

Franz Heinrich Reusch / by John E.B. Mayor.

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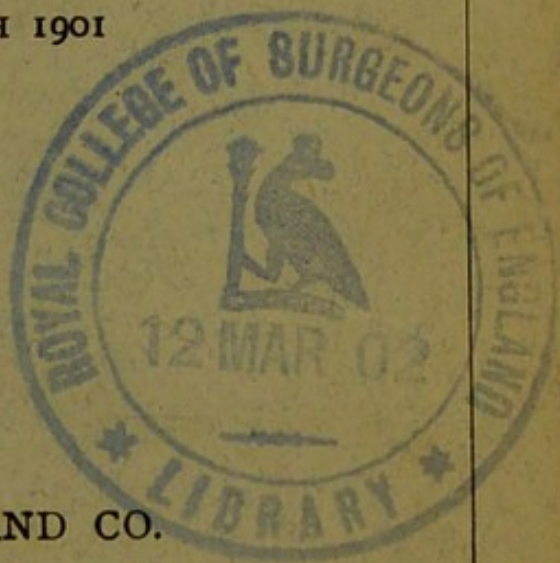
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Franz Heinrich Reusch

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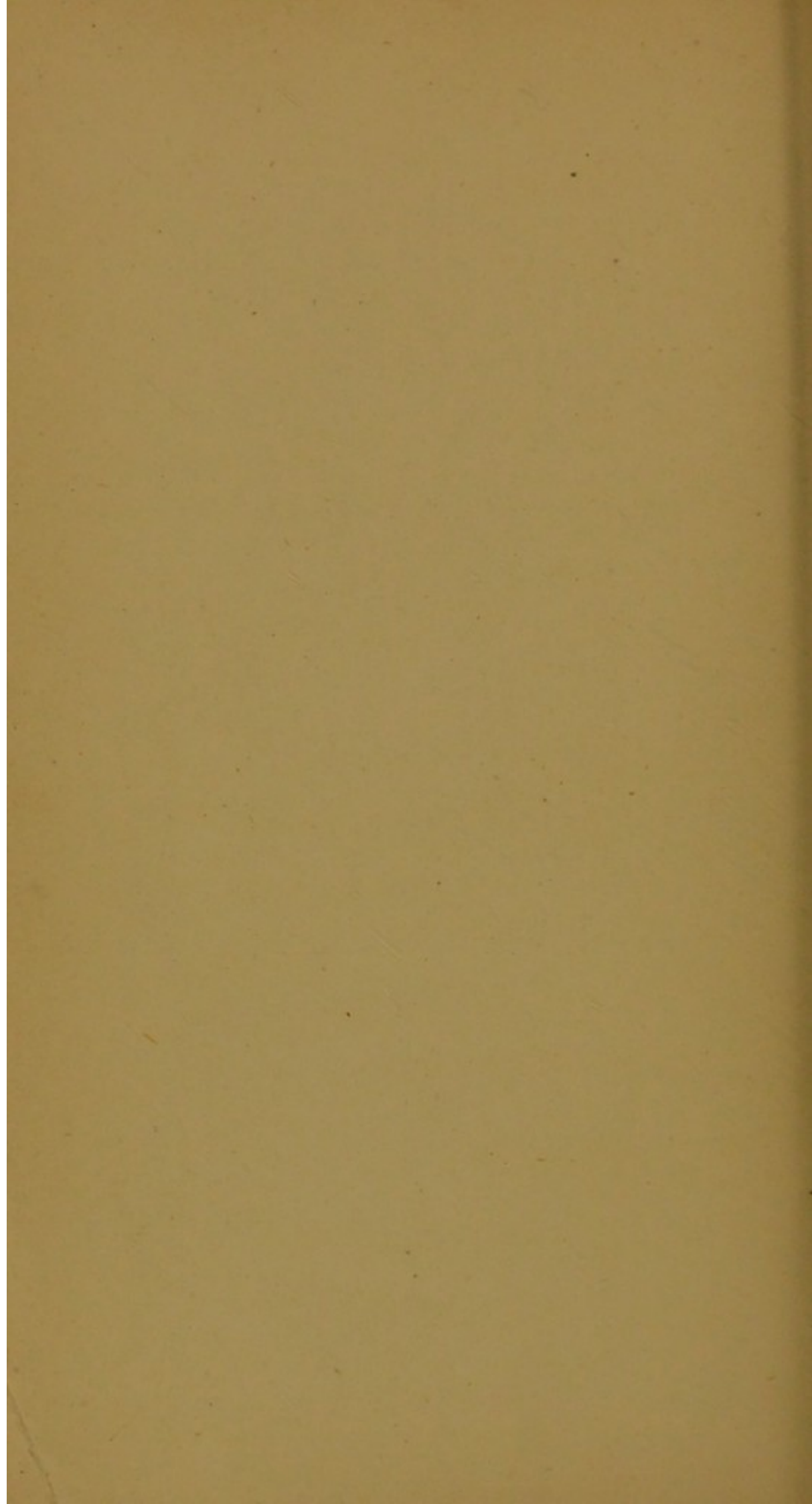
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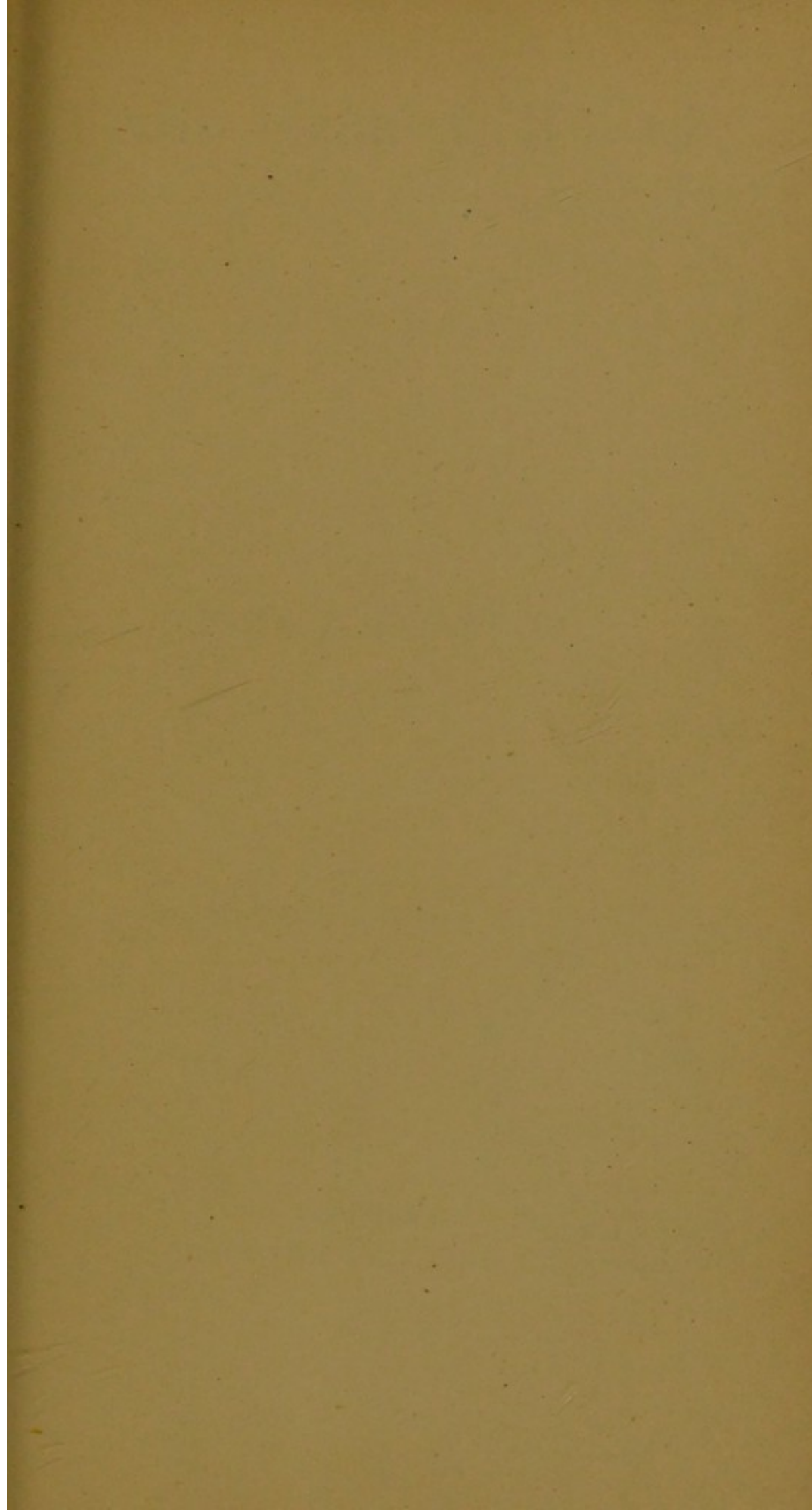
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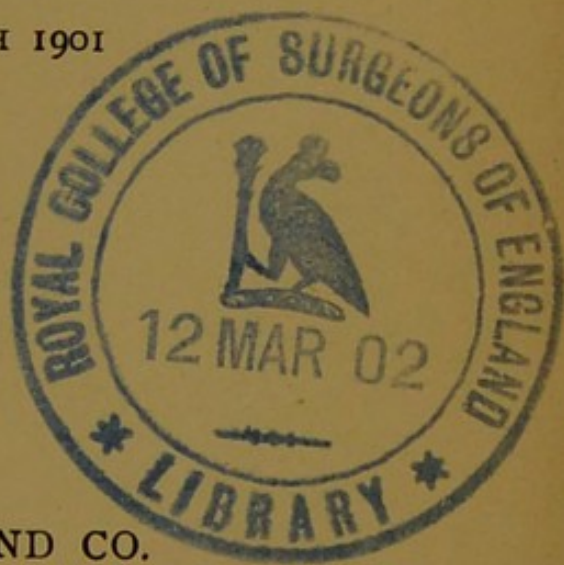


