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HISTORY

OF THE

FALL OF THE JESUITS

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

By COUNT ALEXIS DE SAINT-PRIEST,
PEER OF FRANCE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

NEW EDITION.

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HISTORY

OF THE

FALL OF THE JESUITS

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

The Jesuits in Portugal—Their Influence—Conspiracy of the Fidalgos—The Marquis de Pombal—The Jesuits banished from Portugal.

TOWARD the close of the Eighteenth century an event occurred which marked the history of this period with a character of no ordinary importance—the expulsion of the Society of the Jesuits from the principal Catholic states in Europe, and their suppression by the See of Rome. It appears strange that the interest attaching to these events, keenly and universally as it was felt at the period when they occurred, has never attracted the due attention of the historian; whilst such partial accounts as have been published abound with misrepresentations and party perversion. The object of the present work is to supply in part this blank page in history, by giving an impartial narrative of events, founded upon such authentic documents as the author has been fortunate enough to have at his command. At the same time the actors in the great drama which is here recorded, rather than himself, will narrate its progress,—Pombal and Choiseul, Clement XIV. and Pius VI., the Cardinal de Bernis and Father Ricci, Charles III. and Louis XV., Frederick, and

Joseph; and, in addition to these sovereigns and statesmen, the favourite of a monarch, the Marchioness de Pompadour.

Before we enter upon the history of this singular revolution, we must notice an error which has been spread widely and designedly. A conquered party invariably attribute their defeat to the effect of outward circumstances, although it may generally be traced to causes existing among themselves. The panegyrists of the Jesuits represent their fall as the result of a conspiracy originating at a distance, artfully planned, and aided by complicated intrigues, which rendered that event inevitable. They represent kings, ministers, and philosophers as being all leagued against the Society, or (which in their view is much the same thing) against religion. This is incorrect: neither premeditation, plan, nor concert led to the overthrow of Jesuitism. Many interests had undoubtedly for a long time previous conspired against the Jesuits, whose conduct had provoked a feeling of bitter animosity; but it was no philosophical school, nor any political intrigue, that eventually proved their ruin,—it was simply the progress of events. Their fall was neither decreed at Ferney, nor at Versailles. Notwithstanding the recollection of the Bull *Unigenitus*, no person in France had dreamt of the destruction of the Society; the Jansenists were alone interested in its proscription, but their enemies were already too numerous to render it prudent in them to provoke fresh hostility: whilst, on the other hand, the French philosophers, who were equally removed from either party, did not desire the destruction of the Institution, since they desired still less the triumph of the Parliament of Paris, and the restoration of Port-Royal. No preconcerted measures therefore were taken against the Jesuits in France, although the contrary opinion has been maintained, nor was there any ministerial conspiracy. The Duke de Choiseul excited no enemies against them in the south of Europe; he instigated no plot, and still less is he chargeable with having masked any conspiracy under a feigned name. Neither the statesmen nor the men of letters in France merited the honour or the reproach of having proscribed Jesuitism. The philosophy then in vogue had likewise but a very indirect share in this event, which in fact was beyond the reach of its influence. Those who first attacked the Jesuits were not adepts of the

French school of philosophy, but strangers even to its tenets. The causes which struck at Jesuitism, and occasioned its overthrow, in all the plenitude of undisputed power, were wholly local, and of a private and personal nature: whilst, to crown the general astonishment, the vast and powerful body, whose arms extended (as has been often said) to regions till lately unexplored—this universal colony of Rome, an object of dread to all, and feared even in the very seat of its power—received its first blow, not from any great potentate, nor upon any of the principal theatres of Europe, but in one of its extreme corners, and in one of the weakest and most isolated of its kingdoms.

This blow was struck in Portugal, an event which would indeed excite our surprise, if we considered only the power which the Order possessed in that country, ruling both monarch and people, the throne and the altar; but if we regard the excess and abuse of that power which itself tended to endanger its durability, and recall the circumstances which, fortuitously or not, are connected with the introduction of the Jesuits into the Court of Lisbon, our surprise will lessen, and we may find cause to reverse our opinion. They had undoubtedly rendered some partial services to Portugal, and added new and profitable subjects to the realm; in China and in the Indies they had extended the renown of the Portuguese name by their missionary labours, crowned, as they were, by martyrdom. But at the same time it must be remembered that the establishment of this society coincides with the decline of the Portuguese monarchy. Unhappily for Portugal, the Jesuits entered the country at the very time that a foreign influence was introduced, and the decay of the monarchy was rapid and even instantaneous. Though opposed to the testimony of almost all historians, we are disinclined to attribute this circumstance to the Jesuits; we remark only that it was unfortunate for them to have been the active witnesses of the event. Right or wrong, responsibility attaches to those who exercise power; and it cannot be denied that in Portugal the Jesuits exercised sovereign power uninterruptedly for two centuries—from 1540 to 1750.

From the fourteenth to the sixteenth century Portugal presents the phenomenon of a weak but active population, which,

actuated by courage, the spirit of adventure,—by a mixture of chivalrous excitement with commercial calculation, a kind of compromise between the past and the future, the middle ages and modern times,—rose suddenly to wealth, renown, and power; and then fell at once, from the very same causes which had led to its rapid elevation. It was at this period that the Jesuits appeared at Lisbon. In 1540 they were presented to John III., and from that moment the face of affairs changed. Scarcely had they obtained a footing, when they exchanged submission for control. Even the Inquisition, which regarded their reception with jealousy, and offered a partial but vain resistance, finally gave way and adopted them. They demanded the free exercise of instruction, and the university of Coimbra yielded,—partially at first, but at the end of seven years the Jesuits expelled the former possessors from their institutions. The superstitious youth of Don Sebastian, and the ascendancy of the cardinal, signalized both the decline of the Portuguese monarchy and the triumph of the Jesuits. The Spaniards were at first received with open arms; their subsequent expulsion afflicted the Order, but it soon extended its sway over the new dynasty. The Jesuits governed in the name of the two queens, the widow of John IV. and the wife of Alphonso VI., who had married her brother-in-law during the life-time of her first husband, whom she dethroned and chained upon a rock. Under John V. their power reached its climax; they in fact ruled the nation, and Portugal fell exhausted into the protecting power of England, never again to recover her position.

The New World opened to the Jesuits a more glorious career. Notwithstanding the objections which may be urged against their settlement in Paraguay, it must be acknowledged that they afforded in that country the noble example of a handful of unarmed men, introducing religious faith and civilization amongst a savage population. This spectacle created universal astonishment, and the Jesuits cannot complain that the singular beauty of their offices and ministration was either misunderstood or unappreciated. Even the schools of philosophers have attested their merits, and in terms which their own writers have cited continually. We are not blind to the elements of pure absolutism, not to say of tyranny, which were fostered in their government;

it is true that the conditions of happiness were restricted to a continuance in a state of infancy; but we may profit by the experience of the past, by the revolutions which have taken place in those distant countries, and by having witnessed the atrocious dictatorship of that fantastic pretender who succeeded the Jesuit fathers in Paraguay; and, looking back to the history of this period, we cannot but applaud a government which, with all the means of exercising a despotic and cruel sway, was content to rule with the olive branch of peace, although with arbitrary power. Nevertheless the position of the Jesuits in America was certainly anomalous. Although apparently attached to the two monarchies of the Peninsula, they in fact exercised an independent power; and for this reason their fall was inevitable as soon as either of these courts asserted its rights. It was clear that this must be the case sooner or later, and the event at length took place. In the year 1753, a treaty between the kings of Spain and Portugal effected a mutual exchange of provinces; a stipulation was made that the inhabitants of the respective districts should quit the territories ceded, and change their country in order to remain under their former sovereign. These unhappy people resisted this arrangement, and the Jesuits seconded their resistance. They have since obstinately denied the part which they took; but when we compare the peaceable and docile character of this people with the zealous activity of its real masters, it is impossible to doubt the use to which the Jesuits turned their power. Moreover, the Jesuits are wrong to apply to this fact the system of denial which their writers so constantly employ. A greater frankness and highmindedness would lead them to avow their opposition to so oppressive a measure, and they would rather make a merit of having generously opposed the violent transference of a people from one state to another. The system of apology which they have adopted has uniformly led them to deny everything—even courageous and honourable acts—to serve a temporary purpose. We would render them more justice upon this point than they themselves are willing to accept; but we may ask, what government in Europe, having taken such a resolution as that adopted by the courts of Spain and Portugal, right or wrong, would allow any corporate or associated body to resist it? After such an example, it is not

difficult to discover motives for the hostility of the secular power against a religious order which had rashly cast the whole weight of its name and influence into the balance of an international treaty. At the present day such an explanation is easily comprehended, but previous to the French Revolution, and especially in the South of Europe, it was less easy to take any decided and vigorous measures against an enemy sheltered under the banner of religion.

The situation of affairs at this crisis required to be comprehended by a cool and clear judgement, and regulated with a firm hand. These qualities were united in the person of Sebastian Carvalho, afterwards Count d'Oeyras, and finally Marquis de Pombal. We shall call him in the sequel only by this last name, as his other titles are lost to history. The odium which still attaches to the name of Pombal, no less than the honours which were once paid him, the opposite feelings which his memory still excites in his own country, are sufficient evidence that he was a man of no common intellect and character. Nevertheless we cannot give implicit credence either to his enemies or to his apologists. His cruelty, jealousy, and avarice cast a deep shade over his courage, patience, and his indefatigable energy. Pombal was not a great man, but assuredly there never was a greater minister in so small a state. "King Sebastian is born again!" said his enemies, in allusion to his name and his power. His enemies were the nobles and the Jesuits—he crushed them both: we shall see in the sequel wherefore he took this daring step, and how he accomplished it.

Pombal was descended from a family of the middle classes, or at most from the lowest grade of the nobility; and at an early age he declared his hostility to the Portuguese aristocracy, who were among the proudest and most exclusive in Europe. Whilst a youth, he carried off a girl of the *sang bleu* (*sangre azul*), and married her in the face of the nobles, who were indignant at such an intrusion into their ranks. He was at the same time bold and flexible, and vainly endeavoured to soothe the pride of the Fidalgos, and reconcile them to his admission into their ranks. All his efforts were fruitless, and from that time he vowed to accomplish the ruin of those whom he had failed to conciliate. He came to London, where he was accredited

as chargé d'affaires,* and here his sentiments were confirmed by associating with an aristocracy which afforded an illustration confirmatory of his own predilections, and which would readily have admitted him within its ranks had he been born an Englishman. The balance of power in the state, and the government of a country where an authority was placed beside that of the monarch, and above the power of the minister, attracted his attention little. In England he envied, not the liberty of the nation, but the hope, the prospect which it enjoyed,—that proud and fruitful hope, which an Englishman at that time could alone rely upon. Above all, he was astonished at the substantial prosperity of Great Britain. At the sight of such objects of wonder, his thoughts turned to Portugal, and his mind, enlightened and intelligent, even if not wholly disinterested, grasped at once high and noble views and generous ideas, mingled with projects of personal ambition. Pombal, upon his elevation to the ministry, followed and applied the principles which he had adopted, and their origin is unquestionably to be traced to his residence in London. There it was that he formed the resolution to place himself either upon an equal footing with the grandees of Portugal or to rise superior to them, —to be at the same time the master of his sovereign and the reformer of his country.

Joseph I., the successor of John V., was the Louis XIII. of Portugal. Like that monarch, he had his Richelieu, and this parallel flattered the vanity of Pombal. In moments of intimate intercourse he applied it to himself, and in public he compared himself to Sully. Joseph I. was devoid even of that imposing exterior and of those regal graces which invest disorder with a kind of nobleness. He was indolent and melancholy, and abandoned the affairs of state to his minister: it was more to his taste and pleasure to steer his royal barge on the Tagus, upon a bright summer day, filled with women and musicians. Distrustful and suspicious, his ear was always open to spies and informers, and he lived in the continual dread of a conspiracy. It was easy to govern such a prince by terror; and Pombal skilfully employed those means which the character of the monarch

* Carvalho was afterwards minister at Vienna, where he entered into a second marriage with the niece of Field-Marshal Daun.

itself suggested. He paid assiduous court to Joseph, and whilst he abstained from obsequious adulation, he made him tremble for his life. Nevertheless the favour shown him by his sovereign never caused him to neglect his own security; he took no step without an order under the sign manual of the king, a precaution which at a later period saved his life.

