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ART. V.—THE PRESENT POSITION AND PROSPECTS
OF OLD CATHOLICISM.

IT has been one of the greatest misfortunes of the Old Catholic movement generally that it has been kept in the background by influential organs of the English Church press. Consequently, most of our leading men in England are not in the least acquainted with its present position and prospects in various countries. Above all, our Bishops are in the dark, for their time is so much taken up with home work that they have none left for investigating the condition of these foreign movements. Yet it seems to me that the question of our relations to them is of vital importance. On one side is the vast and historic Church of Rome, with her matchless organization and unbounded command of money. On the other are these infant communities which have struggled into life against enormous odds, viewed with suspicion alike by Protestants, Romanists, and indifferentists, obnoxious to statesmen as a new denomination, compelled to face difficulties of organization, finance, legal status, just at the moment when opposition was greatest and their confidence in their own position least. And standing by has been the Church of England, holding precisely the same principles which these bodies are endeavouring to maintain on the Continent, rich in means and in practical experience, and doomed herself to suffer from the same restless spirit of proselytism, the same lavish expenditure of money, the same unscrupulous and untiring opposition as has been employed to crush out the nascent Old Catholicism of the Continent at all hazards. Every consideration of policy and principle alike, it seems to me, would dictate to the Church of England the advisability of giving the warmest sympathy and the most active support to these Reformed Catholic Churches at the moment of their greatest need. But we find, on the contrary, this very fact that they are in need of help is the chief crime alleged against them. *Because* they are not numerous, *because* they have enormous odds against them, *because*, as Professor Beyschlag, of Jena, himself a Protestant, has told us, every expedient of persecution short of death or imprisonment has been resorted to during the last twenty years to prevent the spread, in fact the very existence, of these churches, we find influential men in England laying down the principle that we had better leave them to themselves. I should, on the contrary, be disposed to the opinion that these constitute the very reasons why we should give them as energetic a support as we can.

I do not mean that we should attempt to Anglicise them—

quite the contrary. But I mean that, as all the resources of the Roman Communion are, and have been, employed to crush them, so the Church of England should strain every nerve to assist them morally, and even materially, in the spread on the Continent of those true Catholic principles which have long been our boast, and are now proving in a most remarkable manner to be our strength. People are assiduously informed that Old Catholicism is making no progress. This may be the case. It has hitherto had enough to do to hold its ground at all, to prevent the infant churches from being strangled in their birth. To take an instance. At Nuremberg the movement has a hold on the young officers of the army. But service is only held once a month in the Protestant church. One thousand pounds would put the community in possession of a handsome disused church, but it has not the funds, and in the present condition of the movement elsewhere it does not feel justified in asking for them. Perhaps when the church at Carlsruhe is finished, as it is to be this year, an attempt will be made to build churches elsewhere. Why does not England help in this work? But although little progress has been made in Germany, the small communities sturdily hold their own, and the increase of members, though small, is steady and general. In Switzerland we are told that the movement makes no progress because the number of registered Old Catholics is not so great in 1889 as in 1874. But then there were a number of nominal adherents, who dropped off as soon as the real struggle began. For at first the Pope refused to allow Roman Catholics to vote for the election of their *curés*, and so the Old Catholics elected clergy to their mind. These were expelled at the next election in 1880, and this, combined with the decision in 1878 to allow the Old Catholic clergy to marry, lessened their numbers for a time. But lately there has been again an advance. Priests have begun to hold services in the districts from which they were driven in 1880, and a new centre has recently been formed at Schaffhausen. How many people in England are aware of the seven years' struggle of the Old Catholics to obtain a church which has been going on at Lucerne, and their ultimate success in building one, with the help of the American Church? In Austria there are large accessions in the Isergebirge; also at Arnsdorf, where the Government will not permit the Old Catholics to have a priest. At Warnsdorf they considerably exceed four thousand, and at Vienna and Ried there are flourishing congregations. There were at one time one thousand children waiting for confirmation in Austria, but the Government will not allow the Bishop-elect to be consecrated, so he administers confirmation *as* Bishop-elect. I suppose it is no business of ours that

while Rome is allowed a free hand in proselytizing in England, our Old Catholic brethren, who are maintaining our principles in Austria, are not allowed the free exercise of their religion. To me it seems that we ought to exert ourselves to obtain it for them, if possible. But "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

To turn to Italy. As long as Count Campello hid his head under a bushel in Umbria he was likely to be the subject of *canards* of all kinds. But now he is coming into the light of day matters are altered. No doubt can possibly exist that a large number of the Italians are ready to receive him with open arms. And this is not only because he preaches Catholic reform, but also because of what is called the "political" element in his teaching. Mere pietists are offended with him because of the occasional lack of individualism in his public addresses. But those who watch the signs of the times in England see that the Christianity of the future among ourselves must largely consist in the application of religion to the problems of social life. Nor is it otherwise in Italy. Of course Count Campello is no more infallible than the Pope, nor will a movement conducted by him display all the excellences of every other movement without any of their defects, as some people seem to think it ought to do. It is sufficient to know that on the first occasion of his passing beyond Rome and Umbria he stirred public opinion in a manner which must be characterized as extraordinary. What is our duty as regards this movement? Not, certainly, to keep it up with foreign money. We ought to see that at least it is partially self-supporting. And we ought to give no ground for any complaint on the part of Italians that we are forcing an alien religion on them. But while I think we should insist on their maintaining their own ministers, we should, I think, help them to do anything which is beyond their present capabilities, and yet, humanly speaking, necessary for the success of their cause.

