

visually measured by them), and put the pistols into our hands. They then retired to a little distance; the pistols were raised; and we waited but the signal to fire, when some police-officers whose approach none of us had noticed, and who were within a second of being too late, rushed out from a hedge behind Jeffrey; and one of them striking at Jeffrey's pistol with his staff, knocked it to some distance into the field, while another running over to me, took possession also of mine. We were then replaced in our respective carriages and conveyed crest-fallen to Bow street.—Lord John Russell *Memoirs of Moore*.

THE APPROACHING STRUGGLE WITH POPERY.

ADDRESS OF THE NATIONAL CLUB.—The Committee of the National Club have issued an address on the "progress of foreign Popery, as affecting English safety," and we regret that the pressure of matter upon our columns does not permit us to give it *in extenso*. It is a document of more than ordinary ability, and deserving of attentive perusal by all who love their country and reverence the God of truth. Amongst the points connected with "foreign Popery" to which the Address calls attention, is the fact that!

In France the absolute autocrat of the French nation is the close ally of the Pope. He has restored him to his "seven hills." He guards him with French armies. The new French Emperor and the Priest party in France are identified: so that the French army and the French Roman priesthood are united under one head.

The conclusion at which the Address arrives, upon the facts set forth in it, is, that a great struggle is impending between the principle of Popery and the principle of Protestant truth, which will be fought in and by this country; whereupon the awful question is asked, "how we are preparing," and "how we ought to be preparing" for that struggle.

PIERCE CONNELLY'S LETTER TO THE EARL OF SHREWSBURY.

DEAR LORD SHREWSBURY.—The friendship with which you have honoured me for more than 15 years, from the day when your kind courtesy first brought you to my modest apartment in "Via della Croce," and subsequently led you to stand sponsor for me upon entering the Church of Rome—which at last placed me in the confidential relationship of your domestic chaplain and in close intimacy—a friendship proclaimed so honourably to me in my absence, and ever proved so affectionately at home, and which, on an occasion of great affliction, supported me by a sympathy given with manly frankness, but with all a woman's gentleness—such a friendship, deeply felt, and dearly remembered, imposes it upon me, almost as a duty, to offer you publicly, if not an apology, at least the reasons, for my renouncing, as much against my feelings as your own, not only a position of much happiness and many worldly advantages, but the religion, which at one-and-thirty years of age I had deliberately chosen, and to which you solemnly took upon you to answer for my fidelity.

You doubtless will remember my printed letter to my Bishop, when I gave up my preferment in the Protestant Church in America, long before taking a more decisive step. You will remember the principle which lay at the bottom of all my dissatisfaction with Protestantism, and what dear Bishop Otey called, my horror of the restless spirit of democracy in Church and State.

I am not ashamed of that principle, however I may be of the conclusions to which it led me. Nor am I ashamed of having been deluded into thinking purity and charity to be synonymous with morality in a Church which showed me such living examples as Gwendaline Talbot and Carlo Odescalchi.

Hierarchical subordination, whether in state or Church, in a kingdom or in a family, I still consider the only basis for a community to be built upon, the tranquility of order, the only tranquility that deserves the name. And the virtues of the angelic persons I have named, (and of others I could mention, not yet gone to their reward,) seen so nearly as I saw them, were enough to establish Rome's claim to sanctity, if they had only been Rome's real coinage. But they were not.—They were the pure gold that counterfeiters show you to make their base coin current.