The tendency of the European governments in the eighteenth century may be reduced to this expression—reform, but reform effected by arbitrary means. All the princes and statesmen of any note proceeded in this course and followed this object; but more or less hypocrisy accompanied their application of the system; and whilst they had recourse to the employment of absolute power, they assumed an air of deference to the philosophy of the age. Pombal was not a man of letters, and had no correspondence with the Encyclopedists of France,* but he furthered their objects without consulting them. Surpassing them in activity and candour, he neither disavowed nor excused anything: he did not even affect to pronounce the word liberty, but proclaimed civilization as the legitimate offspring of despotism. There was no secrecy or reserve in his conduct, no explanation or apology; his spirit, contracted and obstinate as it was, refused all compromise: he pushed absolutism to its utmost limits, and demanded all that it could yield him. The general destinies of mankind did not affect this practical sceptic; his intellect extended neither far nor high enough; but the very plague-spots which affected Portugal in particular excited his lively attention.

A multitude of edicts, issued in quick succession, soon roused the Portuguese from their lethargy. Perhaps we cannot correctly estimate these acts; praise and censure may be applied to them in turn; but although they are not all based on the principles of a sound policy, yet Pombal cannot be blamed for not being in advance of the political science of his time; nor is it just to attribute in all cases the errors of his age, or of his natural turn of mind, to calculations of mere interest and cupidity. He was certainly not free from these faults; but his whole character, viewed at a sufficient distance to efface the

* The immense correspondence of Voltaire does not contain a single letter addressed to the Count d'Oeyras (the Marquis de Pombal).

prejudices of his time, is certainly stamped with an imposing although brutal grandeur, which burst forth on a memorable occasion. The earthquake in 1755 had overthrown three-fourths of Lisbon. The court in their terror had not time to fly; the people perished in the flames and ruins, or by the knife of the assassin. The courtiers wanted to conduct the royal family to Oporto. Pombal alone refused to let them go. "The king's place is in the midst of his people," said he to Joseph: "let us bury the dead and take thought for the living." Under such circumstances, ambition has no attraction for ordinary minds, and power devolves exclusively upon the energetic. Pombal seized upon the helm of the state as of right, and declared himself prime minister. At that time various calamities seemed to threaten unhappy Portugal: unaided and alone, the minister undertook to allay and subdue them. There was something of antique greatness in the courage which Pombal displayed that excited a general astonishment. The colonies supplied the metropolis with food without foreign aid; brigands were visited with terrible punishments, and three hundred gibbets were brought into requisition for the armed robbers who infested the ruins of Lisbon in open day. But notwithstanding calamities of every description, and in the midst of the anxieties arising from two political actions at law, Pombal retained his judgment and his courage. On the ruins of the ancient capital he raised a new city; and with justice, if not with modesty, on erecting the statue of Joseph, Pombal placed his own image on the pedestal.*

Pombal had now attained a position in which his credit was unlimited, and his thoughts were from this time fixed upon the execution of the two great projects he had conceived,—the subjection of the aristocracy and the expulsion of the Jesuits. The first was a bold measure, but Ximenes in Spain and Richelieu in France had set an example to the Portuguese minister; the second was without precedent. Pombal was moreover resolved to attempt these two measures in a direct and open manner.

Whatever view we take of the resolution to destroy the

* The medallion of the Marquis de Pombal was removed by Don Miguel and replaced by order of Don Pedro.

Jesuits—whether friendly or inimical—it must be admitted in this instance that the Marquis de Pombal acted as a statesman, and not in the spirit of an irritated or vindictive courtier. If, with a view to attain this object, he pursued too frequently a crooked line of conduct, he was at least actuated by considerations of an elevated policy, and not, as is still asserted, by mere cold suggestions of egoism. He aimed the blow at the Jesuits as a body dangerous to the public welfare, and not as dangerous to his own credit. The Jesuits were not his enemies; on the contrary, it was they who had raised him to power. They reckoned upon him; and, with deep dissimulation, Pombal kept up their confidence in him until the very moment when he avowed himself their enemy. To the astonishment of the Order and of the whole of Portugal, the Jesuit confessors of the king and the royal family were banished from the palace, and replaced by regular confessors. At the same time the manifestos of the Marquis de Pombal brought against the Order terrible accusations, which we shall soon examine dispassionately. The minister communicated these complaints to the pope, demanding the immediate support of the apostolical see. Benedict XIV. had never been friendly to the Jesuits, whom he knew thoroughly; he had predicted their fall; but it was the policy of this wise and spiritual pontiff to evade a decisive answer, and he had only time to issue an order that the establishments of the Order should be visited by the patriarch of Lisbon, when he died, without having pronounced a decision between the Society of Jesus and the crown of Portugal.

Two powerful families, the Mascarenhas and the Tavoras, were at this time at the head of the Portuguese aristocracy. Pombal had not taken any step against these families; he obtained an introduction through his wife to the society of Donna Eleonora, the wife of the Marquis de Tavora, former governor of India, who was in every respect a woman of the highest pretensions in Portugal. She was a person of respectable morals, but of a haughty temper, and in her eyes might be remarked a fatal glance, the presage of her destiny.* Pombal had ventured to solicit for his son an alliance with this noble and proud family.

* This look, which struck me in the portrait of Donna da Tavora, is equally observable in that of Strafford.

"Alas!" said he one day to a priest of the Tavora family, "the king may heap favours upon me, but my happiness will be incomplete unless the heir of my fortune become the son-in-law of the illustrious Donna Eleonora." "Your Excellency," replied the monk, "raises his eyes high indeed." A coolness now suddenly arose between the minister and the marchioness; she had solicited the title of duke for her husband, and Pombal defeated her pretensions. There is but one step from indifference to hatred, and finally the whole of the *sang bleu* took part in this quarrel. Joseph de Mascarenhas, Duke d'Aveiro, treated the minister with the utmost scorn. D'Aveiro, an arrogant and insolent man, was invested with the highest offices, and allied to the royal family. From this moment Pombal meditated a deep and deadly revenge. These court nobles, whose resentment was fostered by the Jesuits, menaced the power and even the life of the minister; when on a sudden, in the night of the 3rd of September, 1758, the gates of the palace were closed; the king did not make his appearance for several days; no report was circulated respecting the causes of this measure, and Pombal endeavoured, by every means, to inspire with a feeling of security those whom he had marked as his victims. At length, after a long suspense, the Duke d'Aveiro and the family of Tavora, together with their friends, were arrested in their own dwellings. The haughty Donna Eleonora, taken from her bed, was dragged half naked to a convent, and the rest of her family were shut up in the menagerie of Belem, which had remained empty since the earthquake.

What could have happened in this interval to give cause for these acts of violence? What crime did the minister impute to all these nobles? The facts of the case were as follows:—Donna Teresa, the wife of the young Marquis de Tavora, was the king's mistress. On going to visit her one night, Joseph had been fired at by two pistol-shots: he was wounded in the arm, and had remained within his palace, waiting the arrest of the accused parties. These were the Duke d'Aveiro and the husband of the king's mistress, who were regarded as the instruments of the crime; the old Taveras, who were accused as accomplices; and the Jesuits, who were regarded as the instigators. Of all the members of the

accused family, Donna Teresa was the only one treated with indulgence, although it has never been shown whether the discovery of the conspiracy was not her act. Louis XV. manifested to his chargé d'affaires the greatest curiosity regarding the fate of this young woman.*

Pombal never intended to summon the nobles before a tribunal of their peers; perhaps the state of the nobility at that time rendered the maintenance of this privilege impossible; nor did the minister bring them before the ordinary courts: the accused parties were summoned before an exceptional tribunal, called a tribunal of *Inconfidenza*, that is to say, before a commission. The execution of the sentence followed closely upon its announcement. In the night of the 12th of January, 1759, a scaffold, eighteen feet high, was erected on the square of Belem, fronting the Tagus. At daybreak this open space was filled with soldiers and the populace, and even the river was covered with spectators. The servants of the Duke d'Aveiro appeared first upon the platform, and were fastened to one of the corners, to be burned alive. The Marchioness of Tavora at length ascended the scaffold, with a rope around her neck and a crucifix in her hand. She was scantily clad in some tattered clothes, but her whole figure and demeanour were stamped with firmness and dignity. The executioner, in attempting to bind her feet, accidentally raised the hem of her robe. "Stop!" cried she, "forget not who I am; touch me only to kill me!" The executioner fell on his knees before Donna Eleonora, and begged her to pardon him; whereupon she drew a ring from her finger, and said, "Here, I have nothing but this in the world; take it, and do your duty." This courageous woman then laid her head upon the block, and received her death-blow. Her husband, her sons, the youngest of whom was not twenty years of age, her son-in-law, and several servants, perished after her in frightful torments. The Duke d'Aveiro was led forward the last; he was fastened to the wheel, his body covered with rags, and his arms and thighs naked. Thus was he broken alive, not expiring until after he had endured protracted tortures, making the square and the neighbourhood re-echo with frightful cries.

* Despatches of the Duke de Choiseul to M. de Saint Julien, Chargé d'Affaires of France at Lisbon

At length the machine was set on fire; and presently wheel, scaffold, bodies, all were burned, and cast into the Tagus.

The palaces of the condemned parties were razed to the ground, and salt was sprinkled on the spot where they had stood; their heraldic insignia were effaced from all places, both private and public, especially from the hall of the knights in the castle of Cintra, where their escutcheon is still seen covered with a black veil, like the portrait of Faliero in the ducal palace at Venice. Pombal at last erected a pillory in one of the squares of Lisbon, which, by special privilege, he reserved for the highest nobles. At a later period of his ministerial career he compelled one of the Tavora family, the granddaughter of Donna Eleonora, to marry his son, the Count d'Oeyras. A numerous family sprung from this tragical union, and the blood of the persecutor and his victims now runs peacefully in the same veins.

The complaints of Pombal against the Fidalgos, notwithstanding his hatred and the injuries which he had sustained, had only been a means to a higher end. His animosity was even greater against the Jesuits than the aristocracy, but they were less accessible. Their intercourse with the conspirators was unquestionable: they had been their friends and advisers, and had taken a decided part in the discontents, murmurs, and open opposition of the Fidalgos; but it was difficult to convict them of a participation in the regicidal plots. Pombal however did not hesitate to accuse them; the very day on which the arrest of the Tavora family took place, the houses of the Jesuits were invested by troops, their chiefs were cast into prison, and a formal accusation of having fomented the conspiracy was brought against three of their body, Mattos, Alexander, and Malagrida.

Pombal spread his manifestos throughout Europe, and they were read with avidity. The catastrophe, and especially the event which had led to it, fixed the attention of all cabinets. This regicidal attempt followed immediately that of Damiens, and a secret though vague presentiment was felt by all the sovereigns that a storm was at hand. It was to be expected that the general feeling in France would be disposed to welcome the accusations of the Portuguese minister, and that the Ency-

clopedists would have been his zealous and faithful allies. This, however, was not the case. The manifestos issued by the Court of Lisbon appeared ridiculous in form and fundamentally ill-considered. Such a holocaust of the heads of the nobility shocked the higher classes, who until that time had been sedulously courted by the philosophical school; a cruelty so wanton formed too strong a contrast to the morals and manners of a Society which, although verging on its decline, still preserved considerable outward elegance: general pity for the victims was also excited. Pombal's conduct met with derision, and every one laughed at his appeal to the ideas of the middle ages, — a period of history which the fashion of that day reproved as forcibly as the fashion of the present time favours,— whilst the despotic maxims with which his manifestos abounded were strongly reprobated.* But what most of all stirred up the hostility of the French philosophers was Pombal's declining to accept their patronage, or to avow himself a pupil of their school. In persecuting the Society of the Jesuits, he did not bring any charge against the institution, nor did he accuse the members of professing bad or immoral principles; his ground of complaint was that they had remained less faithful than their predecessors to the principles of St. Ignatius; indeed, he even made a boast himself of belonging to the third order of Jesus, and of scrupulously observing its practices.† Pombal's acts might be such as to lead to a rupture with Rome, and he might have expelled the Jesuits, but it was not in the name of philosophy. The accusations which he brought against them did not rest upon general grounds, but upon particular facts, questionable and ill-stated. Pombal, as we have said, derived no support from the chief men among the French philosophers, but he moreover appeared carefully to disclaim any connection with them; he did not even venture to rise to the liberties of the Gallican church, an act of courage which was then very easy, but which he either did not possess, or disdained. The philosophers never pardoned these instances of neglect; and still less the fact that Pombal had appealed to the decision of the Pope

* Correspondence of the Duke de Choiseul.

