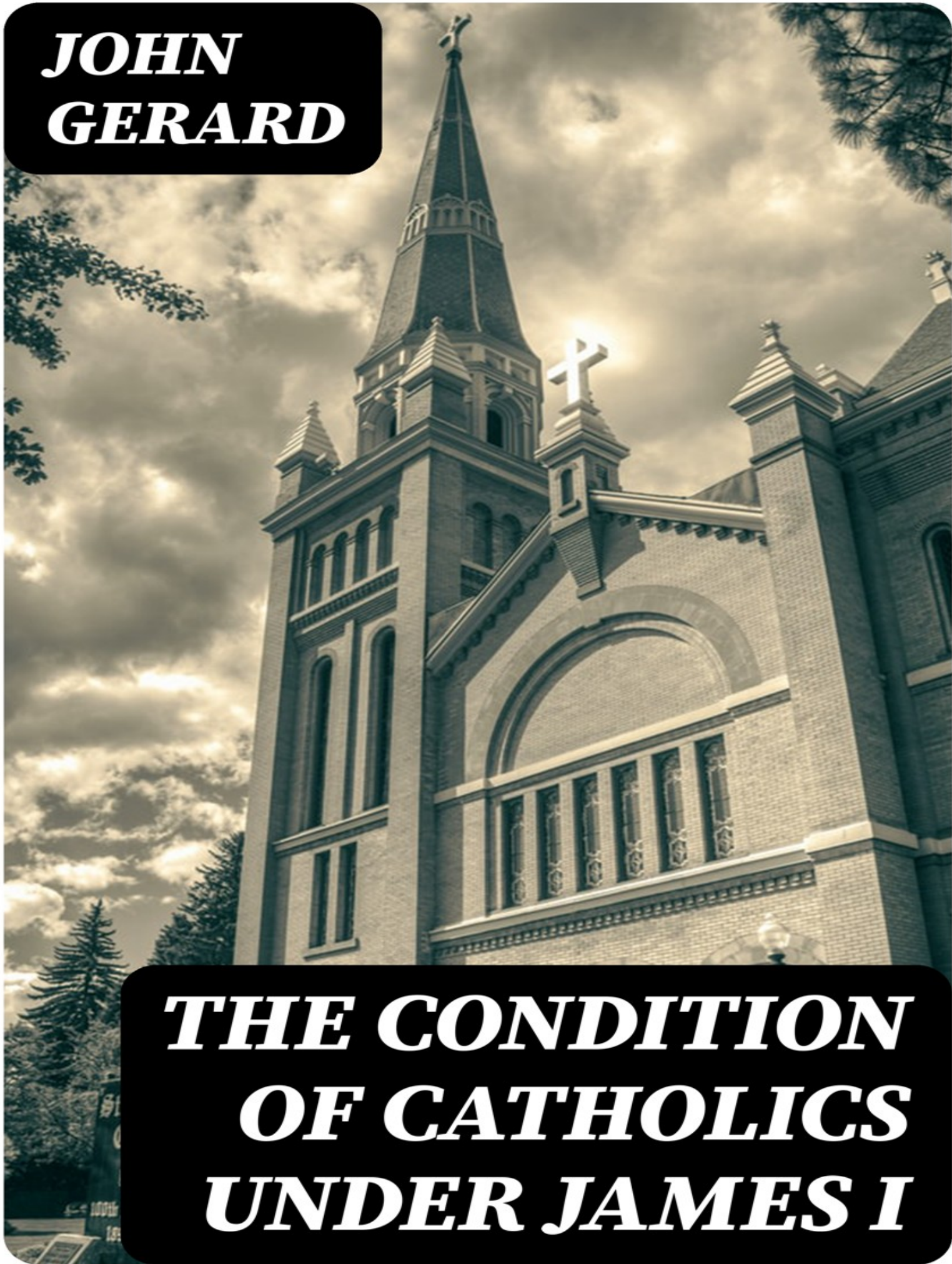
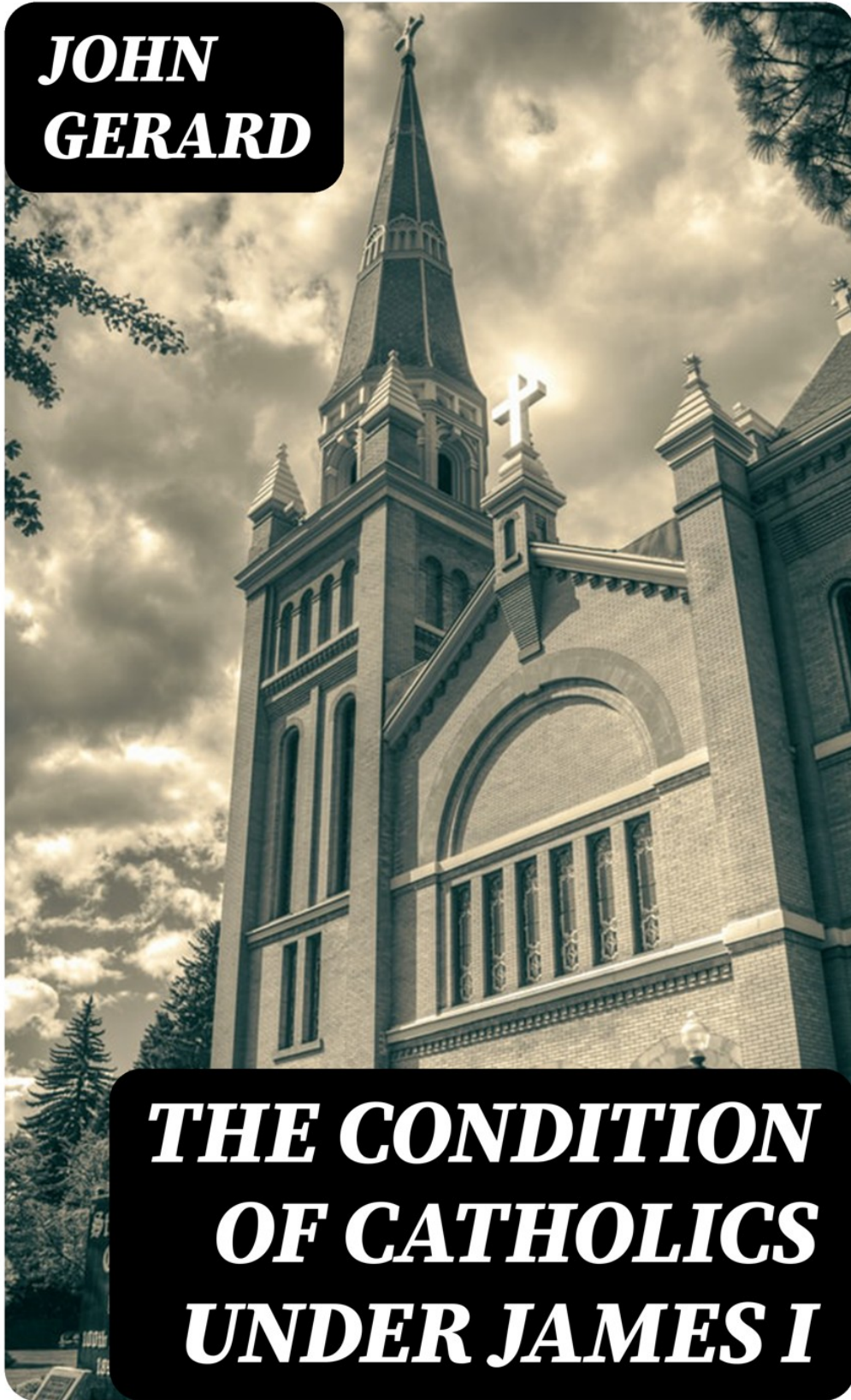


