

SOCIAL UNREST IN SPAIN

efficacy of Fascism. His object is to effect a deep social transformation in a spirit of unbounded justice, tending towards the establishment of a corporate State. Certainly the present conditions of violence, indiscipline, and anarchy should cease, for even the Spaniard's traditional stoicism has been severely tried since that fateful day of April 1931, when Alfonso XIII left his country. The foreigner might well be inclined to agree with Balmes, who once said on a similar occasion that the Spaniards had lost everything except the habit of suffering.

RAMON SILVA.

WALES AND THE REFORMATION

THE Reformation in Wales has until recently proved something of an enigma to historians. It was common knowledge that the new doctrines were at first detested by the Welsh, that there was no nucleus of Calvinism, as in England, to give momentum and drive to the Reform movement, nor could there be a sense of antagonism between national prestige and the political expression of continental Catholicism. The English government, no less than the Catholic powers abroad, were fully aware of the possibility of an armed rising in defence of the old religion, though the extent of the danger was a matter of debate. It has been said of the Celts that 'they went forth to the battle but they always fell.' In this instance, however, it was precisely in so far as they did not go forth to battle that they fell. Catholicism withered, and the nineteenth century found Wales the home of a type of Protestantism of whose spiritual and literary qualities the poetry of William Williams of Pantycelyn and Ann Griffiths is sufficient evidence.

The historical causes of this religious and cultural revolution remained for a variety of reasons almost unexplored, so far as the general reader is concerned, until the appear-

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ance last year of Fr. David Mathew's book *The Celtic Peoples and Renaissance Europe.*' Not only is this a **book** of considerable penetration and brilliance, but it also supplies a need which is at once new and pressing.

No history can be good history unless it is alive. Mere erudition is no compensation for paste-board figures. It is this power of vivid and convincing representation which makes Dr. Mathew's book so valuable; a power which is often lacking in contemporary historical writing. It is notable, also, for its author's method of approaching his subject. Most of the historical writing of the nineteenth century is vitiated by the fact that the point of view of one section of the nation is extracted and isolated from the complicated tangle of the past and presented to the reader as the national attitude of the period under discussion. The method had the advantage of being concise and the answer was always the right one—Liberalism. It was only when Tories, Catholics and Marxists adopted the same tactics that the situation became unmanageable. In the meantime, History remained, to a great extent, unwritten. Dr. Mathew's method is to present the whole complex of social, religious and racial traditions—the Elizabethan courtier, the Anglicised squire, the gentry, the herdsmen from the hills, the Gaelic chieftains in Ireland and the Isles, the great churchmen of Spain and Italy, the remnant of 'Queen Mary's priests,' the younger men, full of the Tridentine reform, and the parochial clergy—each as representatives of the social, spiritual and economic forces which were struggling for expression or survival.

For the most part the figures move with a quiet self-absorption which is the stamp of their truth. As the last level rays of the Middle Age rest on Wales, these small self-important figures stand out clearly silhouetted just before the light begins to fail. The traffic along the road from Holyhead to Chester; the Bulkeleys, the Wynnes and the Salusburys calculating their rents and their influence

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and fumbling with the news from London; all the business of places, marriages, tithes. And then there are the lesser fry—the Pennants, the Mostyns, the Thelwalls and their like—so anxious to fit convincingly into that English background which was to be the guarantee of their success. 'It is difficult to decide whether Welsh gold exists, save as an illusion.' What there was of it was for the most part spent in England or mislaid on the Continent.

Up in the shadows of the hills are the small gentry, the shepherds and the herdsmen, Welsh-speaking, rooted in the immemorial tradition of the race, incapable of compromise and equally impotent for effective resistance; still, for a generation or more, to guard the relics and to maintain, in some sort, the pilgrimages. They are to be seen, grumbling in the moorland taverns or riding home through the drifting rain storms. As the last of the old monks disappeared, the Mass flickered out in the highlands of Arwystli and the Black Mountains and away to the North among the brigands of Ysbyty Ifan and on the slopes of the Hiraethog Hills.

It was in fact the end of that autumn of mediaeval Wales which set in on the field of Bosworth. The Renaissance came scarcely at all—the few grammar schools, starved and Anglicised, and the sardonic figure of Ellis Price are only just redeemed by the scholarship of Bishop Morgan and Edmund Prys. The Welsh were no longer to be a European nation, and England was to be the larger by thirteen counties.

In the collapse of Welsh Catholicism the year 1410 is of fundamental importance, for it was then that the failure of Owen Glendower to establish the political and ecclesiastical independence of Wales became indisputable. Had he succeeded there would have been a threefold result. First, a compact political structure capable of protecting the cultural and religious development of the nation. Secondly, a Welsh Church independent of Canterbury with a clergy trained in the new Welsh universities and possessed of a culture at once national and European. The result must, almost inevitably, have been a political and religious re-

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naissance which would have saved the nation from a fatal entanglement with the dying mediaeval world.