Franz Heinrich Reusch

BY

JOHN E. B. MAYOR

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IOANNI FRIDERICO SCHVLTE
AMICI AEQVALIS CONLEGAE CONMILITONIS
VNANIMAEQVE PARITER CONIVGIS OBITVM
MAERENTI MAERENS
CAELESTIS SVPERSTITI ADLOQVIA SPIRITVS
AETERNAEQVE LABORIBVS FVNCTO CVM BEATIS VITAE
PACEM PRECOR INCONCVSSAM

MELCHERS. *Sie haben als Priester das zu leisten, was Ihr Erzbischof von Ihnen erlangt ; und wenn derselbe mit dem Papste im Gegensatze stände, hätten Sie diesem zu folgen. Da das jetzt nicht der Fall ist, begreife ich nicht, warum Sie den Revers nicht unterschrieben haben.*

REUSCH. *Der Erzbischof ist eine menschliche Auctorität ; als Glaubenssatz kann ich nur das anerkennen, was mir mit göttlicher Auctorität vorgehalten wird.*

24 Nov. 1870 (SCHULTE, *Der Altkatholicismus*,
Giessen 1887, p. 140.)

EPH. 4 15 *Speaking the truth in love.*

THESE three words: ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ, blend in sweet accord the two elements which, as Frederick Maurice teaches, together go to make up tolerance. "It is the natural feeling of all of us," says Maurice, "it is the natural feeling of all of us that charity is founded upon the *uncertainty* of truth. I believe it is founded on the *certainly* of truth."

I will not speak of truth or of love in themselves, or as wedded in a large-hearted tolerance. That work has been done for our time by Bishop Phillips Brooks. I take the text as a badge of a martyr church, which aroused much sympathy in England thirty years ago, but is now forgotten, out of sight, out of hearing, out of mind. My revered friend Bishop Rein-
kens wrote under his photograph the text "Whatsoever is not of faith (or as he preferred to say, 'of conviction') is sin." When he and his fellows flung away all worldly advantage to follow conscience, they held up to a careless

world a much needed mirror of entire surrender of heart and life to the truth. They hoped to purge the words and works—the doctrine and discipline—of the Church from the scum of ages. At the same time they blazoned on their banner the reunion of a Christendom rent into sects and factions.