But what I saw required a constituted "power" as well as commission, a human Head with a Divine authority; and such an authority—an authority which could make doubt, anathema—to be just or valid, must be infallible. I wanted supernatural attributes embodied visibly. I started with wholly mistaken notions of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth. I was more than half a Romanist before I ever dreamed of Rome. And when, at last I so avowed myself to myself, it was upon no examination of such dogmas as transubstantiation, the merit of good works, or the like; it was in submission to a polity which I believed to be divinely established upon earth, and to stand upon the same level as the highest dogma. I became a Roman Catholic wholly and solely on the ground of there being among men a living, infallible interpreter of the mind of God, with divine jurisdiction, and with authority to enforce submission to it. Well do

I remember the elaborate argument of one of the most distinguished—if not the most distinguished—of the canonists of Rome, which convinced me of the right and duty of papal persecution. And I defy any honest man of ordinary capacity to resist the argument, if he once acknowledged the lowest pretensions of the Papal Church. To burn heretics whenever practicable and expedient, (and it is now inculcated on the Roman Catholic children of England by command of Dr. Wiseman,) is as binding as abstinence on a Friday.

From the moment that I accepted infallibility and a visible supreme headship over Christendom, I frankly and deliberately gave up my reason, or at least, in all matters of faith and principle, solemnly purposed to renounce it. From that moment I never examined one single doctrine of the Church of Rome with any other view than to be able to defend it against heretics and other "infidels." And I not only gave up myself, body and spirit, but, God forgive me, I gave up all that was entrusted to me, all that was dear to me, to my new obedience. I believed myself to be the most thorough of Roman Catholics, a very fakir in my allegiance; and my ecclesiastical superiors believed me to be so too.

How often the strange unreality of this deep conviction must have occurred to you, dear Lord Shrewsbury, since our sad parting! Like the infallibility on which it was founded, it was a delusion. I never was wholly a subject of the mysterious Church of Rome, no more than tens of thousands of others who live and die in her.

I had put my natural affections under ban, I had renounced the senses which our Lord himself bade his Apostle, St. Thomas, appeal to finally. I had renounced much of private reason. But I never had let go my conscience.

And so I never was—you are not, my Lord, you never can be—truly a Romanist. No man can be truly a Romanist who is not so *unlimitedly and without reserve*. Conscience and the creed of Pius IV. are contraries, contradictories. To make a consistent, congruous Roman Catholic, there must be unreasoning submission in morals as in faith.

But though my allegiance to the Church of Rome was a delusion, and a culpable delusion,—for it had its origin in carnal-mindedness and pride,—it was most sincere. The sacrifices which I made, and the ways in which I proved my devotedness, you, my dear Lord, and many other illustrious Roman Catholics, will not need to be reminded of, and will not allow to be forgotten. At the time I made those sacrifices, they were the almost involuntary expression of my passionate love to the Church of my imagination and my hope. They are even now my poor excuses to myself. Devotion to any cause, as to any person, finds its natural utterance in sacrifices. And to the last, it was not from sacrifices nor sufferings that I drew back—I drew back from nothing, even in my most secret thoughts till I was required to be a *conscious partaker* in undoubted sin.

There is, blessed be God, still power for good in the Roman priesthood, and hundreds of its members, there is a desire only for what is good. But great as may be the power of an individual priest for good, it is infinitely greater for evil. Sincere as may be an individual priest's desire for good, in the great polity of which he is an agent, often a blind agent, the good itself is always, and necessarily, a means of evil; nay, its chief value is as a means of multiplying evil. I have had experience in the Confessional, from princes downward and out of it, such as perhaps has fallen to the lot of no other living man, and my solemn conviction is, that celibate priesthood, organized like that of Rome, is in irreconcilable hostility with all great human interests.

Go from one corner of the globe to the remotest opposite; take the experience of families in the highest or the very lowest rank, of the most cultivated or the most barbarous nations;—the same strange concord of result wherever Papal influence predominates, shows a still more strange unity of purpose.

Men may be kept like domesticated animals, as in Paraguay, like savages, as in Ireland, or, as in France, they may be covered with every comfort and every luxury of material, æsthetic civilization; they may be democrats, as in America, or democrat-hating absolutists any where; but no more in the land of Galileo than in the Rocky Mountains, no more at Oxford than at Timbuctoo are they left with the intellect unfettered, or the moral sense at large; no where is individual or even universal conscience recognised as an authority; no where is a government of laws attempted or even possible; no where is sacredness of person any more respected than sacredness of soul. The liberty of common men—is the liberty of beasts within a park; the liberty of kings—a sort of game-license from the "Supreme temporal Governor of Christendom."

