

This state of unrest and disquietude, and fruitless quest of the good and the stable, perplexes and dismays the heart and paralyzes the thought. One is fain to ask again and again the old question, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" And again and again the self-same answer is given back, "Dark and stormy. Dark and stormy." And truly our night *is* dark and stormy. Well do I remember, in the days of youth, passing down one of the back streets of London's lowest quarters, and speaking to a poor old withered-up crone who sat on her lowly doorstep. Before her, overshadowing her little home, were a Wesleyan chapel, a Mission chapel of the Established Church, and a Roman Catholic church. "To which of all those, mother," said I, "do you go to worship?" And the answer came back, quietly but firmly, from her trembling lips, "*I looks only to One above.*" And one cannot help feeling that only and entirely the help in which that poor woman trusted *can* save and redeem Spain of to-day.

The attitude of the thinking mass of Spaniards reminds one daily of the question asked in Holy Story, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" But one listens in vain for the answer from the self-same lips, "Thou (and only Thou) hast the words of eternal life."

If you shall be conversing with a Spanish gentleman of Republican views on the subject of religion, his words will be very few, but they will be *very* sad. The following conversation occurred a short time since between the writer and a literary man in Spain of real culture and refinement. He himself introduced the subject on which I write by saying to me, "I believe you are a Protestant?" After answer-

ing his question, I merely said, "You have now the advantage of me: are you not yourself a Roman Catholic?"—"Yes," was the reply; "yes. I am a Roman Catholic—that is to say, I have not renounced that *credo*; it is more convenient not to have an open rupture. But," said he, "I believe really in nothing of the ceremonies or rites of my Church; I pray to God at home; I believe in Him, and in Jesus Christ. I consider myself exactly at the stand-point of your English Church. I despise the music, the processions, and the unintelligible tongue of my Church's services; I hate to see money given for such things; but I do feel the need of public worship without all this. Four bare walls and a pure heart are all that is needed to serve and love God." He added a few words to this effect, that no appeal to the senses should ever be made in a church—nothing touched save a man's heart.

I did not press the subject further, for both his heart and my own were too full. Yet once again let me recur to a few words said to me by a Spanish student—words which, spoken but a few weeks since, have never left my memory. We were supping together, merely discussing the subject of art in this country; and, as conversations (even in Spain!) *will* fall into the religious groove, at last we spoke of religion. He was a Roman Catholic, but, as he himself allowed, "Indiferente." He was speaking of public prayer, and I merely remarked that, as he never went to public prayer, I supposed he found an equal solace in private prayer. I then spoke of sermons, and added, "Do you find no help in the sermons of your clergy?"

This then was, word for word, to the best of the

writer's recollection, the language of his reply:—"The English pray; they try to act up to their religion, because they can believe it; we cannot, with modern literature at hand, swallow *our* religion at a gulp. You must give up one of the two. I hold to neither. As to us, as a rule, we do not pray to God. You ask about sermons: well, I went into a church the other day to listen to one who was said to be a good preacher. He did, truly, preach magnificently: I never saw a man with such a flow of language; he was an orator! But" (*pero*, the constant Spanish antithesis) "with all his flow of language, I only remembered two things as I left the church: he compared the exceeding purity of the Virgin to a cup of silver and a tower of ivory; and there was no room at all for God or Jesus Christ. These clergy, who aspire to guide us to peace here and in the next (*if there be a next*) world," continued he, "never preach about the *only two things worth preaching about, Virtue and the Almighty.*"

As usual, then, with the education of his order, this young fellow simply believed in and longed for tidings of the Christian moral code and the Fatherhood of God. For *that* his soul thirsted; for *that* he went to church. He was a hungerer and thirster, I truly believe, after righteousness—a few simple words would have gone straight to his heart; for those few simple words he looked and waited, and for them, alas! he looked and waited in vain.

Another leading topic of conversation is (as I have already mentioned) the deification of Nature. In high Republican circles in Spain it is constantly said, "We make war against all that is against Nature. It must be wrong."

I once asked of a Republican orator, "How can you justify your fellows' act in turning the nuns out of their convent?"

"We would turn out the priests too, if we could, because we want all men not to be unnatural. Celibacy is unnatural."

"But is not *expulsion* a rough way of inculcating a moral lesson?"

