St. Anthony Mary Claret

THE TRAVELLER JUST ARRIVED

El viajero recién llegado

From the Spanish of the Colección de opúsculos, vol. III (Barcelona, 1860)

English translation

Contributed to Mind of the Church by a friend of the library who wishes to remain anonymous

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About this translation

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The notes give the references to Claret's sources and the notes he printed himself; the modern editors' commentary and the translator's own remarks are not reproduced.

The Traveller Just Arrived

Don Casimiro was well pleased and content. After so long and toilsome a journey he was back in the bosom of his beloved family, and his relatives and friends came to visit him one after another. They all asked him how he had fared during his long absence. With the greatest attention and pleasure they listened to his accounts, as interesting as they were detailed, of the many rich regions he had visited, of the places where he had chosen to stay, and of all he had seen and observed in them. He told things with such impartial exactness, and spoke with such charm, that he held spellbound \[*tenía pendientes de sus labios*, "kept hanging on his lips"\] all who came to his house, where the *tertulia* met every evening. On one of those evenings Don Lucio, one of the company, asked him: What do you say of England, Señor Don Casimiro? What do you think of its prosperity, its power and its happiness these three centuries, that is, since it became Protestant?

I have seen and admired at close quarters, answered Don Casimiro, all that is good and great in the illustrious British nation. I have looked carefully at its Government, its laws and its inhabitants. With pleasure I have observed the legal order that reigns everywhere, the very great respect generally shown to the laws, and the scrupulous care with which they try to keep and perpetuate their traditional customs. I have also seen and admired in that nation the wonderful natural talent its people show in the mechanical arts; the very flourishing state of its industry and trade; the courage and daring with which they undertake any enterprise, however hard and risky; and, in short, the serious, thoughtful and cautious \[*pacato*\] character of those islanders.

I am well aware, for I have read it myself in many books and heard it in many conversations on my journeys by sea and land, that England entered on the flowery path of prosperity where it now stands only when it left Catholicism to become Protestant. On that view its present happiness should be counted a fruit of Protestantism rather than a consequence of the Catholicism it formerly professed. But besides being a gratuitous assertion, this is a solemn piece of nonsense. It is possible only in the mouths of charlatans who add to the short sight of their understanding the perversity of their will and the most complete ignorance of history. Thinking men, and men truly learned, reason and speak very differently. They know very well, and know beyond doubt, that the English constitution is not of yesterday. It goes back to the times before Protestantism, for it was brought forth in Catholic times, and, what is more, the Catholic clergy, and even the legates of the Popes, took a very active part in it.

From this it follows, naturally and beyond dispute, that when Great Britain abandoned the religion of its forefathers it was already educated as a Catholic nation, and exclusively accustomed, to the true forms of representative government. Its peaceable temper, its enterprising character and its deep and unchanging love for the national customs explain, moreover, the steady progress of that people. Its course would not have changed at all if it had stayed faithful to the Catholic Church. The decisive proof is that in this respect there is not the least difference in that part of the nation, already very considerable and growing every day, which professed and publicly professes Catholicism. There is nothing in all this, then, that Protestantism can boast of, claiming it as its own exclusive merit. Besides, did not a prosperous trade, a colossal power at sea, wide conquests and an abundance of gold fall for a long time, and in very high degree, before they fell to Great Britain, to the kingdom of Portugal, devoted to the Catholic faith? And in still greater degree to our Spain,

which was never more Catholic than then? Do we not know by our own constant and not very distant experience that Spain was never richer and more powerful than when she was most religious and Catholic?…

Anyone moderately versed in history knows this. In the ill-starred sixteenth century, England and Scotland, Germany and Denmark, Switzerland and part of France were abandoning or proscribing the true religion of their forefathers, to plant in its place the baneful tree of Protestantism and water it freely with the blood of their own sons. In those same days Spain, unshaken in her faith, was sending out, with Catholic missionaries beside them, her discoverers and conquerors of the New World. From there she brought back immense riches and a threefold, unfading crown of glory: for her many discoveries, for her swift and daring conquests, and for the Christian civilization which, in the shadow of the cross, she established everywhere in those vast regions, until then victims of the most brutal and savage barbarism. This is the plain truth of history. While Spain, with her Catholicism, increased her prosperity, adding to her riches and widening her dominions, the kingdoms where Protestantism entered and took control were in visible decline. Their only increase was in the victims whom they daily tore from among their sons to sacrifice to the new and monstrous idol that fed on them…

Neither at its beginning nor since has Protestantism ever brought happiness to any people, nor will it ever be able to. Happiness! There is nothing the so-called Reformation crows about more \[*cacarea*, "cackles about", like a hen over its egg\], and nothing it brings about less. Its words always overflow with happiness, and with its hands it pours out misfortunes and miseries everywhere. It does neither more nor less than the serpent in paradise did with our first parents. It promised them nothing less than a divine happiness, *eritis sicut dii* \["you shall be as gods"\],[1] and in reality it gave them only a degrading, shameful and wretched slavery…

Let England herself, whom so far we have looked at only from her prosperous and happy side, serve as proof of this truth. There is no other country in the world where goods and fortunes are so unequally shared, nor even as unequally. On one side, comfort, opulence and luxury are heaped up in an exorbitant and immeasurable excess in a comparatively very small number of inhabitants. On the other, the great masses are sunk in the most desolate pauperism and the most extreme need. Besides what I had occasion to see with my own eyes, here is a copy of the official reports that I was curious enough to note down in my pocket-book during my travels.