***JOHN
GERARD***

***THE CONDITION
OF CATHOLICS
UNDER JAMES I***



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John Gerard

The Condition of Catholics Under James I

Father Gerard's Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot

EAN 8596547130741

DigiCat, 2022

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THE LIFE OF FATHER JOHN GERARD

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I.

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The life and character of a witness are the grounds on which we base our estimate of his credibility. That he should have spoken of himself at great length and with many and minute details is a circumstance most favourable to the formation of an accurate judgment respecting him. Such is

fortunately our position with regard to Father John Gerard, the author of the Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot. He has left a full and most interesting autobiography in Latin; and we have felt that we could not do the reader a better service, or better establish the good fame of a man who has been unjustly accused, than by prefixing to his Narrative translations of large portions of his Autobiography. When the life of Father Gerard is before the reader, we will address ourselves directly to the subject of his veracity, and in conclusion, we will give what is known of the history of the Autobiography, and of the autograph manuscript from which the Narrative of the Powder Plot is printed.

John Gerard was the second son of Sir Thomas Gerard, of Bryn,¹ Lancashire, Knight, and Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Port, of Etwal, Derbyshire, Knight. In the Narrative² of the Plot, when he has occasion to speak of his elder brother Thomas, who received knighthood from King James on his accession, he says “that was to him no advancement whose ancestors had been [pg x] so for sixteen or seventeen descents together.” This Sir Thomas was made a baronet at the first creation of that dignity in 1611.