"*Muy bien*," was his answer; "but we must use rough measures sometimes."

The ignorance of their clergy, again, is a constant theme of conversation among the Spanish Republicans. They will have it—I know not with what truth—that the priests know little besides the lives of the saints and Latin books. As to geography, say they, or modern history, they know nothing; and modern literature they never read!

Many thoughts here force themselves upon me. Among others, fain am I to confess that a tribute is due to the worth of the priests. Where they *could* give to the poor, the writer of this work believes they freely gave of what they had. But now they are poor indeed, and rejected of men. Still their influence is great, and this for two reasons. First, because their hold on the women of a family is still great: the devout and simple-minded women of the family still give to their church and priest—still are regular at confession, prayers, and mass.

The second reason of their influence is this, that so many of the clergy come from influential families—are, in fact, *bene nati*. In Galicia and the North of Spain, the poor, and very oftentimes the uneducated, become clergymen. But in the interior, and in the South, as regards the town clergy, most, or, at least, many of

them, are well-born; and many a family puts its dullest member into the Church, as the *dernier ressort*, that he may have a certain position and status in society. In the towns, however, the clergy are generally selected for the merits of their education and for their talents.

Gladly do I turn from this part of the signs of the times, merely adding a trifling anecdote which I heard some few months since in the best educated city in Spain—the only city where one-half of the population can read or write. A Spanish woman went into church, a few minutes before service, to inquire who would be the evening preacher.

“*El chantre*,” was the answer. This would be equivalent in English, I suppose, to the precentor.

“*Que’ lo oiga su abuela*” (“Let his grandmother hear it”), was the answer, as the woman swept out of the church.

To a candid mind this little anecdote (a “good story”) shows, surely, an irreverence for the Church which dismays one, on the one hand, but, at the same time, a real seeking and longing for that which, for so many hundred years, we have called, with truth, the good news of God.

How bitterly upon English ears would have fallen the words with which, a short time since, the streets of my town were ringing—“Our Castelar is the Saviour, the Christ of 1873!” One can only say, as one hears such words, that one’s best hope is that He whom they crucify may pray—as we doubt not He does pray for them—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they say.” Alas! Castelar’s reign over these people’s hearts is short indeed; already are vague rumours of his unpopularity, and of “Pi y

Margall and the Cantonal system," floating about among us, though, perhaps, Spain has known no more liberal, religious, or noble leader than Emilio Castelar!

(b.) Among those signs by which the state of religious feeling may be known, I mentioned, in the second place, the statistics of church-going.

Very few men, as a rule, attend church. The old anecdote of Sydney Smith is constantly recalled to one's memory. He preached, we have heard, upon the text, "O that *men* would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness," when Sunday after Sunday, his quiet village church was denuded of *men*. And in Spain the emphasis might well, and with reason, be laid upon the same word—"O that *men* would praise the Lord!"

What *is* seen in the churches of Spain, and I have gone to her country parish churches and to her large cathedrals—is this: the bright array of lights, the gaudy dresses of the saints, the black, white, and embroidered vestments of the priests, as in solemn silence they come forth to kneel and pray before the altar of our common God and Father. What *is not* seen is the bronzed face of the vine-dresser, the worn visage of the artizan, the pale face of the *littérateur*; the sailor, the soldier, the bookseller, the tailor. Where are they? They are not here!

What *is* heard in our Spanish churches is the unintelligible prayers of the priests; the ringing, joyous, inspiring clash of the music, oftentimes supplemented with the sweet carol of birds, the deep bass of the head singer. What *is not* heard is the answer of *men's* voices; what *is not* heard is the deep "Amen" to every prayer. It is not here! There is no response

from the men! They are away—at the Muséo, at “La Libreria,” at the Casino.

In Spanish churches you simply see and hear women—for the most part well-bred women—kneeling devoutly upon the rush-matting of the church, and praying to their God—I *must say* praying, to all appearances, most fervently, most earnestly. I have seen nothing in Spain of that looking round and back, so common with ladies in England, to scan every person who comes into the church.

It is said in England that one out of every six of our *male* population goes to a place of worship. Here we have no places of worship save those of the Established Church, and I fear that not one in every twenty-five enters these to pray!

