



# CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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## A BEAUTIFUL SKETCH—APOSTLE OF THE INDIES.

A cotemporary calls our attention to the following graphic sketch of the great Francis Xavier, and of his labors in the East. Coming, as it does, from a Protestant pen, it cannot but be regarded as a most "significant sign of the times." It is from a late number of the *North British Review*, the organ of the Free Church of Scotland:—*Truth Teller*.

"It was in the spring of the year 1641, that the first missionary of the new Society of Jesus turned his clear, blue eyes, for the last time, upon the orange groves of Spain, and set his face towards the shining Orient. A Portuguese vessel, destined to carry out to Goa a new Indian viceroy, and a reinforcement of a thousand men, suffered the great-hearted enthusiast to sink silently on board, and to mingle with the noisy crowd of soldiers and mariners on her deck. No pleasant well-fitted cabin was there for him—no well-supplied "cuddy-table"—no outfit that he did not carry on his back. He pillowed his head upon a coil of ropes, and ate what the sailors discarded. But there was not a seaman in that laboring vessel—there was not a soldier in that crowded troopship, who did not inwardly recognize the great soul that glowed beneath those squalid garments. No outward humiliation could conceal that knightly spirit; no sickness and suffering could quench the fire of that ardent genius. The highest and the lowest held converse with him; and, abject, prostrate as he was, he towered above them all, alike as a gentleman and a scholar. And when, thirteen months after the vessel sailed out of Lisbon, its rent sails were furlled, and its strained cables coiled before the sea-port of Goa, there was not one of the many enthusiasts who now, as they dropped down her weather-stained and shattered side, shaped for themselves in imagination so brilliant a career in the great Indies, or heaped up such piles of visionary wealth as stirred the heart of Francis Xavier. But his career was only that of the Christian Missionary, and the riches he was to gain were countless thousands of human souls.

It was Xavier's will to suffer. The King of Portugal had ordered, that on his passage to India a cabin should be placed at his disposal, and furnished with everything that could render tolerable the discomforts of a sea life. But he had rejected these kindly offers, and contented himself with the bare deck as his home; and a single cloak to shelter him in the foul weather, and a few books to solace him in the fair. And now that he had reached the point at which were to commence his apostolic ministrations, the same spirit of self-dependence animated him in all that he did. He had prayed before his departure for more stripes; he had asked the Divine goodness to grant him in India the pains that had been faintly foreshadowed in his Italian career. He had carried out all sorts of briefs and credentials from regal and pontifical hands; and the bishop now eagerly tendered him assistance, and pressed upon him pecuniary support. But he refused all these Episcopal offers, and sought no aid but that of God. The more danger seemed to thicken—the more appalling the difficulties that beset his path—the louder, the more earnest was his cry, "Yet more, O, my God!—yet more!"

Protestant zeal is only contemptible when it denies that Francis Xavier was a great man. Delusion he may have had, strong as ever wrought upon the human soul; but the true nobility of his nature is not to be gainsaid. He faced the most tremendous trials with a courage and a consistency of the highest order, and prosecuted the most arduous and astounding labor with an energy and a perseverance scarcely exemplified in the history of human action. He found himself suddenly thrown into the midst of a mingled community of natives and Europeans, of which it was hard to say whether the one or the other were sunk in the deeper and more debasing idolatry. It was a privilege to him to endure hardship and to be beset with difficulty in the prosecution of his great work. His courage rose as the objects in his path loomed larger, and he waded through the sea of pollution that lay before him as one who never feared to sink. He began his course by endeavoring to entice his countrymen at Goa into a purer way of life; and, as none since the days of the apostle Paul had known better how to abound and how to be abased, he became as weak unto the weak, all things to all men, that by all means he might save some. The knightly spirit was never extinct with him; with the chivalry and the courtesy of the old noble, he united the fulness and readiness of the scholar; and whether among the gay and gallant officers who surrounded the Viceroy of Portugal, or among the degraded fishermen on the coast of Malabar, the gentle blood which flowed in his veins imparted dignity to his presence, softness to his speech, and the most winning generosity to his actions. Whether, placing himself at the head of a band of oppressed Christians, he charged down, cruci-

