

FATHER KENNEDY

In the enthusiastic allusions to a new Elizabethan era for England, it is obviously forgotten that the first Elizabethan era (1558 to 1603) meant for Catholics in England persecution, ruthlessness and endless. Something of the extent and the intensity of that assault on the Church of England may be found in "The Autobiography of a Hunted Priest" (Pellegriani and Cudahy, \$3.50). Originally written in Latin by Father John Gerard, S. J., it has an introduction by Graham Greene.

Father Gerard was born in England in 1564, six years after Elizabeth I came to the throne and vigorously began trying to exterminate the old Faith.

His family was immovably Catholic despite the severe penalties their fidelity brought on them. At 12 he went to Oxford but soon left because of his re-

fusal to participate in heretical worship. At 14 he crossed to France to study. While there, he was drawn to mental prayer and a mature spiritual life, and after meeting the heroic Fathers Parsons, determined to become a Jesuit priest.

IN DUE COURSE he was ordained to the English mission, which meant that he undertook to return to England in disguise and to brave the spies, the secret police, the jailers, torturers, and executioners whom the queen had put to work to extirpate the Catholic priesthood, and with it, even the underground operation of the Church.

In 1588, Father Gerard landed surreptitiously, as November dusk fell, on a lonely piece of the English coast. After spending the cold and rainy night shelterless in a wood, he set out, in his layman's dress, to try to find some Catholics. In the very first hours of what was to prove an 18-year ministry, there occurred two things which were to be typical of that ministry.

First, there was his running

Perilous Journey With English Priest

afoul of the network of priest-hunters then drawn tightly over all England. It looked as if his work had ended before it could start, but Father Gerard managed, through bluff, to get away. Secondly, there was his happening upon a Catholic gentleman eager to be in touch with a priest and ready to do anything he could to help the priest perform his sacred task.

FATHER GERARD shortly presented himself to the Jesuit superior in England, Father Garnet, who, from his hiding place, directed the labors of a considerable company of priests and brothers, many of them sooner or later martyred. It was Father Gerard's wish and prayer that he might share that fate. But this was not to be. He was arrested, spent three years in various prisons, was savagely tortured, but escaped from the tower and, in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot, from the country.

He gives us a vivid, if artlessly composed, picture of Catholic life — and death — under Elizabeth. He takes us to the country-houses where priests said Mass, administered the Sacraments, conducted retreats, reconciled lapsed Catholics, converted Protestants, received young men and women aspiring to the priesthood or the religious life and started them on their way to seminaries and novitiates on the Continent.

In such a refuge a priest might work for months at a time with little interruption. But always there was the danger of betrayal by a servant, a weak or disgruntled member of the family, or even an apostate priest. And at any moment the priest-hunters might, without warning, burst into and pour through the house. This meant that the priest had to be ever ready to go into a hiding place in the wall and to remain there, cold, cramped, hungry, for days.

HE TAKES us to the houses which he rented in London itself and shows us the busy, varied schedule which he there pursued in the very shadow of the gallows. He takes us to the prisons, some foul and horrid, some fairly comfortable, and discloses that there too the captured priest's ministry went on, sometimes with celebration of the Mass and performance of the Sacramental rites, always with a determined effort to win to Catholicism everyone he met, from high officials, to wardens, to fellow prisoners, to the meanest servant.

He takes us on his perilous journeys when, dressed as a gentleman, he must be ready to talk falconry with sportsmen, to ride in the hunt, to turn aside suggestions that he would make a fine husband for this or that maiden relative. He takes us into the presence of such extremely different celebrities as Topcliffe, Elizabeth's brutal priest-hunter-in-chief, and Father Robert Southwell, the martyred poet.

Catholics and the Catholic Press

By O. A. BATESTA
(Reprinted with permission of "The Lamp" published by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement)

During the month of February we do more than pay tribute to the hardworking and militant army of religious and lay Catholic editors and writers who toil in the vineyard of the press to produce well over 100 Catholic magazines in the United States alone, not to mention the numerous diocesan newspapers.

We take stock of how much we owe "our" press, and what we can do to support and expand it still further.

If we have during the previous months slipped into the easy rut of gobbling down the many competing secular publications, at the costly expense of only glancing at the Catholic magazines which we subscribe to, this is the time to bring ourselves in line.

NEVER IN THE history of civilization was it more important for Catholics — every man, woman and child, to recognize the value to be found in the wealth of Catholic reading available today.

A recent survey has shown that over 60,000,000 Americans claim they do not believe in the immortality of the soul. Our daily newspapers give us shocking proof that millions of Americans are pursuing drink, money, power and sex in a futile effort to escape their fears.

Our mental institutes are filled to overflowing — minds are cracking under the tensions of the times — and psychiatrists are enjoying a phenomenal boom. Juvenile delinquency, continues to increase, and our legislators clamor for more funds to build jails.

Attacks on the Christian way of life appear more frequently than ever, and with ever-increasing efficiency and danger. Divorce is tearing the American family apart at the seams.

FACED WITH such a bleak and depressing world situation such as this, we can thank God that we have a well-organized Catholic press today.

It stands out as a shining light striving to nourish the mind with truth, to invigorate it with honestly interpreted facts, and to furnish reading entertainment that is morally good.

It dispels false thinking on doctrine and matters appertaining to Christian conduct.

It serves as an armor of Faith, shielding us from the pernicious filth that can be found on the corner news stand.

It reports faithfully what is happening in the world of Catholic thought, giving us the Catholic viewpoint on current events.

It tells us what others are doing to show their devotion to God and country. It offers inspiration and guidance for every member of the family.

The earnest reader of Catholic literature is bound to see more vividly than others, the beauty of our Faith, and to bring others a knowledge of the truth.

Even though our Catholic Press cannot boast of circulations in the same class as the



large secular newspapers and magazines, many of its best known weeklies or monthlies are so assembled that the general contents appeal collectively to the family.

Vital news events are discussed fairly, and timely instructions are combined with special feature articles, query columns, poetry, biography or fiction.

SHYING AS it does away from the melodramatic, the half-truth sensationalism whereby secular publications frequently lure subscribers, the Catholic Press emphasizes primarily the fundamental truths of faith, and prints only the most wholesome type of inspirational informative matter. For this reason, it always is so much more reassuring and convincing to hear a person say, "Of course, it's true. I read it in a Catholic publication."

In recent months I have seen figures stressing the comparative circulations of secular magazines as contrasted with that of Catholic periodicals. The comparison is frightening. The proportion of Catholics who subscribe to a long list of non-Catholic public- (Continued on Page 6)

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Jesuits To Build Seminary in N. Y.

New York (NC)—An anonymous gift of \$100,000 has brought to slightly more than \$1,000,000 subscriptions received so far for a new Jesuit seminary to be built at Shrub Oak, near Peekskill, N. Y., provincial of the New York province. Goal of the fund campaign, which got under way last November, is \$5,000,000.

Father McMahon said that the first \$1,000,000 subscribed represented donations by 275 contributors, and nearly 80 per cent of the amount came in gifts of \$20,000 and over.

Father McMahon said the new seminary will include all the facilities needed for the training of 300 Jesuits. He declared the seminary is needed because present facilities for the training of Jesuit students are not adequate for the growing number of scholastics. Last year, Father McMahon added, 148 scholastics had to be sent to seminaries outside the province.

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