Still further to set bounds to my theme I will not trace the Old Catholic leaven quickening the sluggish lump of the wide world, or even of the German Empire, but will, in the few minutes at my disposal, fasten my gaze on one venerable form, the last leader in the Holy War that has passed beyond the veil. If any man ever devoted mind and soul to the patient search and brave avowal of truth, it was Francis Henry Reusch; and few indeed have borne slander and proscription with so unruffled a temper, never rendering railing for railing but contrariwise blessing. Truth and love, the virtues of the scholar and the saint, met in him in rare ripeness and harmony. Of no life is the saying of our Johnian poet more utterly true, "The child is father of the man." From boyhood to the breakdown of his powers, "his days" were "bound each to each by natural piety."

He was born on the 4 December 1825, at Brilon in Westphalia, a town founded by Charles the Great. Hard by lay a broad stretch of forests, which fostered in the boy a love of nature. While strength held out, it was his delight to bring home flowers culled in his walks; indeed he was a botanist in more than name. One of his teachers, from his tenth to his twelfth year, Weber, was an eager naturalist; another, Wellingmeyer, was a linguist, from whom Reusch learnt, out of school hours, English and Italian. All the Brilon masters were priests, and many boys there won a thirst for learning which never left them.

After two years spent in a school at Paderborn, whither he was drawn by the presence of his uncle, Bishop Dammers, Reusch, in October 1843, entered the University of Bonn, as a student of catholic theology. He read theology under Hilgers, afterwards his Old Catholic colleague, and others, philosophy under Brandis and others, history under Aschbach, classical philology under Ritschl and Ritter, Romance philology under Diez, the Semitic languages and Sanscrit under Gildemeister, Freytag, and Lassen. Probably no university could then boast so famous a staff.

At Tübingen Reusch spent a year, learning dogmatics from Kuhn, church history from Hefele, the Old Testament and Arabic from Welte. These three colleagues all cringed to the Infallible, but their pupil followed them in the old paths, not in the shame and sin of their fall (Matt. 23 2). At Munich, his abode for some months in 1846 and 1847, he knit with Döllinger a friendship doomed to mould for high ends the career alike of disciple and of guide.

I hurry on to his settlement in Bonn as Extraordinary Professor, at a salary of £90. This was on the 19th of October 1858. He had passed all examinations as boy and man with the highest note of distinction. At Münster in 1849 he maintained various Latin theses, two of which seem to us now to forebode the struggle in store for him. The one is, "The Council of Trent is fully justified in forbidding the interpretation of Scripture in matters of faith and morals against the consent of the Fathers"; the other, "The same Council when declaring the Vulgate authentic, does not refuse its regard to the Hebrew and Greek Texts."

In the Easter of 1859 two sisters came to keep house for Reusch, and no tongue can tell

the services which they rendered to him, especially during the last four years when body and mind were failing. His mastery of modern languages and literatures was broad and deep ; and one of his sisters bore him company in this pastime.

On the 4th of May 1861 Reusch became Ordinary Professor of Old Testament Exegesis at the old salary of £90, raised by slow degrees to £225 in 1873, and at last, a short time before his death, to the maximum of £300.

In the University Reusch's fame stood high. He always held aloof from cabals. After the Vatican council the Old Catholic Professors were in the majority in the theological faculty ; but in 1886, the Protestant Government, having struck sail to the 'Centrum,' founded two new chairs, so that Ultramontanes were to Old Catholics as five to three, in August 1886 as five to two, now, since Reusch's death, as seven to one ; and the minister has promised after Professor Langen's death to leave no room for an Old Catholic in a Bonn chair of theology.

It is no matter of mere party interest whether the State favours Old Catholics or Ultramontanes. It touches the whole commonwealth of letters in its tenderest part—its freedom. The

Old Catholics for scholarship and tested force of intellect rank with the foremost scholars of the age ; the Ultramontanes are drilled in sectarian seminaries. The Old Catholics are loyal to history, loyal to king and country. One of their ultramontane colleagues, speedily promoted to a high stipend long grudged to Professors Menzel, Hilgers, and Langen, calls the Roman Inquisition "a stately institution, wise in its organisation, of world-redeeming efficacy." Another, Professor Simar, now Archbishop, has declared : "So many miracles are daily wrought amongst us, that we can have only a smile of pity for the unbelievers who triumph over the discovery here and there of a cheat." Those who know anything of the devotion to St Antony of Padua will rate this vaunt at its true worth.