Instead of this Wales was plunged into the full hurly-burly of the Wars of the Roses. Unable to assist themselves, the Welsh were yet enabled to intervene decisively in the affairs of the conquering nation. Without the possibility of any settled polity at home, the vigour of the nation expended itself in ferocious faction fights which began as the aftermath of the unsuccessful revolt and developed until they became the main factor in the Wars of the Roses. Mathew Gough died in battle: William Herbert on the scaffold; and Henry Tudor on the throne. Wales served, for the most part, as a convenient background to their activities on the stage of English and French affairs. The soldier and the statesman lost their lives: it was the politician who won.

When the army of Henry VII marched into London under the Red Dragon of Cadwaladr, superficial foreign opinion considered it to be a Welsh victory. 'They may now be said to have recovered their former independence,' wrote an Italian observer, 'for the most wise and fortunate Henry VII is a Welshman.'² Actually, the Battle of Bosworth marked the end of the first period of national dissolution.

On the death of Sir Rhys ap Thomas in 1525, the realities of the situation immediately became apparent, and in 1534 Bishop Rowland Lee 'stowte of nature, readie witted, rough in speeche, not affable to any of the Walshrie,' undertook that pacification of the country which should have been accomplished more than a century earlier by **Owen Glendower**. His methods gained him the contemporary reputation of having hanged five thousand men in six years. During the seven years from 1535 to 1542 there came the legislation which turned the Lords Marcherships into Shireland, ordained that Wales should henceforth be

² *An Italian Relation of the Island of England*, published by the Camden Society.

considered to be 'incorporated, united and annexed' to England, and proscribed the use of the Welsh language as 'a speech nothing like, nor consonant to the natural Mother Tongue used within this Realm.'

Such were the events, but there has been a curiously thorough misapprehension of their significance. It is essential to grasp that the conquest—in the true sense of the word—took place under Henry VIII rather than Edward I. The latter scarcely did more than to destroy the Principality which should have been the mediaeval nucleus of a subsequent Welsh polity and to rivet the disordered fragments of the nation to his own monarchy, where its value as a recruiting ground for the English armies was counterbalanced by its own turbulence and the continued existence of the Marcher Lordships. The failure of Owen Glendower, so far from being a triumph for law and order as is usually supposed, removed the last possibility of peace. A century of anarchy produced a situation as dangerous as it was paradoxical. The King, the Tudor, was in London and the visible embodiment of Cymric tradition was **busy** declaring that 'this realm of England is an Empire.' Persistent tradition which harked back to 'the crown of Britain,' to Arthur the Great and Cadwaladr the Blessed, no less than possibilities of wealth and advancement at Greenwich, the law courts, and the Universities, disguised the situation. Heraldry, with unconscious exactitude, proclaimed the reality—the Red Dragon shared the privilege of supporting the leopards and lilies of traditional English politics. Order and government, no less than advancement, could now come from England alone. In default of Glendower's alternative, only 'incorporation' and 'annexation' could save the country from anarchy.

Owen Glendower had come to the Abbot as he walked in the early morning on the hillside above Valle Crucis, where the miraculous image of the Risen Christ brought the pilgrims down the hill road from Llandegla and the Hiraethog uplands: 'Sir Abbot, you have risen too early.' 'No,' retorted the Abbot: 'it is you who have risen too early—by a hundred years.'

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Seen against this background, the Reformation in Wales falls into place in the logical development of the political situation. The exigencies of English politics made the destruction of Welsh Catholicism necessary, and the forces of national resistance had already been hamstrung by the events of the previous century. In Europe Catholicism survived or returned as the natural foundation of the social order: in Wales it was left doomed to sterility as the religion of intellectuals in exile or of the dwindling bands of robbers in the hills.

The political and religious collapse of the nation immediately brought about a cultural dissolution. The old culture of Wales, remarkable as it was for its strength and the universality of its outlook, depended on two strong national organizers—the Church and the Bards. The dissolution of the monasteries and the destruction of religion inflicted a mortal wound. Whereas in Brittany the national genius expressed itself in sculpture, in Wales the language was the one concern of the artist. Here again the same paradox appears. At a time when the vernacular tongues of Europe were everywhere triumphing, the Welsh language, and the peculiar pride and glory of the nation, was suddenly and forcibly degraded to the position of a despised vernacular. Instead of moving forward into the uneasy brilliance of post-Tridentine Europe, the nation as a whole was forced back into a cultural condition scarcely distinguishable from that of the Dark Ages. Brilliant individuals escaped and triumphed, but the mass of the people, despised and monoglot, was left with a language which was fast disintegrating into a mere patois, which, as William Salesbury complained, was ‘no better than the churm of wild fowls or the bleating of beasts.’

