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LECTURE DELIVERED BY THE REV. MR. KERRIGAN, AT THE HALL OF THE ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC INSTITUTE, QUEBEC,

ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, 26TH APRIL.

Subject—Galileo and the Roman Inquisition.
(From the Canadian Colonist.)

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen—I appear before you this evening for the purpose of addressing you on a subject on which, among our separated brethren, the grossest ignorance generally prevails; which has afforded to innumerable declaimers and shallow misinformed writers, as they conceived, ample matter for making a successful onslaught against the Catholic Church. It is universally assumed by them, as an unquestionable fact, that Galileo was persecuted by the Court of Rome, merely because he defended the Copernican system, and endeavored to overturn the old and erroneous one which had previously existed. Nor is it to be wondered at that such should be the opinion of those who look upon Rome as the mother of ignorance and something worse, when we reflect that history, especially history written in the English language, was, to use the expression of an eminent writer, for the last three hundred years, one vast conspiracy against the truth. I am well aware of the many deep rooted prejudices which exist on this subject, and of the obloquy to which I expose myself by distrusting the complacency of those who sneeringly point to Rome as antagonistic to science, and always jealous of the intellectual progress of the human race. It is really amusing to see the pompous airs which some men, stunted in intellect, and innocent of true historical knowledge, assume when they take occasion in their drivellings to refer to Galileo, the so-called martyr of science and victim of jesuitical intolerance. The voracity with which some Protestants, especially the vulgar sects, gulp down every lie and calumny, no matter how monstrous, against the Church, is really astonishing. Nothing is too huge, nothing too disgusting, for their capacious maw; every atrocity is fondly credited and tenaciously remembered which can inspire a hatred and nursery horror of the Court of Rome. There can scarcely be a doubt that if it were asserted that the present Pontiff renewed the war against science, and sent forth an army of monks throughout his dominions with orders to spike every telescope and dismantle every voltaic battery, the whole fignent would be readily believed and afford a delicious *marcanti* to the morbid appetite of the diseased religionist. It scarcely ever occurs to him to enquire what possible motives the Church can have for this supposed hostility to physical science. She surely could not fear that from the study of astronomy any objections could be deduced against transubstantiation, nor that chemistry and geology could overturn her belief in purgatory. Before I enter upon my subject I must observe that no Catholic is under the necessity of defending the acts of the Inquisition; no possible bond of interest can be assigned to connect us with its proceedings. In Italy it owed its origin to the pestilent heresy of the Albigenses, and therefore was established 1300 years too late for us to take any vital interest in it, for all we venerate in our hierarchy had its origin in the institution of Jesus Christ. I may also add that some of the most severe and vigorous attacks on the character of the Inquisition have proceeded from the pens of Bercartel, Cardinal Fleury, and other eminent Catholic Theologians. The famous decree of 1633, in reference to Galileo, does not pretend to be a dogmatic decree decisive of any point of doctrine, as we shall hereafter see; but even were it so, it would merely prove that those who were never gifted by Christ with inerrancy had erred. It was not to the seven Cardinals who drew up that decree that Christ addressed himself when he said: "Go, teach all nations, and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." The Sovereign Pontiff did not appear in the issuing of the decree; but even if he did, it would remain to be seen in what capacity he shewed himself; whether as a temporal Prince or as Bishop of the particular see of Rome—the first among equals, or as supreme head of the Church, addressing himself to the nations of Christendom, commanding them "to captivate their understandings to the obedience of faith." In the last instance alone would the decision take the form of a doctrinal decree; and even as such it is the opinion of a large section of divines it might be rejected until it should be accepted by the great body of the hierarchy. Now not one particle of all this appears. I advance a step further and I assert that it is the unanimous doctrine of Theologians now and then, that the Universal Church could if be supposed capable of adopting such a decree, could not make it binding on the consciences of Catholics; and for this simple reason that it would pretend to declare a certain doctrine philosophically false. Now Christ did