† State Papers and Manuscripts of the Marquis de Pombal: Library of M. S. Vicomte D'A., at Lisbon.

against Malagrida and his companions. Voltaire attacked him for this more than once, in the *Siecle de Louis XV.* and elsewhere.*

Rezzonico reigned at that time as pontiff under the name of Clement XIII., having recently succeeded the amiable and prudent Benedict XIV. Pombal had consulted the pope, and the answer was delayed: Clement, indeed, who was devoted to the Jesuits, overlooked the fact that the King of Portugal had in this act shown the greatest deference to the ancient privileges of the Holy See. In Portugal, the tribunal of the Nuncio had up to that time retained the right of pronouncing judgment upon members of the church. Pombal, who had resolved to transfer this power to a commission named by himself, did not think fit to dispense with soliciting a nominal authorization from the Court of Rome. The latter had viewed the demand in a serious light, and postponed the issue of the instrument; but the impatient minister did not await a reply, and the pope's letter crossed on the road a decree issued by Pombal for the expulsion of the Order. All the bishops of Portugal received a command from the government to remove the instruction of youth from the hands of the Jesuits, and to supersede them immediately in the university of Coimbra and elsewhere. In a few days the vessels both of the royal and merchant navy were filled with these priests, who were transported to the coast of Italy; whilst the same orders were despatched to Brazil and to all the Portuguese colonies, and were immediately put in execution. As soon as the news of this measure reached Rome, the pope ordered Pombal's manifesto to be burnt in a public square,—an act which the Portuguese minister retaliated by confiscating the property of the Society and declaring it forfeited to the crown.† But not satisfied with this measure. Pombal took advantage of an imprudent act of the Nuncio, and sent him his passports, at the

* *Siècle de Louis XV.*, vol. xxix. p. 38. Edit. Delangle.—*Sermon du Rabbin Akib*, vol. xliii. p. 234.

† The author can guarantee the accuracy of the following anecdote. In the hurry of departure, the Jesuits of Lisbon intrusted their treasures to one of their servants, who preserved and afterwards restored them to his masters so faithfully, that in return for his honesty they gave him a large fortune. A descendant of this man distinguished himself greatly as a politician in the last changes in Portugal.

same time, with an affectation of parade, recalling the Portuguese ambassador accredited at the Court of Rome.

Although the French philosophers of the eighteenth century were little friendly at first to the administration of Pombal, it might have been expected that his excessive zeal would have won their attachment: they had witnessed the humiliation of Rome, a Nuncio expelled, and the Jesuits abolished,—what more could they desire? Surely it might have been anticipated that in all those countries where the new spirit prevailed,—in England, and still more in France,—a man in the situation of Pombal, who was the avowed enemy of the Jesuits and the pope, would have become the idol of public favour, and been extolled to the skies by Voltaire, Diderot, and D'Alembert. On the contrary, they all kept aloof from him, more even than before, and the reason of this is easily explained: Pombal had destroyed the Jesuits, but he was the protector of the Inquisition. Assured of the fidelity of the patriarch of Lisbon, and having got rid of the Papal nuncio, he found in this formidable institution a convenient and ready weapon,—a kind of committee of public safety,—and he consequently spoke of it with enthusiasm. In conversation one day with a French Chargé d'Affaires, he said, "My desire is to reconcile your country to the Inquisition, and to exhibit to the world the utility of that institution: it has been established under the authority of his very faithful majesty only to execute certain episcopal functions, which are surely more safely intrusted to the hands of a corporation chosen by the sovereign, than to an individual who may deceive others, and who is himself liable to be deceived." To add the force of example to such maxims of policy, Pombal deemed it opportune to apply them to the Jesuits: he removed Malagrida from prison, where he was pining away forgotten, and caused him to be accused of heresy by the Inquisition, who delivered him over to the secular power, that is to say, to the tribunal of the *Inconfidenza*,—an arbitrary commission established since the conspiracy of the nobles. Malagrida was subsequently strangled and burnt in a solemn auto-da-fé. Voltaire loudly censured this hypocritical cruelty; he showed that throughout the affair, *the excess of the ridiculous was mingled with the excess of horror*, and, with his penetrating sagacity when he was not troubled by pas-

sion, he denounced the cowardice and inconsistency of condemning a man for heresy who was accused of high-treason.* Pombal's conduct thus excited only general disgust, and found no sympathy, even amongst those who considered the Jesuits culpable. This emboldened the friends of the Society, who grew louder in their recriminations: they asserted that the conspiracy was imaginary, that the minister had himself recurred to such a pretext in order to strengthen his power over a pusillanimous prince, and they even went so far as to attribute to the government the feigned attempt upon the king's life, which, it was said, he had so narrowly escaped. We are not astonished at this party manœuvre; nevertheless, as at that period boldness was not carried to the length of denying the peril to which a king's life is exposed, no one doubted that Joseph had been wounded. To suppose the contrary, we must imagine that Pombal, with a rashness bordering upon madness, had exposed himself to the peril of attempting the life of the king who was his only support, or that the wound had been feigned, in which case Joseph must have been an accomplice, although actuated certainly by most unaccountable motives. He had himself perpetuated the remembrance of that act by placing a model of his arm pierced with balls, as an *ex-voto* offering, in one of the churches in Lisbon. But the connivance of the King of Portugal cannot be seriously admitted, although this opinion prevailed among the defenders of the Jesuits, and many traces of it still exist in Portugal. The mysterious suspicions which Pombal's conduct only served to heighten, and which attach to his memory, cannot be wholly dissipated. It appears to be certain that the king's life was attempted by some of the conspirators accused, but whether they were all implicated in the plot admits of doubt. We may however observe that subsequently, during the revolution in the palace, the triumphant party, who excited the re-action against Pombal, failed to support their accusations by any proof. There are fully sufficient reasons, therefore, to believe the arrest of the parties accused to have been a legal act, although the means employed to obtain their conviction cannot be approved. Above all, the choice of these means was especially reprehensible: if Pombal was just, cruelty certainly tarnished his glory.

* *Siècle de Louis XV.*, vol. xxv. p. 433.

In the publications which were at this period issued in prodigious numbers by the Jesuits or their defenders, the name of the Duke de Choiseul is constantly associated with that of the Marquis de Pombal, and they are represented as allied from the first in the attempt to overthrow the Jesuits. The assertions of the Abbé Georgel, and a host of other pamphleteers, that Choiseul had always entertained a hatred for the Jesuits, were repeated on all sides: he was represented as the instigator of their fall; and this fundamental error has been from that time to the present attempted to be supported by statements of very questionable authority. The Jesuits themselves assisted in circulating these tales. Assuming that a connection existed between the two ministers, they represented them as accomplices in the destruction of the Order, and Pombal and Choiseul were said to have concerted the part which each was to act: the former was to commence the campaign, and the second to come to his aid. Nothing is more false than such a supposition; and we assert this after having inspected the diplomatic correspondence, and the most familiar letters of the Duke de Choiseul. In a secret memorial, addressed to Louis XV. himself, the duke reminds the king that he had not been the one to commence this great measure: "Your Majesty," said he, "knows well that, although it has been said that I have laboured at the expulsion of the Jesuits . . . . I have in no way, either at a distance or on the spot, either in public or in private, taken any step with this intent."* These two statesmen were not at all in concert; there existed no understanding between them, nor could they have entertained any such projects in common. There was moreover nothing akin to the dull-minded and vindictive Portuguese, in the brilliant, frivolous, and courteous minister of Louis XV. Choiseul never even applauded the proceedings of Pombal, but spoke of them only in terms of coldness, and frequently of contempt. Pombal's bluntness appeared to him gross and vulgar, his pomposity misplaced, and his audacity impertinent. He often laughed at him with the Prince de Kaunitz: "Ce monsieur," they would say, "a donc toujours un jésuite à cheval sur le nez." In his character as a minister, a favourite, and still more as a noble, the duke disdained any comparison with the upstart

* State Papers and Manuscripts of the Duke de Choiseul.

marquis: indeed everything in the character of Pombal excited a repulsive feeling in Choiseul, who regarded him as unjust, cruel, and, what in his eyes was worse, a man of bad taste.

Notwithstanding all this, the two statesmen were associated in purpose for a time. Choiseul had determined upon the family compact; and he hoped to engage Portugal in this project, from the Capet origin of the House of Braganza. Moreover, a common feeling of hatred united them: France was at that time at war with England, against whom the Marquis de Pombal secretly entertained a bitter enmity. His conduct toward England had been perfectly whimsical. One or two diplomatic manifestos, of a very bold nature, gained for him the reputation of a patriot, and of being the enemy of England. The party which participates in the ideas of this minister (and that party exists to the present day in Portugal) boasts of his independence, which was but nominal: although Pombal vaunted his opposition to England, he was always in reality subject to that power. Whilst he ostentatiously proclaimed the liberty of Portugal, he raised to revolt the city of Oporto, for the establishment of the Company which gave to the English the monopoly in wine. In the same manner the political circles in Lisbon regarded these rodomontades of the Marquis as concerted with the Cabinet of London to serve as a veil to acts of submissive courtesy.* Nevertheless there existed a real antipathy between England and Portugal; the English (who would believe it?) had regarded the expulsion of the Jesuits with disapprobation: her commerce, which had been intimately connected with the interests of the Order, had suffered from their suppression. Troubles arose in the Portuguese foreign possessions, which Pombal, in official documents, whose authenticity we can attest, attributed to the influence of Great Britain.†

* The Marquis de Pombal, who was in connection with the Whigs, and particularly with Mr. Pitt (Lord Chatham), found much less sympathy in the Tory party, who were represented in the ministry, shortly after the accession of George III., by Lord Bute.

† A trace of this singular imputation is contained in the letters of Madame du Deffand. Lady Rochford, the wife of the English ambassador, was thought to have intrigued with the Jesuits and with the Duke de Lavanguyon, their protector.—(Letter of February 13, 1769.) We have found accusations of a like kind in the imperial archives of Rio Janeiro, in the correspondence of Pombal with the viceroys of Brazil.

The union between the cabinets of Versailles and Lisbon could not be of long duration. In the relations of Portugal with England, submission is the inevitable result of remonstrance. Choiseul used every means to induce Portugal to favour the family pact, but in this he failed. The ambassadors of Spain and France simultaneously presented notes from their respective courts, urging the King of Portugal to declare in their favour, and to close his ports to England, threatening hostilities in case of his refusal: to this demand they required a reply with the least possible delay. The tone of their demand showed that they expected refusal rather than concession. Pombal answered with nobleness and moderation, claiming the right of Portugal to remain neutral. Whilst he was engaged in arguing against the proposed measure, the Spanish troops crossed the frontier, declaring that they came not to attack the Portuguese, but to deliver them from the British yoke. At this news Pombal exhibited one of those traits of courage which are the more praiseworthy in a statesman, because they prove that the calculations of the head do not always supersede the dictates of the heart. Unprepared and unprovided with any means of defence, taken thus completely unawares, Pombal did not await the manifesto of Spain, but was the first to declare war. Although a difference, more apparent than real, existed between the two countries, he could rely upon the support of England, and he demanded it. Thus on the one side were ranged France and Spain, and on the other Portugal and Great Britain. The measures of defence were better taken than those of aggression: Pombal manifested great activity, and aroused the military spirit which he had himself contributed to depress. The war, which was unskilfully commenced by the Gallo-Spanish army, lasted but a short time; and Portugal, which for some years had attracted the attention of Europe, now relapsed into her wonted obscurity: the public attention was diverted to another quarter.*

* Manuscript of Fr. Em. Comte de Saint Priest, ambassador and minister under Louis XV. and Louis XVI.

CHAPTER II.

The Jesuits and Madame de Pompadour—Trial of Father Lavalette—Louis XV. expels the Jesuits from France—Charles III. drives them from the Spanish Monarchy.

THE news of the fall of the Jesuits in a distant country aroused their enemies in every quarter. In France a general astonishment was excited at the facility with which the Order had submitted to its sentence, and the absence of resistance emboldened the hostility against them. Up to that time the reputation for sagacity and tact which the Jesuit fathers boasted had been their most powerful protection in France; no one had ventured to attack them; but when they were seen to surrender their power without a struggle,—when the rupture of a small court with the Holy See on their account was declared ostentatiously without leading to any disturbance, without even causing any great sensation, the probability of success (as is often the case in human affairs) doubled the number of their adversaries. These only awaited an opportunity to act, and this soon arrived. The ruin of the Jesuits in France became inevitable: a court intrigue prepared the way, and an act of public scandal accomplished it.

It is true that, after vainly attempting to negotiate with the Jesuits, Madame de Pompadour, in consequence of this failure, resolved upon their destruction. The testimony of the favourite on this point is so valuable, and conveyed in such singular terms, —it gives such a picture of the times in which it was penned—that a simple transcript of it is far better than any comment. The following are the instructions given by herself to a secret agent who was despatched to Rome.

