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ARTICLE I.—TONQUIN: OR, THE FRENCH IN ANNAM.

IN working out the destiny of nations, certain ideas become controlling principles and guide their movements for centuries. Their development follows the resultant line of the moving forces. He who would give an account of Vladivostock, the Russian seaport which menaces Japan and Corea, must go back to the time when Yermak with his filibustering followers crossed the Ural Mountains. Russia has been three centuries extending her sway to the new province on the Pacific coast.

To account for the fall of the last King of Burmah, we must go back to the time when the first English company was organized for traffic in the Eastern Seas. And to explain the situation in Tungking (or Tonquin) we must begin with the discovery of the New World and that of a new way to the eastern shores of the Old World.

Those events filled the minds of the French as of other maritime nations with grand ideas of foreign conquest and of indefinite expansion. Failing in the conquest of India they

ARTICLE IV.—THE NEW METHOD OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

IT is a dictum of high authority throughout the greater part of Christendom, that while church dogma, once formulated, is "irreformable," church discipline, on the contrary, is subject to be modified, from time to time, at the discretion of the governing part of the church. But it is a dictum which Protestantism, and especially Puritan Protestantism, has been gravely reluctant to accept. Puritanism has reckoned the system of mutual duty among Christians in the community of believers to be quite as much a part of the *jus divinum* as the system of theological truth. And even in later times, when it has come clearly to recognize that the attempt to adjust all the pins of the Christian tabernacle after a supposed pattern of church-order that had been showed in the mount is an attempt that may be overdone, there are not many, even of the most advanced innovators, who would deliberately assert the right of departing, in the administration of church affairs, from those great canons of mutual duty laid down in the New Testament and recognized by the constant assent, if not the consistent practice, of Christian people generally as being an integral part of Christian morality.

But yet any one who will thoughtfully compare the course of church government in this country, at the present day, in even the most strenuously conservative of Protestant denominations, with the procedures of two or three hundred years ago, will recognize, albeit under similar phrases and formulas, a difference that is nothing less than revolutionary. Contrast, for example, the administration of the discipline of the church against heretics, under the guidance of the very founder of the Reformed discipline, at Geneva, with the processes in the American Presbyterian Church, within a few years, against Mr. White and Mr. McLean. In the earlier cases, an awful sense of the solemn importance of the business, and of the wickedness of the alleged offense; an unmistakable consciousness on

the part of the tribunal that it was the church of Christ and held the keys of that kingdom. In these contemporary cases, on the contrary, a consciousness in the judicatory that it is not the church of Christ at all, but only a sect; that it does not pretend to exclude from Christian ordinances and the exercise of the ministry, and from the fellowship of Christians; but only from free access to certain pulpits, and from special terms of fellowship with a certain set of Christians. The culprit is given to understand that he is held in the very highest affection and esteem as a Christian brother, and if he is convicted and deposed, he is assured that it is meant only in a Pickwickian sense, and that the good wishes and prayers of his judges will follow him to new "fields of usefulness." They do not in the least mean that he is not an excellent minister of the gospel, as good as they are, or better, but only that he is not one of those Christians of a particular stripe or pattern whom they are trying to collect in an organization by themselves, separate from other Christians. Is it not obvious that this conception of church discipline takes away all its horrors—we might perhaps say, all its seriousness?

But the change in the character of church discipline in our land and time is not wholly in the direction of mitigation. Doubtless it has made it highly improbable that in the present state of society such tragedies as those of Valentine Gentilis and Michael Servetus will be reënacted. But by just so much as it is felt that the censure of heretical pravity pronounced by an American sect is rather a mild form of annoyance than an awful and overwhelming infliction, by just so much will there be a tendency to inflict it lightly and unadvisedly, and without those serious and anxious precautions provided for in the church-order of the New Testament. So that our immunity from the solemn and tragical trials which in the early days of the Reformed churches terminated sometimes at the stake or block, is offset in part by the tendency to reckless and irresponsible charges of heresy, and to trials without the serious and charitable precautions prescribed in the Christian law, or even to condemnation without trial, and the attempt by private hands to execute penalty by means of published denunciation. It is natural enough that one whose notion of heresy is that it