not promise to be with his Church teaching philosophy, but to be with it "teaching all things whatsoever I have commanded you," among which assuredly the conclusions of philosophy did not form a part.—I have entered into this explanation to show you how remote and slender is the tie of sympathy between us and the actors in the memorable transaction; how very far the conclusion, be what it may, that shall be adopted, is from implicating any one point of belief or practice to which as Catholics we are attached.—In fact there is nothing more familiar in our history, both before and since the condemnation of Galileo, than that the decision of the Inquisition should be rejected or reformed by the higher authorities in the Church. The Council of Trent itself has taught Catholics to place no implicit reliance on its awards and judgments, as may be seen in the case of Gonanza. But after all, what has been the temper and feeling of the Church in reference to the Copernican views? How did she receive them? For if we were to be influenced by the statements of her enemies, we would have to conclude that she looked on the growing opinions with an eye of jealousy and mistrust, and that finally in the day of Galileo this long pent-up jealousy broke out in open rupture, when she avowed herself the sworn enemy of the Heliocentric doctrine—that doctrine which is now taught so universally in her schools, and of which, had it depended upon her, mankind would have never heard. (Applause.) Now, ladies and gentlemen, what must be your astonishment when I prove to you that it is to the Church of Rome that we are principally indebted for the new theory of the earth's motion; that in Rome it had its birth, in Rome was fostered and matured; that but for Roman auspices, the countenance of Popes and Cardinals, the adoption of the new theory had been thrown back, in all probability, to a distance which it would now be vain to attempt to calculate. Yes, I proudly assert, that it is to the Pontiffs, and the Dignitaries of Rome, that we are mainly indebted for the Copernican system. The first to broach that system in modern times was a Cardinal. Destitute, and a stranger, indebted for his very name to the obscure village which gave him birth, Nicholas the Cusan was gifted with the most brilliant talent, the most soaring genius, and this was sufficient to open to him the road to the highest preferment in that Church and nation, which it is the fashion to decry as the enemies of all mental improvement. But in what particular department of science did this great man distinguish himself? He departed from the received opinions of his times. He advanced in the teeth of the much exaggerated peripatetic dogmatism of the day the startling proposition that "the Earth moves, the sun is at rest," and he answered the objections, as they have ever been answered, by contending that the illusory impression rises from the same cause which makes a person in a ship in motion fancy the objects on shore to be receding from him; and these views he proclaimed to the world as best he could. He even carried them to the foot of the Pontifical throne, by inscribing them to his former preceptor, Cardinal Cosarini. Was he visited with persecution? Did the thunders of the Vatican break over the head of this audacious man? Was the majesty of the Church insulted by this astronomical innovation? Nicholas the Fifth, a most illustrious Pope, and great Patron of learning, honored him with his most intimate friendship; raised him to the dignity of the Cardinalate, and always evinced towards him the highest marks of respect and esteem. He was intrusted by four successive Pontiffs with the most delicate affairs and important legations, and he continued in favor with the Court of Rome, without one moment's interruption, to the close of his valuable life, in the year 1464. Nor were the works of the good Cardinal allowed to go down with him into the oblivion of the tomb. It was one of the first tasks of the Italian Press to diffuse and perpetuate them, under the sanction of another exalted name, that of Cardinal Ambroise. In the year 1500, Copernicus, who occupied a professor's chair at Rome, gave lectures on the new theory, to overwhelming crowds, who flocked to hear him, and yet there was no opposition. On the contrary, after his retirement from the duties of his professorship, ample means were provided for him, by which he was enabled, in an honorable retreat, to devote all the energies of his great mind to the reconstruction of the whole fabric of astronomy. From the banks of Vistula, he turned for protection to the only spot on earth where he could hope to find minds sufficiently enlarged and enlightened to give a favorable hearing to his exposition of that system, in the study of which he had spent years of the most intense application. He was well aware of the difficulties that beset his path. He too well knew that his new doctrines would clash with those deep-rooted prejudices which had existed for ages. He dedicated his new work on the revolution of heavenly bodies to Paul III, and the successor of St. Peter, swung over the infant theory the shield of