Inborn reverence for man's fellow-man or self respect, is incompatible with spiritual subjugation. And, while the most unnatural incest, committed with a dispensation, ceases to be sinful, the tie that binds a woman to her husband, a son or daughter to a parent, a mother to her child, is venerated only according to an hostile priest's notions of expediency; as for loyalty to a native sovereign: in Rome's philosophy it is a baby's fondness for a doll, something to be grown out of along with spiritual babyhood.

I knew this same Church of Rome, in its pretty schemes of anarchy in families, more hateful and more devilish then when it deals with nations.

I have seen priests and bishops of the Church of Rome, their own convictions disregarded and all responsibility to God and to society thrown off, and in the instinct of hostility to man's natural relationships, (in spite, too, in one instance, of the private commands of the Pope himself,) I have seen them band together, for the mere sake of a legacy or a life interest, to break down laws which are looked upon, even by savages, as the most sacred of all, divine or human. I have known a husband taught and directed to deal double in the sacred matter of religion with his own high-born sisters, wives with their husbands, and daughters without number with their trusting parents. I have known, in Derbyshire, a young lady not eighteen years of age, the daughter of a widow mother, the mother also a Roman Catholic, seduced into a convent under false pretences, kept there in spite of every effort of her family, with the approbation of the papal authorities, and only delivered by my own public threat, as a priest, of application to the civil power and consequent fear of scandal. I have seen clerical inviolability made to mean nothing less than license and impunity. I have read to the pure and simple minded Cardinal-Prefect of the Propaganda a narrative, written to a pious lay friend by a respected Roman Priest, of such enormities of lust in his fellow-priests around him, that the reading of them took away my breath.—to be answered, "Caro mio, I know it, I know it all, and more, and worse than all; but nothing can be done." I have known a priest (here in England) practise Liquori on his clientele simply as an amateur of wickedness apparently without conscious malice, just as he would try poison upon dogs or cats; an lago, without even an imaginary wrong from any body. I have known this creature get up, and very successfully, a miracle.—(I have proofs in his own hand-writing.)—at the very moment when as a brother priest satisfied me, he was experimenting in seduction. But nothing could be done! I have known a priest received and honoured at a prince-bishop's table, when the host knew him to have just seduced a member of his own family. But nothing could be done! I have been mocked with false promises by dean and bishop in denouncing a young priest in whose bed-room.—and before there had been time for him to dress himself,—in broad day, in England, under a convent roof, I had myself found a young nun, apparently as much at home as her confessor was himself. I have been forced to let pass, without even ecclesiastical rebuke, a priest's attempt upon the chastity of my own wife, the mother of my children, and to find instead, only sure means taken to prevent the communication to me of any similar attempt in future.

This is a part of what has come within my own experience. But it is not yet the worst of that sad experience.

I have seen priests of mean abilities, of coarse natures, and gross breeding, practise upon pure and highly gifted women of the upper ranks, married, and unmarried, the teachings of their treacherous and impure casuistry, with a success that seemed more than human. I have seen these priests impose their pretendedly divine authority, and sustain it by mock miracles, for ends that were simply devilish. I have had poured into my ears what can never be uttered, and what ought not to be believed, but was only too plainly true. And I have seen that all that is most deplorable is not an accident, but a result, and an inevitable result, and a confessedly inevitable result of the working of the practical system of the Church of Rome, with all its stupendous machinery of mischief.

And the system is irrevocable and irremediable.

When I compare the Church of Rome, as I now see it with what I painted her to myself, with the imaginary realization of our blessed Saviour's scheme for fallen men's sanctification, no words can convey my horror at the contrast. I should often doubt the conclusion of my reason, mistrust my moral sense, and reject my certain knowledge as a dream, if God's written word and man's universal conscience, if the experience of both hemispheres and ten centuries did not confirm me.