"In the commencement of 1752, being resolved (by motives which it is useless to relate) to retain only sentiments of gratitude and the purest attachment for the king, I declared this to his majesty, and begged him to consult the doctors of the Sor-

bonne, and to write to his confessor, with a view to consult others, and to find means to allow me to remain near him (as he desired it) without being exposed to the suspicion of a weakness which I no longer entertained. The king, knowing my character, felt that he could hope for no return on my part, and yielded to my request. The doctors were consulted, and wrote to Father Pérusseau, who required him to consent to a total separation. The king replied that he was not at all disposed to agree to this, and that it was not on his own account he desired an arrangement which should remove all cause for public suspicion, but for my satisfaction; that I was necessary to the happiness of his life, and to the interests of his kingdom; that I was the only person who dared to speak to him the truth, so useful to kings, &c. The good father still hoped that he should make himself master of the king's mind, and persisted in repeating the same arguments. The replies given by the doctors would have rendered an arrangement possible if the Jesuits had consented. At this time I spoke with some persons who were anxious for the interests of the king and of religion. I assured them that unless Father Pérusseau bound the king by the sacraments, he would give himself up to a course of life which every one would regret. I did not persuade, and in a short time it was seen that I had not been deceived. Things remained therefore, in appearance, as in the past, until 1755. At length, long reflection upon the unhappiness which had followed me, even in the possession of the greatest fortune—the feeling of certainty that I should never find happiness in worldly fortune, since I had enjoyed every kind and yet had never attained happiness—the effect this had produced in weaning my mind from the greatest sources of my former amusements,—all led me to the conviction that the only happiness was in communion with God. I consulted Father de Sacy as a man most imbued with this truth: I disclosed to him my soul, unmasked, and he was my secret adviser from the month of September until the end of January, 1756. He proposed to me during this time to write a letter to my husband, the rough copy of which I have preserved, in his own hand-writing. My husband refused ever to see me. Father de Sacy made me request a place near the queen, for greater decorum; he desired the staircase to be altered which

led to my apartment, and the king never entered it again except in the company of others. Father de Sacy prescribed to me a rule of conduct which I strictly observed. This change made a great noise in the court and city; intriguers of every description took part in it; Father de Sacy was surrounded by them, and told me that he should refuse me the sacraments as long as I remained at the court. I represented to him all the engagements into which he had caused me to enter, the change which the intrigues had effected in his own views, &c. He concluded by saying, that 'the confessor of the late king had been too much ridiculed when the Count de Toulouse came into the world, and he had no desire that the same should happen to him.' I had no answer to make to this argument, and, after exhausting all that my desire to fulfil my duty could suggest most proper to persuade him to listen to religion, and not to intrigue, I saw him no more. The abominable fifth of January arrived, and was followed by the same intrigues as the previous year. The king did all he could to bring Father Desmarêts to the truth of religion; but as the same motives actuated him, his answer was the same; and the king, who had desired anxiously to fulfil his duties as a Christian, was debarred from this satisfaction, and soon afterwards relapsed into the same errors, from which he would certainly have been diverted if good faith had been acted upon.

"Notwithstanding the extreme patience which I had observed with Father de Sacy during eighteen months, my heart was not the less afflicted by my situation. I spoke of this to an honourable man, in whom I had confidence; he was touched by what I told him, and sought means to extricate me. An abbé, one of his friends, whose knowledge equalled his intelligence, stated my position to one who was as well capable of judging of it as himself: they were both of opinion that my conduct did not deserve the suffering which I had been made to undergo. The result was that my confessor, after a new and long trial of me, put an end to this injustice by admitting me to partake of the sacraments, and, although I feel some secret pain which I must keep back (to prevent any calumny to my confessor), it is nevertheless a great consolation to my soul.

"The negotiation in question does not therefore relate to myself,

but it interests me greatly for the king, to whom I am attached as I ought to be. On my side there is no fear of proposing disagreeable conditions: that of returning to my husband is out of the question; he has refused ever again to receive me, and consequently my conscience is quite tranquil on this point; all other conditions will give me no pain. The point in question is to see what will be proposed to the king; it remains for skilful persons, who are desirous of promoting the interests of his Majesty, to seek the means of giving effect to their intentions.

"The king, with a full conviction of the truths and the duties of religion, is desirous of employing all the means in his power to mark his obedience to those acts which are prescribed by the church; and his Majesty chiefly desires to remove all the opposition which is offered to his participation in the sacraments. The king is pained at the difficulties which his confessor has raised on this point, and he is persuaded that the pope, and those whom his Majesty is anxious to consult at Rome, when informed of the facts, will remove by their advice and authority the obstacles which prevent the king from fulfilling a duty which he deems important to himself and edifying to his people.

"It is necessary to present to the pope and to the Cardinal Spinelli a true statement of the facts, in order that they may know and be able to remove the difficulties which have originated as much in the affair itself as in the intrigues to which it has given rise."

The Marchioness here changes her style without assigning any cause for so doing, and speaks, like Cæsar, in the third person.

"The king entertains in his heart a friendship and confidence for the Marchioness de Pompadour, who constitutes the peace and tranquillity of his life: these sentiments of his Majesty are totally foreign to those which passion excites; it may be affirmed with the strictest truth that, for four years and upwards, nothing has passed in the intercourse of the king and Madame de Pompadour which can be taxed with passion, and consequently nothing which can be deemed contrary to the severest morality.

"Some years ago, the position of the king and of Madame de Pompadour being such as is here described, with the firm resolution of both parties to maintain it in that state, the king

wrote to his confessor, who was then Father Pérusseau, that he desired to partake of the sacrament: the confessor replied that he could not bend his duty to the desires of the king, at least unless he removed from him Madame de Pompadour, who, as he stated, was an object of scandal. The king replied to the confessor that Madame de Pompadour not being any occasion of sin to him, either by her conduct or her desire, he did not wish to sacrifice the happiness of his life and his confidence in her. The confessor persisted, and the king did not partake of the sacrament. Such is the situation of the king's conscience. Since that time, Father Desmarêts has succeeded Father Pérusseau in the office of confessor. He is of a narrower mind than his predecessor, and being surrounded, like him, with persons who, in their desire for the removal of Madame de Pompadour from the court, represent to him the granting of absolution to the king as a dishonourable act, he follows the same principles."*

Thus wrote Madame de Pompadour. She determined to act accordingly, and she kept her word faithfully. Perhaps it will be said that the Jesuits suffered on this occasion from not remaining true to their own character. We do them more justice. This transient weakness reflects honour upon them. On another and still more decisive occasion they were less fortunate: we advert to an occurrence which is well known. Father Lavalette, a bold speculator, gifted with that kind of spirit which his age denounced but which ours adopts, was at the head of a large establishment of the Order at Martinique. He availed himself of his position to speculate, and founded a bank. Some jealous friends, perhaps some of his brethren, threw difficulties in his way; his bills of exchange were protested both in France and in Martinique. A house at Lyons and Marseilles stopped payment, and loudly accused the Jesuit banker with being the cause of their failure, implicating at the same time the whole society as responsible for one of its members. In this instance the Order again forfeited its character and reputation for sagacity, but less nobly than in the affair with Madame de Pompadour. Instead of paying the money and compelling the whole body to contribute, the general delivered up Father Lavalette and the

* Manuscripts of the Duke de Choiseul.

house of Martinique. He committed a serious fault in referring the decision of the matter to the high chamber of the Parliament of Paris. The Jesuits, according to their own writers, yielded to treacherous counsel. It may be so, but why did they listen to it? Of what avail was their boasted sagacity, if it did not preserve them from snares? Be this as it may, if there was a snare, they fell into it. This proceeding at law caused the greatest sensation: the Jesuits were declared responsible for the debt of Father Lavalette, and sentenced to pay to the house at Marseilles 1,502,266 francs, and were taxed with all the costs; their possessions were placed under sequestration, and rendered liable to be sold, if needed, to complete the payment. But this heavy pecuniary loss, which a little resolution and foresight might easily have averted, was nothing in comparison to the moral injury which the Society sustained. In the course of the proceedings they were called upon to produce their rule,—that rule which had never before been exposed to the public eye. From that time all minor questions disappeared; mistresses, bankrupts, Madame de Pompadour, Father Lavalette, the deficit of the bankers (who were never paid), all the lesser incidents of this affair, vanished before the great question affecting the position of the Society itself. In France a great cause is with difficulty kept within the circle of personalities; an affair of merely a private nature is soon forgotten, unless it attaches itself to general ideas, which alone excite the national passions. By a characteristic spirit peculiar to France, and which nothing can correct, the accidental question is always lost in a question of principles; all discussion terminates here, instead of leading, as it generally does in other countries, to personal discussions. This has been seen to be the case in Portugal: the practical application of principles was urgent: the first views taken were mean and pitiful, and all was restricted to the narrow circle of a few names and some partial facts. Such was not the case in France: the complaints of a favourite, or the ambition of a minister, had a feeble hold upon public opinion, which looked to the cause and origin of the quarrel. Dogmatical disputes, which had so long been forgotten, now resumed all the force of present interest and all the attractions of novelty: there was a universal eagerness to

discover and apply these mysterious constitutions. Women and even children were animated with the ardour of old practised lawyers: Pascal became the idol of the moment, and La Chalotais its hero. His *Compte Rendu*, the glory of which the Jesuits have in vain attempted to take from him—those of the advocate-general Joly de Fleury, and of the procureur-general Ripert de Montclar, the report of Laverdy, the suit of the Abbé Chauvelin, were to be seen upon every toilet-table side by side with *Tanzaï* and the *Bijoux indiscrets*. In the green-rooms of the theatres the performance of the evening was forgotten in the events of the morning: Tartufe grew pale before Escobar; whilst in the large mansions of the Cité and the Isle Saint Louis, inhabited by the ancient families of the magistracy, as well as in the dark back rooms in which generations of shopkeepers had for ages been immured, the discussion became more serious and undisguised, although no less passionate and ardent. Both sexes of every age and class seized with avidity the writings which poured forth from the office of the Blancs-Manteaux; nothing was talked of but probabilism, surrenders of conscience, obsolete maxims, and mental reservations.

The philosophers, in their turn, thought there was too much talk on these subjects. The triumph of the Jansenists made them lean to the side of the Jesuits: they declared the latter to be justly punished for what they termed their insolence, and smiled at a defeat plotted by the rich and noble, whose intimacy the Jesuits always enjoyed; they were very well pleased to witness their fall as a religious order, but their treatment as a proscribed class began to excite their commiseration. The Jansenists grew too powerful.* Vain and tardy opposition! the impulse had been given, and Voltaire himself could not have arrested, had he desired it, which is by no means certain. There remained, however, a more real and formidable obstacle to be surmounted—the resistance of the king. There was in the character of Louis XV. a singular mixture of various impressions and contradictory habits. He had been trained to respect the Jesuits, but this respect was at the same time allied to fear:

* "What would it profit me to be delivered from the foxes, if only to be given up to the wolves?"—Voltaire to La Chalotais, November 3rd, 1762. Volt., Ed. Delangle, vol. lxxxii. p. 37.

the old accusations of a regicidal spirit had produced no ordinary impression upon his timid spirit. Following the example of all his predecessors, from Henry IV. downwards, he regarded the appointment of a Jesuit confessor near his person as an act not only of moral propriety but as a guarantee of his personal safety; in short, any rupture with the Jesuits appeared to him hazardous, and even dangerous. He was moreover convinced of their ability to impart instruction; and although a motive like this of general utility made little impression upon the egoism of such a prince, care for his own safety produced its natural and powerful effect upon his conduct. Born upon the throne, an object of adulation from the age of five years, snatched from death in the midst of public acclamations, and the declared favourite of his people, Louis XV. set an immense value on his own life; he was, moreover, the grandson of Louis XIV., and this had its effect upon his character; like his ancestor, although not possessing the same power of mind, he fancied himself of a nature superior to other men. Such was the education of Versailles. Louis XV. thought, with perfect sincerity and good faith, that the devotion of kings to religion and to its ministers was sufficient to compensate for their frailties, and to keep them in a sphere apart from the common herd of sinners. "You will be damned," he said one day to Choiseul. The duke expostulated, and took the liberty to remark to his Majesty that, after so severe a judgment, there was reason to tremble for the king himself; that, placed as he was so high above the rest of men, the reproach of scandal and the danger of example rested more seriously on his Majesty than upon his subjects. "Our situations are widely different," rejoined the king; "I am the anointed of the Lord." And the better to explain his meaning, he told the duke that God would not permit his eternal damnation, if, in his kingly office, he maintained the Catholic religion. Choiseul, commenting too strictly, perhaps, on the king's words, says that, on this condition, Louis XV. must have imagined himself at liberty, with a safe conscience, to indulge in any excesses. "The king," he adds, "was instructed in his religion like a nun of Sainte-Marie. No one could listen to him without disgust; and (a thing which is inconceivable, and which I should not believe but that he told it me) he resolved to form an alliance with the