fix in hand, upon a marauding enemy, or whether he braved death in fever-hospitals or lazar-houses, performing readily the most sickening offices for their tainted inmates, the same noble courage and self-devotion shone out in every thing he did. That the doctrines he taught may not have been the soundest—that his means of teaching were insufficient—that he knew little of the native languages—that he made converts who in reality were no converts—that he had an overweening faith, not peculiar to the sixteenth century, in the efficacy of infant baptism, are facts which all history records, but no true history in a grudging spirit. The more insufficient his means, the greater the faith that sustained him. When Francis Xavier went about the streets of Goa, or traversed the villages on the western coast, bell in hand, its clear sounds all who heard to gather round him and accept from his lips the first rudiments of Christian truth; and when, with inalienable European accent, he enunciated a rude translation of the Apostle's Creed, and then of the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments, he did not believe that he, so unworthy an agent, so weak a vessel, could convert thousands of wandering heathens to the faith as it is in Christ; but he believed that even a weaker vessel, even a more unworthy agent, might, in God's hands, become a human medium for the conversion of tens of thousands, and he did his best, knowing how little it was in itself, but how great it might become, if the Holy Ghost descended upon him as a dove, and birdlike accompanied him in his wanderings. How far the Divine Spirit may have worked in him, and for him, it is not for us in these days to determine. It was said that a miraculous gift of tongues was vouchsafed to him, that he raised the dead, and performed other prodigies—but he was too truthful, too real a man to favor the growth of errors which the whole Catholic world was only too willing to accept; and it would be the vilest injustice to fix upon the first Jesuit missionary the charge of dishonesty and insincerity, because among his followers have been liars and hypocrites of the worst class.

"The Proselytes of Francis Xavier are numbered by his followers, not by tens, but by hundreds of thousands. He is said to have converted seven hundred thousand unbelievers to the Christian faith. His converts were drawn from all classes, from princes to pariahs. That the dishonesty or credulity of his biographers have greatly magnified his success is not to be denied; but, making large deductions on this score, there still remain a formidable balance of nominal Christianity to be carried to the account of the apostle. His superhuman energies seem to have been attended with almost miraculous results. Idols fell at his approach; churches rose at his bidding; and the sign of the cross became the recognized symbol of fellowship among the inmates of entire villages. From Goa he travelled southward to the pearl-fisheries of Cape Comorin, and after succoring the poor people who had been driven thence to the shores of the Straits of Manaar, returned to the western coast and commenced his labor, with extraordinary energy and success, in Travancore. According to his own account, he baptized ten thousand heathens in a single month—carrying on the holy work till he could no longer articulate the words of the formula, or raise his hand to perform the office. Then he took ship for the Eastern Isles; visited Malacca, Amboyna, Ternate, Java; and, after a while, returned to visit his churches in Southern India, and to prepare himself for a great crusade against the Bonzes of Japan. More than two years were spent in the holy war; many strange adventures he encountered, many converts he made, and many churches he established; but his career was now drawing to a close. He returned to Goa, and there in council with one Iago Pereira, captain of the vessel which had carried the apostle on his strange and perilous voyage from Japan, formed the magnificent design of converting the Chinese Empire. But he never reached the flowery land. Difficulties beset the enterprise. The apostle of the Jesuits landed at the Island of Sanchian; and there as he was about to join, full of heart and hope, the Siamese embassy of which he had gained tidings, and thus aided to penetrate into the interior of the Celestial Empire, the hand of God was put forth to stay his triumphant career; the Divine mandate, "thus far shalt thou go, and no further," was issued to that lowly, well-prepared servant of God; he met the summons with rapture, and on the bare beach, or beneath a miserable shed, which sheltered him neither from the heat by day nor the cold by night, he closed a life of agency and bliss, of humiliation and triumph, with scarcely a parallel in the history of the world.

