

revolution in Germany found the sensual and brutal Henry VIII. engaged in a savage war upon the Irish nation. Henry early entered the lists against the new doctrines. He wrote a controversial pamphlet in refutation of Luther's dogmas, and was rewarded therefor by an encomiastic letter from the Pope conferring on him the title of "Defender of the Faith." Indeed, ever since the time of Adrian, the Popes had always been wondrously friendly towards the English kings; much too ready to give them "aid and comfort" in their schemes of Irish subjugation, and much too little regardful of the heroic people that were battling so persistently in defence of their nationality. A terrible lesson was now to awaken Rome to remorse and sorrow. The power she had aided and sanctioned in those schemes was to turn from her with unblushing apostasy, and become the most deadly and malignant of her foes; while that crushed and broken nation whom she had uninquiringly given up to be the prey of merciless invaders, was to shame this ingratitude and perfidy by a fidelity and devotedness not to be surpassed in the history of the world.

Henry—a creature of mere animal passions—tired of his lawful wife, and desired another. He applied to Rome for a divorce. He was, of course, refused. He pressed his application again in terms that but too plainly foreshadowed to the Supreme Pontiff what the result of a refusal might be. It was, no doubt, a serious contingency for the Holy See to contemplate—the defection to the new religion of a king and a nation so powerful as the English. In fact, it would give to the new creed a status and a power it otherwise would not possess. To avert this disaster to Catholicity, it was merely required to wrong one woman; merely to permit a lustful king to have his way, and sacrifice to his brute passions his helpless wife. With full consciousness, however, of all that the refusal implied, the Holy See refused to permit to a king that which could not be permitted to the humblest of his subjects—refused to allow a wife's rights to be sacrificed, even to save to the side of Catholicity for three centuries the great and powerful English nation.

Henry had an easy way out of the difficulty. According to the new system, he would have no need to incur such mortifying refusals from this intractable, antiquated, and unprogressive tribunal at Rome, but could grant to himself divorces and dispensations *ad libitum*. So he threw off the Pope's authority, embraced the new religion, and helped himself to a new wife as often as he pleased: merely cutting off the head of the discarded one after he had granted himself a divorce from her.

(To be continued.)

THE TIRLOUGH AT DERRYHOYLE.

Little Field of Water

Among the low hazels,
Pale as the sky above you.

Lily-white child of the sky:

Little Field of Water

Among the ferns and hazels,
Rosy and flushed with dawn,

Rose of the earth and sky:

Little Field of Water

Among the stones and hazels,
Veronica—blue as the heavens,
Flower of noonday light;

Little secret land-lake

Shining among the hazels,
Golden mirror of sunset,

Cradle the moon to-night.

—M. DE V. S., in *Studies*.

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MR. BELLOC ON THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

At a monthly meeting of St. Thomas' Historical Society at Dr. Johnson's house in Gough Square, London, kindly lent by Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, M.P., Rev. Aloysius Roche was in the chair, and the president, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, gave a lecture on the conditions of life in England in "the thirteenth, greatest of centuries," as contrasted with the tendencies of the present day (says the *Universe* of recent date).

He said that in dealing with the Middle Ages one was handicapped by the fact that so much that should be in the mind was not there owing to prejudice and misrepresentation. In history, as in Nature, people see not what is really there, but what they are trained to see; and just as grass is *not* always green, so the Middle Ages are by no means the dark and backward times they are usually represented to be. It is a shock to many to be told that a passion for liberty is the characteristic feature of the thirteenth century, and that the decline of that passion is a leading feature of the present day. It is, however, a fact that liberty reached its maximum in Europe in the thirteenth century. Aristotle defined liberty as obedience to a self-made law. It is essential to obey some law, otherwise we get anarchy and the death of the mind, but it must be imposed upon us by an authority which we accept willingly. It cannot be a law made by "ourselves alone" which would clash with the liberty of others; it is limited by the rights of others and also by the dichotomy between the immediate and the ultimate. Happiness is the true end of life, but it must be ultimate and not immediate happiness. It is an instinct of the human intelligence to inquire "By what authority?" whenever any restriction is imposed upon us, but when you recognise the authority you have all the liberty there is; if you try to go beyond this you lose it instead of gaining it. So we may say that liberty includes (1) power of self-expression, (2) restriction by legitimate authority only. And in both these the Middle Ages were particularly strong. A man of to-day who found himself in a thirteenth-century village would in the first place notice many remarkable contrasts in the material order with the life to which he was accustomed. But he would soon adapt himself to these, just as one does in travelling abroad. The meals would be at different times, such things as tea and mustard would be absent, but there would be plenty of beer and claret. Locomotion would be slow, and news would only arrive at intervals by word of mouth or by very rare letters. The only hard roads would be the main highways; in the village itself there would be only green lanes, which would often be in very bad condition. In the moral order the contrast would be much more striking and much more important. He would observe that every man had definite duties and a definite position. Everywhere he would find a hierarchy and order. Anyone whose position and work was not obvious would be looked upon as suspicious. Then he would find a similarity of habits running through all classes. Everybody dined at the same hour—you could not distinguish a gentleman by his accent, habits, or gestures. Differences in dress would be due to office or occupation rather than wealth. The motive force of humanity would be self-expression. For instance, the houses were not all alike; each of them was built to suit the man who was to live in it; he sent his child to school or not as he chose, and even a poor man could choose what sort of education his child should have. Hence there would be a great simplicity in all departments of life. There was no compulsion anywhere except what arose from moral authority. If you said or did anything unpopular, anything heretical, for instance, you would probably suffer, for you would not be protected by any police force. On the other hand, if a man who lived in the thirteenth century were suddenly to find himself in one of our great cities he would at first find himself a little overwhelmed with the material differences—the trains, telephones, newspapers, etc. But he would soon adapt himself to these. In the moral order he would be much