

### CALUMNIES OF DR. ROBERTSON OF VENICE EXPOSED AND DISPROVED

(Glasgow Observer)

From an esteemed correspondent in Rome, whose writing is already familiar to our readers, we have received an article dealing with the subject of Dr. Robertson of Venice, and the Catholic Church in Italy. Our correspondent writes:—

I have just read in the "News" of Saturday, March 4th, the statement made by Rev. Dr. Robertson, Presbyterian minister at Venice, that "out of 33,000,000 inhabitants in Italy, no fewer than 22,000,000 refused to attend the Roman Catholic Church." I have written to that journal on the subject. The Rev. gentleman can only mean us to understand by his words that these 22,000,000 have ceased to be Catholics. For some time past I and others have watched with growing amazement and indignation the wild and reckless statements of this man in his anti-Catholic campaign in England and Scotland. No one has evidently thought it worth his while to take any notice of him. So long as he indulges in slanders and calumnies of a general kind, of course one can do nothing but pity him, and marvel that a minister of religion should take such pleasure in the work of speaking evil of others. But now he has ventured on definite assertions, and is consequently capable of refutation. I have no hesitation in branding this statement about the 22,000,000 as utterly and wickedly false—wickedly, because he could have so easily verified his assertions before making them; and from this single example your readers may judge of the amount of reliability to be placed on this man's books and lectures. My answer is twofold:—

(1.) There are the official Government statistics of religion, of last year, which I luckily noted down when I saw them printed. Here they are:—

Catholics	31,500,000
Protestants	65,000
Jews	35,000
Greek Schismatics	2,000
Mahomedans	280
Buddhists	1
Brahmins	1
Copt	56
No Religion	36,000
Made no statement of belief	794,000

From which it appears that out of a total of 32,432,338, less than a million are professed non-Catholics. What, then, becomes of Dr. Robertson's 22,000,000? They are the fiction of his disordered brain. He stands confuted by that very Government of which he is such an admirer.

(2.) But perhaps some one might say, "These are only statistics: they only show the people are nominally Catholics: they tell us nothing about the actual practice of their religion, such as hearing Mass, frequently the Sacraments, and the like." Will, even if it were so it would still be telling us a good deal. It is not likely that 31 millions of people would allow themselves to be written down Catholics if they had ceased to be Catholics—still less if they abhorred the Catholic Church as Dr. Robertson would fain make us believe. Why should they tell a lie about their creed? No one compels an Italian to call himself a Catholic if he is not one—or even to reveal his religion at all, as is proved by the fact that over half a million made no statement of their beliefs (and of these probably the vast mass will die Catholics). But it is not the case that the statistics are merely nominal: their truthfulness is borne out by the facts which anyone can ascertain who cares to keep his eyes open. It is simply the literal truth that

Wherever you go in Italy, in Town or Country, you find the Churches Thronged, the Sacraments Eagerly Frequented, the People Full of Fervent Faith and Devotion, and Protestantism and Drunkenness, God be Thanked, Unknown.

There are, I don't doubt, one or two exceptions, namely, places where Socialism has for the time being interfered with the practice of the Catholic religion; but these places are so rare as to be hardly worth mentioning; and even there the people certainly have not renounced the Faith, but are only temporarily duped into giving up the outward practice of it. And one thing there is that everybody knows: they never dream of becoming Protestants; they may be bad enough, but they have not fallen, and never will fall, quite so low as that. The Protestant sects do their best to seduce the faithful, but with infinitesimal success. In some of the large centres their agencies are well backed by American and English gold,

which supplies free medicines, free meals and various other bribes to corrupt the faith of the poor Italians and their little children; and even in the Army I came to know of the case of

#### A Soldier Who Got 100 Francs on Becoming Protestant;

but the ungrateful fellow, finding the Protestant religion not so good as the Protestant money, forthwith renounced the former though he kept the latter. However, I shall not pursue that subject, as I merely set out to give a specimen of the veracity of this minister from Venice. He has been proved guilty of a gross and wicked calumny. Ignorance in such a case can hardly be an excuse. He ought to have verified his statements before publishing them. He ought not to make such allegations when he is so transparently ignorant of what he is talking about. He ought to take pains to inform himself as to the real facts—for example, one way would be to get up at five o'clock a.m. and go to the Catholic churches at the hours when Catholics go to them, instead of lounging in with tourists at ten or eleven, when public worship (on week-days) is over. But what does this minister care for truth so long as he can get some Protestant audiences to swallow down his lectures? He seems to have but one aim and end in life, to vilify and slander the Catholic Church. He lives and moves in a foul and venomous atmosphere. His every word breathes malice and hatred. People in Britain say: "O, here is a man from Italy itself; he knows all about Catholicism there; he is quite an authority; he has written a book about it." But that is precisely where they make the mistake.

#### Dr. Robertson Does Not Know Anything About Catholicism

You cannot trust a word he says about it. And why? Because a Protestant may live among a Catholic people for a whole lifetime, and, if he be of the stamp of this minister, he will yet only see what he wants to see, and hear what he wants to hear, and then go back to Scotland and only tell what his audience wants him to tell. Such is this Doctor of Divinity. He could not if he tried, because he hates it like poison. He is fair and just to the Catholic Church. Everybody knows he does. We cannot forget what even the "Scotsman" newspaper said about him when criticising his book on the Church in Italy—that he had evidently yielded to the temptation of gathering his information from low, vile and hostile sources, such as the anti-Catholic Press, apostate priests, bad Catholics, and the like. What is the value of such a man's word in a contention of this kind? What value, e.g., would a judge place upon it here? Nil.