his high protection, and secured to it eighty years of uninterrupted tranquillity and peace. But this was not all. Seven years before the publication of his great work a rumor was current that want of pecuniary means and fear of attacks from the scrupulous religionist prevented him from giving publicity to the results of years of laborious study. Cardinal Scorsberg nobly came forward, bade him dismiss his fears and instantly supplied him with the requisite funds.—At the death of this good man, who may truly be styled a Christian Moeenas, the Bishop of Ermeland succeeds him as patron of the system, and the new book soon appears, dedicated to and approved of by the first authority in the Catholic world. (Applause.) From all this, you may perceive, ladies and gentlemen, that it is to the fostering care of the Church that the world is indebted for the new system; that a Catholic Ecclesiastic was its first discoverer; and that once ushered into life it was taught with applause in all the Italian Universities. In the Roman College of which Bellarmine was Principal, the distinguished Jesuit Touquato, and in the Sapienza, also at Rome, another Jesuit delivered lectures in support of the Copernican system. How different the conduct of the highest dignitaries in the Catholic Church from that of the cotemporary Protestant Theologians. John Kepla, an honest Lutherinian, was subjected to the greatest annoyance of the divines of Tuburgen for having advocated the new system. These Protestant divines publicly condemned and branded him as a heretic, and persecuted him so much that he was at last obliged to fly his native country, and seek protection in the land of the stranger. And where think you did he obtain that protection? Who received the poor outcast? Who in the darkest hour of his affliction opened to him the door of hospitality, and caused his bright genius again to soar amid the stupendous wonders of the solar system. Let the Protestant historian, Wolfgang Mensel, who was his intimate friend, answer the question. It was, says he, the Jesuits at Gratz who afforded him an asylum, where secure from the malignity of his co-religionists, he could indulge without danger in the development of his favorite theme. As a further illustration of Papal hostility to science, he was afterwards called to fill the chair of astronomy, vacant in one of the Pope's Universities. Well indeed might the exclaim, in the words of one of England's greatest bards—

"Oh Rome, my Mother, City of the Soul!
The Orphans of the heart must turn to thee."

Having now proceeded so far, I beg leave to call your attention to the illustrious man, whose imaginary wrongs and woeful persecutions by the Roman Inquisition have been so frequently laid before the American public by bigoted sectarian writers, by spouting declaimers, and miserable little dabblers in historical lore, whose only knowledge has been gleaned from tainted sources, and whose minds are saturated with all the lies and calumnies which uncandid men could devise to bring the Church of God into derision and contempt. No sooner had Galileo directed his great discovery, the telescope, to the heavens, than he determined to go to Rome as to the place where with the best prospects to science he could first make known those startling revelations which it now became his exalted privilege to proclaim to the world. In vain did the Court of Florence use its every effort to induce him to, at least, postpone his visit. He was determined to unfold his views in the capital of the Christian world, by which means he expected they would be more speedily and widely diffused. Nor was he disappointed, his ardent expectations were more than realized. His reception was of the most splendid and flattering description; every grade of society vied with each other in heaping honors upon him, and no efforts were spared by the citizens of Rome to testify their deep respect and reverential homage to this child of genius and ornament of Italy. Buoyed up and emboldened by the splendid reception which had been given him in Rome, in 1612, he most unwisely began to raise the uncalled for question of the reconcilability of the scripture texts with the new theory, and to this course he clung with the most desperate tenacity, under the double persuasion that the system demonstrated, and that to him belonged the honor of having furnished that demonstration from the flux and reflux of the tides. I need scarcely observe that this double assumption is now recognized by all astronomers to be entirely false and ungrounded. The new system was by no means demonstrated by Galileo, for as Delambre justly observes, "Despite the immense progress which astronomy had made, have the moderns themselves been able to allege any direct proof of the diurnal motion of the earth previous to the voyage of Richer to Cayenne, where he was obliged to shorten the pendulum? Have they been able to discover one positive demonstration to the point to prove the annual revolution of the earth before Romur measured the velocity of light and Brad-

