

# THE CATHOLIC.

QUOD SEMPER, QUOD UBIQUE, QUOD AB OMNIBUS CREDITUM EST.—WHAT ALWAYS, AND EVERY WHERE, AND BY ALL IS BELIEVED.

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From the U. S. Catholic Magazine,

ROBERT SOUTHWELL, S. J. (1595.)

W. JON WALTER, AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SIR THOMAS MORE," &c.

"And smit with feelings of the olden days,  
Revive the music of neglected lays."

Daniel, (1595.)

[CONTINUED.]

Of the barbarities practised on the clergy, during their imprisonment, the same writer has left us an appalling account. "The manner of imprisoning priests," says he, "is, that first they are kept in Topcliffe's house, or in that of some other catchpole. Topcliffe tortures them by his private authority, before they pass out of his doors; and he keeps their taking so secret, that sometimes it is long ere it be known, where the party apprehended is, lest the rumor of his torturing should be spread abroad. From Topcliffe's house the victim is carried to Bridewell, there he is hanged up by the hands in manacles, and examined upon all hateful and odious points, and treated with such extremity of torture, that death would be far less misery than the bloody usage of this place. If they find him constant, he is carried to some other prison, and there kept close, with as hard usage as may be. . . . One of the principal methods of torturing is with manacles, in which some are made to hang nine hours together, the weight of the whole body being borne upon the hands, so that oftentimes the victim swoons under the torture, and when hardly recovered is oftentimes hanged up again." Thus it was with Mr. Bales, Mr. Jones, Mr. Norton, Mr. Randal, and most of the priests that have been taken during these five years past [as we shall shortly have occasion to see, he might have added, Southwell's name to the list]. They whip priests naked, as was the case with Mr. Besceley and Mr. Jones, and in so cruel a manner, that the persecutors themselves have been obliged to confess that they endured their torments with a constancy more than human: nay, they declared that they must have employed charm and witchcraft to produce such effects.

"One of Topcliffe's methods was to keep his victims from sleeping, till by continual watching they became half beside themselves. Others, as was the case with Mr. Jones, were tormented in Topcliffe's house (decency compels me, says Mr. Tierney, to omit this passage) so filthy and shameful is their cruelty. As to their threats and terrors, it is needless to report them, as well as the barbarous lies and slanders which they utter against priests, seeking to make them all infamous with Catholics themselves, till the edifying deaths of the slandered martyrs have proved the reporters to be liars.

\* The manacles spoken of above, are described as iron gauntlets, that could be contracted by the aid of a screw.— They served to compress the wrists, and to suspend the prisoner in the air, from two distant points of a beam. He was placed on three pieces of wood, one piled above the other, which when his hands had been made fast, were successively withdrawn from under his feet. "I felt," says Father Gerard, "one of the sufferers, the chief pain in my breast, belly, arms and hands. It seemed to me that all the blood in my body had run into my arms, and was bursting out at my finger ends. Not that it was so; but the arms swelled, till the gauntlets were buried within the flesh. After being thus suspended for an hour, I fainted. When I came to myself, I found the executioners supporting me in their arms. They replaced the pieces of wood under my feet, but as soon as I was recovered removed them again. Thus I continued hanging for the space of five hours, during which I fainted eight or nine times." (See Bartoli, 418.)

"If they confess not enough in their tortures, in order to make their arraignment the more odious, they work upon them while in prison by their spies and sordid persons, who pretend friendship, and appear to pity their situation, offering their help to carry letters or to fetch money if they have it in the keeping of any Catholic. By such devices, they seek to discover the persons to whom they have resorted, that they may be troubled and made a booty of by these ravaging fellows.

"But of all the methods of torture employed on the unfortunate victims, that of the rack was the most terrible. The description of the fearful machine is familiar to all the readers of Langard. One who had been put to 'the question,' says very feelingly: 'it is not, I assure you, a pleasant thing to be stretched and stretched till one's body becomes almost two feet longer than nature made it.'"

But it is time to return to Southwell. We stated that in 1586, a request came from Cardinal Allen to Acquaviva, general of the Order in Rome, for a fresh supply of laborers for the English mission, to supply the places of such of their brethren as were suffering in prison, or had fallen in the good fight, and that the lot fell upon Fathers Garnet and Southwell. They lost no time in preparing for their departure. Father Parsons accompanied them as far as the Ponte Milvio, and on giving them his parting blessing, and bidding them God speed, Southwell exclaimed with much emotion; "Father, forget us not in your prayers. Wear two arrows sped to the same mark, and by God's blessing we shall reach our aim."