\* Whoever wishes to weigh the arguments FOR and AGAINST the miracles attributed to St. Francis Xavier, will find the matter discussed in Bishop Milner's 'End of Controversy,' letter, 'Proof of Holiness'; and still more fully in the appendix to the 'Life of the Saints,' published in Philadelphia, in 1840.

## THE WIZARD AND THE CALF.—PARLIAMENTARY SYMPTOMS ON TENANT RIGHT.

(From the Tablet.)

Parliament meets, and we have the Queen's speech. In that sublime document we have two paragraphs about the condition of agriculture—not specially in Ireland, but in the empire. One paragraph laments the difficulties "felt by that important body among my people, who are owners and occupiers of land." The other paragraph hopes that their difficulties will diminish.

Still, not a word about Ireland; not a line about the Landlord and Tenant Bill; not a sentence about the fruits that were to come from the Devon Commission, and other solemn and farce-like inquiries; not even a notice of some Bill or measure to be laid on the table at some future day. Not a word. But in place of it a long discourse from Mr. Peto, in which—as seconder of the Address—he proves on behalf of the Government the enormous advance of Ireland in industrial pursuits during the six years of famine, and the ten years preceding; the "still more cheering prospect of agriculture;" capital flowing into the country, land consolidated, stock increased, flax cultivated, "large breadths of land sown with cereals," and "the great eagerness of the people to establish packet stations."

Thus stands the case between the Government and the people of Ireland. For the ruined, starving, emigrating population of this country, it has not a word of comfort or of hope. It obstinately refuses to stretch out to them a helping hand. It leaves them to themselves—to starve, to die, to be ruined, and to rot. It despises them. It forswears them. Its main function is to make war upon the Clergy, to undermine their Faith, to plot against their religion, to debauch their morals, and having wasted them to skeletons in this life, to plunge their souls in torments in the life to come.

People of Ireland, peasantry of Ireland, Clergy of Ireland, this is the paternal Government that rules over you; that hates you, that persecutes you, that oppresses you, that makes your land a hell, and uproots from amongst you all traces of a well-ordered civil society. Such is the Government. It will do you nothing but evil; hope nothing from it. Your only hope is in yourselves; in the new franchise; in a new set of representatives; in banding yourselves together as one man against the tyrant landlords and their miscreant tools in the Castle and in Downing-street. They will do nothing for you but scourge you, and add to the chastisement of God the fiend-like wickedness of man. When they should be feeding the hungry and clothing the naked; when they should be fulfilling their oft-repeated promises, and giving protection to those whom their laws have so pitilessly robbed and murdered, they can find time for nothing but new penal laws against the Clergy, and new conspiracies against the independence of the Church.

We hope the Catholic Clergy of Ireland will not let this matter sleep, but in every county, barony, and parish of Ireland, will rouse up their flocks to energetic and well-organised activity against the persecutors who, reversing the law of the Gospel, have made, and are making, themselves equally notorious for their corporal and spiritual works—not of mercy, but of merciless and inhuman cruelty.

Meanwhile, we are very happy to inform our readers, especially those of the South, that in the North, and more particularly in the county Down, the movement for the protection of the tenant farmers is rapidly advancing, and is striking deep root in the soil. The Banbridge meeting of last Monday was in every way most satisfactory, and gives the best possible promise of work. The Northern part of the county is being most energetically worked, by men of great ability and zeal; and it is our firm belief that before long this great county will have distanced, in its support to the Tenant League, every other county in Ireland—Meath always excepted.

## THE MINISTERIAL MEASURE—THE LESS THE BETTER.

(From the Weekly News.)

There can no doubt about it: the Ministers' Measure, as contrasted with the Minister's letter and the country's excitement, is a very small thing. It is equally free from doubt that as applied to Ireland it is a very vexatious thing. It is not only quite possible, but highly probable, that for all practical purposes it will be a very ineffective thing.

And yet, small, vexatious, and ineffective, as it may be, we doubt, exceedingly, whether any set of men called upon to govern this country, under the actual circumstances of this year, 1851, could devise anything which should be at once less ineffective, less vexatious, and less small.