Monsieur Eugène Rendu, in his report to the Minister, tells him among other things: "In one of the nauseating alleys of London, from where one hears in the distance the swift rolling of carriages and the tramp of horses, I went down some eight or ten steps into underground rooms, and there with my own eyes I observed the following. Thirty or forty individuals, men, women, youths, girls and children, lie in confusion in a space of only about ten feet square. The rags that cover them by day they throw at night over cords stretched above the bed of straw or boards that serves that kind of flock. So the bodies, covered only with useless tatters, appear almost naked, and offer to the sight nothing but a loathsome heap of human flesh…"

According to the report given by Lord Sandon, in a single not very roomy block in the parish of St Giles there were crowded nine hundred and twenty-nine persons. Six hundred and twenty-three were reduced to a single bed each \[*reducidas á una sola cama*\]; another bed held a whole family: the father and mother, both in their fifties, a youth of twenty in consumption, a girl of seventeen suffering from scrofula, and a third, younger child, etc., etc…

Now then, who can reckon the evil physical and moral results of such overcrowding?… Damp, infected and unventilated places, air that cannot be breathed: to how many illnesses and early deaths must they not give rise!… And what shall we say of morals, in the presence of that mixing of both sexes? How many disorders, and what brutalities!… Without education and without the least religious instruction, men, women and children are seen there mixed together and penned in like unclean animals!!!… One would say that modesty, like wealth, is reserved exclusively for the upper classes… And what I have just said of London I have also

seen in Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and town after town of England. I observed another thing in the towns I have just named. Countless children of both sexes were condemned, so to speak, to spend their days tending machines meant for various uses. Had the law not come to their help, not even half of those unfortunates would have reached manhood…

If we pass from the towns to the mines, what horror!… It truly breaks even the least feeling heart to see so great a multitude of people who, to earn a piece of black bread, or rather a few potatoes to feed themselves on like unclean animals, must spend their whole life, or at least a great part of it, in the bowels of the earth, working the coal mines. Besides doing great harm to their health, because it goes on without a break and without sight of the sun, this work exposes them constantly to explosions and sudden cave-ins. These are so frequent in that kind of mine that not a single year passes without hundreds of workers perishing so miserably…

When the thinking man looks at Protestant England and compares it with Catholic England, he cannot but recognize that in morality and in the common welfare it is very far today from what it once was. Before, when it was Catholic, it was a single people with *one soul and one heart*, in the words of Holy Scripture, and, according to a popular saying known to all, it was *the land of the Saints*. Since its people are in fact docile and obedient by character, charity both of the heart and in deeds \[*la caridad afectiva y efectiva*\], with the other virtues that the Catholic religion prescribes and practises, were deeply rooted among those happy inhabitants.

But scarcely had Protestantism been brought in and planted there when it made of one people two peoples: one of *self-worshippers* \[*ególatras*\] and the other of *slaves*. For the first, who are the fewer, it set up a paradise of delights; for the others, who are the more, an anticipated hell. All the treasures, all the riches, are monopolized in the hands of a few lords, manufacturers and capitalists, and with them they procure every sort of temporal happiness. Meanwhile innumerable crowds of wretches have not a mouthful with which to prolong their miserable existence and restore \[*refocilar*, "warm and refresh"\] their limbs worn out by grinding and excessive toil. Nor have they anything to cover their nakedness and shield them from the weather and the rigours of winter but dirty and vile rags. On the one side, an all-embracing abundance rising to the most fabulous opulence, refined pleasures, luxury never seen before; on the other, extreme misery, privations without number, a complete lack even of necessities for the healthy and the sick, and neither the one nor the other has a charitable refuge to shelter in. This is what the Anglican minister Mr Thomas Allies lamented so deeply when he visited the charitable houses among the Catholics. "Oh, when, when will it be," he exclaimed, "that my country will again be distinguished by these works of holy charity!… Would that, instead of so many earthly riches, England might become again *the isle of the Saints*! But that will be impossible as long as she denies, ignores and despises the honour due to the celibate state of those who consecrate themselves to God."

Those present were amazed and horrified, reflecting on what Don Casimiro had just told them. My heart breaks with grief \[*se me parte de pena el corazón*\], said the very feeling and devout Doña Dorotea, when I think of so much misfortune, so much misery, so much suffering. Above all when I see that such dreadful misfortunes are the work of the selfishness of a few who use and abuse the goods that divine Providence pours out lavishly for all. I am sure I would die of grief if I saw in Spain so heartrending a spectacle, so devastating a calamity, so unheard-of a barbarity. God deliver us, as He has delivered us until now, from that accursed Protestant sect that turns charitable men into unfeeling tyrants and sows calamities and miseries with full hands \[*á manos llenas*\] among the peoples it enters.

