

THE CARDINAL OF LORRAINE*

THE sub-title of this work is 'A study in the Counter-Reformation,' and this indicates its real importance. As Mr. Evennett remarks, the unfortunate name 'Counter-Reformation' 'invites a disastrous over-simplification': it was not a mere reaction to the 'Reformation'—another misnomer—it was 'a most complex movement': it was 'essentially a hybrid.' The present volume deals with that curious and interesting group of moderate men—among whom the Cardinal of Lorraine is the most significant figure—that became a vital centre in France during the period between the election of Pius IV, December, 1559, and 'the moment when the Fathers at Trent turned their attention to serious considerations in April, 1562.' The movement culminated and broke down in the Colloquy of Poissy, and petered out in the Conference of Saverne. It was a lost cause—at least in its eirenic projects—but while it lasted it was 'one of the gravest crisis for Catholicism,' and its effect can be felt in the attitude of the French hierarchy in the ensuing sessions of Trent.

The Cardinal of Lorraine, Charles de Guise, Archbishop of Rheims, was regarded by contemporary Protestants as a sinister and untrustworthy person, and later historians have, on the whole, endorsed their view. This attitude is probably in great part due to the permanent inability of the Nonconformist mind to appreciate any greatness that is rich and diverse and unconfined to one single fanatical aim. Mr. Evennett, completing the work of M. Romier, has succeeded in rehabilitating the Cardinal's character. He has not

* *The Cardinal of Lorraine and the Council of Trent.* By H. Outram Evennett. (Cambridge University Press, 1930; 25/- net.)

Blackfriars

written a panegyric : he shows us the brilliant aristocrat, distinguished in person and intellect, in many ways an excellent bishop, on the whole a sound patriot and statesman, a patron of the Renaissance, a great and compelling orator, and, especially, a sincere seeker for that reunion of Christendom which men could hardly yet realise had been fundamentally shattered. With all these qualities, he lacked one that was essential, a unifying principle, a principle that would co-ordinate them. This explains a great deal in his character : his lack of consistency and perseverance, the way he dropped a scheme the moment it appeared to fail. 'He was optimistic, forceful, mercurial ; but if he is to be reproached with dissipation, it will be a dissipation of his talents. Unlike Dryden's Shaftesbury, he was all his life everything at once—but nothing pre-eminently, except in so far as a man's religion by definition embraces and transcends all his moods and actions.' He is prominent in this book, but only as a public person, in a way only incidentally. The author has evoked so much of his attractiveness that we are stimulated to ask for a biography, confined to him, and giving us a fuller knowledge of his individuality.

The condition of the Church of France during this period was not at all happy. 'The many diseases which afflicted the Church Universal were no less grievous in France than elsewhere, and the cold grip which the Concordat had enabled the Crown to lay upon hierarchy and Church organisation did not help to kindle the sparks of revival which undoubtedly existed. Though there were notable exceptions, many monasteries and convents were in a state of almost unbelievable laxity, which the disgraceful system of lay commendations appeared likely to perpetuate. A large number of the lower secular clergy lived in the most abject poverty, and were ground down by taxation in

The Cardinal of Lorraine

the shape of *décimes* and forced loans exacted by the Crown. Many parishes were without any kind of pastor at all, and preaching was left mostly to the mendicant friars. The higher clergy were, on the whole, extremely unclerical, and the conditions for nomination laid down by the Concordat were often unobserved. Bishoprics and abbeys were regarded quite frankly, both by giver and taker, as pensions for political, literary, and personal services, as natural perquisites of the great families, or as gratuities for foreigners who had been useful, or whom it was necessary to placate.' Such a ground was well prepared for heresy, Calvinism sprang up and rapidly became a menace. It was at first entirely non-political—and its ministers seem consistently to have been averse to arms—but numbers brought a sense of power, and the religious faction was used by political malcontents to foment civil strife—thus leading to the so-called 'Wars of Religion.' The situation in France thus bore a remarkable resemblance to that in Germany several years before: and produced the same reaction, indifference, or even hostility to a General Council, and a demand for a national assembly and local reform.