consists in disagreeing with his party, and of deposition, that it means exclusion from his clique, should get into the habit of "striking and beating his fellow-servant" with charges and threats of this sort, and not really mean much by it beyond a sort of rough joke, and sincerely wonder that any should take serious offense at it. It does not seem to him that such grave preliminary steps as are distinctly prescribed in the New Testament for this exact case can be intended to apply to such a trifling matter. They might be appropriate enough when excommunication meant isolation from Christian fellowship, and conviction of heresy was equivalent to silencing from the work of the ministry; but why make so much fuss over what amounts to little more than a public and official hint to your Christian brother to transfer his membership to the church around the corner, or to connect himself, without suffering the slightest loss of public respect, with some such eminently respectable body as the Unitarians or the Episcopalians?

An enterprising clergyman, for instance, by some superior means of information, or superior learning and acumen, or loftier devotion to the interests of truth, has the luck to discover among his neighbors one lurking in the disguise of a Christian minister, and held in very exceptional esteem and love both for his work's sake and for his own, who is really an atrocious and soul-destroying heretic, holding and openly advocating doctrines "repulsive and shocking," "in broad conflict with what are called evangelical views, and with the faith of the Christian church," "wholly at variance with the creeds, faith, and preaching of all the great evangelical bodies,"—doctrines not only "powerless," but "tending to produce contention and division" and "infinite mischief,"—doctrines the preaching of which not only has an "inevitable tendency to encourage men in sin and impenitence," but being approved is "already producing these effects." The discoverer is conscientiously "of opinion that a preacher of such doctrines" ought not to be suffered to continue in the pulpit and the fellowship to which he has gained a place.

What, now, is the course of duty which one ought to pursue who has made so painful a discovery? We waive the question whether or not there has been anything wrong in the fact of

his coming to such a settled conviction to the disadvantage of his neighbor ; but the conviction being there, what ought he to do about it ? In different systems of church order there may be difference in the phraseology of the answer to this question, but in all systems that pretend to be constructed on a Scriptural pattern, the substance of the answer must be the same. He is suffering from the hurt of the daughter of Zion. He is offended when the weak brethren are thus made to stumble. Thus aggrieved, he cannot be excused from the plain duty which his conviction of the dreadful facts imposes on him. There may be many things to make him shrink from the task. It may seem invidious for him to assume the attitude of complainant toward a neighbor minister ; it may seem like an assumption on his part of superior erudition, or perspicacity, or zeal for the truth, for him to proceed in the case, when men quite as near and as responsible and as competent to judge, and quite as well esteemed for their fidelity to duty, see no reason for proceeding. But such considerations must not dissuade him, convinced as he is, from that course of duty toward the offending brother which is divinely prescribed, and which, undertaken in the right spirit, is neither unfriendly nor unfraternal. He has no alternative but to seek a private interview in which to go over the subject of grievance, with the honest effort to "gain his brother." This failing, he must renew the effort, reinforced by other brethren ; and not until these efforts have been exhausted without success, is he at last to bring the matter to a hearing in which, giving just opportunity to set forth both sides of the case, the tribunal of the church shall render a decision which is not to be despised without putting one's self thereby outside of the circle of its fellowship. Only thus, "after the first and second admonitions," may even "a man that is a heretic" be rejected.

But in actual practice, this method of procedure, which has been thought to bear on its very face the marks of a divine wisdom and charity, and which was accepted by the fathers of New England as of binding authority under the law of Christ and the apostles, has been found by some zealous people to be extremely unsatisfactory in its working. It seems to them beset all along with elements of uncertainty.

To begin with, there is the embarrassing requirement of the visit to the offending brother "between him and thee alone." Of course this ought not to be a hindrance to any earnest and faithful man, in a concern involving the interests of truth and of the church. But as human nature is, even when partially sanctified, this requirement is a real and actual hindrance; in-somuch that, if there could be found no way of evading it, it might easily happen that many an erring brother would go on to his life's end preaching the gospel and ministering its consolations, who might otherwise be harried by a most salutary and vexatious system of annoyances, well calculated to strike terror into timid minds.