I already knew, said Doña Petronila, of the countless and unending disasters of England, from the day the shameless Henry VIII threw himself into the arms, or better said into the claws, of Protestantism to carry out his depraved designs. I was also well aware of the immense and ceaseless calamities of the other kingdoms whose Catholic soil was, and is, profaned by the foul growth of that infernal monster of Germany, brought

forth there as an abortion by the unhappy apostate Luther. And so, when a certain young gentleman was at my house a few days ago, posing as a Protestant \[*se echaba de protestante*\] with unbearable pedantry and effrontery, I charged at him so hard \[*le di tan fuerte carga*\] that he has had no wish since then, nor do I think he will have any in future, to set foot in it again. Whether from love of novelty or to receive the inspirations and the *wages* of the English propaganda, the fact is that in all his visits the deluded beardless youth never stopped making the most pompous praises of England and of the other Protestant countries. Time and again \[*una y mil veces*, "once and a thousand times"\] he extolled to me the blessings contained in and procured by free inquiry, freedom of worship, etc., etc. At last, tired and annoyed by so much nonsense, I told him with all the frankness proper to my sex: Be careful, sir, what you say and before whom you say it. I am not an Anne Boleyn who needs Protestantism to find a husband. Nor do I think I am a loose woman who has to lay hold of the corrupt maxims of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and the rest of the troupe \[*y demás comparsa*, the extras on a stage\] to give my conduct an honest look. If you had a little more breeding and refinement, I do not think you would have the audacity to praise such vile beings, and extol their immoral doctrines, in the presence of a Catholic lady. A Catholic daughter of Catholic parents, I glory in professing the religion of my parents, and I hope to live and die in it. Catholic by upbringing and by conviction, in vain would you strive, you and a thousand others like you, to make me abandon Catholicism, the one true religion. You and all who, like you, turn into apologists and preachers of Protestantism are wretched apostates who betray your own conscience, for it is impossible to be convinced of error as though it were the truth. Do you know, young sir, what Protestantism is?… Allow me to tell you, in case you are one of those brand-new masters who abound so much in our unhappy days and who teach what they do not know. Protestantism is the echo of the insolent and proud voice of Lucifer when he rebelled against God. It is the fatal snare in which our parents Adam and Eve were caught and enslaved. It is the pit of the abyss that the evangelist St John saw, from which there come up together a very thick smoke that darkens and blinds the understanding, and devastating locusts that pervert the will. It is a deep tomb in which religion, piety, charity and the other Christian virtues lie buried for ever. It is a cave where the seven-headed monster has its seat, that is, where the seven capital sins dwell together and reign. It is the weapon of tyrants and the shield of those who plunder without risk \[*á mansalva*\]. It is the scourge of the human race and the plague that does most harm, in time and in eternity. Therefore, sir, if Protestantism, free inquiry, freedom of worship, etc., seem so good and so advantageous to you, go and live among those who profess such *wholesome* dogmas. And leave us Spaniards, and me in particular, with our *old* Catholicism \[*rancio*, "time-honoured", literally "rancid", here used with pride\]. For I repeat and assure you, by the God who is listening to us and who will judge me, and you too whether you like it or not \[*mal que le pese*\], that I would rather lose a thousand lives, if I had them, than apostatize from the religion of my parents… So I dismissed him, and the poor devil, confused and red with shame, took his hat and went off, as they say, like a beaten dog \[*como un perro apaleado*, i.e. with his tail between his legs\].

The whole gathering laughed with satisfaction and delight, and could not help applauding the zeal and energy with which Doña Petronila had rebuked and confounded the ill-bred gentleman. Then Don Casimiro took up the word again and said:

Doña Petronila has just uttered, in a few words, a long series of truths that more than once caught my attention and gave me matter for reflection while I was abroad. My conviction, in their light, is that Protestantism is worse still than the Protestants themselves. I have seen some of them who do not act consistently with their doctrines. This may be because of virtues handed down in their families, or because of a certain natural uprightness that nature itself demands. I mean that their deeds do not agree with the corrupt and corrupting principles of Protestantism as taught by Luther, Calvin, Oecolampadius and the other so-called Reformers. I have also observed that the most upright and well-living among them, finding no rest in their many sects, sooner or later return to the bosom of the true Church and become good Catholics. On the other hand, if one or other of our own turns his back on his kindly Mother and becomes a Protestant, he is

the most contemptible and vile of all who were among us. It is just that, obstinate and corrupt as they are, God should allow them to go by themselves to the rubbish heap, to the sink of all wickedness and corruption, to the tomb of all uncleanness. For that is what Protestantism is, as all heresies have always been.

What do you think of Spain, Señor Don Casimiro? Don Lucio asked him. Do you think Protestantism and freedom of worship are possible there?

To answer this question properly and fully, Señor Don Lucio, it would be necessary to go into many grave considerations, which, being lengthy, might well become tiresome. Here are two, however, which I shall try to explain as briefly as I can, and which I think will be enough to answer you satisfactorily.