“I was born,” in 1564, “of Catholic parents, who never concealed their profession, for which they suffered much from our heretic rulers; so much so that, when a child of five years of age, I was forced, together with my brother who was also a child, to dwell among heretics under another roof, for that my father, with two other gentlemen, had been cast into the Tower of London, for having conspired to restore the Scottish Queen to liberty and to her kingdom.

She was at that time confined in the county of Derby” [at Tutbury³] “at two miles distance from us. Three years afterwards, my father, having obtained his release by the payment of a large sum, brought us home, free however from any taint of heresy, as he had maintained a Catholic tutor over us.”

Sir Thomas Gerard was again in the Tower of London later on, and had been there more than two years when his son landed in England as a Priest.⁴ A little before this imprisonment, he had been summoned by his kinsman,⁵ Sir Gilbert Gerard, the Master of the Rolls, to compound for his recusancy by the “free offer” of a yearly sum to be paid to the Queen, “to be freed from the penalty of the statute.” As it gives an excellent idea of the exactions to which wealthy Catholics were continually subjected in those days, we subjoin Sir Thomas' “offer.” The original in the Public Record Office⁶ is signed by himself.

“14 die Martii, 1585.

“Sir Thomas Gerard saith that he is greatly in debt, by reason of his troubles and suretyship, and payeth large interest for the [pg xi] same; and hath sold much of his lands and departed with a large portion of the rest unto his sons; and hath two daughters to bestow, so that he is not able to offer any great sums unto Her Highness in this behalf [preparation to resist the Spanish invasion]. “Yet, nevertheless, he most humbly submitteth himself unto Her Majesty's pleasure, offering his person to serve Her Highness

in any place of the world. And if he shall not be admitted thereto, then he offereth, with very good will, 30/. a-year, which is the fourth part of his small portion remaining, now left to maintain himself, his poor wife and children.”

“THOMAS GERARD.”

The name of “Dame Elizabeth Gerard” heads the list of thirty-three “Recusants sometimes resident about London and in Middlesex, but now dispersed into other countries.”

With regard to the mention of property transferred by Sir Thomas Gerard to his sons, it may be interesting to quote from the information of a spy,⁷ given just ten years later, the following details—

“*Item*, John Gerard the Jesuit hath certain houses in Lancashire, called Brockehouse Row, near Ashton; he hath made leases, and one tenant hath not paid all his fine: old John Southworth, dwelling thereabouts, is his bailiff, who can show how else the land and title standeth.”

“At the age of fifteen,” the Autobiography resumes, “I was sent to Exeter College, Oxford, where my tutor was a certain Mr. Leutner,⁸ a good and learned man, and a Catholic in mind and heart. There however I did not stay more than a twelvemonth, as at Easter the heretics sought to force us to attend their worship, and to partake of their counterfeit sacrament. I returned then with my brother to my father's house, whither Mr. Leutner himself soon followed us, being resolved to live as a Catholic in very

deed, and not merely in desire. While there, he superintended our Latin studies for the next two years, but afterwards going to Belgium, he lived and died there most holily. As for Greek, we were at the same time placed under the tuition of a [pg xii] good and pious Priest, William Sutton by name, to whom this occupation served as an occasion for dwelling in our house unmolested. He afterwards entered the Society, and was drowned on the coast of Spain, whither Superiors had called him.

“At the age of nineteen I passed over to France, by permission, with the object of learning the French tongue, and resided for three years at Rhemes. While there, though yet a lad, and far from being solidly grounded in my Humanities, I applied myself to the study of Sacred Scripture, consulting the commentators for the sense of the more difficult passages, and writing down with my own hand the explanations given publicly to the theological students. Being my own master, I did not, as I ought to have done, lay a sufficiently solid foundation. My own taste guided my choice of authors, and I sedulously read the works of St. Bernard and St. Bonaventure, and such other spiritual writers. About this time I made, by God's providence, the acquaintance of a saintly young man, who had been admitted into the Society at Rome, but having for reasons of health been sent out for a time, was then living at Rhemes. He gave me the details of his past life; he told me (may the Lord reward him) how he had been educated in the household of God; he taught me how good and wholesome it was for a man to have borne the yoke from his youth. He taught me the method of mental prayer; for which exercise

we were wont to meet together at stated hours, as we were not living in the College, but in different lodgings in the town. It was there that, when about twenty years of age, I heard the call of God's infinite mercy and loving kindness inviting me from the crooked ways of the world to the straight path, to the perfect following of Christ in His holy Society."