House of Austria merely with a view to the ill-considered project of annihilating Protestantism after having crushed the King of Prussia."*

The resistance of Louis XV. would have been insurmountable, had not the fickleness of his character exceeded the prejudices of his education. Madame de Pompadour, and the Duke de Choiseul, in order to please that favourite, circumvented the monarch: they represented to him that the parliaments and the people were roused against the Jesuits, and they inspired him with the dread of a new Fronde. Thus placed between two extremes, the king was induced to adopt the course which appeared the least perilous. Choiseul placed before him the alternative of the expulsion of the Jesuits or the dissolution of the parliaments. Louis XV. was not yet prepared for such a measure as the latter; and the suppression of the Order appeared to him more easy of accomplishment. It was represented to him that the Christian religion had existed for fifteen centuries without the Jesuits, and that it would continue to exist very well without them; and at the same time the regicidal maxims of some casuists were again placed before him. At length, wearied rather than convinced, and always desirous of quiet rather than truth, Louis XV. yielded; but, with a feeling of moderation which does him honour, he did not consent to the immediate destruction of the Order: he directed letters to be written to Rome, with a view to obtain a reform, but to obtain it immediately, and without hesitation or subterfuge. Choiseul himself prepared the scheme of one, and sent it to the Holy See. Through the medium of the Cardinal de Roche-Chouart, he informed the pope that fifty-one bishops in France had assembled, not in regular and formal conclave, but in a private conference at the residence of the Cardinal de Luynes, one of their body; that in this assembly it had been resolved, with only six dissenting voices, and after a profound examination of the constitution of the Order, that the unlimited authority of the general residing at Rome was incompatible with the laws of the kingdom; that, with a view to reconcile the wants of all parties, the general ought to appoint a vicar who should reside in France,—a measure, moreover, which was in conformity with

* Manuscripts of the Duke de Choiseul.

the statutes, since they authorised the general to appoint a vicar in cases of pressing importance. The internal government of the Society would in no way be changed by this measure; so far from it, that if by chance the general himself came to reside in France he would exercise full authority over the Order, and the powers intrusted to the vicar would be suspended. In this manner the maintenance of the Society and the execution of the laws of the kingdom would be reconciled, especially the edict of Henry IV., of 1601, one clause in which provides distinctly that a Jesuit, possessing authorised powers, should always reside near the king, as a pledge and surety for the Society.*

This transaction, which would have been honourable under any circumstances, was unlooked for in the present state of affairs. Its reception by the Jesuits is well known: "*Sint ut sunt, aut non sint*"—"Let them remain as they are, or let them exist no longer." Their partisans of the present day deny this answer. The impossibility of fundamentally modifying their constitution, so as to adapt it to changing circumstances, forms at once both the power and the weakness of this Society; it is precisely this which so frequently places them in the utmost peril, but it is this likewise that prevents their extinction.

At length, notwithstanding the efforts of a powerful party, at the head of which were the Dauphin and Mesdames, Louis expelled the Society of the Jesuits from France (1764), saying, as their only funeral oration, "It will be pleasant to see Father Pérusseau an abbé."

Two years later came the turn of Spain. The causes which were here at work are veiled in impenetrable obscurity. Never did a more trifling motive lead to so decisive a result; the very name which is given in history to this event manifests its frivolity—*L'émeute des chapeaux*. At that time large hats were in fashion at Madrid, with broad rims, similar to that which Beaumarchais gives to Basile. In the ardour of reform, which at that period extended to small as well as great matters, Charles III. wished to suppress these hats. He had a reason for this step, as numerous abuses had risen out of the fashion of wearing these

* Despatch of the Duke de Choiseul to the Cardinal de Roche-Chouart, of January 6th, 1762.

hats, together with the use of large cloaks. The minister Squillace wished to prohibit the *capas* and *chambergos;* but he was a Neapolitan, and the Spaniards would not submit—they in fact revolted. Squillace was besieged in his own house, which was destroyed, and the minister escaped death only by flight. In vain the Walloon guards marched against the people; in vain the king himself harangued the seditious multitude from a balcony; neither an armed force nor the majesty of the king were able to appease the tumult. The Jesuits alone succeeded, and with so little trouble that it led to their being accused of fomenting the riot. The king was of this opinion, and did not forget the circumstance (1766).

The revolt lasted for several days. The ambassadors were at that time little familiarized with such outbreaks of popular feeling. The Marquis d'Ossun, who represented the court of Versailles at Madrid, animated by a chivalrous spirit, proffered the assistance of France to the King of Spain. It was not disavowed—the fashion was not yet established; but Charles III., a Castillian at heart, answered by a refusal, which relieved Louis XV. of considerable anxiety, as he had been greatly alarmed by the disturbances in Madrid. Louis was curious to learn the minutest details of this event, and inquired about them with all the anxiety and forebodings of a weak mind. At this period the report of an insurrection in a neighbouring country was sufficient to arouse the most apathetic sovereign. Moreover, in spite of his carelessness, Louis XV. was deeply wounded by so marked a disrespect to the majesty of royalty. What a spectacle!—a prince of his blood cited to appear before the mob! Nevertheless, as the natural inertness of Louis was stronger than his indignation, it ended by his ordering his ambassador never for the future to make any proposition to the cabinet of Aranjuez, and declaring that he relied implicitly on *the wisdom of the king his cousin.*

The Duke de Choiseul would have shown less patience if left to follow his own inclinations. He severely censured the weakness of Charles III., and the incapacity of his minister Grimaldi, whilst the possible return to office of Don Ricardo Wall and the Duke d'Albe, enemies of France, heightened his ill-humour.

He was indignant too at the inertness of Charles;* but the remembrance of this revolt vanished rapidly; in fact, from March 27, 1766, until the 2nd of April, 1767, the event, together with its consequences, having led to no result, were forgotten; when suddenly, at an instant when Spain and Europe expected it the least, a royal decree appeared, abolishing the institution of the Jesuits in the Peninsula, and expelling them from the Spanish monarchy.

Let the reader picture to himself the astonishment of the whole of Europe at this news; nothing had occurred to prepare the public mind for such a step; there had been no threats, no previous signs of the coming storm, but on the contrary an increased courtesy and respect had been observed. The Society had even been diverted from any suspicion by the flattery paid them: proscribed by France, they boasted of the friendship of his Catholic Majesty, and at the very moment when they deemed themselves the most secure, the arm on which they relied for support was raised to crush them. How were they to ward off such a blow? how, above all, to explain such an humiliating expulsion? Up to this time the Jesuits, when exposed to the attacks of philosophical ministers and Jansenist parliaments, had uniformly sheltered themselves in their defeats behind the cover of religion: the maxims of their persecutors sanctified their fall. But on this occasion, what motive could be alleged? D'Aranda, the chief of the council, Moniño, Roda, and Campomanès, inferior ministers of the Order, were it is true infected with the modern doctrines; but although it is easy to detect in them some weakened traits of a Pombal and a Choiseul, did the king, Don Carlos, resemble a Joseph de Braganza or a Louis de Bourbon? Was he, like those two monarchs, steeped in a drowsy sluggishness or enervated by licentiousness? On the contrary, he was active, virtuous, and even chaste; independent of his minister, he scrutinized everything with the eye of a master, and in the full exercise of power he maintained an upright mind and an ardent spirit. His piety likewise was as zealous as it was sincere; never was there a prince more

* D'Ossun to Choiseul (March 27th, 1766).—Official reply of Choiseul to d'Ossun (May 20th).—Private letter of Choiseul to d'Ossun.

Catholic, in the strictest sense of the term; and miracles, even those of his own day, were never questioned by his reason. So far was he from showing any hostility to the court of Rome, or disdaining its spiritual favours, that, on the contrary, he desired, and even solicited them: the instructions to his ambassadors at Rome were constantly prefaced by the canonization of some monk. All these facts, which are perfectly well known, embarrassed the Jesuits and their partisans; they were wholly at a loss to comprehend the motives and conduct of the King of Spain, or to discover any plea for this brand inflicted on their society by so moral, sincere, and devout a sovereign. Their first suspicions rested on the Dominicans, a rival order in the church, to whom Father Osma, the king's confessor, was attached.* But although a great animosity existed between the various religious orders, this was considered an insufficient explanation of the mystery. Suspicion next fell on Choiseul: the duke alone was said to have done it all; his machinations had roused the populace of Madrid to demand the expulsion of the Jesuits. This minister, according to the Jesuits' version of the affair, in his anxiety to give the last blow to the wavering piety of Charles III., had resolved on resorting to a forgery. A letter, attributed, it was said, by Choiseul to Ricci, and in which the hand-writing of the general of the Order was perfectly imitated, was intended to convey the suspicion that the King of Spain was an illegitimate son of Alberoni, and that the Infant, Don Louis, was the legitimate sovereign:† this charge is absurd; it is equally impossible that Choiseul should have forged the letter, as that the general of the Order should have penned it: they were neither of them insane, and they knew well enough that such a manœuvre would have obtained no credence. Ambition was the only passion of Elizabeth Farnese, the mother of the king; she was never accused of intrigue. In the absence of mathematical demonstration, history has recourse to inductions and probabilities. In this instance the question lies between the Jesuits and the king of Spain—between a highly ambitious society and

* Coxe and Muriel, *L'Espagne sous les Rois de la Maison de Bourbon*, vol. v. p. 34.

† L'Abbé Georgel, *Mémoires*, vol. i. pp. 110-112. Georgel, who was an ex-Jesuit, and a determined enemy of Choiseul, has the credit for *the secret despatches of an ambassador*, whom he does not take the trouble to name.

a prince of a narrow mind, but of admitted truth and frankness. We have already heard the allegations of the society;—the evidence in favour of Charles III. is furnished in a conversation between the king and the ambassador of France. Charles pledged his honour to the Marquis d'Ossun that he had never entertained any personal animosity against the Jesuits; that, before the last conspiracy, he had even repeatedly refused to sanction any measures inimical to them. Notwithstanding that he had been warned by confidential advisers, on whose word he could rely, that ever since 1759 the Jesuits had incessantly traduced his government, his character, and even his faith, his reply to these ministers had uniformly been that he believed them to be either prejudiced or ill-informed. But the insurrection of 1766 had opened the king's eyes: Charles was convinced that the Jesuits had fomented it—he possessed the proof of the fact: several members of the society had been arrested in the act of distributing money among the populace. After they had prepared the way by poisoning the minds of the citizens with insinuations against the government, the Jesuits only awaited a signal to spring the mine. The first opportunity was sufficient, and they were content with the most frivolous pretexts: in one instance the form of a hat or a cloak; in another the misconduct of an intendant, or the knavery of a corregidor. The attempt failed, as the tumult had broken out on Palm Sunday. The time fixed upon had been Holy Thursday, during the ceremony of visiting the churches, when Charles III. was to be surprised and surrounded at the foot of the cross. There is no reason to think that the rebels had any intention of attempting his life, and they declared that their sole object in resorting to violence was to impose conditions upon the king. Such is the substance of the motives stated by the King of Spain to the Marquis d'Ossun: the monarch a second time protested the truth of what he had said, and appealed, in proof of this, to all the judges and magistrates of the most incorruptible integrity in his states: he went so far, indeed, as to declare, that, if he had any cause for self-reproach, it was for having been too lenient to so dangerous a body; and then, drawing a deep sigh, he added, "I have learnt to know them too well."*

* Despatches of the Marquis d'Ossun to the Duke de Choiseul.

The proceedings against the Jesuits continued for a year, and were conducted in profound silence. This is the masterpiece of Spanish discretion. Choiseul was not informed of the publication of the edict until an instant before it took place. The Count d'Aranda feared his fickleness, and his indiscretion in the society of the courtiers and the women.* He neglected no precaution to ensure the success of his undertaking, and endeavoured especially to prevent any suspicions in the court of Rome. The king and his minister admitted into their confidence only Don Manuel de Roda, a member of the council, an able jurist, and previously an agent of Spain at Rome. D'Aranda conferred with Moniño and Campomanès, who were very influential magistrates, in a singular and romantic manner: they repaired separately, and unknown to one another, to a kind of ruined house in a remote spot. There they worked, alone, communicating afterwards only with the prime minister. The count received the information which they gave him, transcribed it himself, or intrusted the task to one of his pages, who was too young to be distrusted.† The ordinances and memoirs relative to the Jesuits never passed through the ministerial offices: the count himself carried the various expeditions to the king, not admitting either Moniño or Campomanès, and he checked their pride by telling them that he intended to be the master, as was just, since he was their head.

