

I travelled in France;

it was during the reign of Louis the Just (1). The first thing I was asked was whether I wanted for breakfast a little piece of Marshal d'Ancre (2), whose flesh the people had roasted, and who was being distributed at a very reasonable price to those who wanted any of him.

This state was continually a prey to civil wars, sometimes for a place in the Council, sometimes for two pages of controversy. For more than sixty years this fire, now covered and now violently blown on, had been devastating these lovely climes. These were all freedoms of the Gallican church.

"Alas!" I said, "yet this people was born gentle; what can have drawn it so far out of character? It makes jokes, and it makes Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacres. Happy the time when it will make nothing but jokes!"

I crossed over to England: there the same quarrels were exciting the same furies. Some holy Catholics had resolved, for the good of the Church, to blow sky-high with gunpowder (3) the King, the royal family, and the entire Parliament, and to deliver England from these heretics. They showed me the square where the Blessed Queen Mary, daughter of Henry VIII, had had more than five hundred of her subjects burned. A Hibernian priest assured me that this was a very good action: firstly, because those who had been burned were English; in the second place, because they never took holy water and did not believe in Saint

1. *Louis XIII (1601- 1643), who reigned from 1610 to 1643.*

2. *Concino Concini, Marquis, like his wife a favourite of Queen Marie de Médicis, assassinated in 1617 by order of the King.*

3. *The Gunpowder Plot (1605) of Guy Fawkes and others.*

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Patrick's Purgatory (4). He was especially astonished that Queen Mary was not yet canonised; but he hoped that she would be soon, when the cardinal nephew (5) had a little leisure.

I went to Holland, where I hoped to find more tranquillity among more phlegmatic peoples. They were cutting off the head of a venerable old man when I arrived at the Hague. It was the bald head of Prime Minister Barneveldt (6), the man who had deserved the best from the republic. Touched with pity, I asked what was his crime, and whether he had betrayed the state.

"He did much worse," answered a black-cloaked preacher; "he is a man who believes that one can be saved by good works as well as by faith. You can well sense that if such opinions become established, a republic could not subsist, and that severe laws are needed to repress such scandalous horrors."

A profound political theorist of that country told me, sighing: "Alas ! sir, good times will not last forever; it is only by chance that the people are so zealous; the depths of their character lean toward the abominable dogma of tolerance; one day they will come to it; it makes a man shudder."

As for me, while waiting for the fatal day of moderation and indulgence to arrive, I very quickly left a country where severity was relieved by no amenity, and I embarked for Spain.

The court was at Seville; the galleons had arrived; everything breathed abundance and joy in the fairest season of the year. I saw at the end of an alley of orange and lemon trees a sort of immense tilting ground surrounded by stands covered with precious fabrics. The King, the Queen, the infantes, the infantas, were under a superb canopy. Facing this august family was another but loftier throne. I said to one of my travelling companions: "Unless that throne is reserved for God, I do not see what use it can be." These indiscreet words were overheard by a

4. *The cave of Lough Derg, a place of pilgrimage, from the early Middle Ages reputed to be a gate to Purgatory.*

5. *Presumably Ludovico Ludovisi, right-hand man to his uncle Pope Gregory XV, who made him a cardinal in 1621.*

6. *Johan van Oldenbarneveldt (1547-1619), known as Bameveldt, Land's Advocate of Holland, supporter of religious tolerance.*

grave Spaniard and cost me dear. Meanwhile I was imagining that we were going to see some tournament or some bullfight, when the Grand Inquisitor appeared on this throne, from which he blessed the King and the people.

Then came an army of monks filing past two by two, white, black, grey, shod, unshod, with beard, without beard, with pointed cowl, and without cowl; next marched the executioner; then, amid alguazils (7) and grandees, one could see about forty persons covered with sacks on which devils and flames had been painted. They were Jews who had not been willing to renounce Moses absolutely, they were Christians who had married their godsons' godmothers, or who had not worshipped Our Lady of Atocha (8), or who had not been willing to rid themselves of their ready money in favour of the Hieronymite friars (9). Some very beautiful prayers were piously sung, after which all the culprits were burned in a slow fire; at which the entire royal family appeared extremely edified.