I mentioned as the two last signs of the decay of religious faith, the transactions, however small, which have lately taken place, and the bookstalls of Republican Spain.

Let me touch upon these briefly, and then enter upon the *causes* of this revolt against religion, and the speculation, Whither does it tend?

(c.) If it has more than once been asserted, in the course of these remarks on the state of religious feeling in Spain, that the small occurrences of daily life, and the acts of the revolutionary party in the summer of 1873, have shown and are daily bearing witness to the decay of religious faith in Spain, these assertions, it shall now be demonstrated, are not made without sufficient grounds.

Enter many of the Government (“del Rey”) hospitals in Spain, and ask whether there is any religious service, any ministrations of clergy, in those towns where there has been a revolution—that

is, where popular feeling obtained for a while the mastery—and you will find that they no longer exist. They were dismissed during the summer revolution, and the chapel of the hospital is closed; the priest—an institution as old as the hospital walls—no longer lives within them, or attends to the sick and dying among its inmates.

Among the Foundling Hospitals, the Christian rite of baptism is, in many cases, no longer administered; in smaller hospitals, or homes, you will find, on inquiry, “We had a chapel, but have none now; the clergy lived here, but now only the doctors are allowed to reside on the premises.” Go to many of the churches in Spain, whose walls, once richly gilt with the paintings of her great sons, attracted many a strange traveller’s footsteps, and mark if in many of these cases they are not taken away. In some cases they were carried to a place of safety until this tyranny be overpassed; in a still greater number they were rudely torn down (I have seen some literally *torn* in the operation) and carried off to the Public Library or the Muséo, and thither you must follow if you would behold them.

Sundays are fearfully desecrated. If it be true, as has often been asserted, that where, during the great French Revolution, Sundays were abolished, and every day of the seven was a working day—if it be true that the abolishing of the prescribed day of rest, and the incessant strain of work caused by it, led to disease of mind, and in many cases lunacy, one can but tremble for this country, for it seems that Sunday is often wholly, and the feast-days partially, ignored.

Again, the aspect of the Church herself is wholly stagnant. With her 42,000 clergy, whose charge

are fearfully demoralized, and, in the interior, utterly ignorant—men who are joyless, religionless, mindless—one looks in vain for tidings of the newly-endowed home, the fresh school-walls, the congress, or the midnight mission. These are not. The faded dresses, and in many cases the worn and sad countenances of the clergy, too, all point, not to life, but to a slow decay.

In the interior, the frequent interments without religious rites, the secular and profane so-called baptisms, known as the "Civil Funeral" and the "Civil Baptism"; the sight of the priests, oftentimes forced, because their pecuniary support has been taken away, or at least is no longer paid at present by the Government of their country, to seek their bread in secular callings; the indecent behaviour of men, very often, who keep their hats on as the procession of the Host files by,—these, and such as these, are the signs of a deep-seated hatred to the religion of their forefathers, and of the reaction which has set in with the Republic against the Church established in this land.

Petty in some cases have been the means by which men of very ultra opinions have shown their contempt for the "Credo" in which they have been brought up. To change the name of a street because it bore a Saint's name, to mutilate a pillar because the figure of a Saint was sculptured upon it, these were unworthy of Republican Spain, and were and would ever be repudiated by all her right-minded sons. But such things were.

(*d.*) And if the general tone of conversation in educated Republican circles; if the statistics of Church-going; if the daily events—trifling, perhaps, in themselves, but not trifling when viewed in connexion

with other things—all bespeak and bear witness to a growing dissatisfaction with their established religion, restlessness, and reaction, no less do the gaudy book-stalls of the cities of Spain show the same tendency to revolution.

For a few reals (a real = $2\frac{1}{2}d.$) the mind may have its glut of materialism and blank unbelief. Every school of thought here known as Liberal ("Liberal" meaning any work on religion which is not distinctively Roman Catholic) is represented on these shelves. To enumerate these cheap works would be a long and fruitless task; it would simply be to recapitulate the titles of the works of all the modern writers, French, German, English, and Spanish, of the various schools of free thought, beginning, as I have said, with the works of E. Renan, which are *very* popular here in Spanish translations, and ending with the countless little works of the modern Spanish thinkers—oftentimes mere imitations of the French authors and schools—bearing such high-sounding titles as 'The New Religion for the People,' or 'The Teaching of Natural Religion!'

