

State display a great want of understanding both of Austria and of the outlook of the Church's leaders.

It may appear mean to complain of misprints in an article of this kind, but they are so frequent and so striking that it does seem as if the author has never corrected the proofs. In his acknowledgement, five lines long, at the opening of the book there are no less than three misprints. One book is said to be published by Sheed and Ward which was actually published by Burns and Oates, and I am still at a loss to see why there should be special mention of two books on Austria in a work of this kind, which is, first, based mainly on investigation at first hand and, second, concerned with the whole of Greater Germany.

In general, it seems that the author has almost unconsciously been more influenced by Nazi propaganda than he would care to admit, and he is too much inclined to see the Church as the Nazis see it, purely from the political aspect. One would like to have seen a greater appreciation of the supernatural.

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ST. CATHERINE, THE PAPACY, AND ENGLAND

As an instance of the work done by the Friars Preachers for the good of England, it is interesting to remark the part Dominicans played in keeping the country faithful to the true Pope during the Great Schism. This has not been sufficiently noticed in the history of that sad time.

On March 27th, 1378, Gregory XI died at Rome, whither he had returned from Avignon in 1376. The chief instrument used by God to persuade the Pope to take this step was that great daughter of St. Dominic, St. Catherine of Siena. She it was who reminded him of the secret vow he had made to return to Rome; and when innumerable obstacles were put in his way by the Cardinals, who were loth to leave the peace and luxury of Avignon for the grass-

grown streets of turbulent Rome, it was Catherine who cried with holy boldness: 'Be a man, Babbo mio!'

Two years after his return Gregory was dead, and the Cardinals assembled in conclave to elect his successor. The city populace raised a tremendous clamour, demanding the election of a Roman, or at least an Italian Pope. The electors were divided. The majority of the Sacred College were Frenchmen, most of whom wanted a Limousin. The rest of the Cardinals hotly opposed this. It was finally decided to elect some Italian Prelate, renowned for virtue, who belonged to neither party. The choice fell on Bartholomew Prignano, Archbishop of Bari, who was not a Cardinal. He took the name of Urban VI. The mob surrounding the Conclave proceeded to threats of violence, and to pacify them the Cardinals allowed a rumour to be circulated that the old Cardinal of St. Peter's had been elected Pope. The terrified Cardinals implored the poor old man not to undeceive the people until they had effected their escape from Rome. Such were the Courtier-Cardinals created at Avignon! It was indeed time that the Pope should return from the 'Captivity of Babylon.' However, the next day calm was restored, and the Sacred College reassembled to confirm their election of Urban. He was crowned at St. John Lateran on Easter Sunday, and the Cardinals paid him homage in the customary manner. The Pope then dispatched letters to all the Sovereigns of Europe announcing his election.

Urban was a good and upright man, but he was hard. Instead of conciliating the Cardinals and trying to enlist their co-operation in his schemes of reform, he denounced the luxury of their lives in no measured terms. At this, most of them left Rome, and one of them insulted the Pope to his face. Catherine was much distressed at the turn of affairs, and she writes a gentle remonstrance to the new Pope.

'Act with benevolence and a tranquil heart,' she says, 'and for the love of Jesus restrain a little those too quick movements with which nature inspires you.'

It would have been well for the Church and Europe if the Pope had taken this advice. Exasperated by his

severity, the French Cardinals assembled at Fondi and by persuasions and threats induced the hitherto faithful Italians and the Spaniard to join them. One alone of the whole Sacred College stayed with Urban. This was the aged Cardinal of St. Peter's. On his deathbed he solemnly called God to witness that Urban VI had been validly elected Pope. The rest of the Cardinals now declared that they had elected the Archbishop of Bari through fear, and therefore their act was not valid. They proceeded to the election of another Pope, and chose for this purpose Cardinal Count Robert of Geneva, a man who was more soldier than priest and notorious throughout Europe as 'a man of blood.' He took the name of Clement VII. Thus began the unhappy Schism which tore Christendom asunder for forty years.

Catherine was heart-broken when she heard the news, but she did not remain inactive. She wrote to Urban, telling him to stand fast in courage and confidence, she wrote to the schismatic Cardinals and told them what she thought of them. 'Incarnate devils who have elected an Anti-Christ,' was her way of expressing her opinion on the matter. And then she set herself to communicate the true state of affairs to every country in Europe, using for this purpose her spiritual sons, the Friars Preachers. She wrote many letters to Kings and Princes, and, among them, to Richard II, King of England. This letter has not been found, but it is mentioned by her devoted disciple and secretary, Stephen Maconi, when he complains to a fellow secretary that he had not received 'a copy of the letter which went to the King of England.' The State document which was sent by the English Parliament to the rebellious Cardinals, refusing to recognize their Anti-Pope, was drawn up by someone familiar with all Catherine's arguments, and the very phrases she used in many of her letters are actually reproduced in it. It speaks of: 'the face of the Church growing pale'—of the schismatic Cardinals as: 'members of the devil'—of the Pope as: 'the Christ,' all terms that recall the language of St. Catherine. The document also mentions a certain 'holy hermit of England, who dwells in the place where the Brother Hermits of St. Austin

took their origin,' as having written three letters to England saying that he knew by revelation that Urban was the true Pope. Though anonymous in the State paper, this 'holy hermit' is no stranger to the friends of St. Catherine. Father William Flete, the stubborn, phlegmatic Englishman, 'the Cambridge Doctor,' as the Sienese called him, might refuse to leave his solitude even at the request of his 'Sweet Mother,' but he worked for her nevertheless. We wonder what effect the revelations of a hermit would have on the English Privy Council to-day! But in the ages of Faith St. Catherine and others like her were able to influence the Rulers of States and make peace where human passions and selfish interests were causing suffering and bloodshed. And wild and lawless men like the Plantagenet Kings of England stayed their headstrong courses for a time and listened to the Saint who rebuked them.

Richard was but a boy at this time, but like all his family he had a Dominican confessor, and the Dominicans had much influence in his council. It was no doubt through them that St. Catherine's letter was presented to the Parliament, and went far towards maintaining the fidelity of England to the true Pope.

S.M.F.

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

WHY AN ITALIAN POPE? The election of Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli to the See of Peter has been welcomed with almost unanimous acclamation throughout the world. True, that acclamation has sometimes been based on a misunderstanding, on the efforts of various propaganda-machines to align him on one or the other side of the ideological front which now splits the civilised world. But here and there have been expressions of more or less veiled regret that once again the Cardinals have chosen an Italian national—however 'travelled' and 'enlightened'—and lists of the Pope in the papers have served to remind the general public of the extent to which 'Italians' have preponderated in the