"After my three years' residence at Rhemes, I went to Clermont College, at Paris, to see more closely the manner of the Society's life, and to be more solidly grounded in Humanities and Philosophy. I had not been there one year, when I fell dangerously ill. After my recovery, I accompanied Father Thomas Darbyshire to Rouen, in order to see Father Persons, who had arrived thither from England, and was staying incognito in that city, to superintend the publication of his *Christian Directory*, a most useful and happy work, which in my opinion has converted to [pg xiii] God more souls than it contains pages. The heretics themselves have known how to appreciate it, as appears from a recent edition thereof published by one of their ministers, who sought to claim the glory of so important a work. To Father Persons then did I communicate my vocation, and my desire of joining the Society. But as I was not yet strong, nor fit to continue my studies, and, moreover, as I had some property to dispose of and arrangements to make in England, he advised me to return thither, so as to recruit my health by breathing my native air, and at the same time to free myself from every obstacle which might prevent or delay me in my pursuit of perfection and the Religious life. I accordingly went home, and after settling my affairs, set out on my

return, in about a year; this time, however, without having asked for a license, for I had no hope of obtaining it, as I did not venture to communicate my plans to my parents.

“I embarked then with some other Catholics, and after having been kept five days at sea by contrary winds, we were forced to put in at the port of Dover. On arriving thither, we were all seized by the Custom House officers, and forwarded to London in custody. My companions were imprisoned, on a warrant of the Queen's Privy Council. For my own part, though I declared myself a Catholic, and refused to attend their worship, I escaped imprisonment at that time, as there were some of the Council that were friendly to my family, and had procured me the license to travel abroad on the former occasion. They entertained, it would seem, some hopes of perverting me in course of time, so I was sent to my maternal uncle's, a Protestant, to be kept in his custody, and if possible, to be perverted. He, after three months, sought to obtain my full liberty by praying or paying;⁹ but being asked whether I had *gone to church*, as they call it, he was obliged to acknowledge that he could never bring me to do so. Thereupon the Council sent me with a letter to the pseudo-Bishop of London,¹⁰ who having read it, asked whether I would allow him to confer with me on religious matters. I replied, that as I doubted of nothing, I had rather decline. ‘You must in that case,’ answered the Superintendent, ‘remain here in custody.’ I [pg xiv] replied that in this I was obliged to acquiesce, through force and the command of the Government. He treated me with kindness, with a view perhaps of thus drawing me over.

But he ordered his chaplain's bed to be brought into my chamber. At first I repeatedly declared my determination not to enter into any dispute with this man on matters of faith, as to which my mind was settled, nor to receive religious instruction from him; but as he ceased not pouring forth abuse and blasphemy against the Saints in Heaven, and against our Holy Mother the Church, I was forced to defend the truth, and then almost the whole night was spent in disputing. I soon discovered that in him at least God's truth had no very formidable adversary. After two days, as they saw my case was hopeless, they sent me back to the Council with letters of recommendation forsooth, for the so-called Bishop told me that he had greatly striven in my favour, and that he had great hopes of my being set at large. It was, however, a Uriah's letter that I carried, for no sooner had the Council read it, than they ordered me to be imprisoned until I had learnt to be a loyal subject. For they hold him a bad subject who will not subject himself to their heresies and their sacrilegious worship.

“Being committed to the Marshalsea prison, I found there numbers of Catholics and some Priests¹¹ awaiting judgment of death with the greatest joy. In this school of Christ I was detained from the beginning of one Lent” [March 5, 1584] “to the end of the following, not without abundant consolation of mind, and good opportunity for study.”

“Twice during this interval we were all dragged before the Courts, not to be tried for our lives, but to be fined according to the law against recusants. I was condemned to

pay 2,000 florins [200/].¹² The Court was held in the country, some six miles out of London....”¹³

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“At times our cells were visited, and a strict search made for church stuff, Agnus Dei, and relics. Once we were, almost all of us, betrayed by a false brother, who had feigned to be a Catholic, and disclosed our hidden stores to the authorities. On this occasion were seized quantities of Catholic books and sacred objects, enough to fill a cart. In my cell were found nearly all the requisites for saying Mass: for my next-door neighbour was a good Priest, and we discovered a secret way of opening the door between us so that we had Mass very early every morning. We afterwards repaired our losses, nor could the malice of the devil again deprive us of so great a consolation in our bonds.

“In the course of the following year, my liberty was obtained by the importunities of my friends, who however were bound as sureties, to the extent of a heavy sum of money, for my remaining in the kingdom. I was, moreover, to present myself at the prison at the three months' end. And these sureties had to be renewed three or four times before I was able to resume my project. At length the long-wished-for opportunity presented itself. A very dear friend of mine offered himself as bail to meet whatever demand might be made, if I was discovered to be missing after the appointed time. After my departure, he forfeited not indeed his money, but his life: for he was one of the most conspicuous of those fourteen gentlemen who suffered in connection with the captive Queen of Scots, and whose

execution, as events soon showed, was but a prelude to taking off the Queen herself.