I. The first is that Protestantism and *Philosophism* are, in their basis and essence, nothing but Rationalism. They are like the two hands of one body. From their close kinship and their identical tendencies one can see the intimate and indissoluble alliance they have made with each other. Every Protestant is a rationalist, and though not every rationalist is a Protestant, he is not far from being one. These abound in all the countries of Europe, and they join hands to act together. One of the practical means they use to gain their ends is to take from the Church all she owns, so as to impoverish her and keep her as if subject to the temporal power. So, as long as there is a jewel in the Church of Spain, or a *real de vellón* to disentail \[*desamortizar*\], Protestantism will in fact be possible there from this side. “Some,” said Luther, “are good evangelicals (Protestants) because there are still goods and sacred vessels in the monasteries.”

What that heresiarch said of Germany in his own time explains the danger that threatens Spain as long as there are Church goods in her to sell. But once that sale is finished, the faithful, as faithful and as owners of property, must be on their guard and promptly change their tune \[*muden luego de registro*, “change register”, as on an organ\]. Above all the new owners, who should remember what never fails to happen: that in revolutions and disorders the children always devour the parents who begot and reared them. The reasoning could not be more obvious. “Goods,” those others will say, “are held as lawful property either because one acquired them by his own industry and diligence, or because one bought them with his money, or because one received them from someone who could and would give them. By these three lawful titles, well known to everyone, the Church held her goods as property. By these same titles, and perhaps neither so lawful nor so certain, you, you say, hold yours. Very well: just as you took the goods of the Church, so we shall now take yours, according to what you have taught us…” And there is the door opened to Communism with the key of Protestantism. Beware, property owners, beware of Protestantism! It is a monster that is not content with ruining souls, but devours property as well, unless the law of the strongest keeps it chained and subdued. But since it is then in a state of raging violence, if its keeper gives way ever so little, it breaks its chains and does damage not easily repaired…

Müntzer gives us another proof that clarifies and confirms the one before. This Protestant opens the Bible and, by means of private interpretation, fancies he sees in it that the possession of goods and property is nothing but an impious usurpation, contrary to the natural equality of the faithful. With so fine a discovery, and believing himself inspired from on high to restore things to their lawful and natural order, he gathers a great multitude of Protestant fanatics and puts himself at their head. All armed with fire and sword, they set out on their crusade against the property owners and strip them of their goods. The Saint-Simonians, the Fourierists, the Icarians, the Socialists and other such reformers, all legitimate children of the great German Reformation, have not stopped at saying that property is theft. They have worked, and are working, together to give free rein to all the passions of the mob, sowing everywhere the seeds of every wickedness and disorder.

So Protestantism opens the way to every horror and injustice, and authorizes every crime and misdeed. We have living and plain proof of it in that very England which seems to be the emporium of all horrors and errors. Of old the classic land of charity and holiness, a flowery and pleasant garden of all the virtues, today,

ever since it became Protestant, it is nothing but a vast field sown with thistles and thorns. The rich, set up by the law of the strongest as absolute masters of the goods and lives of others, look on the common masses only as material to be exploited. With a trifling contribution they pay to the Government for the poor, they think themselves lawfully dispensed before God and men from the obligation of helping the needy, even when want devours them by hundreds, as very often happens…

This, however, can happen, and does happen, in England, where the people, as I said on another occasion, are by nature silent and patient. They are, if I may be allowed the expression, like a donkey: they work, carry the load, go badly harnessed, worse fed, and beaten into the bargain, and the poor beast suffers and puts up with it until death lays it low. Such is the character and the lot of the English people. But the Spanish people and their character are very far from being what the people and the character of the United Kingdom are. The Spanish people is a lion, and as such wishes to be treated with dignity and not with brutality and tyranny. It is a lion in nobility and strength, and on the day anyone tried to enslave it, it would give such roars and do such damage that the whole earth would tremble. History reminds us of what it has done already whenever someone tried to put on it a yoke it neither wished nor ought to bear. The deeds are so great that, if history did not record them, they would seem fabulous to us. Woe to the apostate Protestantizers, and woe to Spain herself, on the day when, abandoned by the hand of God for her blindness and criminal obstinacy, her Catholic heart should be turned into a Protestant heart!!!… That is exactly what the English would like. Why? Because *á río revuelto, ganancia de pescadores* \[proverb: "when the river is troubled, the fishermen gain"; i.e. "it is good fishing in troubled waters"\].

II. The second is that in time, and perhaps not a long time, a law may be made in Spain that establishes or permits plurality and freedom of worship. For though it is true that all Spain is Catholic, Apostolic and Roman, and has always kept herself devoted to Catholicism alone, it is no less true that there are Spaniards, fortunately few in number, ready to sell their religion and their souls, and wicked enough to ask for or make a law allowing each and every Spaniard to do the same as they. They are moved either by the diabolical and constant prompting of foreigners, above all of crafty and meddling England, or by a wicked and execrable self-interest. This would not fail to produce great and frightful disorders, even if those capable of carrying things to such an extreme are few. For it is well known that ten men who stir and shout make more noise than ten thousand who stay quiet and silent.