II. The writer thinks that enough has been already quoted on the *first* subject proposed for consideration, and passes on to consider very briefly the two other subjects, or lines of thought, proposed at the commencement in connexion with the great subject of which he has merely endeavoured to present the picture as exhibited to the outsider.

He passes on therefore to ask, To what causes is the present state of religious feeling due?

The present state of religious feeling in Spain, then, is, he believes, simply a natural reaction from the

excessively tight reins with which her sons were held during the reign of the late Queen, and, of course, long before the accession of that sovereign. We all know that the starting back of the bow is fierce, sudden, and often self-destructive, when the string is suddenly relaxed; and that in proportion as had been the tightness of the restraint, so will be the fierceness of the recoil. And so, now that men are suddenly freed, by enactments of the Republic, from the necessity of subscribing to the doctrines of the Established Church,—now that liberty has been proclaimed after so many years of slavery,—it is not at all, the writer thinks, matter for wonder that their liberty should for a while be utter *licence* (as it certainly is). The wonder would be if such were *not* the case.

And, secondly, the reaction of feeling against the Established Church—for we must still call it so—is due in great measure to the abuses and superstitions which have existed in that Church. When reasonable men are compelled to belong to a society whose members in authority proclaim as truths doctrines which they cannot accept in any sense as true,—when they are compelled to acquiesce in what they believe to be gross superstitions,—they *will*, and in patient, indifferent Spain they *have*, for a while given a silent acquiescence. But now men travel, men read; education, though very slowly, *is* spreading even here; floods of books come in from France, Germany, and England—all are now free to buy and read them; and men see that they have *been blinded*; that the whole truth has not been proclaimed to them; and they will not, in so vital a matter as religion, any longer be trifled with. With one voice, from the educated artisan to the Chief of her Republic, the

educated sons of Spain say, "We will be free; we will serve God as our hearts tell us, and not submit the reason He has given us to the thralldom of Church decrees."

And, thirdly, the want of freedom and of a liberal and general education of the clergy of this land has been one fruitful cause of discontent. Many are men of education and culture, but not by any means all; and, as a rule, they are too much bound down by subscription to *this* article and *that* decree, to have any original thought or research for themselves; they do not meet the doubts and acknowledge the tendencies of the age in which it has pleased God to cast their lot, and so they cannot guide, shape, and direct into its proper channel modern thought.

And, fourthly, the Church of this nation has fallen in the esteem of her children because she has not, as other Churches have, sought to *educate* the masses committed to her care: she has given them no fresh light of knowledge, and they cannot understand her services, these poor, uneducated masses; and so, receiving little, they—the most uneducated—though still afraid of, and full of awe for her power, do not *love* her in their heart of hearts, and, not loving, they cannot believe in her beauty or her wisdom.

And, lastly, the revolt against the religion of their land by her sons may be assigned to this fact, that nothing which is not based upon perfect truth can ever ultimately prosper. With all that is good in her, no thoughtful man can fail to see how much is withheld of Divine truth, how much is supplied of human invention, to the doctrine and discipline of the Roman Church. No warping of the truth, no withholding of the whole message of God, can prosper. Such is one

moral of the decay of religious faith among the thousands of my country this day!

III. But it is time to draw to a close remarks which have cost the writer many months of research and observation, but in the compilation of which he has never left his daily path of duty to seek his materials. He has merely thrown together, into perhaps a somewhat crude, but, he trusts, intelligible form, the result of a long sojourn in the country from which he writes, and from whose sons, of every shade of religious opinion, he has received unmingled kindness. Our third line of thought was this: to what is all this unsettlement of religious belief tending?

The writer answers: *To good.* To the establishment of a purer, truer, more lightful religion in this land; a religion more Scriptural, more what the Spanish people call *Evangelical*, i.e., Christian, in the broadest, deepest, widest acceptance of the word. Things, *as they are, cannot long remain.* Either the tight, fierce rein must be again had recourse to (that, the writer believes, never will, or can be), or, as most educated men think and say, a wave of truer, simpler, broader religion, of which this surf is but the prelude, will sweep over and cleanse this land. As in nature, so in things divine, things religious: when the storm is fiercest, it must soon be over; when the night is darkest, dawn is ever nearest. Man's extremity is ever God's greatest opportunity. How often, in the history of individuals and of nations, has the truth of these trite sayings been realized! The Renaissance in France, the Reformation in England, how were these heralded in? And may the religious dawn of suffering, restless, aspiring Spain, be the

dawn of that true religion and useful learning which kindles more and more into the perfect, peaceful, shining day!

