**THE PRIEST IN ABSOLUTION**

**THE PRIEST IN ABSOLUTION:** ----If one thing more was needed to make Ritualism more entirely odious, it has been furnished in the filthy manual lately brought to light, second in infamy only to the book for which Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant are under legal prosecution for circulating. Mrs. Besant was once a Ritualist, and no wonder she is what she is now, if such a book was put into her hands. The *Pall Mall Gazette* says " If journalism is good for anything at all, it is good for the purpose of keeping people's attention awake to the dangers which threaten them either at home or abroad; and if it finds that a certain influence which is making head among us is a source of danger both abroad and at home, there is a double reason for speaking out. We have of late made it our business to show what mischief sacredotalism is working, or attempting to work, in the conduct of our affairs abroad; what disastrous tricks it is playing, or would play if it could, with our foreign policy; and Lord Redesdale has just recalled attention to a more familiar fact —the pernicious and detestable influence which it seeks to exercise at home. We shall ask our readers to consider the two facts together. We shall ask them to remember that the men who have been the head and front of the anti-Mohammedan crusade —the men who have done most to thwart the efforts of their government for the maintenance of the peace of Europe and the interests of their country—are the same men— the same set of semi-Romish priests—whose infamous manual of confession Lord Redesdale laid the other night before the House of Lords. And finally we shall invite our readers to pronounce upon the claims of those men to advise their countrymen or to be even heard by them on any matter of public interest whatever. The *Pall Mall Gazelle* proceeds to give extracts from the work which we consider altogether too foul for publication, and then adds, " We leave our readers to ponder the foregoing passages from the " Priest in Ab-solution," and to consider whether they care to submit their wives, sons, and daughters to such religious training as this, and to teachers of whom the Primate of their own nominal Church has admitted that a layman would be justified in warning them " never to approach his doors again." And, having duly pondered the extracts from this disgusting book, we would ask them this further question, What claim have the men whose 'vade mecum' this is, to be considered Englishmen at all? They are of no country. They have renounced their own along with the Reformation which they disown and vilify. They belong only to the bastard sect of their own creation that offspring begotten of sacerdotal arrogance upon effeminate vanity—that incarnation of the spirit at once of the mystagogue and the man-milliner. What claim to be heard on any question of English politics, domestic or foreign, can attach to men who live only to assert that principle of priestly domination—of priestly intrusion into the household—under which Englishmen were the most restive of all races, even in the so-called ‘ages of faith,' and which in the present age they regard with more disgust and abhorence than any other nation upon earth? "The *Globe* says." Although we have not hitherto said anything regarding the disgusting book which has suddenly attained so undesirable a notoriety, it was not because we felt Iess keenly than our contemporaries the indignation which has been stirred among the great mass of Englishmen on the subject. We had hoped----though with the lapse of time we grieve to say the hope grows fainter— that those clergymen whose names have been mentioned in connection with this manual of the confessional would have come forward to repudiate all responsibility for the repulsive work. So far, however, from their doing so, we have had apologies from individuals who though not clergymen, have been well known for the sympathetic interest they have taken in what is called Ritualism. We do not give up the hope that as to others repudiation will yet be forthcoming; but we feel bound especially as there seems to be a doubt on the subject, to speak out with all the strength and earnestness at our command in condemnation of this atrocious ‘Priest in Absolution.' The question is not one for argument. The people of England have made up their minds on this subject long ago. They declared at the Reformation that they would not tolerate auricular confession, and the attempt to introduce and to establish amongst us the filthy literature of the confessional cannot be allowed to be made a matter of controversy. It is repugnant to the common sense and to the feeling of honest Englishmen. Let us not however; be led away on a matter of this sort by theological subtleties. There must be no mistake on the part of the Ritualists or any other class on this point. Englishmen will not tolerate these nauseous sacerdotal drugs and potions in any shape or form; however they may be hidden away in secret corners from the public view. Englishmen will not have the abuses of auricular confession amongst them at any hazard. The *Daily News* referring to the subject, strongly deprecates the attempt to use against vice a weapon more dangerous to society than vice itself Even if all natural purity were not shocked, and ultimately destroyed, as it is by the hideous system of the Anglican confessional in the form to which attention is now attracted; even if morality were not utterly sapped, and the true life of character destroyed, by the mean dependence on the authority of the confessor, the interference with essential human relations would be equally intolerable. The apearance of a stranger as the supreme authority between father and child, husband and wife, is absolutely unendurable. Society is human, not divine, and even if it were the latter, the brethren of the Holy Cross would need to produce some better credentials than those which are the laughing stock even of the Church of Rome. Englishmen did not throw off the yoke which had at least the respectability of tradition to put on this new-fangled and gewgaw imitation of the genuine article. They are determined that girls and boys shall not be trained in a loathsome system, and set to read books compared with which the consciously indecent literature of the lower Empire is frank and manly. An Oxford correspondent writes that the discussion in the House of Lords has aroused great interest in that city. A handbill has been circulated in Oxford giving a list of some 15 clergymen in that city and the neighborhood who are members of 'The Society of the Holy Cross," and calling on the Bishop of Oxford to follow the example of the Bishop of Gloucester and bid those clergymen withdraw from the Society and repudiate the book.