It is possible, I repeat, that in the end someone may try to give the nation, in the name of the nation, things it has never dreamed of or wanted, and which, as I believe, it will never consent to or want. Think of the universal alarm that spread through all Spain when base 2 of the Constitution was being debated, and of the astonishing number of signatures at the foot of the petitions against it. The number would have been more astonishing still on further petitions, had it not been prevented. All this leads me to believe that at least the matrons of Spain would know how to imitate, in such a case, the manly and exemplary conduct of the illustrious matrons of Peru. The members of the Convention of that Republic, meeting in Lima, were debating last year (1855) the toleration or freedom of worship that some of them were trying to bring in. But no sooner did the news reach the public than the women, and among them the most distinguished ladies of that capital, went to occupy the public galleries set aside for their sex, and did so every day without fail until the day of the vote. Placed there, and paying the closest attention to every speech the orators made, they showed them constantly and noisily their approval or disapproval, according as the speakers were for or against the exclusive Catholic religion. From their fair hands fell the most exquisite flowers, raining on the first, while on the second, amid a deluge of humiliating epithets, they threw handfuls of alfalfa \[i.e. fodder, as for donkeys\]. The moment of the vote came, and the following article was passed by 46 votes to 21: "The religion of the State is the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman. The nation protects it by all means in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel, and does not permit the public exercise of any other."[2]

If this sacred warmth is kept in the Spanish blood that runs in the veins of those noble matrons, after thirty-odd years of separation from the mother country, what would the native women of eminently Catholic Spain herself do? Would they keep silent at a like or similar juncture, in a like or similar danger that their children might one day apostatize from the true religion?… No!!! And how could they keep silent, foreseeing besides, as they foresee by instinct and without fail, the furious storm in which they themselves would be caught once Protestantism came to thunder over our heads?… Unhappy woman, from the day error should have altars among us as truth has!… Freedom of worship, which the ungodly seek to enthrone under pretext of a tolerance required by advanced civilization, that is, by the paganism of the age, is a monstrous amalgam, a pernicious confusion, an internal struggle with no possible truce or rest. Better, it is a deadly poison that seeps through all the pores of society, a gnawing cancer which, seeking food to feed on, spreads its fearsome roots through the whole body of the nation, until it wraps round its heart and puts an end to its moral and religious life…

From freedom of worship would follow at once, as an inevitable consequence, civil marriage and a law permitting divorce. And do you know what civil marriage with such a permission is? It is the destroyer of the family, the oppressor of woman and the shame of her dignity. It robs her of the holy freedom and protection that Catholicism grants her. It is the most fruitful seed of immorality and general corruption. It is the changing of the sacrament of Matrimony into a mere agreement or contract, which makes the wife an instrument of pleasure, a public concubine whom a capricious and corrupt man can scandalously abandon whenever he pleases.

Would that I could make my voice ring through every corner of the Spanish dominions! Beware! I would say to the women, beware! in case the moment of trial should come… See what happens in England and other Protestant countries like her, where civil marriage is sanctioned and authorized by law. Married women, what horror! are led there to market like domestic animals and sold at any price… In London I myself saw one sold for a shilling, that is, five *reales de vellón*!!! In America I have seen as much as five hundred *pesos fuertes* \[silver dollars\] given for a Negro slave woman, and in Europe the civilized and humanitarian Protestants of Albion pay no more than five reales for a white slave!!!… This is adding contempt and insult to the most unheard-of barbarism… And for all their unnaturalness, would you believe that many ministers of those accursed and infernal sects into which Anglican Protestantism is split have their eyes fixed on Spain, and want at all costs \[*á todo trance*\] to make us, with their doctrines, as happy as they and their unfortunate followers are?

Oh, my dear little sisters! cried the boy Don Dionisio when he heard this, lovingly embracing his dear sisters Josefina and Anita. Oh, little sisters of my heart!… God deliver us, and deliver Spain now and always, from the execrable maxims and consequences of Protestantism!… Ah! If instead of a good and virtuous father such as we have, we had a capricious and cruel one, brought up in the dissolving doctrines of so diabolical a religion, perhaps by now we would have seen our darling mamma dragged like a vile animal to a public square to be sold and handed over to a monster in human form, and then…

Be quiet, for God’s sake, Dionisio, cried Josefina, bursting into tears, I could die of grief at the mere thought that…

Oh, mamma dear, I’m dying!… said Anita.

Fear nothing, my children, said Don Casimiro, shedding tears of tenderness and clasping his family and his beloved wife in his arms. Neither you, nor your mother, nor I will ever, God willing, be Protestants. It may be, as I have said, that some bastard Spaniards will try to pour over our country the golden cup of Protestantism, full of all the errors and abominations that I have partly told you of. But let us hope in the mercy of God, who will deliver Spain from this new storm that threatens her, as He has delivered her until now from others like it or worse. Many other things no less horrifying remain for me to tell you and the other

persons who honour me with their visits. But the hour is late, and we must put an end to our tender and shared emotions. Meanwhile, what most concerns and befits us all is to make ourselves ever more worthy children of our one true Mother, the holy Catholic Church. For if we do not, perhaps God, wearied by our iniquities, would abandon us in this life and hand us over to the power of the Prince of darkness…

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[1] Gen 3:5 (Vulgate).

[2] The article quoted became, in substance, art. 4 of the Constitution of 1856.