On reaching the French coast, and when on the point of embarking for England, he addressed a letter to his superior in Rome, which breathes all the spirit of a champion descending into the arena. Of the situation of the Catholics in England at this moment, a lively picture has just been presented to us: to which it may be added, that in consequence of the expedition fitting out in Spain, the coast was guarded with redoubled vigilance, emissaries were in every port, and spies scattered in every direction. But our two youthful missionaries succeeded in making their way through all the dangers that beset their way, and reached London in safety. Their escape was the more remarkable, as the spies of the Government had scent of their coming.— This we learn from the following notes among the Burleigh papers—

"January 10th, 1586. There is a famous Jesuit on his way to England, of the name of Southwell."

And a paper headed, "From Ed. Hoord, a spy on the Seminaries," and whose words are; "I have directions to find out a priest, whose name is Southwell, the chief dealer in the affairs of our state of England for the Catholics."

On reaching the capital, he found an asylum in the

\* Those who are curious as to the use and abuse of this mode of punishment, will find the subject ably discussed in Mr. Jardine's recent work "On the employment of the torture in England." Mr. Francis Palgrave remarks that "the subject is one among others which shows that the English law must forfeit many of the economies for humanity, which have so long been current amongst us." The observation of a heathen writer on this mode of punishment, might well put Christian magistrates to the blush. "It is a perilous expedient, calculated to baffle, rather than promote the purposes of truth and justice. It is at once cruel and irrational; for what more senseless than to interrogate that portion of man, which responds not by the voice of the understanding, but by the force of pain."—Quintilian.

house of Lord Vaux, who a few years before, had been reconciled to the Church by Father Parsons. Here he found means to exercise his priestly functions, to the comfort of many pious Catholics who had for some time been deprived of the consolations of their religion. Some six months after his arrival, the private chaplain of the Countess of Arundel, a name familiar in the history of this period, dying, Father Southwell was chosen to fill his place. In the house of this noble and excellent lady, his cautious but untiring zeal in the duties of his dangerous ministry, were attended with abundant fruits, and by the most cheering success in bringing back many stray sheep to the fold. It was also under the roof of his worthy patroness that he composed the greater part of those works, both in prose and verse, which were the pride and admiration of our forefathers, but were suffered to fall into unmerited neglect. In 1590, Southwell writes to his superior, in Rome:

"As yet we are alive and well, being it seems unworthy of a prison. We have oftener sent than received letters from your parts, though they are not sent without difficulty; while some, we know, have been lost.

"The condition of Catholic recusants here is the same as usual, deplorable, and full of fears and dangers; more especially since our adversaries have looked for wars. As many of ours as are in chains rejoice and are comforted in their prisons; and they that are at liberty, set not their hearts upon it, nor expect it to be of long continuance. All, by the great goodness and mercy of God, arm themselves to suffer any thing that can come, how hard soever it may be, as it shall please our Lord, for whose greater glory, and the salvation of their souls, they are more concerned than for any temporal losses.

"A little while ago they apprehended two priests, who have suffered such cruel usages in the prison of Bridewell, as can scarce be believed. What was given them to eat, was so little in quantity, and withal so filthy and nauseous, that the very sight of it was enough to turn their stomachs. The labors to which they obliged them, were continual and immoderate, and no less in sickness than in health; for, with hard blows and stripes, they forced them to accomplish their task, how weak soever they were. Their beds were dirty straw, and their prison most filthy.

"Some are there hung up, for whole days, by the hands, in such a manner that they can just touch the ground with the tips of their toes. In fine, they that are kept in that prison, truly live in *lacu miseriae et in luto facis*, Psalm 39. This purgatory we are looking for every hour, in which Topcliffe and Young, the two executioners of the Catholics, exercise all kinds of torments. But come what pleaseth God, we hope we shall be able to bear all in *Him that strengthens us*. In the meantime, we pray that they may be put to confusion *in their work iniquity: and that the Lord may special peace to his people*, Psalms 24 and 74: that, as the royal prophet says, *his glory may dwell in our land*. I most humbly recommend myself to the holy sacrifices of your Reverence, and of all our friends."

From a parliamentary return it appears that the number of benefices in the Church of England is 10,957, of which 3736 are held by non-resident incumbents, and the number of glebe-houses 7529.—The total number of the clergy is calculated at 13,173.