“Being at length free, I went to Paris;¹⁴ and finding Father William Holt, who had just arrived from Scotland, ready to start for Rome with the Provincial of France, I joined myself to their company. At Rome I was advised to pursue my studies in the English College, and to take Priest's Orders before I entered the Society. I followed this advice, despite my ardent desire of entering Religion, which I communicated to Father Persons, and to Father Holt, the then Rector of the English College. [pg xvi] But as the Roman climate was not suited to my constitution, and I had an extreme desire of going to England, it seemed good to the Fathers to put me at the beginning of the year to casuistry and controversies; I went therefore through a complete course of Positive Theology. Towards its close, when the Spanish Armada was nearing the coasts of England, Cardinal Allen thought fit to send me to England for various matters connected with Catholic interests, but as I still wanted several months of the lawful age for taking Priest's Orders, a Papal dispensation was obtained. I was most unwilling to depart unless I was first admitted into the Society, so Father Persons, out of his singular charity towards me, obtained my admission to the Novitiate, which I was to finish in England. There were at that time in the English College some others who had the like vocation, and we used to strive to conform ourselves as much as possible to the Novices at St. Andrew's, serving in the kitchen, and visiting hospitals. On the Feast of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, 1588, our Very Rev. Father

General Aquaviva received Father Edward Ouldcorne of blessed memory and my unworthy self into the Society of Jesus, and gave us his blessing for the English Mission.

II.

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“I started then on my homeward journey,¹⁵ in company with Father Ouldcorne and two other Priests who had been students at the English College.”... “As we passed through Rhemes, where there was an English Seminary, and through Paris, we kept the strictest incognito.”

Father Gerard's passing through Paris was not as little known as he thought, and without being aware of it, he then fell into the gravest of the perils that beset the poor Catholics of England, the “perils from false brethren.” Gilbert Gifford, *alias* Jacques Colerdin, “an English Priest and Bachelor in Theology,” as he describes himself in his petition¹⁶ to the Archbishop of Paris for [pg xvii] liberation from his prison in Paris, was one of Sir Francis Walsyngham's most copious correspondents. He had been arrested for Babington's conspiracy, and turned spy to save his life. He had a pension¹⁷ from Walsyngham of 100/. a-year for his treachery, the suspicion of which caused his imprisonment. Apparently from his prison, he found means to write a

letter¹⁸ to his employers, in which the following sentence occurs: "There be 8 Priests over from Rome, whereof John Gerard and Arthur Shefford a Priest, and his man, will be in England within five days."

In all unconsciousness Father Gerard proceeds: "At length we came to Eu, where a College for English youths had been established, which was afterwards abandoned on account of the wars, and another more extensive establishment erected at St. Omers. Our Fathers at Eu, after conferring with those who had the management of the College in that town, all strongly opposed our venturing into England as circumstances then were, for that the Spanish attempt had exasperated the public mind against Catholics, and most rigid searches and domiciliary visits had been set on foot; that guards were posted in every village along the roads and streets; that the Earl of Leicester, then at the height of his favour, had sworn not to leave a single Catholic alive at the close of the year, but this man of blood did not live out half his days, for he was cut off in that very same year. We were compelled then to stay there for a time, until fresh instructions were sent us by Father Persons in the name of Father General. They were to this effect, that the state of affairs had indeed much changed since our departure from Rome, but that, as it was the Lord's business that we had to do, he left us free either to wait the return of greater calm or to pursue the course we had entered upon. On receiving this desirable message we did not long deliberate, but immediately hired a ship to land us in the northern part of England, which seemed to be less disturbed. Two Priests from Rhemes joined us, as our former companions preferred

to take time before they faced the dangers which awaited them on the opposite shores.

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“The ship then set sail with four Priests on board, a goodly cargo indeed, had not my unworthiness deprived me of the crown, for all those other three suffered martyrdom for the faith. The two Priests were soon taken, and being in a short space made perfect, they fulfilled a long time. Their names were Christopher Bales and George Beesley,¹⁹ but my companion, the blessed Father Ouldcorne, after having spent eighteen years of toil and labour in the Lord's vineyard, watered it at length with his blood.

