

# **PROTESTANT FICTION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649119974

Protestant fiction by James Britten

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**JAMES BRITTEN**

**PROTESTANT  
FICTION**



# PROTESTANT FICTION

BY

JAMES BRITTEN

HON. SEC. CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY



LONDON  
CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY

21 WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD S.E.

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1896.

APPENDIX

ROEHAMPTON:

PRINTED BY JAMES STANLEY.



## PREFACE.

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THE following chapters originally appeared in *The Month*, and are here reprinted, in a somewhat amplified form, by kind permission of the Editor of that magazine. The manner of their original publication will, it is hoped, excuse certain defects, such as an absence of arrangement and occasional repetitions, which may be noticed by the critic.

Amusement and amazement will probably be equally blended in the minds of those readers to whom Protestant literature of a certain class is unfamiliar. To these feelings indignation will doubtless succeed; but the sentiment which must finally prevail will be one of pity for the extraordinary ignorance of Catholic faith and practice which characterizes the publications here passed under notice. It is well-nigh incredible that ignorance which the perusal of the Penny Catechism or a conversation with a Catholic would at once dispel, should be possible at the present day; but the evidence adduced is more than sufficient to show that to a section of our fellow-countrymen the teaching and practice of the greater part of Christendom is as unknown as if it did not exist.

It is true that by one means or another, and especially owing to the work of the High Church party in the Establishment, our countrymen during the last fifty years have greatly advanced in the knowledge of things Catholic. It is equally true that a large proportion of those who calumniate us are paid officials of societies, whose occupation would be gone were the Church portrayed in her true colours, and whose interest it is to foster and develop popular prejudice against us. One such society, as *Truth* pointed out,<sup>1</sup> has been formed by an enterprising publisher, who is its sole officer, for the express purpose of promoting the sale of his publications, many of which, on the authority of the same non-Catholic organ of opinion, are an outrage upon decency. But the number of men of influence and independence who support these bodies is not only small, but decreasing; any one familiar with the reports of anti-Catholic meetings published in Protestant papers, will notice the constant repetition of the same names, and these of persons in no way representing English opinion.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that certain men of undoubted position are not ashamed to be associated with the "lewd fellows of the baser sort" who are the self-constituted champions of Protestantism. Dean Farrar and the Rev. H. E. Fox, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, think it

<sup>1</sup> See p. 182, footnote.



no shame to patronize the same publisher who is responsible for the publications denounced by *Truth*, one or two of which, and these not the worst, are briefly dealt with on pp. 198—201 of this work. Each of these representative members of the Established Church has had his attention called to the company he is keeping, and neither has dissociated himself from it.

I am frequently asked where I found the material on which these chapters are based, and it seems to be thought that I have taken considerable pains to bring it together. But it abounds on all sides. The grosser fictions, indeed, emanate from Mr. Kensit's shop and from Racquet Court; but, as I have shown, respectable bodies like the Religious Tract Society, eminent publishers like the Messrs. Longmans, philanthropic organizations like the Pure Literature Society, high-placed ecclesiastics like Dean Farrar, are not ashamed to put forward publications as inaccurate and misleading, although not so offensive, as the works of Dr. Fulton and General Sir Robert Phayre. A mere glance through the names of those from whom I have quoted will show that clergymen (both Anglican and Nonconformist), lawyers, military men, women of education and social position, contribute to swell the tide of Protestant misrepresentation which vainly rages and swells round the Rock on which the Church is founded. The difficulty has not been in the finding, but in the selection of material; I have

not even referred to one half of the books devoted to attacks on Catholicism which are in my possession, and which I have picked up, for the most part, on bookstalls or in the "fourpenny box." And my collection is far from complete: I have never, for instance, come across a copy of *Poisoners and Propagandists*, to which I find a reference in the *Protestant Woman* for July, 1896, and which, judging from its title, must be well worthy of attention.

It is obviously the duty of every Catholic to do his utmost to dispel the darkness which still encompasses many of his fellow-countrymen; and this can be done by spreading the knowledge of the Church as she really is, and by confuting the false statements which are made concerning her. There is no lack of literature specially written with these two ends in view. The Catholic Truth Society has provided a series of cheap and useful leaflets and pamphlets explanatory of Catholic faith and practice, with others in which the popular calumnies against the Church are refuted. Not only "by kindly word and virtuous life," but by the promulgation of every means in our power of the truth as God has revealed it to His Church, must we work for the restoration of the "faith of our fathers" to the land which has so long been estranged from the Catholic unity.

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