In the evening, at the time when I was about to go to bed, there arrived in my room two familiars of the Inquisition together with the Holy Hermandad (10): they embraced me tenderly, and without saying a word to me took me into a very cool dungeon, furnished with a bed of straw and a handsome crucifix. I stayed there six weeks, at the end of which the Reverend Father Inquisitor sent to ask me to come and talk with him: he clasped me in his arms for some time with an affection quite paternal; he told me he was sincerely distressed to have learned that I was so ill lodged, but that all the apartments in the house were full, and that another time he hoped I would be more comfortable. Then he asked me cordially whether I did not know why I was there. I told the Reverend Father that it was apparently for my sins. "Well, my dear child, for what sin?"

7. *Police officers.*

8. *A wooden image of the Virgin in Madrid, supposedly brought from Antioch by an apostle, said to weep on her feast day.*

9. *Members of the hermit orders of Saint Jerome.*

10 *The Holy Brotherhood, an association formed in Spain with a police force to track down criminals.*

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Speak to me with confidence." I used my imagination to no avail, I did not guess; he charitably set me on the right track.

At last I remembered my indiscreet words. I got off with a whipping and a fine of thirty thousand reales (11). They took me to make a bow to the Grand Inquisitor: he was a polite man, who asked me what I had thought of his little festivities.

I told him that they were delightful, and I went and urged my travelling companions to leave this country, beautiful as it is. They had had time to learn about all the great things the Spaniards had done for religion. They had read the memoirs of the famous bishop of Chiapa (12), from which it appears that in America ten million infidels had been slaughtered or burned or drowned in order to convert them. I thought this bishop was exaggerating; but even if these sacrifices were reduced to five million victims, that would still be admirable.

The desire to travel still impelled me. I had planned to end my tour of Europe with Turkey; we set out for it. I fully intended to speak my mind no longer about the festivities I would see.

"These Turks," I said to my companions, "are unbelievers, who have not been baptised, and who consequently will be much more cruel than the Reverend Father Inquisitors. Let us keep silence when we are among the Mohammedans."

So I went to their country. I was strangely surprised to see in Turkey many more Christian churches than there were in Candia. I even saw large troops of monks who were allowed freely to pray to the Virgin Mary and curse Mohammed, some in Greek, some in Latin, a few others in Armenian. "Fine people, the Turks!" I exclaimed.

The Greek Christians and the Latin Christians were mortal enemies in Constantinople; these slaves persecuted each other, like dogs who bite each other in the street and whom their masters beat with sticks to separate them. The Grand Vizier was

11. *Spanish silver coins.*

12. *The Brevissima relacion de la destruycion de las Indias occidentales (c. 1554) by Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474-1566), Dominican missionary, at one time (1544-1547) bishop of Chiapa in Mexico.*

then protecting the Greeks. The Greek patriarch accused me of having had supper at the Latin patriarch's, and I was condemned by the whole Divan to a hundred strokes with a lathe on the soles of my feet, redeemable for five hundred sequins. The next day the Grand Vizier was strangled; the day after that his successor, who was for the party of the Latins, and who was not strangled until a month later, condemned me to the same fine for having had supper at the Greek patriarch's. I was in the sad necessity of no longer attending either the Greek or the Latin church. To console myself, I rented a beautiful Circassian woman, who was the most tender of persons in a tête-à-tête and the most pious in the mosque. One night, in the sweet transports of her love, she cried out as she embraced me: "Allah illah allah" (13). Those are the sacramental words of the Turks; I thought they were those of love; I also exclaimed most tenderly: "Allah illah allah." "Ah!" she said to me. "Merciful God be praised, you are a Turk." I told her that I blessed him for having given me the strength to be, and I thought myself only too happy. In the morning the imam came to circumcise me; and since I offered some objection, the district cadî, an upright man, proposed to me that he impale me; I saved my foreskin and my behind with a thousand sequins, and quickly fled to Persia, resolved nevermore to hear either a Greek or a Latin Mass in Turkey, and nevermore to exclaim "Allah illah allah" at a rendez-vous.

Arriving at Ispahan, I was asked whether I was for the black sheep or for the white sheep. I answered that that was quite indifferent to me provided the mutton was tender. The reader must know that the factions of the White Sheep and the Black Sheep (14) still divided the Persians. It was thought that I was making fun of the two parties, so that already at the gates of the city I found myself with violent trouble on my hands; it cost me another large number of sequins to get rid of the sheep.