ley had observed and calculated the phenomena of aberration? Previous to these discoveries and to that of Universal Gravitation (made many a long year after Galileo) were not the most decided Copernicans reduced to mere probabilities, were they not obliged to confine themselves to preaching up the simplicity of the Copernican system, as compared with the absurd complexity of that of Ptolmey, (applause.) From this, Ladies and Gentlemen, you may perceive that the system was not demonstrated. Let us now proceed to examine the grounds of his confidence in the new views. Most modern writers would have us believe that it arose from the light which the first telescopic glimpse of the heavens let in on our system, particularly by the discoveries of the phases of Venus and the satellites of Jupiter. Now, nothing can be more false than this assumption. In 1610, the phases of Venus and other planetary wonders were discovered. In 1597, Galileo assures Kepler of his settled conviction of his favorite system, and towards the end of his life, in a letter to one of his pupils, he avows that he was led to this opinion by the facility which he conceived it afforded him in explaining the mystery of the flux and reflux of the tides. This was his favorite hobby, the crowning proof beyond which evidence could not possibly go. Compared to it the phases of Venus and all the other wonders of 1610 were as nothing. In 1616, when he stood the second time before the Inquisition, in 1623, and also in 1633, when he was condemned, he puts forward this as his main argument. Having thus erroneously persuaded himself that he had demonstrated the earth's motion he began to make a vigorous preparation for removing the remaining impediment, as he conceived, in the way of its general adoption, namely, the scriptural difficulties. In pursuance of the unwise purpose of raising the question as to the value of scriptural objections against his system, he commences that series of theological epistles, the first of which he addressed to Castelli, and this letter formed the sole ground of the impeachment brought against him in 1615. One Loreni, a Dominican, contrived by some means to get hold of a copy of this letter, and forthwith proceeded to Rome to lay his complaint before the Holy Office. The Inquisition, peremptorily demanded the production of the original, it could not be produced and the designs of the denouncer were therefore frustrated. The correspondence of the principal persons on this occasion which has come down to us reveals the temper of the tribunal in question, and the light in which they were disposed to look on the whole affair. Immediately after the denunciation, on the last day of February, 1615, Campioli the friend of the accused writes to say that the sentiments of Cardinal Barberini on this point were "that Galileo should not travel out of the limits of physics and mathematics, but confine himself to such reasons as Ptolmy and Copernicus used, because declaring the views of scripture the Theologians maintain to be their particular province. On the 21st of March, when the proceedings were at their height, the same writer again addressed his friend: "I have been this morning, together with Monsignor Dine, to the Cardinal de' Monte, who told us he had lately a conversation with Cardinal Bellarmine on the subject of the new opinions, and that the conclusion was that by confining himself to the System and its demonstration without interfering with the scriptures, the interpretation of which they wish to have confined to Theological Professors, approved and authorised for the purpose, Galileo would be secure against any contradiction; but that otherwise explanations of scripture, however ingenious, will be admitted with difficulty when they depart from the common opinion of the Fathers."

On the 25th of the next month, when the case had been dismissed, Bishop Dine testifies to "Bellarmine's having remarked to him that there was no question about Galileo, and that by pursuing the course mentioned, that of speaking as a mathematician, he would be put to no trouble." Thus terminated the first judicial enquiry which, by many, is confounded with the second, which took place the following year. So little, indeed, did the authorities at Rome wish to have any collision with the new doctrines, that, at the very moment when they are accused of attempting to crush them by means of the Inquisition, the famous Jesuit Torquato is delivering lectures in the Roman College in favor of the Copernican system. Galileo is congratulated by his friends that his affairs are now settled; but nothing, the most pressing solicitations of his friends, could prevent him from forcing the matter on again. He completes the last and most formidable of his polemical epistles, and sends it to the Court of Florence, thereby stamping it with the impress of royal authority. He then proceeds to Rome, unsent for, incited of his own free will, "to know," as he says, "what he should believe on the Copernican system." If it were necessary, I could here adduce innumerable and unquestionable testimony to prove that he was