Reusch was Rector of the University 1873-4, and member of the senate for fourteen years. As senator his calmness, fairness, experience, and knowledge of affairs won for him great influence and respect. Public gratitude was conspicuous by its absence. He had indeed three decorations from the government, and was a corresponding member of one Academy, one only, that of Munich, at Döllinger's instance.

Oxford and Cambridge have for ever lost the chance of proving themselves alive to his deserts.

Until 1870 he published no separate work outside his own department, the Old Testament. I note Baruch 1853, Tobit 1857, the Book of Wisdom in Greek 1858; Introduction to the Old Testament 1859, 4th edition 1870; Bible and Nature 1862, 4th edition 1876. This handled the Mosaic account of creation in the light of modern science, and displayed wide and hearty acquaintance with scientific literature. Tobit from the Sinaitic MS. 1870. In all these books Reusch appears untrammelled by mere tradition, and fully on a level with Protestant colleagues in keen and single-hearted research.

Reusch was also one of the busiest contributors to the earliest, and long only, Roman Catholic print in North Germany, now known as the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*. Archbishop Melchers during the Vatican council warped the policy of the journal in the interests of Rome, but for many years Reusch there pleaded for liberty of prophesying in Catholic Germany, and rifled English, Italian, and Spanish journals in search of news.

In 1865, when Jesuit reaction set strongly in, Reusch founded, and continued to 1877, the *Theologisches Literaturblatt*. As I look at the twelve goodly volumes, and see the columns dwindle from over a thousand to a little more than six hundred, more than half the contributors dropping off, only seven of the original seventy-three remaining staunch, and many of them as Hergenröther, Hülskamp, Janssen, sinking to the lowest arts of Ultramontane intrigue against their former partners, I need no other proof of the power of the Papacy to stifle the hunger for knowledge. As the threats of the Vatican scared writers, so subscribers, even those who still wished well to the work, fell away, under the pressure of the priest in confession; and thus one of the purest sources of contemporary church history dried up.

The constitution *Pastor aeternus*, put forth by Pius IX on the 18th of July 1870, shattered at a blow the ties which bound many fervent catholics to the Papal see. Reusch, as executor of the Old Catholic Professor Menzel, who died 4 August 1886, carved on his tombstone the words *Fidem servavi*; I have kept the faith. They may serve as the motto of Old Catholicism.

Reusch, says von Schulte, was a blameless priest, who daily said mass even when on a journey, never shirking the use of the breviary; none of his colleagues commanded, in the same degree, the regard of the students; the discharge of his priestly office was a cordial to him; he daily read mass in the chapel of the hospital sisters, and was highly esteemed as a confessor.

On the 12th of March 1872 Archbishop Melchers of Cologne smote Reusch for notorious heresy with the thunderbolt of the greater excommunication. Bishop Reinkens, when he was laid under ban, feeling that he had crossed the Rubicon, enjoyed perfect peace of mind. Not so with Reusch. He wrote to a friend after the blow had fallen: "To be debarred from lecturing is hard; but to be unable to celebrate, and to find a difficulty in obtaining absolution and communion, is cruel."

The conversations between Reusch and his Archbishop, written down by Reusch immediately after, are of enduring historical worth. Authority is the one weapon of the prelate: exercises (a retreat, as it is now the fashion to say) among Redemptorists or Capuchins might perchance enlighten the dim eyes. "Have you

read the main arguments for Infallibility?" "I have read an infinite mass of papers *pro* and *con*." "Do not your studies make you doubt the soundness of your position?" "I have read most of the Latin fathers of the first six centuries and a portion of the Greek: and the pity of it is, that I can nowhere find infallibility in these centuries." The whole debate may be summed up in two short utterances. "I cannot act against my conviction." "You must now obey your bishop; I take upon me a thousand times over the responsibility for what I demand of you. You cannot suppose that God will take it ill if you obediently do what I demand."

