

**A TRUE HISTORICAL RELATION OF
THE CONVERSION OF SIR TOBIE
MATTHEW TO THE HOLY CATHOLIC
FAITH: WITH THE ANTECEDENTS
AND CONSEQUENCES THEREOF**

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A true historical relation of the conversion of Sir Tobie Matthew to the Holy Catholic faith: with the antecedents and consequences thereof by A. H. Mathew

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A. H. MATHEW

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*The lively Portraiture of
S^r Tobias Mathewes K^t*

The portrait of Sir Tobie Matthew is reproduced from the picture given in Sir Tobie's posthumous book, "A Collection of Letters," edited and published by John Donne, LL.D., son of the Dean of St. Paul's, in 1660. The name is misspelt by the engraver.

A TRUE HISTORICAL RELATION OF
THE CONVERSION OF

SIR TOBIE MATTHEW

TO THE HOLY CATHOLIC FAITH;
WITH THE ANTECEDENTS
AND CONSEQUENCES THEREOF.

EDITED, AND NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME, WITH A PREFACE,
BY HIS KINSMAN,

A. H. MATHEW.



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PREFACE.

SIR TOBIE MATTHEW,* priest, Jesuit, and Knight, was born at Salisbury, 3 October, 1577, and was the eldest son of Dr. Tobie Matthew, then Dean of Christchurch, Oxford, who subsequently became Anglican Bishop of Durham, and finally Archbishop of York. His mother was Frances Parker, widow of the Rev. Matthew Parker, who was a son of the Archbishop of Canterbury of that name. Her father was William Barlow, Bishop of Chichester, the reputed consecrator of Matthew Parker, the founder of the new Anglican hierarchy. Dr. Tobie Matthew, the father of Sir Tobie, was the son of John Matthew, a Bristol merchant, a member of the ancient family of the Mathews of Glamorgan, who traced their descent from Cunedda, the over-king of all Wales, ancestor of Gwaethvoed Vawr, Prince of Cardigan, the progenitor of Sir David Mathew of Llandaff, and of the Earls of Landaff of Thomastown, Co. Tipperary. This family, for many generations powerful in South Wales, remained for the most part true to the

* The name varies in its orthography in the different branches of the family.

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ancient Faith all through the troublous times of the Reformation, and the evil days that succeeded it. John Matthew of Bristol and his wife, however, conformed to the new religion, under pressure of the Penal Laws of Elizabeth. Yet they were strongly opposed to the ultra-Protestant opinions embraced by their son, and did their utmost to prevent his entry into the Anglican ministry. He, however, followed the advice of clerical friends and became a clergyman, later on to be noted for his vigorous repression of Catholicism in the North of England, his severity towards "Popish recusants," and his activity in preaching, chiefly polemical discourses, in every portion of his extensive dioceses. Sir Tobie, son of this famous Protestant divine, displayed remarkable intellectual powers at an early age, for when only twelve years old he matriculated from Christchurch, 13 March, 1589-1590, graduated B.A., 5 June, 1594, and M.A., 5 July, 1597. Not long after this he attracted notice by his skill as a disputant and his abilities as an orator. Among others whose acquaintance he made was Francis Bacon, with whom he formed a life-long friendship, being frequently described by the philosopher as his *alter ego*. In 1595 he took the part of the Esquire in Essex's "Device," the dialogue of which was com-

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posed by Bacon. The performance took place on the Queen's Day, in the presence of Elizabeth and her court. In 1596 he was taken seriously ill, and was at variance with his father, then at Durham, who was greatly blamed for his severity. Two years later he went to stay with young Throckmorton of Coughton, a good Catholic, residing in France; and in the same year was again in trouble with his father on account of his debts. On 15 May, 1599, he was admitted at Gray's Inn, and on 3 October, 1601, entered Parliament as M.P. for Newport, Cornwall. In a letter written by Bacon to James I. in March, 1603, he is described as "a very worthy and rare young gentleman." On 25 March, 1604, he was returned M.P. for St. Alban's, *vice* Sir Francis Bacon, who elected to sit for Ipswich. Shortly after his election he determined to visit Italy, in fulfilment of a desire he had long entertained. He had some difficulty in gaining his parents' consent, for they feared that his intercourse with Catholics might induce him to change his religion. Finding it easier to obtain his father's permission to go no greater way from home than France, he solicited both parents' consent to spend six months in that country before the reassembling of Parliament. They reluctantly complied, expressly stipulating, however, that

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Tobie should not visit either Italy or Spain. He agreed to these conditions, without intending to abide by them. In after life he expressed deep contrition for this act of duplicity. On 3 July, 1604, he sailed for France, but within a few weeks returned secretly to England, for what purpose is uncertain. His life up to this period was that of a gallant and a courtier, much of his time being devoted to pleasure and dissipation. Early in 1605 he again started for France, this time continuing his journey to Florence, where he submitted to the Catholic Church. The "True Historicall Relation" of his sentiments on that occasion is what is here printed at length for the first time. During his imprisonment in the Fleet, Bacon, who was at that period strongly prejudiced against Catholicism, endeavoured to persuade him to abandon the Faith he had embraced at Florence. Finding his arguments powerless to influence Tobie, he ceased to employ them, but continued to exhibit the same regard and esteem for him as before, and showed his appreciation of Tobie's literary judgment by submitting various literary compositions for his opinion, a practice he continued to the end.

In April, 1607-8, Tobie obtained a permit from James I. to travel abroad, and went first to Flanders, and then, with Sir Robert Shirley, to