With regard to relations with Rome, Gallicanism in the strict sense was not yet developed. But the Concordat inevitably gave a great impulse to those natural tendencies of the age which in England produced the Tudor "Royal Supremacy" and in France the new "Gallicanisme du Roi" How far these tendencies could go is seen in the crisis of August, 1551, between Henry II and Pope Julius III. 'The King was urged to make the breach with the Holy See permanent, to remove the Gallican Church from the papal obedience, and to create under himself an independent National Patriarchate with complete and final spiritual authority.' It was only Lorraine's advice to the King

Blackfriars

that saved the Church from schism. 'It will not appear an altogether extravagant conclusion to assert that the Cardinal of Lorraine, in saving the Roman supremacy in August, 1551, had probably, in the long run, saved the future of the Catholic faith in France. And not only had he saved the Roman supremacy; he had virtually refused a patriarchal crown. For though Lyons was the Primatial See of France, there can be little doubt that it would have been upon Lorraine's brow rather than upon Tournon's that the crown of the Gallican patriarchate would have rested.' This is most noteworthy: it does not mean, however, that the Cardinal, any more than the rest of the French hierarchy, was exuberantly ultramontane, particularly in matters of finance or in the burning question of whether the Council of Trent was to be continued or scrapped.

'Persecution is a policy of sheer negation. Conditions that call for it must also of necessity call for concomitant remedies of a more positive nature. The Cardinal of Lorraine took more interest in active movements of reform than in the mere repression of dissent He held that the Council of Trent could never achieve the reunion of Christendom, and this reunion had now become the urgent objective.' And thus the project of a National Council arose. It was immensely feared by Pius IV, who saw in it an attempt of the secular powers to gain entire control of the Church. 'The tendency for them to do this—whatever might be the abstract political theory held of the relations between spiritual and temporal—was almost as strong in Catholic as non-Catholic countries. . . .' There can be no doubt that the Regent Catherine de Medicis was largely indifferent to, and incapable of comprehending the religious issues; she only wanted unity and peace in the State. But the Cardinal and a few scholars, such as D'Espence and Baudouin,

The Cardinal of Lorraine

thoroughly believed that a meeting and discussion between Catholics and Huguenots would lead to the latter's return to the fold. The ensuing diplomacy is a maze, and Mr. Evannett unravels it with admirable lucidity. At last, Pius IV published the Bull, 'Ad Ecclesiae Regimen,' re-opening the Council: it contained the fatal clause, 'sublata suspensione quacumque,' and Lorraine refused to accept it, until the Emperor's refusal to back him up compelled him reluctantly to do so. The delay in the Bull's execution enabled the idea of the National Council to be kept up, and after further complications, the Assembly of Poissy was held. On the Catholic side the most important person after the Cardinal was the General of the Jesuits, Laynez, and the chief representatives of the Protestants were Beza and Peter Martyr. The conference was a failure; it brought out dramatically the fact that no compromise was possible. In the discussion on the Eucharist, the Catholic insistence that the change depended on the Word of God and the Protestant position that it was due to the faith of the believer, made evident the impassable gulf between the ancient objective attitude and that subjectivism which was the essence of the Protestant revolution.

These lines merely hint at the contents of this learned and illuminating work. It is a work of scholarship lit up with intelligence. It is exhilarating to read, because the author has not simply reprinted archives, but brought back a period to life. He has caught the mean between an excessive deference to documents that spells death and an unbridled use of the imagination that results in inferior fiction. He has satisfied both the exigencies of the Ecole des Chartes and those of a human being. It would have been gratifying to have had a more complete account of the position of Spain. That country appears faintly

Blackfriars

in this volume as a remote and grumbling obstructionist. Much more probably could be said of it, even with direct reference to the situation in France. And in relation to the discussion on the Eucharist, although as Mr. Evennett rightly points out, the words of the decree of Trent do not absolutely postulate the scholastic philosophy, and that ' . . . the bishops were consciously anxious that they should not do so,' yet we think he might profitably have made a considerable addition to his note on p. 319 and indicated that if the Cardinal had understood the scholastic discussion on the mode of the Real Presence, he might have enlightened his opponents more and depreciated reason less. But these are hardly blemishes on a work whose next volume we await with eagerness.

ÆLFRIC MANSON, O.P.

MARY OF CLEOPHAS

THREE lovers waited steadfast
To see their Master die,
And she that loved the lovers
Was also standing by.

The three that stood beside Him
He saw them from the Tree,
And that last faithful Mary,
Who stood beside the three.

ELIZABETH BELLOC.