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CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SITUATION OF CATHOLICISM IN 1800 AND IN 1852.

(From the *Count de Montalembert's recent pamphlet, "Des Interests Catholiques au XIX. Siecle."*)

In entering upon the consideration of a subject of such majestic immensity as that of Catholicism, the great difficulty is, to avoid prolixity, and to restrain our efforts within concise and prescribed limits. I should wish, in taking a retrospective view of past, though recent events, and of the present state of Catholic interests in Europe, to avoid any digression into the province of theology, philosophy, or science; to discard even all very remote historical recollections; and to concentrate the attention of my readers in the circle of the direct relations of the Church with society as it now exists.

In order to form a clear and concise estimate of this situation, I cannot imagine a more rapid and certain plan, than that of retracing fifty years, and figuring the state of Catholicism in Europe on the first day of the last year of the eighteenth century.

On the first of January, 1800, there was no Pope. Pius the VI had died at Valence; the exile and prisoner of an atheistical republic. Rome had only just been released from the hands of a horde of pagans, who had set up an apology for a republic, in proclaiming the perpetual dissolution of the papacy. A most perilous interregnum, of eight months, intervened between the death of Pius VI and the election of Pius VII. The sacred college, expelled from Rome, could only be assembled under the safeguard of a schismatical army, brought over from the interior of Muscovy, to arrest, for a time, the parricidal arms of a people but lately the most eminent of Catholic nations. A few old men, assembled behind the Russian lines, in an island of the marshes of Venice, that haughty and accomplished city, which had just been laid low, after having signalled itself by its shuffling hostility to the Roman Church, of which, during the middle ages, it had formed the bulwark and the honor. The Cardinals spent a hundred and four days in solemn conclave, without coming to any agreement, preoccupied with what a contemporary calls the *state of flagrant treason in Catholic Europe*: at length they agreed to bestow their votes upon a monk, whose principal title consisted in his obscurity. The Austrians were in possession of the Legations; the Neapolitans were masters of the city of Rome. Pius VII therefore, did not obtain from these two powers, without considerable difficulty, those states of which Napoleon was soon again to deprive him.

In the kingdom of Clavis and St. Louis, the state of the Catholic religion was this:—The entire body of the episcopacy was in exile; the clergy decimated by the guillotine and banishment; the faithful hunted and harassed, long driven to the alternative of open apostasy or death, only just beginning to breathe, and enjoy in silence the tolerance of contempt. There was no resource, either material or moral; the vast patrimony of the Church, formed by the love and voluntary donations of forty generations, was totally alienated; the religious orders, after a thousand years of glory and works of benevolence, were extirpated and suppressed; three thousand monasteries and convents abolished, and together with them, all the colleges, chapters, sanctuaries, asylums of penance, retreat, study and prayer!

France, polluted by ten years of revolution, had just placed herself under the dominion of a young conqueror, who had delivered her, at the same time, from a state of anarchy, and deprived her of her liberty; who knew everything could do everything, and willed everything; who, in Italy, had imposed on the Holy See the cruel treaty of Tolentino; who, in Egypt, had embraced Islamism; and who was only known to the church which he was so gloriously to restore, for the acts of deception and spoliation which he had practised upon her.

Persecution had no sooner been allayed, than it gave place to the uncontested victory of evil. Legislation, education, and morals had fallen a prey to the practice of all the theories of the eighteenth century. The social family became dismembered under the action of divorce. From every sanctuary God had been expelled. Bernardin de Saint Pierre for having pronounced His name, was insulted before the assembled Academy. Voltaire might have seemed too reserved, and Rousseau too mystical, in the bosom of this society, which only divested itself of the preoccupations of war, and the infallibility

of mathematics, to delight itself with Parny and Pignault-Lebrun.