A short comparison between the state of the Church of this land and that of her Sister Church of England, shall, in conclusion, be offered.

The Churches of England and of Spain are, if the writer's recollection of the former serves him in good stead, both of them to be considered as sick men, and to be judged of accordingly. But there is a difference in sickness, and in the signs of it—a difference which, by practised eyes, is well understood.

In the sickness of the Church of England I see all the signs of a sick man, fretful, and anxious, and dissatisfied, and restless, it is true; but still of a sick man waking up to life again from the long slumber that had promised, at one time, to end in nothing but death. In the Church of England I see life—life in her many missions; *life* in her schools and churches, rising up in every desolate hamlet and every overpopulated outskirt of her large towns; life in her overflowing Congresses; life in the keen interest with which all her proceedings are canvassed and criticized by the public press; life in the existence of unorthodox ministers within her fold; life in her many religious dissensions: and, where life is, there is *hope*.

In her Sister Church of Spain I see no signs of life. Her clergy preach, one and all, as they preached one hundred years ago. Her chief prayers are still offered in a tongue “not understood” of her sons and daughters—the self-same lack of independence and of originality of thought is, as of old, imposed upon her ministers. Her services are magnificent, many of her churches and cathedrals sublime; but it is the

sublimity of a grand architecture; it is the attraction of a gorgeous and sensual ritual; there is spirited music and flashing lights, and a grand appeal to the senses. There are, it is true, none unorthodox among *her* ministers; but it is all too possible, as the experience of past ages has taught us, "*Solitudinem facere, pacem appellare.*"

As for the living souls outside her churches, as for those that hunger and thirst for Hope and Truth and Love and Faith, where are they? Alas! they are not here!

In conclusion, the writer would observe, it may be true that in the Church of England there is a vast deal of mental unrest, a certain amount of alienation of the masses from their Church's services; but, be it remembered that in that country both clergy and statesmen and bishops are making gigantic efforts—by increased personal zeal; by increased manifestation of love for the masses; by the measures of educational improvement lately promulgated and acted upon; by the fixed determination of many of the most enlightened among the clergy not to tighten, but to loosen the reins, not to make narrower, but to make broader the terms of communion with their Church; by the increased education of the clergy, and their better acquaintance with *modern* and ancient literature,—by all these means, the writer says, the Anglican Communion is making visible and gigantic efforts to recover its lost ground—ground won from it during the repose of centuries.

And in speaking of the Church in England in comparison with that of Spain, ever must it be borne in mind that the majority of those who do not enter the doors of the church at least enter the doors of the

chapel; and that those who are not within the fold of England's Established Church are, at any rate, able to find shelter within the fold of some one of the many of her Christian communities; whereas that in Spain the case is wholly different. Here, there is no communion, save with the ancient Church by Law Established. "Leave her," men say. "Yes! But what then?" It is the question of many an uneasy soul in these days and in this country, "Lord, to whom shall I go?" Leave the Church's one fold, and you have left all—all the light, all the guide, and all the shelter, such as they are! Alone you pass out into the great darkness, yea, even into a darkness that may be felt; alone must you wander upon the mountains, seeking some track to guide your weary footsteps; alone must you lie down, as the shades of your last long night draw on—confused, bewildered, baffled, deserted, and in pain. It is so. He who leaves the "one fold" in Spain has "no place to flee unto, and no man cares for *his* soul." In his reading, in his thought, in his hope, in his prayer, in his belief, *for him* there is simple, sheer, utter loneliness: it is "*chacun pour soi*" in everything. That the *finale* of that proverb may also be true of the sons of Republican Spain—who have no anchor, sure and steadfast, of their souls—is the earnest hope, desire, and expectation of the writer of this work; that if, at present, it must be—and it must—"chacun pour soi," it may also be "*et Dieu pour nous tous*."

From a communication sent to the Editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, and forwarded by him to the author of 'Untrodden Spain and her Black Country,' it would appear that some of the leading members