I cannot pass from the subject without speaking of the singular promise of Signor Janni. His impassioned eloquence is startling to our Northern ears; but I believe his motives to be as good and his views as sound as his abilities are unquestionable. He has conducted the *Labaro* for five years with great ability and judgment, and the principles of the Catholic Reform are spread by it in places which could not otherwise be reached. The consequence is that adhesions and requests for instruction are coming in from all sides. At Dovadola a congregation, with its minister, has come over bodily from the Methodist Episcopal Church. While these words are passing through the press, intelligence reaches us of a remarkable movement at San Vito and San Angelo dei Lombardi, owing,

strange to say, to the services held in the Italian language by our American sister. Other places are ready to embrace the Reform cause, but unfortunately the leaders have neither money nor men. The great fault of the movement is, it appears to me, its lack of energy and initiative. It is time an appeal should be made to Italy at large, and if Count Campello were well advised he would instruct his able subordinate, Signor Janni, to open a campaign in all the principal cities of Italy. There can be no doubt that support, moral and material, would be the result of this action, and the rapid spread of the principles of the movement throughout the length and breadth of Italy.

It is time that moderate men, opposed alike to Rome and to the morbid sympathy for Rome which is displaying itself so unhealthily among ourselves, should take note of this movement. It *has* not died out, it *cannot* die out, for it is founded upon the Rock. It has not been like those who "strive" or "cry," or make their "voices to be heard in the streets." It has attempted no *propaganda*. It has simply said: "Let those who do not believe in Papal infallibility come and worship with us." It has attacked nobody, it has excommunicated nobody; it has desired, as far as men would allow it, to be at peace with all. It has lived down false accusations; it has survived the predictions of its extinction. And after having quietly perfected its organization during a period of a quarter of a century, it has inaugurated the one movement above all others which should attract the attention of thoughtful men. Since 1890 it has started reunion congresses, which have been held biennially at Cologne, Lucerne, and Rotterdam. The second of those congresses will never be forgotten by those who had the privilege of attending it; nor was the third deficient in points of interest. The spectacle of men of every civilized nation under heaven meeting together for mutual prayer and consultation in regard to the welfare of God's Church, and on the basis of primitive doctrine and organization, is one which should surely have an attraction for every earnest and warm-hearted man. The institution of the *Revue Internationale* by the little band of able theologians at Berne has placed the whole Church of Christ under a debt of gratitude to them. In that review, which appears quarterly, articles have appeared in the French, German, and English languages from men of nearly every civilized nationality. Russians, Greeks, Germans, French, English, Armenians, Poles, Dutch have contributed to its pages, and even Haiti and the United States have not been left out. There are few subscribers either in England or America to that review. I would ask whether it is not time that this reproach were

wiped away. The next congress was fixed to be held at Vienna in September of this year, but very recently appeals have been made to the Austrians to allow it to be held at Carlsruhe instead, on the occasion of the opening of the new church the Old Catholics have built there. It is just announced that the Austrians have acceded to that appeal. Will none of those who sympathize with this gallant attempt to withstand the disciplined battalions of Rome, and who would desire to encourage organized resistance to Papal usurpations, take the trouble to attend that congress? For myself, I should only be too happy to give any information in my power to any who may wish to know more, either of the congress, of the *Revue Internationale*, or of the Old Catholic leaders. Old Catholic congregations are to be found in nearly every important town in Germany and Switzerland, and their members are most willing to see cordial relations established between themselves and the English Church.

J. J. LIAS.



ART. VI.—SOME CLERICAL WEAK POINTS.

THE subject of this paper is most difficult. It is a very ungracious task to attempt to play the part of the candid friend. Yet it may sometimes be useful for an observer whose work is mainly official, and who is a good deal mixed up with men of all kinds of views, to put with some diffidence before his friends things which appear to him to have weakened a good cause. I should be just as ready to offer suggestions to a meeting of the English Church Union as to those who are the readers of the *CHURCHMAN*. In so doing there will be no claim to superior enlightenment, but only the advantage of detachment which arises from holding a public post of trust.

1. First, I should say it would be a weakness *if any minister of the Church of England were to do what he liked with the Prayer-Book*. If it were once generally understood that the Book of Common Prayer was an obsolete collection of prayers and rubrics, of which a man might use as much or as little as he pleased, then there would be little to guide the Church of England in her practice of public worship, and the last vestige of uniformity would disappear. The men whose innovations seem to us so unfortunate add to the Prayer-Book provisions and directions from previous collections which are not found in our present formularies. Some of them have the Use of Sarum printed in parallel paragraphs with the Office of Holy Communion. When appeal is made to Bishops