England, diverted from the revolutionary torrent by the eloquence of Burke and the genius of Pitt, looked with an eye of astonishment on the virtues and the courage of those Catholic bishops and priests, whom proscription had thrown in thousands on her hospitable shores; but no symptoms were as yet observable of any immediate change in the barbarous system of legislation which had served to extirpate Catholicism from Great Britain, and crush it in Ireland. The blessings resulting from her glorious and solid institutions were available to all except the native Catholics. The British code was still further disgraced by the barbarous penalties instituted against the public exercise of the religion of Alfred and St. Edward. Her judges declared, from the justice-seat, that the law did not recognise a legal existence in any Catholic. The most illustrious families of her aristocracy were still excluded from their hereditary seats in the House of Lords. The most courageous soldier, if he were a Catholic, could not rise higher than the rank of a colonel. No amount of merit or talent—no service, however efficient, would have sufficed to open the portals of the House of Commons to any Catholic who should have refused to swear that transubstantiation was idolatry, and the mass a sacrilege. George III preferred to deprive his government of the corporation of Pitt, than consent to the change of one iota of these criminal follies. Every traveller who, twenty years ago, traversed that wonderful country, might have still seen those filthy dens, those sheds, those stables, to which the small remnant of the faithful in London were wont to repair, to attend the holy sacrifice; and those masses offered up in the open air, at which the famishing Irish were grouped together, in rags, around their priests, in sight of the deserted and profaned cathedrals, stolen from them by Elizabeth and Cromwell.

In Germany, the Church was yet more deeply sunk in that abasement, in which it appeared to be gradually disappearing, since the termination of the thirty years' war. At one time, mistress of the half of that empire, which her monks had cleared and cultivated, and her bishops had reclaimed from barbarism, she was now about to lose irrevocably the remnant of her patrimony. One half had already been annexed to France, and the other was about to be parcelled out, and allotted to those numerous princes and barons, Catholic and Protestant, who, at Lunéville and Ratisbon, were craving, from the hands of victorious revolution, a share in the spoils of the Church. She sank without resistance, she fell without honor. The Catholics, both clergy and laity, for a considerable period, had only opposed to the contempt of Protestantism, and the invasions of philosophy, an inert torpor. Catholicism had no voice, was held as an absolute non-entity, both in the political councils and in the literature of that nation, which lay prostrate at the feet of Frederick the Great, and which the paganism of Goethe thrilled with joy and admiration. Theology gave no signs of life, except in its struggles against Rome, under the inspiration of Febronius and his emulators. The last historical act of the three ecclesiastical electors of Mayence, Cologne, and Treves, had been to unite with the Archbishop of Salzburg, the Primate of all Germany, in drawing up, in the *Punctuations d'Em*, the code of revolt and ingratitude against the Holy See.—They were engaged in applying it, when the republican armies were sent to dethrone them, and inflict upon them the chastisement which they had justified by their previous conduct. Moreover, not a voice was raised in defence of the Christian truth, of the rights of the papacy, nor even of those ecclesiastical sovereignties, in which, for a thousand years, a proverbial happiness had reigned. There was nothing to announce, even in the distant future, the existence of a Stolberg, a Schlegel, a Gorres. In this vast shipwreck, the eye might wander over the whole of Catholic Germany, without discovering therein a single writer, doctor or bishop, worthy of the appellation.

In Italy, the same desolation and humiliation prevailed: laws issued against the Church by absolute monarchy at Naples, Parma, Turin and Florence, were upheld and enforced by demagogues; temples were profaned, monasteries suppressed, the people thrown into consternation; there was not a single martyr, nor even a soldier.

In Austria, the Church slept upon the bed of Procrustes, prepared for her by Joseph II. Upon the ruins of two thousand confiscated monasteries, two years before the constituent assembly had applied the same theories to the same victims, the imperial bureaucracy forged at its pleasure the velvet sheathed chains, with which to the present day it has fettered all the limbs of its captive. Joseph II wrote:—"I have made philosophy the legislator of my empire." And his successor, Leopold II, faithful in every respect

to his lessons, denounced before the states of Lower Austria, the power of the aristocracy and *monachism* as the source of all evil. Belgium, that cherished and faithful daughter of the Catholic house of Hapsburgh, had been wrested from it for ever. Ground down beneath the twofold effort of the monarchal revolution of Joseph II, and the revolutionary conquest of the terrorists, she had succumbed, but not without having first paved the way, by a generous effort in favor of religion and liberty, to that Catholic and national regeneration which we have had the consolation to witness.

