

## LATIN AND AMERICAN IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

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IT is strange enough that our war with Spain should have had a repercussion in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. And yet of the immediate effects of the war that repercussion will possibly prove amongst those fraught with the most wide-reaching consequences.

The principle that motived the recent action of the United States has its counterpart amidst the theories and tenets that animate the dogmatic doctrine of a large portion of the Catholic ecclesiastics in this country. These theories are more or less at variance with traditions that obtain in Rome. Hitherto they were tolerated there, but the outbreak of the war has stirred up a certain amount of bitter resentment, which is at present being vented and which has just caused some incidents of a piquant nature.

An orderly narrative of a recent episode will probably be the best means of bringing out the nature of the conflict that exists on non-dogmatic points between the rulers of the Catholic Church in Rome and the Roman Catholic authorities in the United States.

First, however, it may be well to make clear who these Catholic authorities in the United States specifically are. It is fairly generally known that two currents of feeling exist among the Roman Catholic clergy in this country. The one is represented by the progressive Americans, who wish to bring the broad liberal principles that regulate the Government and administration of the United States to be as far as possible admitted as a part of that practical code in accordance with which the affairs of the Catholic Church are directed. The prominent names on this side are Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop Keane, Archbishop Ireland, this last mentioned being the personification of the idea. The other current is repre-

sented by the so-called conservative section of the Catholics, and includes in the first place the Jesuits, secondly the Germans, and finally, though to a minor extent and probably for different reasons, Archbishop Corrigan. The parties are variously designated as the Americans and the Germans, or as the Irelandites and the Corriganites. This latter manner of describing them is unquestionably inexact, for Archbishop Corrigan's disconnection from the other party is due not to differences of aims and theories but merely to personal motives. This, however, is unimportant to the present consideration, what is to be brought out being simply the specification of that section of the Roman Catholic Church in America which has latterly drawn upon itself a certain amount of ill-feeling in Rome. Its chiefs are Archbishop Ireland, Cardinal Gibbons, and Archbishop Keane, and it is an unquestionable fact that behind these stand the bulk of the episcopacy and the vast majority of what may be considered the distinctively American or non-foreign section of the Roman Catholic clergy in this country.

Not very long ago a book was published in the United States entitled *The Life of Father Hecker*, its author being the Rev. Father Elliott. An innocent-looking publication in itself, it appeared to have only one aim, that of narrating the life of the founder of the Paulist Fathers, a man apparently endowed with the heroic degree of virtue which in the Roman Catholic Church is regarded as constituting sanctity. Cardinal Gibbons gave his enthusiastic approval to the work. It was eulogised by Archbishop Corrigan himself, and numbers of persons qualified to speak with authority declared that they had read it with much edification and spiritual profit.

But the work, besides narrating the holiness of Father Hecker's life, dwelt also on certain holdings of his with regard to the relations that may advantageously exist between Church and State. Father Hecker was a practical man. He left out of account the old scholastic theories of Canon Law, and looking facts in the face recognised that the Catholic Church in America enjoyed as much liberty and independence as any one in our generation could reasonably desire. Father Hecker maintained the necessity of Catholics in their own country being and having the appearance of being good citizens. For that purpose in many circumstances they would need to be not too rigidly uncompromising with regard to their theories, but, realising the inherent difficulties of statecraft, to be conciliative and liberal-handed with the rest of their fellow-countrymen.

Father Hecker's ideas in this regard were taken up for sepa-

rate treatment by Mgr. D. J. O'Connell, a former rector of the American College in Rome and the intimate friend and ally of Archbishop Ireland and Cardinal Gibbons. They were made the subject of a paper which he read at the International Catholic Scientific Congress held in August of last year at Fribourg in Switzerland. Afterwards they were printed and disseminated in pamphlet form.

The liberal ideas embodied in the pamphlet left the inference that the satisfactory working relations of Church and State in this country might be profitably put into actuation in other lands, and even in Italy itself, to the great spiritual gain of the Church. The pamphlet was a shell in the opposing camp, and its true import was accurately gauged by those most interested in the matter. It was well known that amongst the thoroughly business-like prelates of the United States dissatisfaction reigned as to the administration of the Church. It was known that these prelates were asking themselves if the Roman Catholic Church was to be really catholic, that is, universal, or if it was to be simply national, that is, Italian; and if the entire interests of the Catholic Church were to be identified with the question of the Pope's aspirations for temporal power. It was recognised that with the publication of this pamphlet the American prelates were now growing outspoken and assertive in a manner that augured ill for the future. Jesuit and Dominican felt that theories and tenets dear to them were being rudely shaken at their base. The war broke out and the wrath of Dominican and Jesuit was turned against all things American. The time, they felt, had come for a vigorous parry and thrust against "Americanism," as the liberal theories of the United States clergy began to be designated.

