

A REVIEW OF VON HOENSBROECH'S
WORK ON SOCIOLOGY.

Das Papstthum in seiner sozial kulturellen Wirksamkeit von Graf von Hoensbroech, Erster Band: Inquisition, Aberglaube, Teufelsspek und Hexenwahn. Zweite, unveränderte Auflage, Leipzig: Britkopf und Hartel 1900, pp. L. 688.

The fact that a second edition of this elaborate work should have been called for within a few weeks after its publication, proves a general interest in the subject and especially a strong curiosity as to the methods and results of its treatment by the author. Count von Hoensbroech was educated by the Jesuits and also became a member of this religious order. The department of study assigned to him by his superior was the history of the church and particularly that of the popes, and in order to pursue these investigation he went to Brussels, where he remained for some time with the Bollandist and made diligent use of this large library. Soon his earnest researches threw an unexpected and by no means favorable light on the history of the papacy, which now began for the first time to reveal itself to him in its true character. This discovery by a conscientious Catholic and an uncompromising lover of the truth gave rise to many severe mental conflicts. From his childhood he had been taught to look with suspicion on all non-Catholic writings as tissues of lies or at least of gross errors, the reading of which would be a deadly sin and involve the danger of eternal damnation. The Catholic youth, he says, is so thoroughly imbued with this notion that every attempt to extend his knowledge in directions forbidden by the Prohibitory Index seems to him to imperil the salvation of his soul. In this connection he speaks of Pater de Smet, the head of the Bollandist community as "an amiable skeptic with whom I had many an interesting conversation." Doubtless at this crisis in his career as an advanced novice the daily association with a critical doubter instead of a strict dogmatist served to encourage him in the acquisition of knowledge interdicted by the see of Rome. He then entered the University of Berlin, where the lectures of Harnack, Paulsen and Treitschke and the assiduous and unhampered use of the library soon brought the as yet green, but growing fruits of his studies, to their fuller development and maturity.

The first practical result of this enlargement of his intellectual horizon was his withdrawal from the society of the Jesuits, a step which, as a "scholar" and not a "priest," he was perfectly free to take at any time and of which he gives an extremely interesting account in a pamphlet entitled, "Mein Austritt aus dem Jesuitenorden." This frank confession of his

doubts and difficulties and the resolute solution of them created no small sensation. Meanwhile he continued for years to prosecute his historical researches in the same direction and the desire to publish the conclusions to which they had led grew constantly stronger until it became so intense as to leave him no rest. He compares this feeling to a warm glow of satisfaction, which new accessions of truth, like fresh breezes, gradually fanned into a fierce flame burning inextinguishably within him.

Papacy Not a Divine Institution.

Such, in short, is the genesis of this remarkable work, which contains, as Milton says of every good book, "the precious life-blood of a master-spirit." Its origin and purpose necessarily give it an essentially polemical character, since the author's aim is to show that the papacy in its claims to be a divine institution established by Christ and endowed with infallibility in all questions of faith and morals is "the greatest, the most fatal and the most successful fraud in the world's history." The present volume treats of the inquisition, superstition, diabolical apparitions and witchcraft and discloses the true relations of the papacy to these sources of cruelty and delusion. The authorities cited are for the most contemporary Roman Catholic writers, who were in many instances eye-witnesses of the events described and the authenticity of whose testimony cannot be questioned. During the period of its greatest activity the inquisition was universally recognized as an ecclesiastical institution organized and conducted at first by bishops in their respective dioceses and later by monks, especially Dominicans, under the direction of the pope. Nowadays every effort is made by Catholic writers to palliate the atrocities committed by the inquisition, or, when it is impossible to deny or extenuate them, to throw the entire responsibility upon the secular authorities. The mere form of giving the condemned over to the secular arm for punishment with instructions to "show mercy" or to "deal with them according to reason and custom" never saved a single human being from the flames, nor was it intended to do so. And yet this mockery of mercy and justice is being constantly adduced to prove that the church never shed blood—*Ecclesia non sinit sanguinem*. Thus Professor Pastor of the University of Freiburg in his "Geschichte der Papste im Zeitalter der Renaissance," recently completed in three volumes and covering a period of more than two centuries, does not make the slightest allusion to the inquisition in Italy, France, Germany and the Netherlands and devotes less than six pages to the inquisition in Spain, which, however, do not contain a word about the horrors perpetuated by it. His statement that

"unbaptized persons were never subjected to the Auto-da-fe" is utterly false. Still more amazing are the assertions of the Belgian "privy chamberlain of His Holiness the Pope" M. Claessens, in "L'Inquisition dans les Pays-Bas du Passe," published in 1886. In the first place he declares that the Spanish inquisition was "an exclusively royal tribunal;" the ultramontanist Professor Pastor, on the contrary, affirms as "a firmly established fact" that it was "an ecclesiastical papal institution." It is also well-known to have been founded and extended by successive popes from Innocence III to Sixtus IV and to have been controlled by "apostolical inquisitors." Claessens then informs us that the notoriously cruel Dominican inquisitors in southern France "never used any other weapons against heresy than prayer, patience and instruction;" that "during three centuries the Roman inquisition never pronounced a sentence of death or any other sentence causing blood to be shed;" that the execution of Giordano Bruno at Rome never occurred, but is "a legend based upon a forgery." More than half a century ago Bishop Hefele of Rottenburg, in his "Leben des Kardinals Himenes," contended that the papal see in its relations to the Spanish inquisition was "a protector of the persecuted as it has always been." Some twenty years later, when the bishop joined the old Catholic movement and began to realize in his own person the real nature of the "protection" vouchsafed to schismatics by the head of the Romish church, he declared that "if the hierarchy could have its will, pyres would again be erected and men burned at the stake in the nineteenth century."

These few representative examples suffice to show the kind of evasions, falsifications and perversions of history which Count von Hoensbroech has undertaken to expose and to refute. This difficult and somewhat invidious, but very important task, has been most thoroughly done and the result is a vast and exceedingly valuable repository of facts drawn from the most direct and trustworthy sources and chiefly from ecclesiastical and monasterial archives, inquisitorial ordinances and reports, papal decrees and other original documents of an official character. The same process of investigation is applied with equal success to superstitious beliefs and practices with an exhaustive account of "the Taxil-Vaughan swindle." A second volume will discuss the influence of the papacy on morals in general, on the family, marriage and slavery in particular, and finally on science and art, and on political economy and national prosperity.

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