After the recognition of Bishop Reinkens by the State, Reusch resumed his lectures, which after 1886, when only two Old Catholic Professors remained, covered a very large portion of theology. His preparation was always thorough, and his teaching highly valued by the few, four to ten, Old Catholic students.

He took part in the congresses of Munich 1871, Cologne 1872, Konstanz 1873, Freiburg 1874. In 1873 he received five votes when Professor Reinkens was elected Bishop. Till the year 1878 he acted as Vicar General. To him

fell the chief burden of the five first synods—from 1874—1878. He drew up the reports of these synods, drafting proposals relating to auricular confession, fasts and abstinences, the use of the vulgar tongue in public worship, a catechism and bible history and *rituale*. He composed the *rituale* accepted in 1876. He wrote reports of the conferences held at Bonn, in 1874 and 1875, to advance the union of all churches outside the Roman obedience. Members of the Greek, Anglican, and Protestant communions, from Germany, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Russia, Greece, England, America, took part in these conferences, which allowed the validity of English orders, and found little to censure in our articles.

In 1878 when the Synod permitted the clergy to marry, Reusch resigned the cure of souls at Bonn, which he had administered without stipend from 1872, and also his place among the clergy. Still he constantly attended the services, said mass, officiating when the pastor was absent from illness, gave religious instruction in the schools, examined candidates for orders, and lectured in the University.

For ordinary men the work of lecturing, with

the charge of congregations scattered over the whole of Germany, would have spent their entire stock of energy, but Reusch since 1870 poured forth a stream of books, so full of matter carefully sifted, betraying such a grasp of history and biography, and likewise of many languages and literatures, that one would think the author could never have budged from his study. As a pastor he issued in 1876 sermons on the Sunday gospels, and a complete prayer-book for Catholic Christians. This latter admits hymns by Luther and other Protestants, and respects a feeling for which the American church has made provision, though we in England as yet take no account of it: I speak of the 137th Psalm 'By the waters of Babylon.' Here Reusch prints the first six verses alone, without the three which pain us by their revengeful spirit.

Directly bearing on the decay of the church are the following: Luis de Leon, and the Spanish Inquisition (1873). Galilei's trial and the Jesuits (1879). The German bishops and superstition (1879). Index of prohibited books (1883—5, and *indices librorum prohibitorum* of the 16th century. Tüb. 1886. One of Parma, 1580. Bonn 1889). A monument of amazing

learning, which no one can overlook who is curious about the literary policy of Rome, or the history of science and letters. Contributions to the history of the Jesuit order (1894).

In concert with Döllinger, Reusch published the autobiography of Cardinal Bellarmin (1887), and "History of moral controversies in the Roman Catholic Church" (1889, 2 vols.). This does for Jesuit and (later) Redemptorist morality up to date, what Pascal did in his day for the Jesuit school. Reusch edited Döllinger's Letters and Minor Works (both 1890); also Letters to Bunsen (1897).

From 1870 to 1896 he was a writer, till 1894 one of the most constant writers, in the *Rheinischer* (afterwards *Deutscher*) *Merkur*, for which he composed e.g. scathing criticisms of Janssen's history, and of the oft repeated legend of Döllinger's submission to the Roman Curia. After 1870 he sent articles to the chief theological and historical reviews edited by Protestants, and drew up more than a hundred biographies for the *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*.

In the winter of 1895 stroke after stroke put an end to his public labours, though he still lectured till 1897 in the Old Catholic Seminary,

four doors from his home. Early in the morning of 3 March 1900 he entered upon his rest.

At his funeral on March 5 even the Roman Catholic corps of students, it was observed with a glad surprise, took part in the procession. That a Liberal print like the *Kölnische Zeitung* should do Reusch justice was natural, but his friends were startled and rejoiced to read in the leading organ of German Ultramontanism, the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, a hearty tribute to his services as scholar and author and teacher. His pupils, even such as bowed their necks under the Vatican yoke, revered and waited upon him to the last. None of them, so far as is known, ever dared to approach him with attempts at conversion.

He bore his martyrdom of four years with exemplary patience. One matter only troubled him. He had long been gleaning materials for a work which no one else can finish. No weaker hand may bend the bow of Ulysses.