A French priest dealt the blow. One Father Magnen, a member of a religious community, got together materials for a volume which he entitled *Etudes sur l'Americanisme*, with the sub-heading *Le Pere Hecker est-il un Saint?* Father Hecker's personality was again made the motive for the debate on "Americanism." The Platonic question of discovering whether Father Hecker is or is not a member of God's elect was a mere introduction to a fierce personal attack on the more prominent members of the American party, and to the syllogistic proof of the semi-schismatic character of the Church which they represented.

This book was to be published in Paris, and in accordance with the rules of the Index Expurgatorius it should bear the Imprimatur of the archbishop of that city. Cardinal Richard, how-

ever, on reading the book, informed the author that he could not give his Imprimatur to a *libelle* and to a publication which was a mere calumnious attack on the United States Episcopate. The author then brought his book to Rome. He added the name of a publishing firm in Rome to that of the true publishers in Paris, and although this action was *in fraudem legis* and foreseen and forbidden by article 41 of the rules of the Index, he readily obtained the Vatican Imprimatur. For this Imprimatur the direct responsibility belonged to the Master of the Sacred Palace, Fr. Lepidi, a Dominican monk and a candidate for the cardinalial purple.

The publication of a similar volume with a Vatican Imprimatur produced nothing short of amazement to the general public into whose hands it fell. But it was lauded to the skies in a review published by the Jesuit Fathers, and their encomiums were given prominent insertion in the clerical organs in Rome. In face of the insulting provocation directly put upon them, the American prelates did not think it behooved them to remain silent. Archbishop Keane, who lives in Rome, went to the Vatican to make direct representations to Cardinal Rampolla. The pontifical secretary of state disclaimed all connexion with the libellous volume. Neither the Holy Father nor he, he declared, knew anything about it, they deeply deplored the publication, and energetic measures would be taken against those who were at fault.

A liberal newspaper in Rome soon got wind of the affair and denounced the disingenuous action of those who had authorised the publication. To this an answer was made in the name of the Master of the Sacred Palace. It affirmed that he had read and studied the book, that he had thoroughly appreciated its contents, but that considering their importance he had desired to obtain the most authoritative approbation possible and had submitted it to the Holy Father himself. His Holiness, Fr. Lepidi was made to allege, read the book, and approved its publication.

Shortly after a Paris newspaper published a number of testimonials in favor of Father Magnen's book from members of the French Episcopate, and from those chiefly, by a strange coincidence, who had been most notoriously mixed up in the Diana Vaughan hoax. Furthermore Father Montsabré, the Dominican monk and master of asceticism who acquired celebrity by preaching many Lenten seasons to the cultured congregation of Notre Dame de Paris, added the weight of his word to the controversy. He had previously read, he stated in a letter to Father Magnen, *cette insupportable Vie du Père Hecker*. He had now read Father Magnen's

reply. He thoroughly agreed with it. It had only one defect and that was to treat the American prelates and their doctrines with *trop de douceur*.

A similar series of facts needs but little comment. Obviously an influential section of those who are in the very inside machinery by which the Roman Catholic conscience is directed from the Vatican, dread the advance of what, for conciseness, we may call the American idea. Not all of them probably go so far as the cardinal, holding high office in Rome, who in a recent colloquy with a French journalist referred to a rumor concerning Archbishop Ireland, and frankly expressed a hope that the "*quasi schismatique église*" of the United States was not going to have a second cardinal. The vast majority are well aware that dogma is in no risk of being tampered with. But they feel that with the ascendancy of the ideas which the Americans advocate many an old tradition dear to their hearts must go forever. The question of temporal power would soon be in risk of being rudely shaken, and even much of the pageantry of court life at the Vatican would have to be abandoned. Those Americans would gradually be seeking a practical answer to the oft-raised query, Why if the Italians are so conspicuously incapable of governing themselves, should they be allowed a monopoly of the government of the Catholic universe?

The American idea must accordingly be resisted with all possible energy. Thus, although we see Leo XIII. liberal and republican enough when it is a question, say, of France, we perceive that for the United States the strictest conservatism is put in vigor. The laicisation of the schools in France is going actively forward and there is no protest, and yet when Archbishop Ireland experimented with a lay school over here—and, remember, it was only an experiment and on a small scale and as a matter of practical necessity—all hands were raised in horror, and he is still under the imputation of having committed a bad action.

Not all ecclesiastics, however, having influence in the government of the Church are against Americanism. Cardinals there are, and prelates and monks and lay dignitaries, who are thoroughly in sympathy with the movement. They lack the courage of their American brethren. They believe that the cause being good it is sure to go on. They are confident that the American prelates will not be wanting in the necessary perseverance. They hope through their exertions a renovation of the Church in so far at least as it is a visible tangible body and a thing of this world.