a God?" and "Who was Jesus Christ?" and "Jesus, Shelley, and Malthus," are some amidst thousands of other blasphemous tracts which the people are fed with. "The Bible; what it is; being a Freethinker's commentary," "God, Man, and the Bible; three nights' discussion with the Rev. Dr. Baylee;" "Christianity and Secularism contrasted," "Why do men starve?" "The Logic of Death," and other writings of the same sort, subversive of all those fundamental truths on which society rests, have been, for years, working their effect. The masses of the people who can just read, and take in the poison that is offered them, without having sufficient education to detect that it is poison, have been gradually worked upon and undermined by the energetic emissaries of iniquity; and the "Bradlaugh scare" in England the other day, was simply produced by the more public and emphatic advance into higher circles of that blasphemous spirit of the age which is gradually forcing its way amidst the governing class. Pride in the higher class of scientists, and passion amongst the demagogues, point to one issue—the gradual introduction of passion and pride, sustained by brute force, in the place of the cardinal principles of supernatural and natural religion, such as supported, in old time, Christian commonwealths, or were at the basis of the civilization of the great pagan nations of the world.

TRUE RELIGION.

THE following is an extract from a letter of the Bishop of Achonry to Archbishop Croke:—

"The outbreak of fever in 'hungry July,' and at the close of a prolonged period of severe destitution, renders the condition of many parishes of this diocese very dreadful indeed. The visitation has set in at a time when the ill-fated poor are wasted in health and in strength, and their recuperative power at a very low point. It has come, too, at a moment when sanitary requirements are found woefully wanting, and when even the very behests of common humanity are met with cold disregard. Your Grace may easily imagine my feelings when I learned (during my absence from home) that our *Sisters of Charity had been left to coffin the remains of a fever patient; nay more, to carry the confined remains into the street.* I am informed that no one else could be found to undertake the noble work of mercy. It was only when the remains were borne into the open highway by the gentle hands of the devoted Sisters that a few men, less panic-stricken than others, ventured to lend a hand, and conveyed the poor deceased to the grave. And again, when I read of the 'plague-stricken Charlestown,' that there 'was no one to nurse but the priest—the parish priest, who is the chief and almost only nurse, at all hours of the day and night, going from pest-house to pest-house.' I felt proud of the heroic charity of the brave-hearted Sisters and of the manly and dauntless zeal of the P. P. of Charlestown, so aptly described by the *Freeman's* correspondent as 'the big, brave, and generous Father Tom Loftus.' And I felt, too, what a power there is in our holy religion to inspire its consecrated servants with unflinching courage in the face of danger and panic! But whilst our priest nurses the plague-stricken, and our nuns are confining and carrying out the remains of the dead, what is the Local Government doing? Have they provided suitable ambulance accommodation for the proper removal of the fever patients to hospital? Let the passage of the *Freeman's* correspondent on the 'common cart atrocity' be read in reply. Have they sent down an additional staff, even of a few medical students, to relieve the poor priest of the duty of nursing? No, not one. Have they even sent money, so liberally promised by the Chief Secretary, to save the lives of the people? Not a shilling, as far as I can learn. They know that the terrible scourge is daily spreading, that the enemy is upon the poor destitute people, and yet no money, no means, provided to save them! If we read of such scenes in Zululand, every right-minded man would condemn the scandalous inhumanity towards an African dusky brother; but the tale may be told of the fever-stricken, famishing, Irish peasant, and met with the cruel composure of official indifference. Pardon me for addressing your Grace at such length. I should not have presumed to do so had I not counted upon a friendly echo from your truly Irish and patriotic heart."

A correspondent of the *Western Morning News* at Lima sends details of what appears to have been one of the most spirited actions of the South American war. After the battle of Tacna 6000 Chilean soldiers were sent by train to Lenta, and on the 7th of June, after making a complete circuit of the city so as to surprise the enemy where least expected, they made a fierce and general attack upon the new outlying defensive works in one grand charge. The Peruvian forts were taken in the rear, every man in them being put to death, and a rush was made for the inner line. No sooner were the Chileans clear of the outer forts than they were blown high into the air by the explosion of mines fired, just too late, by electric wires from the city. The inner line of the forts was stormed by equal quickness. After a desperate struggle the remainder of the garrison made a last stand in the public plaza, but were mown down on all sides by the victorious Chileans until scarcely one of them remained, all demands for surrender being contemptuously refused. Meanwhile an attack was made from the sea front, and the commodore of the Peruvian monitor Manco Capac, seeing that all was lost, steamed into deep water and sank her. The crew escaped in the boats, but the neutral ships in the harbour refusing to take them on board they had to surrender. The southern army of the allies has thus been practically exterminated.