But supposing the natural shrinking of even a zealous and earnest clergyman from such a personal visit to have been overcome, he is even then only on the threshold of uncertainties. There are several contingencies, any one of which may defeat the great object in view. The visitor may find himself to have been mistaken in the facts, or in his understanding of them. Or, by his strong reasons and forcible way of putting them, he may "gain his brother," and then the fat is all in the fire. Or his brother may gain him—a very common and grave peril, for your heretic is notoriously apt to be of a persuasive and winsome nature.

And then, these several mischances being well escaped, they have all to be encountered again, with three-fold risks, in the perils of "the second admonition." And if, *post tot discrimina tutus*, the defender of the faith shall succeed in haling his brother, at last, before the competent tribunal, then arises the most vexatious difficulty of all—the necessity of proving his case to the satisfaction of a body of men of whom he is not sure in advance that they are on his side, and who are liable to the misleading and demoralizing influence of hearing the other side of the case before pronouncing judgment. This necessity of convincing an impartial tribunal is really the most disheartening thing about the whole business. For it happens, perhaps not invariably, but in multitudes of instances, that the exceptionally pious and perspicacious man whose zeal for truth has been rewarded by the triumphant discovery, under all his disguises, of a dangerous heretic, has succeeded in detecting

symptoms of the same malady in his brethren generally, and is in a chronic state of suspicion of other people's orthodoxy. "So many of our preachers and professors," he laments, "endeavor to substitute the speculations of German rationalism for the old evangelical and scriptural doctrines." "Important councils are approving it." "At what are our preachers and theologians aiming?" How absurd, to ask one in this state of mind to carry his case to court, when in his inmost soul he believes that the judges are involved in the same crime with the culprit! The foundations are destroyed, and what shall the righteous do? Is there nothing for him but to seek out some sequestered juniper tree, beneath which to practice, without accompaniment, the Aria from Elijah, "I have been very jealous for the Lord; and I, even I only, am left?"

It is to meet this really distressing exigency, that the new method of discipline has been devised. It was required to avoid, first, the necessity, so irksome to a sensitive man, of holding personal conference with the person incriminated; secondly, the risks that a promising case might (in the phrase of Sir Lucius O'Trigger) be "spoiled by explanation;" thirdly, the requirement, sometimes so fatally embarrassing, of finding one or two persons as associates; and finally, the necessity of proving the case before a third party that should hear both sides.

Perhaps nothing could have been devised better fitted to satisfy all these difficult conditions at once, than the *Procedure by Pamphlet and Post-office*, by which a single righteous man is enabled at his own discretion, to indict, arraign, try, convict, sentence, and punish. It consists first, in making out and printing in large numbers a full *ex parte* statement of the grounds of condemnation, with the quotation of scraps, shreds, and phrases from the writings of the accused, so chosen as to give a highly unfavorable impression of him, and interlarded with the righteous man's inferences to the still further disparagement of his brother's intellectual, moral, and professional character; and secondly in sending these, by the Post-Office, all over the country, to those with whom it is most to the interest of the accused to stand well, as his professional brethren and his personal friends, or to persons of influence in his

parish. Other means ancillary to the Post Office may be resorted to at discretion, such as the employment of the small boy to push the pamphlet into people's hands on opportune occasions near the domicile of the accused. But after all the Post Office is the best reliance, and vigorously used, will be found effective, and sufficient.

The *objections* against this powerful weapon for the defense of the faith will be found in many cases (in accordance with a well known Hudibrastic sentiment) to proceed from those who have felt the edge of it. But that is no reason why they should not be fairly considered.