His successor in the Bonn pastorate spoke at the funeral of Reusch's dealings with his pupils. His house and ear were ever open to all who sought his counsel or his help ; none parted from him without instruction, without comfort. He

always displayed a gentle, truly Christian temper. He had much to bear from unworthy assailants, especially in the 'seventies, when the fever in the Roman church was at its height ; countless libels reached him, but they could neither shake his belief, nor trouble his assured calm ; when he felt bound to answer his backbiters by word of mouth or by pen, it was always done soberly, with solid reasons, befitting the inborn loftiness of his character.

Often have I heard Old Catholics repeat a Jesuit saying : " Do not mind the Old Catholics, they have no money." Yet these penniless men have for thirty years waged a successful war with Rome, even after Prince Bismarck laid down his arms. They bate no jot of heart or hope. They have built churches, seminaries, schools for nursing sisters. They have a powerful offshoot in America. In Austria and France many are coming out from Rome. They are the spiritual heirs of our Jewells and Hookers, our Mortons and Stillingfleets.

If you think these wrangles concern the school, not the life, learn of Bishop Thirlwall. The Vatican Council, he taught his clergy, is an event of far greater importance than the Franco-

German war. In fact, that war, the Dreyfus trial, the growing jealousy of England, are but episodes in that crusade against free thought, which the Vatican Council set on foot. In one sense, however, I would drive home the Jesuit taunt, making it recoil on its author. The Old Catholics find it hard to publish their books; and booksellers find it hard to get rid of Old Catholic stock. Here any little help which we can give, will be well spent and welcome. Let us sow broadcast their literature, marvellous in bulk and thoroughness, when we remember the conditions of its birth.

When I heard of Professor Reusch's death, I urged on his friends their duty. Such a name must not be forgotten. Professor von Schulte, it was thought, could alone portray to the life the playfellow of his boyhood, his colleague at Bonn for thirty years, his loyal comrade in the fight for truth, for charity, for freedom. But the loss of Reusch and of his own wife unnerved the great canonist. One other hope remained. An Old Catholic of rare promise, Goetz, then a pastor in South Germany, is a practised writer, for four years a pupil of Reusch's. He is now in Bonn, acting as Professor to the Old Catholic

students. Yesterday good news reached me ; the biography is finished, with a full list of Reusch's works, and a publisher has been found. It only remains for us to arouse interest in that noble life ; for we sorely need patterns of holy living and unwearied industry. I pity the man who, really knowing what we have lost in Reusch, in Reinkens, in Döllinger, yet feels no bitter shame and self-reproach that England has not done more to let their light shine before men.

NOTES

I have here freely used, both for matter and words, the tract of 15 pages, 'Franz Heinrich Reusch,' by J. F. v. Schulte, issued by the Synodal-Repräsentanz in Bonn. As a full bibliography will appear in Dr Goetz's life of Reusch, I only add, of a date before 1870, the *Katholik*, *Chilianeum*, and the Tübingen *Theologische Quartalschrift*, as journals for which Reusch wrote ; and, of a later date, the Bern *Internationale theologische Zeitschrift*, parts 2 and 6 ; *Revue historique* ; *Theologische Literaturzeitung* by Harnack and Schuerer (many articles 1888—95) ; Sybel's *Historische Zeitschrift* ; *Preussische Jahrbücher*. In his early days Reusch translated several pieces of Wiseman (*Fabiola* running to 33 editions) and J. H. Newman. His 'Bible and Nature' appeared in a Hungarian, Swedish, French, Italian, Dutch, and English dress. In 1889 he published in the transactions of the Munich Academy, 'The falsifications in the treatise of Thomas Aquinas against the Greeks (*opusculum contra*