D'Aranda, tenacious, inflexible, self-willed, and courageous, went straight onwards to his object. Acting upon his advice, Charles III. did not even consult the pope, and announced to him the expulsion of the Jesuits as a measure accomplished. There was no extraordinary embassy, nor were any unusual steps taken: a courier was simply the bearer of an autograph letter to Clement XIII.; and at the same moment a pragmatic sanc-

* The Abbé Georgel (vol. i. p. 120) affirms that Charles III. placed no confidence in the Duke de Choiseul. This assertion is only half true: nevertheless it is sufficiently true to destroy the accusation we have mentioned, and which is given a few lines below. According to the Abbé, it was the Duke de Choiseul who fomented the insurrection in Madrid, in order to lead to the expulsion of the Jesuits. Coxe (vol. iv. of the 'History of the Bourbons in Spain') insinuates the same fact, attributing it to other motives. Nothing is more incorrect: no trace of any is to be found in the private and diplomatic correspondence of the Duke de Choiseul with M. d'Ossun, his friend, his ally, and one of the blindest executors of his policy.

† Georgel, vol. i. p. 117.—*Souvenirs et Portraits du Duc de Lévis*, p. 168; article *Aranda*.

tion, published by order of the king, suppressed the society throughout the whole Spanish monarchy. This edict prohibited any Jesuit from re-entering Spain under any pretext; it interdicted him also from all correspondence with that country, on pain of the heaviest punishment. An express prohibition was issued to the ecclesiastical authorities to allow any allusion to this event to be made from the pulpit, and Spaniards of all classes were enjoined to maintain absolute silence upon the subject. Any kind of controversy or declamation, any criticism upon, or even any apology for, the new regulations were, according to this edict, regarded as a crime of high-treason, *as it was not for private persons to judge of or to interpret the will of the sovereign.*

The orders issued from the court were executed instantly. On the 2nd of April, 1767—on the same day and at the same hour,—in Spain, in the north and south of Africa, in Asia and America, in all the islands of the Spanish monarchy, the alcaldes of the towns opened the despatches which they received from Madrid. The tenor of all was the same: the alcaldes were enjoined, on pain of the severest penalties (it is said on pain of death), immediately to enter the establishments of the Jesuits, armed, to take possession of them, to expel the Jesuits from their convents, and to transport them, within twenty-four hours, as prisoners, to such port as was mentioned. The latter were to embark instantly, leaving their papers under seal, and carrying away with them only a breviary, a purse, and some apparel.

On the first report of this measure, the government had naturally to fear a popular excitement, but the national feeling soon relapsed into indifference; the people remained passive spectators of the change, and the numerous adherents of the Jesuits among the nobles, obedient to the orders of the king, confined their expressions of displeasure to their own palaces, placing all their hope in the firmness of the court of Rome. Clement XIII., an infirm old man, shed a torrent of tears. The Cardinal Torrigiani, who exercised a control over him, although struck to the heart, left the Pope to his tears, and resolved to act. Torrigiani, whilst he ruled over Clement XIII., was himself subject to a severe yoke; in his office of secretary of state he was merely the agent of the Jesuits. Weighed down

as he was by various diseases, he had long been anxious to quit the ministry; but Father Ricci, the general of the order, retained him despotically at the foot of the throne: he urged upon Torrigiani the duty of sacrificing all for the interests of the society, and the cardinal obeyed. The pliancy with which the Jesuits had been reproached was no part of the character of their chief. Their policy, moreover, was to appear in the light of being cruelly persecuted; for them there was no medium between a sovereign sway and martyrdom; mediocrity would have degraded them. Ricci resolved to sacrifice the individuals to the weal of the society: he had hitherto received the Portuguese and French emigrants only with coldness and disdain, regarding exile and proscription as opprobrious to the society, who had in a great measure considered their glory as based upon a continuance of good fortune. The fall of the Jesuits in Spain, a country which had been such a nursery of the monastic orders, appeared to him still more humiliating. Charles III. sent the emigrants to the ports of the Romish states, but Ricci resolved to refuse to let them land; and Torrigiani, submissive to his suggestions, or rather to his commands, sent word to the Spanish minister that the Pope would not receive the Jesuits. Charles paid no attention to this message, and ordered that they should be landed, if necessary, by force.

It must be admitted, that the arrest and embarkation of the Jesuits were accomplished with a precipitation which might perhaps have been necessary, but was not the less barbarous. Nearly six thousand priests, of all ages and conditions,—men illustrious by birth and learning, old men oppressed with infirmities, despoiled even of the most indispensable requisites, were stowed away in the hold of a ship, and sent adrift upon the ocean, with no determinate object, and without any fixed direction. After a voyage of several days, they arrived before Civita Vecchia: their arrival was expected, and they were received with cannon-shot. The Jesuits were furious at the conduct of their general; they reproached him with cruelty, and attributed to him all their misfortunes. The Spanish commander could have braved the feeble power of the pope, and have landed by force of arms; but he abstained from this step, and coasted away towards Leghorn and Genoa. There these

unfortunate men were received with a similar refusal to land. Diplomatic negotiations failed: what step could they take? There remained the island of Corsica, which the French at that time occupied; and the King of Spain requested Choiseul to grant there an asylum to the fugitives; but Marbœuf, the French commandant, opposed this step, because the island was destitute of resources, and scarcely afforded room sufficient for the army of occupation: there were no towns, and hardly any villages. On every side the country was surrounded with barren rocks, and infested by the haunts of banditti. The troops themselves derived their subsistence from without; for the present of a few half-starved cows and some goats was only an act of courtesy on the part of Paoli. The penury was such, that the maintenance of three thousand men cost France a million *per annum*, beside their pay. Under these circumstances, Marbœuf could not receive an addition of two thousand five hundred Jesuits; he consequently refused, and Choiseul supported him. Charles III. was enraged at this refusal; and at length, Choiseul, persuaded by the entreaties of the King of Spain,* ordered their disembarkation in Corsica. Thus, after wandering upon the ocean for six months, without succour or hope, worn out with fatigue, decimated by sickness, and repulsed even by their own Order, the Spanish Jesuits at last found a miserable asylum, and a lot little better than the miseries they had previously endured.†

* Confidential letter of Choiseul to Grimaldi, dated from Saint Hubert, June 24th, 1767.

† We have not wished, in reference to the edicts of banishment issued by France and Spain, to expose in detail the tenets of the Jesuits—the subject of a multitude of well-known works. Our especial object is, to depict the state of the public mind, the course of affairs, the characters of the principal persons, and lastly, the political and moral *ensemble* of Europe at the period of the fall of the Society.

CHAPTER III.

The Duke de Choiseul—Affair of Parma—Death of Clement XIII.—The Conclave—The Emperor Joseph II. at Rome—Election of Ganganelli—Clement XIV.

WEARIED with these monastic quarrels, and astonished no less than indignant at the importance they assumed, Choiseul was anxious at all events to put a stop to them. His first efforts to establish a reform in the society having been rejected, the consequences which he had been anxious to prevent were too extended for his liking: they diverted him from more serious occupations. He resolved, therefore, to cut the knot which he had been unable to unravel, and, taking advantage of the anger of the King of Spain, he persuaded him to the bold but decisive step of demanding from the Pope, in connection with France and Naples, the complete and general abolition of the Society of the Jesuits. Historians have attributed this step to passion and resentment; and, to justify their conjectures, they recur to the time of the embassy of the duke to Rome, when Benedict XIV. was on the throne. In this they are wrong,—the complaints of the Jesuits have deceived them. Choiseul did not deign to extend to the religious orders either affection or hate: his disposition was frivolous, but his spirit was noble; and, although not profound, he was incapable of anything mean or pitiful. Choiseul would not have saved the kingdom, but he had the address to cast a veil over the decline of its power. He was simply a man of the world. In a constitutional government the weight of responsibility would have proved his ruin, whilst in a republic he would have been regarded only as a presumptuous and prodigal coxcomb. The atmosphere of Versailles was necessary to his very existence: all the qualities, the defects, and the very graces of this minister, belonged properly to his own rank, society, and age; and whilst his actions, conversation, and thoughts always bore this stamp, he invested them with a character of grandeur. He was

the first who combined in his own person the *talon-rouge* with the statesman; he was also the first, perhaps, who gave to indiscretion the loftier character of frankness, raised insolence into dignity, and conferred on frivolity the semblance of independence. Endued with a spirit less firm than refined, he comprehended the age in which he lived wonderfully, but he never ruled it. The philosophers possessed an influence over him which he endeavoured to conceal: he was tired of such domineering preceptors, and kept aloof from them; nevertheless he always relapsed into their tutelage. It was not, however, the philosophy of the times that obliged him to take part in the affairs of the Jesuits, but policy,—the necessity of pleasing Charles III. That prince persecuted the Jesuits bitterly, and too great a lukewarmness might lead to a rupture between the duke and the King of Spain. In this state of affairs the Jesuits were an obstacle in his path, which he put aside without either passion or anger: he proposed their suppression from very lassitude. One instance may be cited in proof of this. The French ambassador at Rome was endeavouring to effect the recall of the cardinal secretary of state, and wrote on the subject to the Duke de Choiseul, whose official reply was couched in the following terms:—"You are embarrassed, Monsieur, by the choice of a secretary of state if Cardinal Torrigiani fails; and I am equally worried by a fool of a nuncio whom you have sent me, and who can certainly never be good for anything: let us take measures together in our embarrassment,—manage so that the nuncio is made secretary of state; he will at all events be worth as much and as little as another, and I shall get rid of him here."* This is certainly not the language of a fanatical persecutor. It was not, therefore, from any deep feeling, which the Jesuits attribute to him, that Choiseul suggested to the King of Spain the demand for the suppression of the Order: he yielded to the repeated requests of the Parliament of Paris, whose interests he had espoused. "Of what good," said these rulers, "is it to have expelled the Jesuits from France, unless that act is followed by their entire abolition? Their return amongst us remains always open and possible, and who can tell what accident may effect this? a change of dynasty, or of

* Choiseul to d'Aubeterre: Versailles, December, 1768.

the ministry,—perhaps the caprice of a mistress, or a fit of devotion in a superannuated sovereign. Has not Louis XIV. given an example of this? And in that case, what may not be expected from the return of a body of priests exasperated by the past and triumphing in their new successes?" These were the presentiments which actuated the Parliament, and Choiseul left them to act. With his natural indifference, he fancied even that he was rendering the Jesuits a service by demanding the complete abolition of their society: he persecuted them from a feeling of pity, and solicited their destruction from motives of humanity! He witnessed with pain the treatment inflicted by powerful sovereigns upon unarmed old men; and the exposure to which they were subjected in their transport across the sea, and their penury in Corsica, grieved him deeply. In his view, the measure proposed was for the interest of the Jesuits themselves. Freed from all prejudices, and sheltered from the animosity of the different governments, he considered that they would regain a peaceful life in the circle of their families, live without fear, in submission to the laws of their country, and would be happy to return to the ordinary course of life.*

The efforts of Charles III. and the Duke de Choiseul tended to the same result, but by means which their respective characters rendered very different. There was a singular contrast between this thoughtless minister, who scrupled not to sacrifice a religious order to the spirit of the day, and the king, an honest catholic, who engaged in persecution with all the zeal and earnestness of a Dominican. It was to be expected that the duke's proposition would be readily welcomed at Madrid; but, contrary to the expectation of the minister, Charles III. recoiled from the idea of suppressing the Order. His conscience represented to him the expulsion of the Jesuits of Spain as simply a measure of policy, but he regarded the abolition of the society as a holocaust to the Voltaire philosophy. The proposition of Versailles was therefore coldly received at the Escurial; and, to complete the surprise of the duke, Naples, Venice, and even Portugal, all suddenly drew back from so vast and decisive a project. These cabinets argued the impossibility of obtaining

* Choiseul to d'Ossun: Marly, May 11th, 1767.

a brief of secularization under the reign of Clement XIII., and they begged Choiseul to await the assembly of the next conclave. But all these delays only irritated the duke's petulance: he had proposed to suppress the Order solely with a view to get rid of the subject, and he represented forcibly that the longer existence of so powerful and exasperated a body endangered the House of Bourbon. It may be imagined that this language was dictated by animosity; but it was simply the expression of impatience, as is sufficiently proved by the confidential letters of the Duke de Choiseul.

