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The Spanish Inquisition.

A most able and convincing defence of the Catholic church, in relation to the Spanish Inquisition, was delivered by Rev. P. Lynch, M. R., on a recent Sunday evening before a large congregation in St. Wilfrid's church, Manchester, Eng. Owing to the higher, truer, and more philosophic study of history and the better arrangement of historical facts, said the reverend preacher, they were now able to view the Inquisition in a proper light, and in this field of historical inquiry Protestant historians had done quite as much if not more, than Catholics to deal the death blow to the popular superstition which regarded the Inquisition as a vague but terrible tribunal erected in Spain in the days of darkness and ignorance to remorselessly and mercilessly persecute men for their honest opinions, and from whose prying eyes and unjust decisions no man's life or property was safe. Now, what were the facts? The Spanish Inquisition was a tribunal established in Spain for the trial of various offences, amongst others the offence of heresy. The accused was tried before the Judicial Committee of the Inquisition, and if found guilty he was condemned to punishment, and in some cases was even burnt to death. This Inquisition was established by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1478, by virtue of a decree of Pope Sixtus IV. Immediately after its institution the Spanish King and Queen sought to make this tribunal purely a State institution. It was quite true that the Inquisitors, the judges, and chief officials, many of them, were ecclesiastics, but nevertheless it was a purely secular and State tribunal, and in consequence of its abuse in 1481, three years after its institution the same Pope Sixtus IV. wrote to the Spanish monarchs entreating them "by the mercy of Jesus Christ" not to be so cruel. In the year 1486 the famous (or infamous) Torquemada obtained the office of Chief Inquisitor, and for sixteen years he strained every nerve to carry out the wishes of the Spanish Government. For the two centuries the Inquisition existed in all its power in Spain many an innocent man suffered the loss of goods and even life by its unjust decisions. In 1781 the last man condemned to death by this tribunal suffered that extreme penalty. Then the consent of the King became necessary not merely to the capital punishment, but even for a man's arrest, and the powers of the Inquisition were subsequently curbed and restricted until, in 1834, it was formally abolished by Royal decree, never more to raise its head in the fair land of Spain. But why it might be asked should any man be imprisoned, punished, and burnt at the stake for his opinions. Well, suppose a sect arose even in these days which taught that it was not merely lawful but a great duty to murder baptised infants in order that their souls might be sure of heaven. They, his hearers, would agree with him that so long as a man retained this belief as a mere opinion he ought not to be molested. But suppose that man went further, put his opinions into practice, and proceeded to murder his own or his neighbor's children, was there anyone who would not say that such a man should not be hanged? Well, one sect of heretics held this belief. Passing from extreme cases, there was a sect in England which believed that any recourse to medical aid in sickness was entirely unlawful as contravening the providence and power of the Almighty. Their conscientious opinion impelled them to allow a poor, helpless child to die that might be easily saved by calling in a doctor. Members of that sect had been summoned before the magistrate and even imprisoned for carrying out their creed. If such a one allowed his child to die, who would say that he could shelter himself before an English tribunal with the defence that he had a religious opinion that it was wrong to call in a doctor? Such a man deserved punishment because the innocent and helpless suffered from his wrong religious convictions. The Army of the Lord which appeared in some of the towns in the South of England having its headquarters at Brighton one of the leaders of which called himself King Solomon, one King David, and another Joshua pretended to receive revelations from the Lord in an extraordinary manner. At one end of the hall in which they met to practice their religion was a platform where girls and women, so called prophets of the Lord, there worked themselves into a frenzy until they fell upon their dress disordered and their bodies exposed, when their ravings were called the revelation of God. This happened in England five years ago. Now he would ask was it right and proper that public morality should be outraged and set at defiance by such a blasphemous travesty of the worship of God. And these were fair samples of the sectaries of the middle ages—the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and a nameless brood of others. Many of these sectaries were not only opposed to every element of civilization in doctrine but also in their practice the primary principles of decency and morality were set at defiance so much so that he dared not defile their ears and soil his lips by describing the horrible prophecies of these men. And it was against such heretics as these that the Spanish Inquisition was first founded. Again, for about a thousand years before the Spanish Inquisition popularly so called, there were similar institutions in every State of Europe. The Emperor Constantine was the first to establish what they would call an inquisition. Constantine's laws were added to by various Emperors and all drawn up into one code by Justinian,