errores Graecorum ad Urbanum IV).' Professor Friedrich says (*Nekrolog auf Franz Heinrich Reusch*, in *Sitzungsberichte der philos.-philol. und der histor. Classe der k. bayer. Akad. d. Wiss.* 1900 pp. 170—1): "Döllinger caused a great sensation by an assertion in *Janus* and in 'Considerations for the Bishops of the Council' (1869). Thomas Aquinas, he said, was victim of a literary fraud, the so-called Pseudo-Cyrillus, whereon he founded his doctrine of the primacy. Men did not know what to make of this assertion. True, a Neapolitan, Uccelli, found the source of Thomas in the Vatican library, and attached it as appendix to some separate copies of his essay (in the Neapolitan journal *La Scienza e la Fede*) 'De' testi esaminati da Tommaso d' Aquino nel opuscolo contro gli errori de' Greci' (1870), but the essay attracted no notice, and the separate copies vanished. It is the merit of our Reusch to have published and critically investigated the Pseudo-Cyrillus, thereby settling the question, and it is a credit to our Academy to have given this work to the world." In England I know of only one journal, *The Church Times* (the article did not fall in my way) which took any notice of Reusch's death. On 30 March 1900 I addressed a letter to *The Times* 'The late Professor Reusch.' It was printed but not before April 17 (p. 11 col. 5).

A like test of the blindness or apathy or bias of journalists where Ultramontanism is in question, was supplied by the death of William Arthur (9 March 1901, see *Times* 12 March p. 10 col. 5). Probably no English writer of the day, Protestant or Romanist, ever spent so much pains in consulting authentic Vatican oracles as Mr Arthur. Professor Reusch looked forward eagerly to the advent of his book: *The Pope, the Kings and the People, a history of the movement to make the Pope governor of the world by a universal reconstruction of society from the issue of the Syllabus to the close of the Vatican Council*. William Mullan, London and Belfast, 1877, 2 vols. Its sources are not Protestant, but Vatican or Liberal Catholic. It has indeed been little noticed, and yet, without the light falling from it (and

works of Nippold and the Old Catholics), history since 1864 is a dark riddle. The critics named a volume of forbidding title, *How to make the most of both worlds*, but were dumb about this standard work. I must borrow a few lines from the preface (p. xii): "The kindness of Dr Döllinger was great and eminently practical. He had kept all pamphlets, bearing on the subject, which had come into his hands. He not only gave me free access to this collection, but, where he had duplicates, presented me with them. Dr Reusch . . . with a collection at least equal, though without duplicates, gave me similar facilities."

Reusch has left, writes Dr Goetz, almost ready for press a life of Joh. Michael Sailer, the reforming bishop of Ratisbon (born 17 Nov. 1751, †20 May 1832); also large collections for a history of rationalism (*Aufklärung*. See above, p. 18 l. 8 from foot).

Pfarrer Bommer of Cologne has catalogued the Old Catholic literature. Schulte, *Der Altkatholicismus*, Giessen 1887, is the best adviser on the question. The following serials record the chief publications from year to year. *The Foreign Church Chronicle and Review*, 23 volumes, 1877—99 (all published). Edited by Frederick Meyrick. The early volumes were sold by Wells Gardner, the later by Rivington. At the end of most of the volumes is a list of publications of the Anglo-Continental Society. The article *Interconfessionelles* in the Jena *Theologischer Jahresbericht*, first written by F. Nippold, and since by his son-in-law.

Page 9. *The Bonn Professors*. If any artless soul dreams that freedom of teaching (*Lehrfreiheit*) still has its home in German Universities, I commend to his attention the honest chronicle of the *Deutscher Merkur* for 1886, pp. 39b, 59b, 60, 66, 67, 114b, 115a, 230a.

Page 10 l. 5 *one*. Professor Schroers (*D.M.* 1888, p. 392b, 1889, pp. 141a, 204b, 238a). This worthy enjoyed a stipend of

£240 immediately on his appointment, whereas Professor Hilgers, under a cloud as a Hermesian and a patriot, almost to his dying day drew only £120 to £135. Another patriot, Professor Menzel, drew £225, and that not till towards the end of his life. Professor Langen, after twenty years' service as Ordinary Professor, was grudgingly awarded the lowest stipend of his grade (*ibid.* 1888, p. 189b.) Small wonder if Mr Worldly Wiseman, bent on mounting the ladder of preferment, cries over his cups, *Katholisch ist Trumpf*. Was not Paul Majunke, editor of the foul-mouthed *Germania*, made State Inspector of Schools? And what was his claim? He revived the fable of Martin Luther's suicide. Verily the *Evangelischer Bund* did not come a day too soon.

Page 10 l. 11. *Simar* (*D.M.* 1891, p. 241b).