The favourable moment, however, had not yet arrived; some fresh event was requisite to bring this great affair to a crisis, and the Pope himself afforded this occasion. Clement XIII. provoked an explosion which Benedict XIV. had foreseen, but had used every means to avoid. Naples and Parma had followed the example of Spain. Clement XIII. dared not to strike the blow at Naples, and he therefore sought to be avenged in a weaker quarter, directing his hostility to the Infant of Parma, a prince the extent of whose states were undoubtedly very small, but whose alliances rendered him powerful. The Pope regarded a grandson of France, the Infant of Spain, only in the light of a Farnese; he imagined that he was only attacking an ancient fief of the Holy See, whereas he was at the same time seizing upon one of the powers annexed to the great Bourbon monarchy. The style and title of the Duke of Parma were declared forfeited by a papal bull. Charles III. and Louis XV. were equally taken by surprise by this measure, but each in his own way, according to his character. If left to himself, Louis would not have taken any part in the ecclesiastical dispute; it was not sufficient to arouse him from apathy, whilst it was too much for the lively activity of Choiseul. The minister, in a fit of indignation, ran to the king, represented all the consequences of the step taken by the Pope, and inveighed eloquently against this revival of the projects of Gregory VII. and Sixtus V. Louis evinced more regret than indignation: he had been educated by the Molinists in the fear of Rome, and he was anxious to avoid any rupture with that power. He was irresolute, wavering, and of a natural weakness of character, which excluded every feeling but that of pride. As has

been before observed, no prince ever more firmly believed in his divine right than Louis XV. Choiseul attacked him on this point; he represented to him Rezzonico, the son of a Venetian merchant, insulting a grandson of Saint Louis. Political arguments weighed nothing in comparison with such a consideration; nevertheless the minister did not choose to neglect them; he argued thus: "If the Pope had any disputes to settle with the Infanta, was it not his duty to appeal to the court of France? After such an insult, Louis XIV. would have compelled Cardinal Torrigiani to sue for pardon at Versailles; his successor will employ gentler, but not less effectual means; he will call upon Clement XIII. to revoke his monitory letter, and if, at the expiration of a week, the Pope answers by a refusal, the ambassadors of the two kings will quit Rome, and the nuncios will be dismissed from Versailles and Aranjuez." * Choiseul spoke thus in the name of the national honour, and the parliament of Paris supported him as usual, suppressing the new brief.

Charles III. was neither less zealous nor less urgent than Choiseul: they hastened to take measures together, and their couriers crossed upon the road. The King of Spain no sooner received the news from Parma than he declared himself personally aggrieved: he assembled his extraordinary council, composed of laymen of a grave character, and several bishops. Like the French minister, he suggested the recall of the ambassadors accredited at the court of Rome. The Count d'Aranda opposed this measure, representing that it would only have the effect of putting the pope too much at his ease; the presence of these ambassadors moreover was indispensable in the event of the convocation of a conclave; the health and advanced age of the pope rendered the prospect of this event near at hand, and meanwhile they alone had the power to demand the recall of the monitory letter; and, if the pope still resisted, they alone had the power to threaten the occupation of Avignon by the French troops, and that of Benevento and Castro by those of the King of Naples. Choiseul adopted the plan of the Spanish

* Letter of the Duke de Choiseul to MM. d'Ossun and Grimaldi.—(Letters of Grimaldi to the Count de Fuentes.)

minister.* In ecclesiastical matters he always deferred to the opinion of the King of Spain, reserving his influence for occasions which he deemed more important. He ordered the Marquis d'Aubeterre, ambassador at Rome, to consult with the Archbishop of Valentia, Azpurù, chargé d'affaires of Spain, and Cardinal Orsini, the Neapolitan minister. As soon as they had received their instructions, they all three demanded a speedy audience of the pope. This incident was dangerous to the partisans of the Jesuits; old Rezzonico might give way from weakness, and it was necessary to prepare him for the shock. Torrigiani and the *Zelanti* cardinals did not lose sight of him until the decisive moment: they represented to him the glory of martyrdom in a victorious resistance, an object which the pious Clement XIII. had so frequently desired. They reminded him that Benedict XIV. had humbled the tiara before the sovereigns of Europe, and that he was destined to upraise it again. At the same time other arguments were employed to second these exhortations. Rezzonico found in his apartments copies of the frescos of Raphael representing St. Leo advancing to meet Attila. In short, the Jesuits neglected no means of influencing the mind of the pontiff, either by argument or outward representation; they dictated the most violent replies to the pope, who was already burdened by years. In the first moments of his interview with d'Aubeterre, Clement remembered perfectly well the instructions he had received: he scarcely deigned to cast a glance on the memorial which the ambassador presented to him, and declared that he would rather die a thousand times than revoke his decree; that, by recognising the legitimacy of the rights of the Infant of Parma, he should be committing a heavy sin in the sight of God; and that it would be opposed to his own conscience, of which he was the sole judge, and of which he had only to render an account to a divine tribunal. But this firmness did not last long: as he went on to read his reply, when the old man came to the word *reprisals*, his whole frame trembled, a cold sweat bathed his cheeks, and he exclaimed in a broken voice, "The

* Consultation of the Extraordinary Council of Spain, on the subject of the letter of the Pope against the Infant Duke of Parma; edited by Moniño. Madrid, February 21st, 1768.

vicar of Jesus Christ is treated like the lowest of mankind! True that he has neither armies nor cannon, and it is an easy matter to despoil him of all his possessions, but it is beyond the power of man to compel him to act against his conscience." These words were followed by a flood of tears.

The city, however, did not share the secular views of the pope's advisers, but on the contrary was filled with alarm as to the issue of this conflict. The pope was generally censured for having imprudently rejected the mediation of the great powers, —an honourable means of preserving their self-respect. The fears of the Romans were soon realized: they heard that the French had taken possession of Avignon, and the Neapolitans of Benevento and Ponte-Corvo. But the three courts, satisfied with having inflicted this chastisement, relapsed into a cold disdain: their ministers declared that they would no longer hold intercourse with Cardinal Torrigiani, and even opposed his corresponding with the nuncios of France and Spain.*

The embarrassment of the pope now increased. The Republic of Venice, the Duke of Modena, and the Elector of Bavaria, aimed at imitating the example of the Infant of Parma; but the pope, wearied with the long conflict, pretended not to notice this new opposition: his only remaining source of hope lay in the House of Austria; but Maria Theresa, without allowing her name to be mixed up with these quarrels, with marvellous adroitness knew well how to take part in them. The Prince de Kaunitz appeared at first to be highly incensed against the pope, and even haughtily announced his intention of attacking him in a memorial. In reality the Court of Vienna had a great desire to take the exclusive direction of this affair into its own hands, in order to revive, upon the ruins of the papal pretensions, what the court called its rights to the suzerainty of Placentia. As soon as the kings of France and Spain earnestly interposed between Clement XIII. and the Infant, Kaunitz cooled down greatly, resumed an appearance of indifference, and said nothing more of his memorial. The empress lent an ear to the complaint of the aged pontiff, and spared neither flattering attentions nor consolatory messages to Rome, whilst the Count de Firmian, her minister in Lombardy, imposed silence on

* D'Aubeterre to Choiseul: Rome, November 23, 1768.

Cardinal Pozzo-Bonelli, the archbishop of Milan, and prohibited, under the severest penalties, the use of the bull *in Cœna Domini*. At Rome and Parma the empress was silent, but at Versailles, at the Escurial, and at the Vatican, her diplomatic agents spread the assurance of a general sympathy.

Clement XIII., however, persisted in refusing to recall his letter. The irritation of the Bourbon monarchs became extreme, whilst the rage of their plenipotentiaries went even further: they emulated one another in hostility to the papal court. In the despatches of the Marquis d'Aubeterre we find with surprise that ambassador coolly advising the blockade of Rome, and the reduction of the city by famine;* proposing to the Duke de Choiseul at the same time to send ten French battalions by sea, from the island of Corsica to Orbitello and Castro, to engage Spain to imitate this example and furnish an additional contingent of four or five thousand Neapolitans, and then to march all these troops to the banks of the Tiber, surround Rome, and cut off her supply of provisions. The marquis adds that the people, reduced to famine, would necessarily rise, and compel the pope to yield to the demands of the other powers. This, he adds, *is the only means of obtaining the expulsion of the Jesuits*. Now, we may ask, who were the Jesuits, that a popular insurrection should be stirred up against them? And what inexperience does it argue in a statesman of the eighteenth century, to entertain the idea of exciting a whole people to rebellion for the purpose of driving away a body of monks! This opinion indeed was not shared by the Council, but it is a remarkable fact that it was not considered absurd. Choiseul wished to resort to less brutal and more decisive measures; he no longer delayed the demand for the total abolition of the Society of the Jesuits, and the secularization of its members: on the 10th of December, 1768, the ambassador of France presented to his Holiness a memoir containing this demand, in the name of the three monarchs.

This sudden blow came unexpected: the pope, on receiving it, was stupified and remained speechless, nor did he ever recover from the violent shock he had received. A few days afterwards, in consequence of a slight cold, and excessive

* Despatch of November 30.

fatigue, which he underwent during a ceremony, he was taken ill, and died suddenly (1769). His death, say the Jesuit writers,* did not appear natural; but this insinuation is wholly gratuitous, and devoid of any probability. There might have been grounds for suspicion in the case of a pontiff gifted with robust health, and a strength superior to the infirmities of his years, braving the threats of a powerful party, signing the ruin of that party, and experiencing then, for the first time, an attack of illness which led to his death; but the circumstance that an old man of eighty-two years of age, subject to apoplectic symptoms, and in such a decrepid state that the diplomatic despatches are filled with conjectures on his approaching death and the speedy convocation of a conclave,—died in consequence of a violent and sudden shock like this, is so simple and natural that no unprejudiced mind could doubt its truth. Moreover, no one had any interest in taking away the life of Clement: his infirmities were sufficient to quiet the impatience of the crowned heads, who had nothing to gain from his death, since he would himself have yielded to their wishes. It was the united will of the powers of Europe that sealed and accomplished the fall of Jesuitism.

Rezzonico had adopted all the means in his power to retard this event: the philosophical historians have attributed to him all the blame, whilst the friends of the society have been extravagant in his praise. Both parties are wrong. A temporizing policy had become powerless to maintain the authority of Rome: Clement XIII. was a pope who belonged rather to the twelfth century, and who was lost and bewildered in the eighteenth. Under his pontificate the power of the Holy See sunk into the shade and finally disappeared. The old man could not bear this humiliation; instead of being satisfied with resistance, he was blind enough to give the signal of attack; and even in resisting, he showed neither foresight, intelligence, nor address. But his defects of talent were compensated by the qualities of his heart: in his actions he never rose above mediocrity, but at the same

* Georgel, vol. i. p. 123. This ex-Jesuit even attributes to the Pope language which would seem to confirm these imputations by the evidence of the pretended victim; but the supposition is false: Clement XIII. died from apoplexy; he had not timely aid, and had not the strength to call any one to his assistance: from the first minute he lost the power of speech, and never recovered it.

time he was never an object of contempt. He gave no protection to the arts, yet the arts have rendered their lasting tribute to his memory: the mausoleum of Clement XIII., erected by his nephews in the Basilica of St. Peter's, has handed down the memory of his pious deportment and venerable features: lions are placed at his feet,—a posthumous mark of flattery typical of a power which the pontiff dreamt of continually but never realized. The statue of Religion which supports him is a more faithful image. The ponderous and uncouth forms which Canova has given to the monument are no unapt emblems of the antiquated privileges which Clement in vain attempted to revive and to defend.