And though I acknowledge, dear Lord Shrewsbury, that you are the man of all others

in the world, to whom I am most bounden by duty, as well as affection, to defend my renunciation of communion with Rome, I should not have had the heart to do so, if I doubted for a moment that the character of the system which I have revealed, was as abhorrent to you as to myself. Nay, more I should believe my conscience, if I professed to think that the mass of Englishmen who think themselves Roman Catholics, really are so. I profoundly doubt, if,—out of the ranks of the recent converts to Romanism,—there can be found a dozen Englishmen of thirty years of age, who are *really* Roman Catholics, who are ready to act upon their principles, when they maintain the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, and his infallibility, as Mouthpiece of the Almighty, in faith and morals.

The ties which bind an individual to his hereditary religion partake of the mysterious character of religion itself. But religion has claims as a national as well as an individual affair. And the religion of the Bible, protesting against that of Rome, is emphatically the national religion of Great Britain and America. And in my soul I am persuaded it is their religion, that has made these countries, and that keeps them what they are, just as I am persuaded it is its religion that has made France what it is just now. Those who think any religion contemptible because it mixes error with truth, or because they see its ecclesiastics individually contemptible, are hopeless. They are almost fit to be considered, what Rome has always considered *mere* men and women, as creatures half-way between priests and monks, not to be reasoned with, but ruled absolutely.

In the first interview I ever had the honour to have with Prince Metternich, the subject of his most minute inquiries was the religious development of America, politically considered, the relative numbers of the different sects and their distinctive doctrines and discipline. Upon my remarking one day in his private cabinet the admirable "American Almanac" for the current year, he playfully boasted that I could find few in Europe better acquainted with my native country than himself; but it was over, even in that new empire its religion that was his chief interest, that which he considered the preponderant interest of the State. The experience of Europe during the last four years it would seem, should be enough to make all men think it so in every commonwealth.

What thinking man, (thinking of other things than himself I mean,) what thinking man, that saw into whose hands France placed anew the rudder of the State in 1848, but knew where these hands would guide it? whether Cavaignac or Bourbon, Louis Bonaparte or Orleans, held the baubles of authority.

When Machiavelli, whose infidelity was learnt from Popes, whose depth of wisdom was all his own, when Machiavelli points to profligate and dismembered Italy, "This," he exclaims, "is what we owe to the Church of Rome." What kingdom on the Continent, but may now echo Machiavelli's gratitude for Italy!

In bringing this painful letter to a conclusion, perhaps it only remains for me to add, that, though I have not entered into the religious part, properly so called, of the Papal System, it is not because I still cling to any single one of the distinctive doctrines of the Church of Rome; but I have not forgotten the awful regard with which I ever approached them during my great delusion. Their mysterious fascination of soul and sense, must have been felt to be imagined. God only knows, how my whole being was bowed down before, what I believed, His real presence in the mass, how I almost seemed to myself sensible of angels kneeling round me, when I lifted up the host to be adored. And I cannot but respect the deep insecurity of such faith in others, however, I can no longer hold it, when all the visionary basis it was built upon is gone for ever.

No one knows better than your Lordship what a wretch it was that broke me from the Church of Rome. But painful as it was, I should be the most ungrateful of men, if I did not ever bless God, publicly as well as in private, for the grace that delivered me, and if in doing so, I did not also give my humble thanks to Him through Jesus Christ our Lord, that the grounds on which I renounced the communion of that Church, left my faith unshaken; that, of His great mercy, I was saved from the infidelity which is a too intelligible reaction with those who, because the faith which grasped at "the secret things of the Lord our God" has proved a great delusion, reject also "those revealed things which belong unto us and to our children for ever that we may do all the words of the law."

Believe me ever,

Dear Lord Shrewsbury,
With the sincerest affection and regard,
Your faithful servant,

PIERCE CONNELLY.
Albany Heath, Guilford, Dec. 27. 1851.