and they became the code of laws of every State in Europe with the exception of England and Ireland. In England the Saxons blotted out almost every trace of the previous Roman occupation, while in Ireland the Roman power never set its foot. Therefore it was not surprising that two centuries before the Spanish Inquisition Frederick Barbarossa, or Frederick of the Red Bear, established an inquisition not quite so severe but differing in no way from the inquisition set up in Spain. Why were inquisitions established at all? They must remember that in the days of Constantine and for a long while after the whole of the civilized world was of the same faith, and wherever heresy appeared it was not a mere matter of opinion, but the cause of tumult and disorder in the State, and many poor people were slaughtered and their homes plundered by the heretics who hated now to restrain them. The only recourse was to stamp out the heresy. Protestants often boasted of the Waldenses and the Albigenses and other heretical sects as their progenitors, and he (the reverend preacher) could not help wishing them joy of their ancestry, and a better knowledge of their antecedents. Another accusation of Protestants was the supposed intolerant persecution practiced by Catholics. He had already spoken of the remonstrance which Pope Sixtus IV. sent to Ferdinand and Isabella. Shortly after, finding this failed, his successor established a court of appeal in Spain, and when this proved useless, he established a court of appeal in Rome, by which many saved their lives and property. In 1486 two hundred people were thus saved out of two hundred and fifty people condemned to death by the Spanish Inquisition; on another occasion fifty, and so on. When Spain obtained possession of Naples, and tried to establish the Spanish Inquisition there, Pope Paul III. said: "No it is too severe. We shall not have the Inquisition in Italy." Later, when they were endeavoring to introduce it into Milan, Pope Pius IV. said: "No. The sentences are too cruel." Yet the Papal Court had its Inquisition, as it had now. But by the Papal Inquisition no man ever lost his life. In its whole history there were only two doubtful cases in which men were condemned to death. The sentence of burning to death was utterly abhorrent to the Papal court. Another point. Protestants were very fond of shouting against the Spanish Inquisition for being unjust, for murdering women and shedding innocent blood. They had short memories. Was there not innocent blood shed in England? Let the blood of Margaret Clitheroe, shed in York for believing in the Catholic faith, make answer. As foul a deed as ever disgraced the annals of the Spanish Inquisition. When just before her death, she, approaching her confinement asked, for the honor of womanhood, that they would leave her some portion of her clothing, they placed her between two boards and crushed and mangled her to a pulp. Let them remember James Finch dragged by ropes through the streets of Manchester to the Cathedral for refusing to go there voluntarily, and afterwards tried and condemned at Lancaster and beheaded. Let them look home and they would find their own annals stained with murders as foul and disgraceful as ever disgraced the Inquisition in Spain. In England at that time, too, they professed the great central dogma of private judgment, of reading the Bible and believing what you liked. But if a Catholic read the Bible and deducted therefrom the Catholic faith, no toleration or mercy was shown to him. He, the reverend preacher, had not time to touch on the constitutions of Clarendon, the Act of Uniformity, and other similar injustices, but this they might say, that the period of the Spanish Inquisition was an age of barbarous punishments. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth 64 different offences, including picking pockets, arson, and shooting rabbits, were punishable with death. And if they did not blame England for her cruelty, why single out Spain for condemnation for acting according to the spirit of the age? Further than that, and overlooking the fact that Ferdinand and Isabella had obtained the decree for the institution of the Inquisition by false pretences, they had just defeated the Moorish invaders and the whole peninsula was filled with hostile Jews who at one time formed a plot to seize Gibraltar and make it the centre of an independent Jewish kingdom in Spain, and hence the Spanish authorities of the time used the Inquisition to restrain these hostile powers. A more important point still, the Spanish Inquisition was used against the ecclesiastics of the Catholic church. The Archbishop of Toledo, who was president of the Council of Trent, was cast into prison by the Inquisition for sixteen years, until the day of his death. All these facts should be sufficient to convince any reasonable man that whatever the cruelties of the Spanish Inquisition, the responsibility for them did not rest with the Catholic church. The Catholic church was the same now as then, the same then as on the day of Pentecost when God's Holy Spirit set His seal upon its brow. The rev. preacher concluded with a most eloquent exhortation, in which he dwelt upon the divinity of the church, and urged his hearers to live constantly in conformity with its teachings.

A visit to the office of the Croix newspaper—the largest printing and publishing office in France—revealed the most interesting sight of a number of gentle faced nuns of the order of the Little Sisters of the Assumption in charge of nearly a hundred girls and women, all engaged in setting up type. The nuns are skilful compositors, but they pray as well as work, which is what the Croix is constantly telling its readers to do. While some are compositors, others are missionaries.

Swindlers in Rome.