“After crossing the Channel, as we were sailing along the English coast on the third day, my companion and I, seeing a convenient spot in which the ship's boat might easily set us on shore, and considering that it were dangerous if we were to land all together, recommended the matter to God and took counsel with our companions. We then ordered the ship to anchor until dark, and in the first watch we were put ashore in the boat and left there, whereupon the ship immediately set sail and departed. We remained there awhile commending ourselves in prayer to God's providence; then we sought out some path which might lead us further inland, at a greater distance from the sea, before the day should dawn. But the night being dark and cloudy we could not strike out any path that would lead us to the open country, but every way we tried always brought us to some dwelling, as we were made aware by the barking of the dogs. As this happened some two or three times we

began to fear lest we might rouse some of the inhabitants, and be seized upon as thieves or burglars. We therefore turned into a neighbouring wood, where we proposed to rest during the night. But the rain and the cold (for it was about the end of October) rendered sleep impossible, nor did we dare to speak aloud to one another, as the wood was in the neighbourhood of a house, but we deliberated in whispers whether to set out together for London or to part company, so that if one were taken the other might escape. Having pondered the reasons on both sides, we determined to set forth each by himself, and to take different routes.

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“At day-dawn, then, we cast lots who should first leave the wood, and the lot fell on the good Father who was also the first to leave this world for Heaven. We then made an equal division of what money we had, and after embracing and receiving one from the other a blessing, the future martyr went along the sea-shore to a neighbouring town, where he fell in with some sailors who were thinking of going to London. Being prudent and cautious, he strove by cheerfulness to accommodate himself to their humours in indifferent things. But twice or thrice he could not withhold from reproving their coarse and filthy language, though he imperilled himself by so doing, as he afterwards told me.”... “Evil as they were, he did not so displease them, but that, by their means, and the protection they unwittingly afforded, he was enabled to reach London without molestation; for the watchers, who were in almost every town through which he passed, taking him to be one of the party, cared not to annoy those whose appearance and

carriage distinguished them so completely from those for whom they were keeping watch.

“When my companion had departed, I too set out, but by a different road. I had not gone far before I saw some country folks coming towards me. I went up to them and inquired about a stray falcon, whether they had heard the tinkling of his bells. For I wanted them to think that I had lost a falcon, and was going through the country in search of it, as is usual with those who have sustained such a loss, so that they might not wonder why I was strange to the country and had to ask my way. They of course had neither seen nor heard any such thing of late, and seemed sorry that they could not direct my search. I then went with a disappointed air to examine the neighbouring trees and hedges, as if to look for my bird. Thus I was able, without awakening suspicion, to keep clear of the highway, and to get further and further from the sea-shore by going across country. Whenever I saw any one in a field I went up to him and put the same series of questions about the falcon, concealing thereby my anxiety to keep out of the public roads and villages, where I knew sentinels were posted with power to examine every stranger. I thus managed to expend the best part of that day, [pg xx] walking some eight or ten miles, not in a straight line, but by doubling and returning frequently on my steps. At length, being quite soaked with rain and exhausted with hunger and fatigue, for I had scarcely been able to take any food or rest on board ship for the tossing of the waves, I turned into a village inn which lay in my road, for those who go to the inns are less liable to be questioned.

“There I refreshed myself well, and found mine host very agreeable, especially as I wanted to buy a pony he had in his stable. I concluded the bargain at a reasonable price, for the owner was not very rich, but I took it as a means of more speedy and safer transit, for foot-passengers are frequently looked upon as vagrants, and even in quiet times are liable to arrest.

“Next morning I mounted my pony and turned towards Norwich, the capital of that county. I had scarcely ridden two miles when I fell in with the watchers at the entrance of a village, who bade me halt and began to ask me who I was and whence I came. I told them that I was the servant of a certain lord who lived in a neighbouring county (with whom I was well acquainted, though he was unknown to them), that my falcon had flown away, and that I had come to this part of the country to recover him if he should have been found. They found no flaw in my story, yet they would not let me go, but said I must be brought before the constable and the beadle,²⁰ who were both in church at the time, at their profane heretical service. I saw that I could neither fly nor resist, nor could I prevail with these men, so, yielding to necessity, I went with them as far as the churchyard. One of the party entered the church and brought word that the beadle wished me to come into the church, and that he would see me when service was over. I replied that I would wait for him where I was. ‘No, no,’ said the messenger, ‘you must go into the church.’ ‘I shall stop here,’ I returned, ‘I do not want to lose sight of my horse.’ ‘What!’ said the man, ‘you won't dismount to go and hear the Word of God! I can only warn you that you will make no very favourable