The Traveller's Notes

On the Morality of Catholics and of Protestants

Lying, slander and violence: these are the favourite and usual weapons of vile people, of people with a cowardly, perverted and ignoble heart. The Protestants neither know how to wield nor can wield any others against the Catholics. They charge them with every kind of falsehood, on the counsel and inspiration of the devil, father of lies[1] and master of Luther, as Luther himself boasts. Besides this, they inflate and exaggerate the Catholics' faults and crimes as much as they can, while they set off and extol the rare natural virtues that shine in one Protestant or another. There is no doubting it, for unhappily it is too true: there is no lack, indeed there is an abundance, of vices and sins among Catholics. But what fault of Catholicism is that? It would be at fault if it commanded or at least approved such excesses and misdeeds, as Protestantism does. Everywhere and always the Catholic religion has disapproved and condemned moral evil in whatever form it appears, and at the same time has pointed out to her dear children every kind of virtue and urged them to practise it. But since they do not cease to be men by being Catholics, neither do the passions cease to hold some sway among them, inciting and pushing them to evil. Yet however bad they may be, the number of their wicked deeds and crimes will never be comparable with that of the crimes and wicked deeds committed among the Protestants, taken in general.

Here, in proof of it, is a comparison between the Catholics and the Protestants of one and the same country. It is the statistics of crimes committed in one year in London *alone*, and in *all* Catholic Ireland:

| Offences | In London | In Ireland | |----------|----------|----------| | Homicides | 91 | 51 | | Suicides | 207 | 0 | | Crimes against nature | 36 | 0 | | Bigamy | 27 | 11 | | Breach of trust with theft | 238 | 89 | | Frauds | 287 | 128 | | Passing false coin | 619 | 241 | | Smuggling | 302 | 0 | | Public indecency | 57 | 10 | | Houses of prostitution | … | … |

This comparative table, based on official data, was presented on 21 February 1852 by *The Lamp*, a Catholic paper, to the Protestant paper *The Times*, the eternal slanderer of the Irish Catholics precisely because they are Catholics. That staunch defender of Catholicism and of Ireland then adds: "There, gentlemen of the Protestant church, there you have a theme that will suggest deep reflections to you, and will serve to compose your magnificent *panegyric*. Examine this table attentively, and in it you will find the great difference between Catholic and Protestant education. Taking as the basis for this purpose the difference in population, we shall find that London alone is *seven times* more bloodthirsty than the whole of Ireland; a hundred and forty-four times more prone to crimes against nature; ten times more inclined to the crime of bigamy; four hundred and twenty-eight times more guilty of theft and bad faith; twelve times more given to schemes for deceiving one's neighbour; eleven times more given to passing false coin; twenty-three times more shameless, offending against public decency; one thousand two hundred and eight times more inclined to smuggling; thirty times more fruitful in crimes of prostitution and in robberies… What do you think of such statistics, you saints of the Protestant alliance? Have you not reason to congratulate yourselves on your glorious Reformation?… Yes, there is no doubt of it: wherever so good a tree, planted by the hands of an apostate and perjured friar, has struck root, it has everywhere borne like fruits… So it has always been, and

so it always will be!…”

Origin and Growth of Protestantism in England. Cruelty and Barbarity of the English Protestants, Not Only Against Catholics and Criminals, But Also Against Those Slow to Pay the Heavy Taxes Demanded of Them

Henry VIII, King of England, wrote against the heresiarch Luther. In his work he not only proclaimed loudly the supremacy of the Holy See by divine right, but also defended it with solid reasons against that innovator, adding that nothing was too much where the pontifical throne was concerned, for which he felt an affection without equal.[1]

Here, among other things, is what he says to Luther in refuting his errors: “Do you dare deny that the whole Christian communion greets Rome as its spiritual Mother? Ah! To the ends of the earth, amid seas and deserts, all that bears the name of Christian bows down before Rome!… And if this power that Rome claims and has does not come from God, then it must be said that Rome usurped it… But when? Could you perhaps tell me? Does this usurpation date from two, three or more centuries?… Take history; open it… But if this power is so ancient that its origin is lost in the night of time, then you must know that human laws themselves hold as lawful every possession whose origin cannot be pointed to; and that, by the unanimous consent of all peoples, it is forbidden to change what time has made unchangeable.”

The same Henry VIII said one day to Sir Thomas More, because of some reflections More had just put to him: “Nothing equals my attachment to the Holy See, and truly I find no terms strong enough to express it.”

Here are the words with which Henry concluded the letter he wrote to Pope Leo X on 21 May 1521, sending him his work, the *Assertio*, which he had dedicated to him: “We have wished to make known and show more clearly to all that we are always ready to defend and protect the holy Roman Church, not only with force and with arms, but also with the works of the mind and with Christian writings. This made us believe that to none but Your Holiness should we offer and consecrate the first fruit of our talent and modest learning, both out of the filial love we bear you and out of care for the Christian commonwealth itself.” The Supreme Pontiff answered him with lavish expressions of love and gratitude, and honoured him with the title of *Defender of the Faith*. Who would then have said that a man of such sentiments would change as he did! Ah! Only the blind and furious passion of lust can explain to us so complete and so deplorable a transformation!…