Poland, that *orthodox* country, for such a long period the invincible bulwark of Europe and of the Church against Islam and the Greek schism, condemned by Voltaire before she was invaded by Catherine, was struggling, torn to pieces, and bleeding, under the claws of potentates, who had consummated, for the first time since the era of redemption, the murder of a Christian nation.

Spain, despoiled of all her ancient liberties, transformed, through the most unaccountable forgetfulness of her immortal past, into a domain deprived of its kings, enervated by two centuries of inglorious despotism, the silent spectator of the unheard-of attack committed by Charles III upon the Jesuits, was languishing under the dominion of a life-guardsmen, the queen's paramour and the king's favorite.

Portugal, where Pombal had renewed against the Jesuits the cruelties perpetrated by the Roman emperors upon the first martyrs, was only held by a single thread to the Roman Church. A perusal of the inestimable narrative of Cardinal Paeca, at that time nuncio at the Court of his most faithful majesty, will show to what a degree of abasement had fallen the ancient glory, the ancient liberty, and the faith of the kingdom founded by Alphonso of Burgundy, after a victory and miraculous vision, with the free consent of his barons, his people, and the sanction of the Holy See solicited by St. Bernard.

To recapitulate: nowhere was to be seen the slightest sign of salvation or of hope. Religion, everywhere neglected or destroyed, appeared to be banished from the face of the earth. Catholicism must have appeared to the sages of the world as a corpse that was only awaiting its interment.

Half a century has elapsed, and everything is transformed. Religion has everywhere resumed her place in the first rank; the Church is everywhere acknowledged as a power of the first order. Invoked by one class of her members with the confidence of an ever-faithful love, and by others with all the zeal of a recent conversion; by some, perhaps with regret and against the grain; if she is still attacked by some blinded mortals, none of them, at least, deny her power, her life, her fruitful immortality. When we cast a glance over the countries of Europe, ploughed up by revolutions and wars, we find her everywhere flourishing anew, extending her influence, exalting her ennobled head, and ruling the destinies of the world. Like the lofty summits after the deluge, in proportion as the waters retire, the truths which she has preached for eighteen centuries, and the institutions which she has established upon the solid foundation of the divine promise, are again exposed to our view.

(To be continued.)

MONEY CHURCH.

(From the *Dublin Weekly Telegraph*.)

Why do we call this monster establishment, which so long has mastered the State and people of the empire, the Money Church? Why so often allude to its wealth as the great element of its mischief? Not assuredly because we, on the part of the Catholic Church, envy its mere wealth, or its worldly prosperity; much less that if its day of reckoning came, as it undoubtedly must soon come, with the British empire, we desire any share of its spoils, which are the patrimony of the poor, and to the poor ought to be returned. But we allude to that enormous and wickedly acquired wealth, because in its nature, and through the means of its acquisition, it has been, and as long as possessed must continue to be, the primary source of those grievances, temporal and spiritual, which have destroyed the native industry, freedom, and prosperity of this gifted but prostrated land. Neither is this bad spirit the vice of its constitution, of an evanescent quality. It is not one, as experience has proved, to be conciliated by submission, or convinced by reason. It is an inherent virus, derived from its birth and co-ordinate with its existence—with the existence and constitution of an establishment originating in crime, subsisting on the fruits of

* The council of regency, after the death of Charles II, wrote in the following terms to Philip V, on the 3rd of November 1700:—"We will inform your majesty that the successor of the late king may come and take possession of this monarchy, and dispose of it as his private property." To such a state was reduced the Spain of the Cid, and of Isabella the Catholic.

plunder, and with no evidences of its mission but murders instead of miracles.