Let us see clearly what our actual position is be-

fore pronouncing as to what our course of action ought to be. Whatever else a great nation may ignore, it cannot ignore its own antecedents. Consistency of public action is vital to the character of States, though its want may not be absolutely fatal to the character of Statesmen.

England—Roman Catholicism—the Holy See—in what relation did these three stand together when the act was accomplished on which the Parliament of England has now to legislate?

Why recapitulate what every one knows? The Act of 1829 gave our Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen a political status. The Acts of 1845 and 1846 repealed the penalties that the legislature of the Protestant Tudors—aye, and even of the Catholic Plantagenets—had carefully imposed on the maintenance in this realm of the Pope's ecclesiastical supremacy, and on the introduction of those instruments by which that supremacy was to be upheld. The language of the Whig leaders (as Lord John Russell frankly admitted on Wednesday night) had been favorable even to a still more complete recognition of the legal action of the Court of Rome within the shores of the four seas. The conduct of the Whig Ministry (after making every reasonable abatement for official indiscretion and subordinate blundering) had unquestionably been such as to favor the claims to rank and precedence of the Catholic hierarchy, both in Ireland and the Colonies. England had diplomatic relations with the *Sovereign of the Roman States*—none with the *Holy See*.

Such was the *status quo ante bellum*: then came the thunderbolt which, launched from a feeble hand, stirred into sudden flame the "fierce democracy" of English Protestantism. As we have over and over again said, we rejoice in that vehement, spontaneous, and sincere demonstration of resentment. It was the nation's own declaratory resolution—it was the adequate and, we are strongly inclined to think, the only appropriate, mode of dealing with an offence wholly beyond the reach of any penal laws which England could enact without first repealing the nineteenth century.

But it was fitting that [what had been done by the nation should not be ignored by the Legislature. The verdict of England was to be fixed in the records of her Parliament. In what way? That was the practical question which Government had to solve; their solution is the Ministerial Measure. The question for the people of England is, whether such measure be, not indeed the best conceivable, but almost the best practicable, solution of the difficulty. We are strongly inclined to think that, among reasonable men of all parties, the opinion is gaining ground, that, upon the whole, this is so.

The zealots, indeed, on both sides, are of course indignant; but between the fanatics of tolerance, and of intolerance, between Mr. Roebuck and the Earl of Winchester, there is a great body of thinking Englishmen, who, at all events in the absence of some more statesman-like plan of operations, are well content to take up with the Ministerial scheme.

This acquiescence will no doubt arise, in some degree, from the varying opinions formed as to the probable effect of the intended measure. Some will accept it as a decorous nullity, others as an effectual piece of prohibitory legislation. Our opinion is with the former class. As at present advised, we do not see how it can even preclude the synodical action of the Romish Episcopate, or materially interfere with the endowment of the Romish Secs.

(From the Spectator.)

We may remark that the whole drift of Lord John's career has been to put the Roman Catholic Prelates on their guard, by holding out large and formidable threats at first, and then, by flinching from such advanced position, it has left the well-reconnoitered ground free to the enemy. The "insidious" invaders will be at once stimulated to the highest degree of watchfulness and encouraged to make new encroachments. For the proposed law "to prevent the assumption of certain ecclesiastical titles" must be an idle law. Prohibit Cardinal Wiseman from calling himself Archbishop of Westminster, and what do you effect? You force him to sign himself "Nicholas Wiseman," instead of "Nicholas, Cardinal, Archbishop of Westminster"; but you do not prevent everybody from calling him by that title. Indeed, if you were to attempt the enforcement of any law against private persons—if you were to bring up Mr. Langdale or Lord Arundel and Surrey for a misdemeanor in calling Dr. Wiseman "Archbishop"—ridicule, shame, and indignation would contend for mastery in the public mind at such an exhibition. But whatever the law is, it is to extend to Ireland—Lord John has braved that difficulty: now, how can he, after all that has been professed, done, and permitted there, work any really stringent law in Ireland? Indeed, our belief is that the new law is not