Catherine of Aragon, wife of Arthur, Henry’s elder brother, had been widowed by him before the marriage was consummated. Henry fell in love with Catherine and, seeking to marry her, sent to Rome for the dispensation, which Julius II granted. They were in fact married, and Henry had by her a numerous family. The royal couple lived for many years in perfect harmony and love, until, unhappily, the King fell in love with Anne Boleyn. She would in no way give in to the Monarch’s base desires unless she were first joined to him by the bond of lawful marriage. Blinded by love for her, he set every means at work to leave Catherine and marry Anne. He appealed to Rome, but in vain. It was then that the treacherous Cromwell, entering into his criminal plans and lustful amours, suggested to him that he had no need at all of the Supreme Pontiff’s approval in the matter of his divorce. The impassioned Prince believed it, and so began the ill-fated schism from which so many and such disastrous consequences followed. He who until then had been, by affection and conviction, a faithful friend and submissive son of the Apostolic See became from then on its determined and bitter enemy. And from being the father of his people while a Catholic, once *Protestant* he began to be its executioner… Davanzati says of Henry VIII: “He lived fifty-six years: eighteen unmarried, twenty-six with no wife but Catherine; but in the remaining twelve alone he had six. He beheaded two of them, the third died in childbirth, he put away two others, and the sixth he had no time to kill… Before the divorce he was not bloodthirsty; he condemned to death very few commoners and only two nobles. He loved the sciences and favoured the learned. But after the putting away and the schism, the slaughter he made of noble citizens

was general and beyond counting. In the books are recorded the names of three or four Queens, two Princesses, two Cardinals and another who was only condemned, twelve Dukes, Marquesses and Earls together with their sons, eighteen Barons and Knights, thirteen Abbots and Priors, seventy-six Religious and Priests, and countless nobles and commoners." (p. 66). What a lesson for those who, dazzled and deceived, leave or try to leave the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman religion!…

When Henry died, Edward VI succeeded him, a boy of only nine years and ten months. He reigned some seven years, and during that time Cranmer, executor of Henry's will, brought in every sort of wickedness in the King's name. In case Edward died without issue, Henry had named his two daughters Mary and Elizabeth heirs to the crown. But Cranmer, instead of carrying out that provision, conspired against them when Edward died and had Jane Grey crowned, who reigned only nine days. Then Mary was crowned. Under her clement and kindly sceptre it seemed that Catholicism was going to recover its ascendancy and its life. But this was only a fleeting brightness, like the flare a lamp sometimes gives as it goes out…

The crown at last passed to the brow of Elizabeth, who reigned forty-five years. There was a law in England that excluded bastard children from the throne. Elizabeth was one, for she was born of Anne Boleyn, unlawfully married to Henry while Catherine, his first and lawful wife, was still alive. Declared illegitimate by the Supreme Pontiff, as justice required, Elizabeth, full of rage and spite, set out to exterminate the Catholic religion from the kingdom, to tear out, if it were possible, its last root.

As the child of the sin of impurity, Elizabeth was very unchaste and lustful. Given up to vice and licence, she lived scandalously with eight known men, but with none as husband. Yet she prided herself greatly on the title of *the Virgin Queen*. What cynicism!… In the sixteenth year of her reign she had a law passed in order to secure the crown to her natural children, whoever their father might have been, as can still be seen in the Statutes. Far from being beautiful, Elizabeth was ugly; and the ugliness of her body, joined to that of her soul, made her a horrible and monstrous woman. Not so her august cousin Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots: she was a beauty and, besides, a most virtuous Catholic woman. These titles were enough for the diabolically jealous Elizabeth to declare herself her irreconcilable enemy. She had her treacherously arrested and, after holding her captive for nineteen years and slanderously charging her with enormous crimes, ended by having her head cut off on a scaffold set up in a hall of the very prison where she had spent so great a part of her life… What cruelty!

Elizabeth declared herself spiritual head of the Church, and sent to the gallows all who would not acknowledge her as such. She then had a penal code drawn up, whose laws were each more unjust and cruel than the last. Under it, enormous sums were exacted from those caught hearing Mass, going to confession, or performing any act of the Catholic religion. All the bishops and priests who stayed faithful to their conscience and to the Church were banished without appeal. She set up an Inquisition incomparably more odious than the one the Protestants have so often and so unjustly reviled in Catholic countries. Besides the stakes and scaffolds, the cruellest torments were invented, the most horrible machines, and the most barbarous kinds of torture and death. One example will suffice, the very idea of which horrifies: from certain victims they drew out the intestines little by little until the belly was completely emptied… Then they threw barley into the cavity and made it serve as a manger for the beasts! The soil of Great Britain was literally flooded with innocent blood during the long and ill-omened reign of that infernal fury. The number of victims whom Elizabeth sacrificed to her satanic fury IN A SINGLE YEAR, with no other crime than that of being faithful to God, was three times greater than that of the criminals condemned to death by Mary during the six years of her reign…

Such is the tolerance and philanthropy of the Protestants!… They want to be treated with consideration and indulgence, but once they believe themselves the stronger, and are, they rule and act with the most refined inhumanity…