In the walls of its conventicles, in the halls of its academies, nothing is heard from its churchmen, nothing instilled among its youth but a perverted knowledge, worse than total ignorance of truth. Worse, we repeat, than total ignorance—for in this case the minds of men may be a blank—more open to truth, more accessible to its instructions, and the conscience once awakened, the soul will embrace conviction, without the alloy of falsehood. But in the case of perverted knowledge infecting the mind, the conscience becomes too often hardened by pre-occupying falsehood—the heart steeled by obstinate error, long cherished as truth, to the exclusion of conviction, which the very pride of intellect embraces, as humiliation to abandon, when hatred becomes the substitute for faith, and bigotry cherished against conviction. Do we, therefore, call that bigotry, which consists in sincerity to the faith that is in us? True faith may be known by this—true faith, relying on its own belief, never persecutes, never excludes. It extends charity towards error—would willingly convince, but never hates or persecutes. But that bigotry, calling itself religion, which resorts to these evil means, in order to protect or promote its own belief, or to crush what it calls error in that of others—most seemingly confident, when most really misgiving—if sincere deceives itself, if insincere is assumed to deceive others—a prejudice adopting the formula of reason, a passion pretending to the sanctity of a duty, it gives to crime the language and the self-justification of a virtue.

In the exercise of such tyranny, by which the Protestant Church thought to extirpate Catholicity, it really succeeded in crushing Catholic literature in the land. Since what was called the Reformation, the Catholics of the empire had scarcely any opportunity to read their own story in their own works. Protestant literature inundated the country—history was falsified—truth suppressed—lies invented—and the whole of the British empire, grave or gay, avowedly Protestant, or affectingly Catholic, were impregnated, either openly or covertly, with calumnies against the Church, the Clergy, or the doctrines of Catholicity, what O'Connell used to call sound Protestant lies. Ask any truthful Protestant in the Empire, whether in any English history, purporting to include the times of what is nick-named the Reformation, if they ever read in any popular English historian, anything approaching to the truth, of the crimes of Henry or Elizabeth?—while their heads were stuffed with lies, purporting to be truths of "Bloody Queen Mary." They read of Harry being a little addicted to gallantry, that Kingly privilege, and of "Good Queen Bess." But did they ever read of the robberies, the tortures, imprisonments, and other cruelties perpetrated on Catholics, for no other offences but fidelity to their faith? No—they read nothing of these facts in Protestant relations of these periods.

Be it our province to supply that want; and since the habits of Protestantism are ever to accuse, hoping by constant crimination, to divert attention from its ever vulnerable Church, we have, in these series of articles, undertaken to put the assailant on his own defence; confident that, if even, through the accessible dissemination afforded by the newspaper press of facts, we do not convince at once numbers of Protestants of the errors of their ways, we shall at least succeed in so familiarising the Catholics of the empire, high and humble, learned and unlearned, with the crimes to which the Church of England owes its existence—that every Catholic shall be rendered capable, if not of making converts, at least of silencing the calumniator by bringing shame upon his own creed.

There is, indeed, such a shame attendant on professing the creed of Henry and Elizabeth, that, we repeat, the Protestants themselves are as much as possible deprived of a knowledge of them. Our readers have already been familiarised with many, not half of the crimes, of Henry, the founder of the State Church, but that Church had a wet-nurse, "good Queen Bess," with whose atrocities we have not yet rendered them so familiar: we shall, therefore, to-day confine ourselves to the doings of that pious damsel.

She found about sixteen Catholic bishops who had escaped the axe and the tortures of Harry the Eighth in England. One only of these, Kitchen of Llandaff, was terrified into apostasy. Of the others, faithful and martyred, ten paid the price of fidelity, by dying in prisons; the remainder were banished and died abroad. Among the second orders of Catholic clergy sacrificed in prisons, or on the scaffold, during this reign, history enumerates thirteen deans, fourteen archdeacons, more than sixty prebendaries, forty-nine doctors of divinity, eighteen of law and physic, fifteen masters of colleges, more than three hundred members of both universities, with pastors and priests innumerable.

* On the 29th of August 1799, Pius VII was not elected until the 14th of March 1800.

† Bonaparte wrote from Tolentino, on the 19th of February 1797, to Pius VI: "The French Republic will be, I hope, one of the staunchest allies of Rome." And a few months later, Caucault, minister of the Republic at Rome, wrote to Bonaparte: "The levying of the thirty millions that Rome has engaged to pay by the treaty of Tolentino, has drained the last drop of blood that flowed in the veins of this old body. We are killing it by inches. It will fall of itself." At a later period, it is well known that Caucault manifested great interest in the affairs of religion. He said of himself: "I am a reformed revolutionist."—Ardant, *Histoire de Pie VII*, p. 22.