A peculiar case of swindling is now pending before the Royal Tribunal in Rome. Some adventurers, among whom figure the Countess Caroline de Saint-Arnaud, the Duke of Bustelli, and Glenard, a notary, have succeeded in extorting from credulous Catholics the enormous sum of sixty thousand francs, under the pretense of liberating Pope Leo XIII. who, they alleged, was kept a prisoner in the Catacombs of the Vatican, while an impostor was occupying the throne of St. Peter. Glenard had written a pamphlet headed "Leo XIII's Greatest Misfortune," in which it was stated that subscriptions to the great work they intended to undertake would yield the benefactors more heavily favor than the Peter's pence, for the latter fell into the hands of an impostor, and far from benefiting Leo, only helped to perpetuate his captivity. "His Holiness," says the pamphlet, "is incarcerated in one of the subterranean dungeons of the Vatican, formerly used for prisoners of state; while a common monk, whose face and figure resemble that of the Pope, rules the church in his stead in the interest of the powers of the Triple Alliance. Catholics, who value their holy religion, should combine to relieve Leo and reinstate him."

Money began to pour in from all quarters, while Glenard kept the attention of the contributors directed to a series of pamphlets, which he and his confederates published and in which the proceedings of the "liberators" as well as the progress of their great work, were described with the utmost minuteness; until finally, on Nov. 5, the swindlers issued a circular declaring that they had succeeded in their holy efforts, and that Christendom on that day was ruled by the true successor of St. Peter.

At the time the scoundrels were arrested, the story of the alleged "rescue Leo XIII." was in type; the sale of which would undoubtedly have greatly benefited the pockets of the adventurers. In this account the Countess was pictured as having ventured into the Catacombs of the Vatican at the head of a gallant corps, consisting of Dukes and Princes, Archbishops and Prelates. It was stated further that they had "found the Pope buried fifty feet under the ground," and that he had lost the use of his limbs, but was well enough to pronounce a blessing for the benefit of all who had contributed to the "liberators' fund." Then the Countess was said to have called the Swiss Guards to sustain the liberated Pope. Further it was stated that they carried His Holiness on their shoulders to the throne-room, "and Leo XIII. was once more at the head of the Catholic church."

It is to be hoped that the Royal Tribunal in Rome will in this instance inflict an exemplary punishment, notwithstanding the fact that the government itself is robbing the church more and more. It is a difficult task to explain how Catholics, of whatever class they may be, could have been deceived by such incredible stories; we must attribute their credulity to the innocence of their hearts, which cannot conceive in others the possibility of such abominable lies. Protestants, of course, who will hear of this case, will no doubt, shake their heads at such simplicity; while they themselves believe stories far more incredible, like the bogus Encyclical of last spring, according to which the Catholics of the United States were to exterminate all the Protestants on or about St. Ignatius day; or like the bogus oath of the Jesuits, which has been flaunted so much in some obscure newspapers, and we are far from believing that this credulity of some Protestants proceeds from the innocence of their hearts, otherwise they would not presuppose such wickedness in the Jesuits and, still less, in the Holy Father.

It is fortunate that the swindlers, who duped so many well-intentioned Catholics, were arrested at the request of the Papal Secretary of State, and that Leo XIII. refused to interfere on behalf of the Countess, when begged to do so; as, otherwise, the enemies of the church, at least the Apapists, would call the whole affair a scheme gotten up by the Vatican to make money. A lie more or less matters very little with some people, provided it serves their purpose.

An Expedition to Liberate two Enslaved Missionaries.

A captain belonging to a Honved regiment, says a cable dispatch, will shortly start for Cairo, where he will assume the command of an expedition to the Sudan. The object of the expedition is to liberate the Austrians, Herr Neufelder, a merchant, and Statin Bey, who have long been held as slaves by the Mahdists.

Before the departure of the expedition; from Cairo, its commander will have a conference with Father Carwalder the priest, who escaped from the Mahdists.

Father Carwalder and Sisters Catherine Chimerini and Elizabeth Venturini Mission were captured by the Mahdists and held in slavery for a long time. They effected their escape during a fight between the natives and Omdurman, and after many privations crossed the desert to Kordoko. They reported that when they left Omdurman there were still held captives by the Mahdists at that place nineteen Greeks, eight Syrians, eight Jews, and two Austrian Missionaries.

Statin Bey was then holding a high post under the Khalifa Abdallah, but was closely watched. Herr Neufelder was kept in chains and compelled to make powder for his captors in the old Austrian Mission church at Khartoum. Some of the captive sisters died soon after being taken into slavery.