The comparison with the Dark Ages is closer than may at first be imagined. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were essentially a period when the foundations of the national life had to be laid afresh and the fact that they were laid at all justifies the modern tendency to emphasize the fact that the darkness was not so opaque as our forefathers were inclined to believe.

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A superficial consideration of Welsh history suggests the gradual supersession of Catholicism, first, by Anglicanism, as in England, and then by Calvinism. In reality in many parts of the country it was paganism which first triumphed: Protestantism came afterwards. In 1585 Dr. Griffith Roberts in his preface to *Drych Cristionogawl* wrote: 'I hear that many places in Wales, yea, whole counties have not a single Christian within them, but live like animals, most of them knowing nothing of righteousness, but merely keeping the name of Christ in memory.' Allowing for natural exaggeration, the picture remains substantially the same, whether in the Visitation of Bishop Bailey (1623) or in Erasmus Saunders's *View of the State of Religion in the Diocese of S. David's* (1721).

As the seventeenth century wore on into the eighteenth, the Anglican Church came more and more to enjoy that tepid popularity which is generally awarded to an absentee landlord who makes few demands on his tenants. It presided, not without geniality, over a paganized peasantry, securing their adhesion to a distant monarchy of which they had no direct experience and providing some guarantee against the few scattered Puritans, who in the day of their triumph had mounted the pulpit steps in buff coat and steel and now contented themselves with dry disputations in their own homes.

In the pagan welter of the Dark Ages, the Welsh nation was formed and wrought into a living thing by its native saints, through whom its origin became sacrosanct and its map a litany. In the eighteenth century the logic of history was vindicated and modern Wales was born again amid the lightnings and thunder of a Puritan Sinai.

The fact that the revival—it was really a revolution—came from abroad is of little importance. The new presbyterianism rapidly became of an altogether different stuff from that of English dissent. Psychologically, it was a return to the older rhythm of religious life as against the static conception of an English state-Christianity. It was a return as unconscious as it was impressiv.

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Close on the heels of the religious revival, and almost entirely inspired by it, came Education and a literary revival. During the seventies and eighties the Welsh University colleges came into being. The religious and cultural changes led inevitably to a political revolution by which the nation abandoned Toryism and attached itself to the Liberal Party in return for the Disestablishment of the Anglican Church. The logic of the national history demanded that Home Rule in religion should come first.

After 1918 a marked change in the spirit of the national development began, at first slowly, to make itself felt. So far the process had, in the main, been instinctive. The leaders of each generation saw only the one step before them and no more. The goal in view was always immediate—the revival of religion, the building up of a system of education, a measure of political or religious emancipation or a cultural revival. During the last ten years, however, a broader and more European outlook has begun to prevail and to manifest itself in the rapid growth among the younger generation of political nationalists. In times of danger nations, like men, grow up to maturity quickly and the collapse of Finance-Capitalism, the World War no less than the example of Ireland and Poland, have quickened the process. In increasing numbers the post-war generation is turning to the business of national construction, leaving its elders to attend the long drawn out funeral of nineteenth century Liberalism.

At the moment the issue is doubtful. A commercialized press, a dubious educational system, and the collapse of an economic order imposed from without, with their natural results of mingled irritation, inertia and mental drug-taking, all obstruct a national resurrection. Moreover, the spiritual impetus provided by the religious revival of the eighteenth century is beginning to falter: in Wales, as everywhere else in Europe, Protestantism is growing old. For individual Welshmen Catholicism is a possibility, but for the nation, as a whole, it still appears as an importation from Ireland and Lancashire. If during the

present generation a native Catholicism can once more come into being, the ultimate future of the nation is secure. For Catholicism does not destroy: it fulfils.

T. CHARLES EDWARDS.

METAPHYSICS—OR MOODS?

TO read modern non-catholic philosophy at the present day one would really think that the world was presented to us 'on approval,' to such an extent does the conception of Value seem to dominate the discussions. Mr. C. E. M. Joad in the *Spectator* of October 6th last, remarks that four out of the five specifically philosophical books reviewed by him since the beginning of the year were to do with some theory of 'Value.' Dean Inge notices the fact in his *God and the Astronomers*, and has a whole chapter on the World of Values; while Windleband says frankly that what is expected from philosophy to-day is not so much a 'theoretical scheme of the world. . (but) . . reflection on those permanent values which have their foundation in a higher spiritual reality, above the changing interests of the times.'

One would like to know by what authority Philosophy abandons its proper function so as to substitute appreciation for apprehension, and turn Metaphysics into a mood—be it optimistic or pessimistic. We will, however, make some attempt to discover why this strange, non-rational, man-centred change has come over non-catholic thinking.

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As to origin no doubt in some form the idea of Value goes back right to the very beginnings, but in its more modern shape it seems to have its root in the writings of Kant. (What modern error has not?) The purpose of the