BOOK 3, CHAPTER 16B

What is Contained in the Edict the Queen Promulgated against Our Sacred Religion

This is the title of the edict:

A declaration of the great disturbances that have been plotted against the commonwealth by a horde of priests from the seminaries, and Jesuits, who have been dispatched in secret, and dispersed throughout the kingdom to concoct outlandish treacheries under the false name of religion, and the provisions and necessary remedies for checking this wickedness, proclaimed by Her Majesty's command.

This title, being false, and employed as a pretext for persecuting the seminary priests and the fathers of the Society of Jesus as rebels and disturbers of the kingdom of England, is thus placed as a foundation upon which to raise all that follows, and render hateful those who defend the Catholic faith with their blood, or profess it.

After having laid—as I said—this false foundation, she proceeds erecting thereon numerous other falsehoods, especially against the pope and the Catholic King for having undertaken a war in defense of the kingdom of France and the Catholic faith, which the prince of Béarn seeks to eradicate. In her edict, the queen calls this war unjust and perilous to the entirety of Christendom. And also because they favor and support the seminaries established at Rheims in France, at Rome, at Valladolid and Seville (as will be seen hereafter) to shelter the English Catholics who wander in exile for the sake of the Catholic faith and intend to return to aid it (as they do) with their sweat and blood. For it is against the students of these seminaries and against the fathers of the Society of Jesus who teach, rear, and encourage them that the queen directs most of the force of the edict, claiming that the Englishmen raised there are base, filthy men, so impoverished and so wicked that, not having wherewithal in England and fearing the penalties for their crimes, they have fled that realm as fugitives, rebels, and traitors. And that, to prevent them returning and to punish those who might return, as they deserve for their great
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And to prove the truth of so obvious a lie, she says,

And the mendacity of those who make such claims is perfectly clear, for in the criminal proceedings brought against them they are not accused, nor condemned, nor executed, save for the crime of lèse-majesté, and because among other things they affirm that if the pope sent an army against her, or against her false creed, they would follow and aid it.

And she adds, to further confirm what she says:

Likewise, it is easily seen that none of them died for matter of religion, for in England many wealthy men are known to follow a faith contrary to the queen’s, and they are not punished or deprived of life or wealth on that account, and that they are only required to pay a certain financial penalty when they recuse themselves or refuse to go to their churches. And she concludes that this her manner of governing, so gentle and moderate, manifestly proves how false are the claims of these fugitives from England and their slanderous pamphlets against her.

Finally, after having given a long account of many other false and senseless matters, in order to persuade her kingdom of its peril from the treacheries that the Jesuits and the seminary priests plot and concoct against it, she discusses their remedy, and before all else:

she requires and charges all her ecclesiastical subjects to make every effort that there be godly ministers in the Church, who by their instruction and the example of their lives may steadfastly preserve the people in the profession of the Gospel, and in what they are obligated to do before God and before the queen, especially seeing that some few rabble-rousers and

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