1. First, it is objected that this course among Christian brethren is explicitly forbidden by the law of Christ. On the contrary, it has a great advantage at this very point. It has often happened that a Turk in good and regular standing in Islam, being found in a state of ebriety and reproached with the law of the prophet against wine, has turned upon his adversaries with overwhelming effect by defying them to point to a single verse in the Koran that forbids the use of brandy. Doubtless no man who pretends to the name of Christian would dare intimate to a meeting of the church that his brother was guilty of heresy, without first having scrupulously fulfilled the prescribed condition of "the first and second admonitions." But is that any reason why he should not advertise him on sight, without warning, in the local newspaper? Where is the text that forbids that? Is there not something providential in the fact that in all the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, there should be no allusion either to the Post Office or to the printing-press, to hinder a good man from employing either of them at his discretion for the glory of God and the protection of the church against heretics? And even supposing that the law of the New Testament could be so construed as to forbid the procedure in question, what are the interests of morality compared with the interests of doctrine? When interests are in conflict, it needs no Sanchez or Liguori to tell us that the less must yield to the greater.

2. Of like nature with the first objection is the pretence that the Procedure by Pamphlet and Post Office is forbidden by the principles of honor. But it is entitled to even less consid-

eration. What evangelical Christian—truly evangelical, and untainted by the sophistries of “German rationalism”—is going to allow himself to be affected by an argument which is used by worldlings to justify duelling and gambling? One who is disposed to be squeamish on points like this, is little fitted for the work which some people think has got to be done by somebody if the church is to be saved from going to the dogs.

3. The objection against the new mode of procedure in discipline, that it is *dangerous*, has much more show of reason. It does seem, at first blush, as if there were serious risks involved in sanctioning the principle that any conscientious person is at liberty, without warning or consultation or trial, to put into actual execution the Penalty by Pamphlet and Post Office against the personal and professional reputation of his fellow-servant. If this sort of thing is to be sanctioned, what man will be safe from intolerable annoyance? Such is the cry of alarm, proceeding, not impossibly, in some cases, from a consciousness of not being wholly safe from the suspicion of having departed from the ways of thinking of the fathers in a direction which some watchful brother may disapprove. The alarm that has such an origin is rather an honor to the new code than a reproach. Is it not well that any brother who is inwardly tempted to supplement by his own thinking or study the precious legacy of truth that we have received from our pious ancestors, should be warned of the grave perils to his reputation and even his livelihood, that may overtake him in a moment, without warning, at the hands of any indignant brother who has dollars enough to spare for printing and postage stamps, and the self-sacrificing virtue to devote them to so good a cause? Is it any real kindness to the tempted to make the way of such transgression less rough and perilous?

No! the real objection to the new procedure is the danger which it involves to the person, not against whom, but by whom, it is used. It is a most keen and double-edged blade against the insidious enemies of the truth, but it has no safe handle by which to take hold of it without danger of hurting one's hands. It is a gun of immense bore, but kicks viciously, and has been known to blow out at the breech with fatal effect

on the gunners; in which case the heartless world has no comfort to offer except some hackneyed quotation about "the engineer and his petard." Even the most orthodox will sometimes leave their volunteer champion to writhe on the horns of a pitiless dilemma—"if you have got a strong case, why don't you prosecute it? if a weak one, why don't you drop it?" As for the sympathizers with heresy, little better is to be expected of them than to resort to the expedient attempted in vain and to his own confusion by the arch-heretic, Servetus, when, appealing to the heathen *lex talionis*, he demanded that Master Jehan Calvin should be put in prison alongside of him, to suffer the penalty he had intended for his victim, in case he should fail to make good his accusations.

Doubtless there is a defect at this point, in the working of the new procedure, for which time and use will find a remedy. What form the remedy will take cannot confidently be predicted. Possibly the way will be, instead of leaving the matter wholly to the unprotected responsibility of individual enterprise, for such of the clergy as still remain truly evangelical to designate some one of their number, of approved keenness of scent and suddenness and sharpness of bite, and consecrate him to this sacred work under some appropriate and scriptural title, such as Accuser of the Brethren.