impression; as to your horse, I myself will engage to get you a [pg xxi] better one, if you are so anxious about him.' 'Go and tell him,' said I, 'that if he wants me, either he must come at once or I will wait here.' As soon as my message was taken to him, the beadle came out with some others to examine me. I could easily see he was not best pleased. He began by demanding whence I came. I answered by naming certain places which I had learnt were not far off. To his questions as to my name, condition, dwelling, and business, I made the same answers as above. He then asked whether I had any letters with me, on which I offered to allow him to search my person. This he did not do, but said he should be obliged to take me before the Justice of the Peace.²¹ I professed my readiness to go, should he deem it needful, but that I was in a hurry to get back to my master after my long absence, so that if it could be managed I should be better pleased to be allowed to go on. At first he stood to his resolution, and I saw nothing for it but to go before the Justice and to be committed to gaol, as doubtless would have been the case. But suddenly looking at me with a calmer countenance, he said, 'You look like an honest man: go on in God's name, I do not want to trouble you any more.' Nor did God's providence abandon me in my further journey. As I rode onward towards the town, I saw a young man on horseback with a pack riding on before me. I wanted to come up with him, so as to get information about the state of the town, and ask the fittest inn for me to put up at, and he looked like one of whom I could make such inquiries without exciting suspicion; but his horse being better than mine I could not gain upon him, urge my pony how I would.

After following him at a distance for two or three miles, it chanced by God's will that he dropped his pack, and was obliged to dismount in order to pick it up and strap it on. As I came up I found he was an unpolished youth, well fitted for my purpose. From him I acquired information that would have been very useful had any danger befallen, but, as it was, by his means the Lord so guided me, that I escaped all danger. For I inquired about a good inn near the city gate, that I might not weary my horse in going from street to street in search of one. He told me there was such an inn on the other side of the city; [pg xxii] but that if I wanted to put up there I must go round the town. Having learnt the way thereto and the sign of the house, I thanked my informant, and left him to pursue his road, which led straight through the town, the same way I should have followed had I not met with such a guide, and in that case I should have run into certain danger, nor would any of those things have befallen which afterwards came to pass for God's greater glory and the salvation of many souls.

“Following then the advice of the young man, I went round the skirts of the city to the gate he had described, and as soon as I entered I saw my inn. I had rested me but a little while there, when a man who seemed to be an acquaintance of the people of the house came in. After greeting me civilly, he sat down in the chimney corner, and dropped some words about some Catholic gentlemen who were kept in gaol there; and he mentioned one whose relative had been a companion of mine in the Marshalsea some seven years since. I silently noted his words, and when he had gone out, I asked who he might be. They

answered that he was a very honest fellow in other points, but a Papist. I inquired how they came to know that. They replied that it was a well-known fact, as he had been many years imprisoned in the Castle there (which was but a stone's throw from where I was); that many Catholic gentlemen were confined there, and that he had been but lately let out. I asked whether he had abandoned the Faith in order to be at large. 'No indeed,' said they, 'nor is he likely to, for he is a most obstinate man. But he has been set free under an engagement to come back to prison, when called for. He has some business with a gentleman in the prison, and he comes here pretty often, on that account.' I held my tongue, and awaited his return. As soon as he came back, and we were alone, I told him I should wish to speak with him apart, that I had heard that he was a Catholic, and for that reason I trusted him, as I also was a Catholic: that I had come there by a sort of chance, but wanted to get on to London: that it would be a good deed worthy of a Catholic, were he to do me the favour of introducing me to some parties who might be going the same road, and who were well known, so that I might be allowed to pass on by favour of their company: that being able to pay my expenses, [pg xxiii] I should be no burden to my companions. He replied that he knew not of any one who was then going to London. I hereon inquired if he could hire a person who would accompany me for a set price. He said he would look out some such one, but that he knew of a gentleman then in the town, who might be able to forward my business. He went to find him, and soon returning desired me to accompany him. He took me into a shop, as if he were going to make

some purchase. The gentleman he had mentioned was there, having appointed the place that he might see me before he made himself known. At length he joined us, and told my companion in a whisper that he believed I was a Priest. He led us therefore to the cathedral, and having put me many questions, he at last urged me to say whether or no I was a Priest, promising that he would assist me, at that time a most acceptable offer. On my side, I inquired from my previous acquaintance the name and condition of this party; and on learning it, as I saw God's providence in so ready an assistance, I told him I was a Priest of the Society, who had come from Rome. He performed his promise, and procured for me a change of clothes, and made me mount a good horse, and took me without delay into the country to the house of a personal friend, leaving one of his servants to bring on my little pony. The next day we arrived at his house, where he and his family resided, together with a brother of his who was a heretic. They had with them a widowed sister, also a heretic, who kept house for them; so that I was obliged to be careful not to give any ground for them to suspect my calling. The heretic brother at my first coming was somewhat suspicious, seeing me arrive in his Catholic brother's company unknown as I was, and perceiving no reason why the latter should make so much of me. But after a day or so, he quite abandoned all mistrust, as I spoke of hunting and falconry with all the details that none but a practised person could command. For many make sad blunders in attempting this, as Father Southwell, who was afterwards my companion in many journeys, was wont to complain. He frequently got me to instruct him in