I pushed on all the way to China with an interpreter who

13. *An English corruption of the Arabic: la ilaha illa allah, there is no God but God.*

14. *Persia was torn by these rival factions in the fifteenth century.*

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assured me that that was the country where people lived freely and gaily. The Tartars had made themselves masters of it after having put everything to fire and the sword; and the Reverend Jesuit Fathers on the one hand, like the Reverend Dominican Fathers on the other, said that they were winning souls to God without anyone's knowing anything about it. Such zealous converters have never been seen: for they took turns persecuting one another; they wrote volumes of calumnies to Rome; they called one another infidels, and prevaricators for the sake of a soul. Above all there was a horrible quarrel between them over the way to make a bow. The Jesuits wanted the Chinese to greet their fathers and mothers Chinese fashion, and the Dominicans wanted them to greet them Roman fashion.

It happened that I was taken for a Dominican by the Jesuits. I was brought before His Tartar Majesty as a spy for the Pope. The Supreme Council instructed a prime mandarin, who ordered a sergeant, who commanded four of the country's myrmidons, to arrest me and bind me ceremoniously. After a hundred and forty genuflexions I was led before His Majesty. He had me asked whether I was the Pope's spy and whether it was true that that prince was due to come in person to dethrone him. I answered that the Pope was a seventy-year-old priest; that he lived four thousand leagues away from His Sacred Tartaro-Chinese Majesty; that he had about two thousand soldiers, who went on guard with a parasol; that he dethroned nobody, and that His Majesty could sleep in security. This was the least disastrous adventure of my life. I was sent to Macao, whence I embarked for Europe.

My ship had to go into dry dock near the coasts of Golconda. I took this time to go to see the court of the great Aurangzeb, (15) about which wonders were told around the world; it was then in Delhi. I had the consolation of beholding it on the day of the pompous ceremony in which he received the celestial present sent him by the Sherif of Mecca. It was the broom with which they had swept the holy house, the Kaaba, the Beth Allah (16).

This broom is the symbol that sweeps away the refuse of the

15. *Alamgir I (1619-1707), Emperor of Hindustan.*

16. *The house of God.*

soul. Aurangzeb did not appear to need it; he was the most pious man in all Hindustan. It is true that he had cut the throat of one of his brothers and poisoned his father. Twenty rajas and as many omrahs (17) had died under torture; but that was nothing, and men spoke only of his piety. The only man compared to him was the Sacred Majesty of the Most Serene Emperor of Morocco, Mulai Ismail (18), who cut off heads every Friday after prayers.

I said not a word; my travels had shaped me, and I felt that it was not for me to decide between these two august sovereigns. A young Frenchman with whom I was lodging failed, I admit, to show respect for the Emperors of India and Morocco. He took it into his head to say very indiscreetly that in Europe there were some very pious sovereigns who governed their states well and who even attended church, without therefore killing their fathers and their brothers and without cutting off the heads of their subjects. Our interpreter passed on in Hindi the impious remarks of my young friend. Having learned from the past, I quickly had my camels saddled; we left, the Frenchman and I. I have since learned that that very night, when the officers of the great Aurangzeb came to get us, they found only the interpreter. He was executed in a public square, and all the courtiers admitted without flattery that his death was a very just thing.

It remained for me to see Africa, to enjoy all the amenities of our earth. Indeed I did see it. My vessel was captured by Negro corsairs. Our master made vehement complaints; he asked them why they were thus violating the laws of nations. The Negro captain answered him:

"Your nose is long, and ours is flat; your hair is quite straight, and our wool is curly; your skin is of the colour of ashes, and ours of the colour of ebony; consequently, by the sacred laws of nature, we must always be enemies. You buy us at the fairs on the Guinea coast, like beasts of burden, to make us work at some sort of labour as arduous as it is ridiculous. With strokes of

17. *Raja: an Indian prince or chief. Omrah: a lord or a Mohammedan court in India.*

18. *Mulai (or Muley) Ismail (1646-1727), known as "The Bloodthirsty," Sultan of Morocco.*

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a bull's pizzle you make us dig in the mountains to get out a kind of yellow earth which of itself is good for nothing and is nowhere near worth a good Egyptian onion; and so when we come upon you and we are the stronger, we make slaves of you, we make you till our fields, or else we cut off your nose and ears."

No one had any reply to so wise a speech. I went and tilled an old Negress's field to preserve my ears and nose. After a year I was ransomed. I had seen everything beautiful, good, and admirable on earth: I resolved to see nothing more but my penates (19). I married in my own country: I became a cuckold, and I saw that was life's sweetest estate.

Lausanne, 1756

19. *Household gods.*