

abolished, Protestant parliaments will be blown to atomicity, Protestant houses of worship and institutions of learning will be rased to the ground, and Protestants themselves hanged or burned as heretics. We have done so in the past and are just as likely to do so again when we see an opportunity fit and safe. This is the average Protestant opinion, and like divine faith in the Catholic, nothing can shake it.

Let us then endeavor to ascertain whether the conduct of Catholics in the past has been of such a revolting nature as to justify these convictions.

For this purpose we shall examine just one of the charges which Protestant historians have so forcibly urged as evidence of Catholic perfidy. Mr. Collier thus describes the famous gun-powder plot. When the Catholics of England found that James I. had no intention of establishing their religion, they determined to blow up the King, Lords and Commons with gun-powder, etc.

The plot having been discovered the conspirators fled, but being overtaken were cut to pieces while fighting desperately. Penal laws of the severest kind followed. No Catholic could live in London, none could be a lawyer or doctor. They were outlawed, and at any time their houses might be broken into with impunity.

From this description we naturally draw the following conclusions: 1st. All or almost all the Catholics of England were implicated in this fiendish plot. 2nd. Their only motive for thus conspiring against constituted authority was an ardent desire to establish their religion, and 3rd. That previous to this time Catholics enjoyed religious liberty and therefore had no reason to complain.

What could be more unjust or more intolerant? It is well known that during the forty-five years of Elizabeth's reign, the Catholics of England were accustomed to nothing but relentless persecution, and now that a new sovereign had ascended the throne, they lost no time in laying before him a humble supplication for the tolerance of their faith. Here are the concluding words of that interesting document which is still extant:

"We request no more favor from your Grace's hands than that we be allowed to profess our religion, if not in churches, at least in private houses, if not with

approbation, yet with toleration, without molestation.

Your Sacred Majesty's Most Devoted Subjects,

The Catholics of England."

To this very modest petition the King made most liberal promises, stating at the same time, that though the Church of Rome was stained by some infirmities, she was still their mother Church. But never was confidence more basely betrayed. Before a year elapsed, James had succeeded in establishing himself firmly on the throne of England. Henceforth he appeared in his true colors. The death-bed proclamation of Elizabeth, commanding all Catholic ecclesiastics under pain of death to leave the country in less than a month, was immediately put in operation. The old fine of twenty pounds imposed on Catholics for non-attendance at Protestant worship was speedily revived. Dungeons were filled with the zealous poor, churches were pillaged, statues, paintings, and crucifixes were destroyed. But why enumerate such acts? Their name is legion, and already too-well known, and should be recalled only as proofs that Catholics have not only been persecuted but also belied. Is it any wonder that under such circumstances, a few men were found rash and desperate enough to attempt to avenge such wrongs?

Not by the Catholics of England, but by ten outraged men, not to establish popery, but to escape the dungeon, was the gun-powder plot contemplated. Yet it is to commemorate this event, and to keep green in the memories of all the once secret contrivances and hellish malice of popish conspirators, that the English parliament has thought it proper to set apart a special day of prayer and thanksgiving. This is how Protestant tradition lives, as this also explains why Catholics are still shunned as dangerous—*ab uno disce omnes*. Believing such charges as these, Protestants would have us be what they believe. Better far that we should be hypocrites, idolaters, profligates, rogues and even demons than that one of them should be mistaken in his belief. The wish is father to the thought. Though we were the meanest reptiles that ever "belied the human form divine," they would not have us otherwise if they