

What was the state of Christendom when Canisius entered upon his apostolic career? We quote from Lord Macaulay: "In the northern parts of Europe the victory of Protestantism was rapid and decisive. . . . Within fifty years from the day on which Luther publicly renounced communion with the Papacy, and burned the bull of Leo before the gates of Wittenberg, Protestantism attained its highest ascendancy, an ascendancy it soon lost, and which it has never regained. Hundreds, who could well remember Brother Martin, a devout Catholic, lived to see the revolution, of which he was the chief author, victorious in half the states in Europe. In England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Livonia, Prussia, Saxony, Hesse, Wurtemberg, the Palatinate, in several cantons of Switzerland, in the Northern Netherlands, the Reformation had completely triumphed; and in all the other countries on this side of the Alps and the Pyrenees, it seemed on the point of triumphing." *

And further on the same author completes his sketch: "In Poland, the king was still a Catholic; but the Protestants had the upper hand in the Diet, filled the chief offices in the administration, and, in the large towns, took possession of the parish churches. 'It appeared,' says the Papal nuncio, 'that in Poland, Protestantism would completely supersede Catholicism.' In Bavaria, the state of things was nearly the same. The Protestants had a majority in the assembly of the states and demanded from the duke concessions in favour of their religion, as the price of their subsidies. In Transylvania, the House of Austria was unable to prevent the Diet from confiscating, by one sweeping decree, the estates of the Church. In Austria Proper it was generally said that only one thirtieth part of the population could be counted on as good Catholics. In Belgium the adherents of the new opinions were reckoned by hundreds of thousands."

* Macaulay's Essay on Ranke's History of the Popes.