The English of those times grew so used to barbarity, and took such relish in it \[*cebáronse*, "glutted themselves", like a beast on its prey\], that they have not ceased since then to be more or less cruel. Compassion among them seems to have given place for ever to the coldest insensibility. So they look with the utmost indifference on the misfortunes by sea and land that often befall their fellow countrymen and fellow men. If an offender falls into their hands, he is treated and punished with the greatest cruelty. Not long ago, on the island of Malta, a man committed a crime for which he was condemned to the following penalty. They laid him naked on a cart, paraded him so through the whole city, and with red-hot pincers \[*hechas ascua*, "made into embers"\] tore out as many pinches of flesh as there were street corners in the streets and squares of the city… A double martyrdom! For besides the flesh he kept losing, what he did not lose was left to the sharp and unbearable pain of the burns!… The wretch gave horrible and heartrending cries… but the executioners did not on that account stop torturing him. It lasted until the condemned man died. Such was the sentence!… This is what the *civilized and civilizing* English do, they who cry out so much against the *excesses, inhumanities, barbarities, tyrannies*, etc., etc., of other nations!!!…

But they not only punish criminals so atrociously; they also treat and punish with unheard-of brutality and harshness the taxpayers who are slow to pay taxes which, indeed, are higher than in any other nation. Here, according to the official report of April 1855, are some of the torments with which those taxpayers are punished in Madras:

"We have seen," the commissioners say officially, "in the hands of a village headman, an instrument of torture, which by his own confession he commonly uses." (p. 18).

"Flogging is in use in many parts." (p. 19).

"The punishment generally employed is to tie a cord round the neck of the defaulting taxpayer, and then tie it to the great toe of one of his feet, so that the man being tortured is forced to bend his body. Once forced into this violent posture, a large stone is loaded on his back for greater pain, and he remains so until he promises to pay the tax demanded of him.

"Two persons hold the man being tortured by the hands, while others beat him on the back.

"Exposure to the sun, deprivation of food, of drink and of other necessities are also torments commonly used, not only against the natives but even against the English themselves.

"Imprisonment, squeezing the fingers, pinching the thighs with pincers, slapping, beating with sticks and whips, making the guilty knock their heads against one another, holding them together by the hair at the back and then tying them to the tail of a donkey or a buffalo: these are the ordinary tortures to which defaulting taxpayers are subject." (p. 48).

More still. In Appendix C, no. 14, p. cxiv, among other atrocities that modesty does not allow me to copy, there is mention of the penal custom of throwing pepper into the eyes of the tortured, and of applying to them boxes of insects that torment them cruelly.

These boxes of insects were invented in the time of Elizabeth, that Queen whom the Baroness de Staël called, with much reason and aptness, "the female Tiberius."

What deep and bitter reflections these notes give matter for!!!…

Spain, noble and Catholic Spain, that illustrious nation whose countless and unfading glories are one with the imperishable and incomparable glories of the true religion; that renowned nation which, so as not to be Muslim, fought seven hundred years on end with matchless constancy and indomitable courage, and did not sheathe her invincible sword until she had driven from her pure bosom the impure and barbarous sons of the Impostor of Mecca: could that same nation one day cravenly bow her spotless brow before error, and let its ignoble yoke be laid on her by the no less barbarous and impure sectaries of the Impostor of Eisleben?… It

does not seem probable, or even possible, if we reflect a little on our most glorious past. And yet the exotic and poisonous ideas sown freely by a foreign hand in our privileged soil have taken root and grown in it to such a point; we have become so money-minded \[*metalizado*\], so materialistic and so corrupt; we have degenerated so far; we are sunk in so icy an indifference to everything, that in religious fervour, in love of country and in respect for the throne we keep no more than a few wretched remnants of our likeness to our forefathers… This gives much to reflect on and to fear!… Fortunately, though weakened, the Catholic faith still remains whole in the vast majority of Spaniards. But the enemy's assaults are frequent, and the state of mind of several of them is not of the most encouraging… Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, listing the causes of Protestantism, said that in Germany it was self-interest, or greed for the goods of the Church; in England, lustful love; and in France, love of novelty… Perhaps these three elements meet together in the bastard heart of some Spaniards, to hurl themselves into that abyss and drag us with them!…

Protestantism, whatever its sect, is called by some, very aptly, a true *Catholicophobia*. For whether its sectaries are Calvinists, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Anabaptists, etc., etc., they are all so many mad dogs. Whether brought in by authority or merely tolerated among Catholics, they try to bite them so as to inject into their souls the deadly virus of their diabolical poison. All Germany, Switzerland and Poland, France, England, Sweden and Denmark are historical witnesses, and some of them present-day witnesses, of the havoc that the many-shaped monster of the Reformation caused, and goes on causing, everywhere…

What would happen in Spain on the day it was allowed to sink its claws and teeth into her?… It is not possible to say, because it is not possible to foresee. I will only say that, divided and split then in religion as we unhappily are already in politics, from the single people that we still form by reason of Catholic unity, we would be reduced to mere individuals without any bond or cohesion. And then, would we be happy?… God deliver us from such happiness!!!…

End of The Traveller Just Arrived.

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[2] Jn 8:44.

[1] Henry VIII's *Assertio septem sacramentorum* (1521).