the technical terms of sport, and used to complain of his bad memory for such things, for on many occasions when he fell in with Protestant gentlemen, he found it necessary to speak of [pg xxiv] these matters, which are the sole topics of their conversation, save when they talk obscenity, or break out into blasphemies and abuse of the Saints or the Catholic faith. In these cases it is of course desirable to turn the conversation to other subjects, and to speak of horses, of hounds, and such like. Thus it often happens that trifling covers truth,²² as it did with me on this occasion. After a short sojourn of a few days, I proposed to my newly-found friend, the Catholic brother, my intention of going to London, to meet my Superior. He therefore provided me with a horse, and sent a servant along with me; begging me at the same time to obtain leave to return to that county, and to make his house my home, for he assured me that I should bring over many to the faith, were I to converse with them publicly as he had seen me do. I pledged myself to lay his offer before Father Garnett, and said that I would willingly return if he should approve of it. So I departed, and arrived in London without accident, having met with no obstacle on the road. I have gone into these particulars, to show how God's providence guarded me on my first landing in England; for without knowing a single soul in that county, where until then I had never set foot, as it was far distant from my native place, on the very first day I found a friend who not only saved me from present peril, but who afterwards, by introducing me to the principal families in the county, furnished an opportunity for many conversions; and from the acquaintance I then made, and the knowledge the

Catholics in those parts had of me in consequence, all that God chose hereafter to do by my weakness took its origin, as will appear by the sequel.”

III.

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“On my arrival in London, by the help of certain Catholics I discovered Father Henry Garnett, who was then Superior. Besides him, the only others of our Society then in England were Father Edmund Weston,²³ confined at Wisbech (who, had he been at large, would have been Superior), Father Robert Southwell, and we two new-comers.

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“My companion, Father Ouldcorne, had already arrived, so the Superior was rather anxious on my account, as nothing had been heard of me; but yet for that very reason hopes were entertained of my safety. It was with exceeding joy on both sides that we met at last. I stayed some time with the Fathers, and we held frequent consultations as to our future proceedings. The good Superior gave us excellent instructions as to the method of helping and gaining souls, as did also Father Southwell, who much excelled in that art, being at once prudent, pious, meek, and exceedingly winning. As Christmas was nigh at hand, it was necessary to

separate, both for the consolation of the Faithful, and because the dangers are always greater in the great solemnities.

“I was then sent back to my friend in the county where I was first set ashore. This time the Superior provided me with clothes and other necessaries, that I might not be a burden to my charitable host at the outset. But afterwards, throughout the whole period of my missionary labours, the fatherly providence of God supplied both for me and for some others. My dress was of the same fashion as that of gentlemen of moderate means. The necessity of this was shown by reason and subsequent events; for, from my former position, I was more at ease in this costume, and could maintain a less embarrassed bearing, than if I had assumed a character to which I was unaccustomed. Then, too, I had to appear in public and meet many Protestant gentlemen, with whom I could not have held communication with a view to lead them on to a love of the Faith and a desire of virtue, had I not adopted this garb. I found it helped me, not only to speak more freely and with greater authority, but to remain with greater safety, and for a longer interval of time, in any place or family to which my host introduced me as his friend and acquaintance.

“Thus it happened that I remained for six or eight months, with some profit to souls, in the family of my first friend and host; during which time, he took me with him to nearly every gentleman's house in the county. Before the eight months were passed, I gained over and converted many to the Church: among whom were my host's brother,

his brother-in-law, and his two sisters; one of these, as I have before mentioned, was my friend's housekeeper, and had been all along a notable Calvinist.

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“I reconciled, moreover, the sister of a Judge²⁴ who even now is the most firm support of the Calvinist party. This lady, having been brought up in his house, had been strongly imbued with this heresy. A very remarkable thing had happened to her some time previously. Being very anxious as to the state of her soul, she went to a certain Doctor of the University of Cambridge, of the name of Perne,²⁵ who she knew had changed his religion some three or four times under different sovereigns, but yet was in high repute for learning. Going to this Dr. Perne, then, who was an intimate friend of her family, she conjured him to tell her honestly and undisguisedly what was the sound orthodox faith whereby she might attain Heaven. The Doctor, finding himself thus earnestly appealed to by a woman of discretion and good sense, replied: ‘I conjure you never to disclose to another what I am going to say. Since, then, you have pressed me to answer as if I had to give an account of your soul, I will tell you, that you can, if you please, *live* in the religion now professed by the Queen and her whole kingdom, for so you will live more at ease, and be exempt from all the vexations the Catholics have to undergo. But by no means *die* out of the faith and communion of the Catholic Church, if you would save your soul.’ Such was the answer of this poor man, but such was not his practice; for, putting off his conversion from day to day, it fell out that, when he least expected, on his return home from dining