I have shown that on this one point, where it was comparatively easy to get at the truth, namely, the adherence of the Italians to the Catholic Church, this Presbyterian lecturer made a statement grievously and wickedly false. What reliance, therefore, can be placed on his authority as to other matters professedly difficult, and above all difficult for a Protestant? What does Dr. Robertson know of the Catholic Church from within? About as much as the Grand Lama of Thibet.

I would warn all whom it may concern that, as regards the Catholic Church in Italy, as in other lands, there does not exist a more unreliable and reckless authority; and I can only conclude by saying that it strikes a Catholic as a sad travesty of Christianity to see a minister of religion, of the position of Dr. Robertson, prostituting his abilities to the mean and unworthy end of vilifying the Church of God, and of heaping coarse and vulgar insults on her reverend head (as he did lately), who is beloved and respected by Catholics and non-Catholics of every nation in the world. I know others of Dr. Robertson's sect, very different from him, who live in Catholic cities quiet, unostentatious, lives in peace and charity with their neighbours. "O si sic omnes!"

#### AMONG THE ESQUIMAUX

For the purpose of attempting to convert the Esquimaux, Father Tarquetil, a well-known Canadian missionary, intends to undertake a long journey to Polar regions. He will shortly depart from Prince Albert, Northwest Territories, and expects to reach a point further north than has been reached by any previous missionary. Father Tarquetil has been largely influenced in his determination to proceed so far beyond the bounds of civilization through an invitation he has received from Chief Nyrimayck, the head of one of the largest Esquimaux tribes.

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### Notes from St. Rose.

When Easter came we sang with the Church "This is the day the Lord hath made, let us be glad and rejoice therein," we had said in our hearts before this: "presently we think we shall be having a little time we can call our own, the time we have now is not our own, it is only Lent, and when it is gone, it will seem like a pastime, although whilst it is here it seems like a time of penance." This appears like a paradox, but no matter, life is full of such. And now we have the happiest time of all the year when Our Divine Lord seems to come and go upon the earth as of old until the Ascension and when He seems to walk once more with his dear disciples, not perhaps on the road to Emmaus but on many other roads in lands undreamt of by the first Apostles; for as the world extends revealing new regions, so also Holy Church ever sends new missionaries to gather to her bosom the wandering tribes of the desert and warlike sons of the forest. She hears the "Call of the Wild" and is the first to answer to it. There are no heroes left in France now, they are all gone off on the missions, the stones that the builders at home rejected are become the corner-stones of the universe; they go in the good old-fashioned way that the Apostles went without over much luggage and learn to speak the language of the peoples among whom they go, in this also emulating the Apostles. A hundred years ago, when first exiled from France they brought the Faith once more and sowed its seed in the fallow fields of Albion where it has been fructifying ever since, and this same large hearted English nation takes them under cover of her white wings to all the ports she trades in and all the heathen hordes who flourish beneath her flag of freedom.

Now that Lent is over we are having

weddings again "Marry in Lent, live to repent" is an old adage; some people never live to repent, so perhaps they do well to marry in Lent after all, and it is better to marry in haste and repent at leisure, than to marry at leisure and repent in haste, and if you are a cross-patch you had better not get married at all, for it is a very trying state, having to put up with two people, yourself and another and it is a very serious thing getting married but some people seem to think it is even a more serious thing not getting married.

We have had a nice little bride here, all in white, among the French Canadians and are expecting other interesting events to come off in the near future. Who's afraid? We can't do worse than some of our forebears have done and may do better. You remember what Queen Elizabeth said to Sir Walter Raleigh:

"He either fears his fate too much  
Or his deserts are small  
Who dares not put it to the touch  
To win or lose it all."

although she was a great deal too cute, herself to be caught in such a trap, knowing as she did that a great deal of her power in Europe lay in the fact that she was able to fool one foreign prince after another with the idea that he stood a pretty good chance of marrying her. I have heard it said that Elizabeth made England great and powerful. No, indeed, it began perhaps to show great and powerful in her reign, but she inherited from her Catholic forefathers, who during 500 years had been silently laying the solid foundations of future glory.

All the poetry in this place is gone with its first inhabitants who discreetly retire before this later civilization manifested by hard work in many ways.

We leave the weather until the last as it might change at any moment; at present we are wind-blown to a degree but have not yet experienced the

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### IN THE 'DEVIL'S HANDS LONG ENOUGH

"This controversy over the acceptance of \$100,000 from Mr. Rockefeller for church work reminds me," says a writer in the New York "Tribune," "of the reply of the witty minister to the worldly travelling man. A commercial traveller went to church one Sunday morning. Perhaps he was suffering a little remorse for some deal he had put through. At any rate he was there, and when the plate was passed around he put on a five-dollar bill. He was a commanding looking man, not uncommon among the class he represented, and at the close of the services the minister shook hands with him. The conversation turned on collections, and our travelling friend said:

"Now I am a very worldly man myself but I am aware of the importance of church work. I gave you a fiver this morning. Can you accept it of me?" "Accept it, of course we can," said the preacher. "It has been in the hands of the devil long enough."

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