4. We ought not to wonder that there should be found some to cavil at the Procedure by Pamphlet and Post Office as *ineffective*. There are those who will even affect to doubt the effectiveness of the Maine law. We are told that those against whom this form of discipline is directed are very apt to be persons so widely known and highly esteemed in love as religious teachers, that the pamphlet, however deadly in its aim, falls harmless at their feet. But this objection, whatever element of truth it may contain, is really true only with reference to that part of the public that has been prejudiced by hearing both sides of the question. No matter how widely known and honored the object of attack may be, and how much his printed writings may be read and admired in all parts of the world, it is a very moderate estimate that out of a thousand copies of a pamphlet ingeniously constructed so as to represent

him as an enemy of the gospel of Christ, and industriously pushed about where they will do him the most harm, after the largest deductions for copies thrown contemptuously into the waste-basket or indignantly into the fire, a good five hundred may be relied upon to fall into the soil of good and honest hearts that know nothing about the subject from any other source, and to bring forth after their kind, to the glory of God and the great discomfort of the victim. And who can doubt the salutary deterrent effect of this on young men, either as a warning to keep out of the Christian ministry altogether, or at least to hold their own personal thoughts and convictions under rigorous repression as esoteric truth?

Still, there is no doubt a measure of justice in the objection that the new discipline is lacking in definite, visible effectiveness. The person who has been deposed and excommunicated by this process sometimes never finds it out, but goes right on, for aught he or the public seems to know, in good and regular standing. It is in order to meet this difficulty that an ingenious and persevering attempt has been made to engraft upon the American ecclesiastical system the Japanese usage of *hari-kari*. It consists in addressing to the incriminated person a solemn and tender appeal to his finer feelings and urging him to inflict discipline upon himself. It says to him, for substance: "We are fully convinced that you are guilty of heresy; but it is going to be extremely inconvenient and embarrassing to us to try you and depose you, and it would make a most unpleasant scene that ought by all means to be avoided. Besides which, if we were to attempt it, the chances are ten to one that the case would go against us, and so 'the last error would be worse than the first.' So will you not, please, for the sake of peace (because there are a good many of us who are resolved to make trouble if you don't)—will you not *please* depose and excommunicate yourself from our sect? It really will not hurt you much, and there are some excellent denominations in which we are sure you would be most welcome and useful—we beg to suggest the Unitarians, and the Episcopalians. We would be so much obliged to you, and you should go off with a most flattering tribute to your high personal qualities. But if you

positively decline, we shall be compelled, painful as it may be to our feelings, to declare, or at least very distinctly to insinuate, that we consider you to be no gentleman."

It will have to be admitted that up to the present time the experiments with this Japanese device have not had an encouraging result. It was faithfully tried for a series of years by the "Congregational Quarterly," with the aid of a small pocket instrument called a "Consensus," that was kept in the editor's private drawer. But we do not remember a single instance in which it was not a ghastly failure. The individuals thus appealed to responded only with a hard-hearted smile, and went on prospering, while the Quarterly grew thin, and at last ceased. In the well known words of Goldsmith:—

"The man recovered of the bite ;
The dog it was that died."

Evidently it will be a long time yet before this tender exotic from the Pacific islands can become naturalized in our uncongenial soil. The adherents of the new discipline would do well to adopt some device of a more American or at least occidental character; and there are indications that something of the nature of an ecclesiastical boycott may be attempted, as more hopeful in this climate.

But when all is said, and every point has been conceded that can justly be claimed in favor of this new *Ratio Disciplina* with which the more boldly innovating spirits among us propose to supersede the system which the fathers of New England derived from the unmistakable commands of the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles,—after all, we must confess a feeling of regret and misgiving as we look back on what is being renounced and abandoned, and forward on what is likely to succeed to it. We would not be unduly tenacious of the ways of our fathers, nor too jealous (if that is possible) for the authority of prophets and apostles and of their Lord. But we wish we could convey in some inoffensive and effectual way, to these eager and headlong reformers who are resolved to change things *proprio motu* "without tarrying for any," some hint of our anxiety lest they may not find it safe to swing off from their base in the Scriptures quite so gaily. They are

very wise and strong, and very earnest and confident that their new devices are going to accomplish great things for the Church of Christ in purifying it from error and confirming the faith of the saints. But somehow we cannot get over a feeling that the old way, the Bible way, is the best way after all ; and that it will turn out in this case, as in so many before, that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

L. W. BACON.