No sooner was Clement dead than the ambassadors of France and Spain resolved to obtain a mastery over the conclave: they proclaimed the necessity of electing a pope who should be acceptable to the European powers, and did not imagine the possibility of resistance. But their project was not easy of execution: the death of the pope surprised them at a moment when they least expected it, and disconcerted all their plans of attack. The ambassador of France especially was placed in an embarrassing position. It is true that the instructions he had received relative to the steps he should take in the event of the pope's death were clear and explicit: the Marquis d'Aubeterre was directed in that event to act promptly and forcibly upon the sacred college; but the ambassador had no means at his command to execute these instructions. France had indeed many pensioners, but not a single friend, at Rome; and even those who drew most largely from her treasury scarcely took the trouble to conceal their aversion. Although ashamed to see their vote put up to public sale, they were too covetous to relinquish the price which they received, and made a fancied compromise with honour by betraying the foreigner who bought them. On the other hand, the general of the Jesuits possessed all those resources of which the representative of Louis XV. was destitute, and he had only to employ them skilfully to hasten on the election. A single moment might be decisive, and victory was to be won by artifice or boldness. The representatives of the Bourbons saw clearly that they should engage in an unequal contest with the Italian priests if they employed the weapons of

intrigue: a bold and resolute tone could alone be effectively opposed to the tact and skill of the Jesuits. Rome in her degenerate condition could only be conquered by the ancient arms of Rome in her triumphant state; and, as corruption was useless, it was necessary to resort to intimidation. The instructions received by the French ambassador were dictated in this spirit, and he fulfilled them to the letter; indeed, he even exceeded them. D'Aubeterre boasted of maintaining the closest union with the ministers of Spain and Naples; he declared that he made no pretensions to dictate the nomination of the future pope, but at the same time added that neither he nor his colleagues would ever permit the election of a pontiff without the consent of the three courts. He moreover demanded, in explicit terms, that the election should be adjourned until the arrival of the French and Spanish cardinals. These demands were made public, and were repeated in a threatening manner to each member of the sacred college. The ministers represented to their Eminences that an election opposed to the wishes of their respective courts would infallibly lead to a rupture between the See of Rome and the princes of the House of Bourbon; they added, likewise, that the ambassadors of those powers would refuse to sanction the election, and quitting Rome would retire to Frascati to await further instructions. Such was the haughty tone in which the ambassadors of these courts addressed the descendants of the Roman senate. The cardinals promised to await the arrival of their colleagues from France and Spain, and, after hastily performing the obsequies of Clement XIII., they formed themselves into a conclave.*

The struggle which had been suspended by Clement XIII., and decided by his death, was one of essential interest and importance. It not merely hazarded the fate of a religious order, but it involved the serious question whether the Holy See should suppress the Gallican maxims adopted by Spain and Naples, or abandon for ever all its ancient pretensions; in a word, its fate hung in the balance between unlimited power in the Church, or an abdication of all ecclesiastical authority. The question, as touching the Jesuits, was merely the outward

* D'Aubeterre to Choiseul: February, 1769.

semblance, not the real point at issue. In the state of affairs at that period, no compromise was longer possible; for the pride of the Bourbons would not allow their relinquishing an enterprise upon which they had once entered. After having expelled the Jesuits from their own states, they deemed themselves called upon, by a feeling of honour, to abolish the Order universally. Notwithstanding the weakness of the pontifical power, this task was no easy one; for the sacrifice was to be wrung from the Holy See itself, and Rome was to be brought to disband the spiritual forces which the sixteenth century had armed and sent forth for the express purpose of combating the novel spirit of the age. Could those orders be allowed to succumb to the attacks of a false philosophy? Could Rome acknowledge rights in that philosophy more dangerous than the Reformation from which it sprung? The princes hostile to the Jesuits had but one means of success,—by intimidating the conclave selecting the pope. In spite of more immediate objects of interest, Europe was interested in this ecclesiastical debate to a degree which will not appear surprising to the men of our own time.

The anxiety of the Jesuits, as may be imagined, was extreme: to them the affair was not one of simple curiosity, but a question of life or death. The presentation of the memorial of Parma had terrified the Jesuits: Father Delci started instantly for Leghorn, carrying off the treasures of the Order, with the intention of transporting them to England; but the general, who was less pusillanimous, stopped him in his flight. Ricci perceived, from the opening of the conclave, that the danger must be thenceforth met, and opposed by boldness: his activity was called forth and redoubled, as if by miracle. During the vacancy of the Holy See, Rome always presents a singular spectacle; the streets and squares are filled with comical and burlesque sights, and the spirit of drollery finds its way even into the corridors of the Vatican. In 1769, the position of the Jesuits added a new feature to these scenes of excitement: general attention was directed to Father Ricci, who was seen everywhere hurrying about from place to place in a state of anxiety and trouble—one while mingling in the numerous bodies of the Guarda Nobile, the pompous escort of the dinners of the cardinals, which are carried through the city in rich litters,—

at another time mixing in the groups of the grave Trasteverini, or the motley crowds of cattle-drivers and peasants assembled from the Sabine territory, Tivoli, Albano, and every part of the Pontine marshes, to witness the grand ceremony. At daybreak Ricci was on foot, traversing every quarter of the city from the Ponte-Mola to the basilica of the Lateran. The Jesuits *de considération* (so styled in a contemporary document), imitating the example of their chief, were continually engaged in paying visits to the confessors and friends of the cardinals; whilst, loaded with presents, they humbled themselves at the feet of the Roman princes and ladies of rank. Nor was all this attention superfluous: the current of public favour had already been diverted from the Jesuits, and, amongst other fatal prognostics, the Prince de Piombino, a partisan of Spain, had withdrawn from the use of the General the carriage which his family had for more than a century placed at his disposal. Ricci, when admitted to the presence of the cardinals during the few days preceding the final closing of the conclave, fell at their feet in tears, and commended to their protection that society which had been approved by so many pontiffs, and sanctioned by a general council: he reminded the cardinals of his services, and claimed the merit of these, without casting blame upon any court or cabinet. Then, in an under tone, and in the freedom of secret conference, he represented to the princes of the church the indignity of the yoke which these courts were attempting to impose upon them. He urged upon them, as the only means of avoiding this disgrace, to proceed to an immediate election, without awaiting the arrival of the French and Spanish cardinals, and to compel them afterwards to kiss the foot of a pope chosen without their concurrence. This violent advice, which was supported by Torrigiani and the old patron cardinal, found an echo in the Vatican. The *Zelanti* were even on the point of carrying it into execution, and the election of Chigi, one of their body, was only lost by a majority of two. D'Aubeterre received timely information of these intrigues, and defeated them by maintaining a calm and dignified attitude. In public, in the saloons of the Roman nobles, he pretended to disbelieve them, alleging that the Holy See could not possibly wish to *commit an act of self-destruction*; but at the

same time he wrote to Versailles to hasten the arrival of the French cardinals.*

The complicated policy of the cabinet of Versailles required the aid of able diplomatists at Rome. The conclaves have always been the rock upon which the French have split: that spirit of confidence, pushed to indiscretion, which is a trait in the national character of the French, and springs from noble qualities, is at Rome an unpardonable fault. The French diplomatists, carried away by the liveliness of their imagination, continually lose themselves in a labyrinth of intrigue; and whilst the Italian cardinals act in strict concert, those of France on the contrary are always disunited. Surrounded with young members of the conclave, ambitious, greedy of information, and still more anxious to appear well informed themselves, the French cardinals, thus exposed to observation, cannot contend on equal terms with a system of continual dissimulation, engendered by a selfish necessity; for dissimulation is at Rome the standard by which a man's talents are measured, and without this quality the highest talents would generally be little valued. In fact, let any one consider the position of a Roman prelate at this period. On the one hand, he had to satisfy his own court, which was continually compromised between the different powers; whilst, on the other, he was under an equal necessity of keeping upon good terms with these powers, whose *veto* might annihilate him. Thus, as soon as his ambition was excited by the prospect of obtaining the purple, he directly assumed a mask: but no sooner had he attained the reward of all this patience, than his character at once changed; and the old *porporati* are busied only in prying into secrets, in dissimulation, and in defeating the views of the *barbares*, whom they are compelled to accept as colleagues.

The choice of the French ministers naturally rested upon the Cardinal de Bernis, who, after his fall, had retired to his diocese of Alby, where in the discharge of his episcopal functions he displayed virtues of which his youth had given little promise. He distributed the greater portion of his revenue in alms, retaining sufficient to support the outward dignity of his office. Bernis was charitable and noble, and his conduct shed a greater

* D'Aubeterre to Choiseul: February, 1769.

lustre from the comparative retirement of his bishopric than from the summit of his power. Louis XV. perceived this, and expressed his approbation to the friends of the cardinal: the latter recollected that Bernis had already been minister of state: Choiseul understood them, and resolved to remove his former protector, lest he should become his rival. He was too prudent to depreciate his merits; but instead of doing this, he employed them as a weapon against Bernis himself, extolling his diplomatic talents to the king, and reminding him of his embassy to Venice, which had been so agreeable to Benedict XIV. The favourable opinion of such a pope was a strong recommendation to Bernis at the court of Rome. Choiseul, with a view to engage him to repair thither, offered him the place of the Marquis d'Aubeterre, and Bernis promised Choiseul to procure the election of a pope devoted to the interests of France. He repaired to Rome with the full conviction that he should keep his word, for his vanity whispered to him that the choice of the head of the church was reserved for him: his colleague, the Cardinal de Luynes, a man of very ordinary talents, hardly appeared to him in the light of a coadjutor. Bernis entertained no doubt of his success; but, although at the bottom of his heart he regarded his entrance into the conclave as a virtual assumption of its command, he had the good taste not to assume an indiscreet or premature air of triumph, but to observe a temperate and modest tone of language. Far from affecting the arrogance of a dictator, he united all the graces of a courtier with an amiable and conciliating exterior. Although he manifested occasionally the superiority of his character, he never made a display of it: no one could doubt for an instant his pretension to exercise an unlimited influence, but he allowed this to appear so cautiously as to give no grounds for reproach. "France has only the desire," said he to his colleagues, "of seeing raised to the papal throne a wise and temperate prince, who may entertain the respect due to the great powers. The choice of the sacred college can only rest upon virtue, since it shines forth in each one of its members; but virtue is not alone sufficient. Who could surpass Clement XIII. in religion and purity of doctrine? His intentions were excellent, nevertheless during his reign the church was disturbed and shaken to its centre.

Let your Eminences restore concord between the Holy See and the Catholic states, and bring back peace to Christendom, and France will be content." This general spirit of benevolence served as a veil to more precise instructions. Bernis was charged to negotiate secretly the restoration of Avignon to France;* but all these objects were subordinate to that of establishing a perfect understanding with the representatives of Spain. The latter had not yet appeared, and Bernis took advantage of their absence to secure an ascendancy by the dignity and charm of his manners. His affability, which was a little theatrical, but always winning, seemed to transport the court of Louis XV. into the midst of the gloomy apartments of the Vatican. At the same time he did not overlook the power over public opinion which had its seat and centre at Ferney; and, in order to render his success complete and general, he addressed some pretentious letters to that place.

Whilst all this was going on in the Papal Court, a young and still more illustrious personage arrived suddenly at Rome, — Joseph II. This was a great event: Rome retained a reminiscence of the authority of the emperors, faintly reflected from a past age, and acknowledged a supremacy which in fact existed only in imagination, as no emperor had appeared within her walls for more than two centuries. Charles V. had been the last: he had made his entry in all the pomp of his triumph of Tunis, clad in steel, and surrounded by those very bands who, under the Constable of Bourbon, had just before brought desolation and mourning into the metropolis of Christendom. Joseph disdained ostentation, and appeared among the Romans with all the studied and striking contrast of an incognito, of which he was the inventor: his costume and manners, the absence of all decoration, and the small number of his suite, appeared to denote the Count of Falkenstein, the possessor of a small fief in Alsatia. His brother, Leopold of Tuscany, accompanied him in a similar disguise. Such unusual conduct on the part of a monarch produced a marvellous effect: it was too novel to be suspected of artifice, and was regarded as frank and sincere. The contrast of so much simplicity with such power charmed no

* Instructions to the Cardinals de Luynes and de Bernis: February 19, 1769.

less than it astonished every one,—it was like an unlooked-for realization of the utopia of *Telemachus*. The effect produced upon the mind of Joseph was such, that it led him to pursue a system which he afterwards carried to so great an extent. When the first enthusiasm subsided, the Romans awaited anxiously to see what side the emperor would take in the quarrel: the slightest expressions that escaped him were seized and commented on with avidity. Joseph took pleasure in baffling and misleading all their conjectures; his thoughts were already filled with projects of reform; but, deterred as he was by the scruples of his mother, he found amends for this restraint by censuring equally the friends and enemies of the Jesuits. He affected not to comprehend how great sovereigns could attach such importance to a monkish question, which only gave rise to pusillanimous apprehensions. At the same time he professed an extreme contempt for the Jesuits, and gave them no reason to hope for his support. Nevertheless the Jesuits indulged this hope, until Joseph dispelled the illusion in a visit of curiosity which he paid to the *Gran-Gesù*, a house belonging to the Order,—a perfect marvel of magnificence and bad taste. The general approached the emperor, prostrating himself before him with profound humility. Joseph, without giving him time to speak, asked him coldly when he was going to relinquish his habit. Ricci turned pale, and muttered a few inarticulate words; he confessed that the times were very hard for his brethren, but added that they placed their trust in God and in the holy father, whose infallibility would be for ever compromised if he destroyed an Order which had received the sanction and approval of his predecessors. The emperor smiled, and, almost at the same moment, fixing his eye upon the tabernacle, he stopped before the statue of St. Ignatius, of massive silver and glittering with precious stones, and exclaimed against the prodigious sum which it must have cost. "Sire," stammered the father-general, "this statue has been erected with the money of the friends of the society."—"Say, rather," replied Joseph, "with the profits of the Indies." He then departed, leaving the fathers in the utmost grief and dejection.

With the intention of humiliating the pope and the Bourbons at the same time, Joseph continued to expostulate against the

importance attached to the election of a new pope, which he considered to be an affair of no moment, and unworthy to occupy the attention of a monarch of the eighteenth century. At the same time, in order to prove his disinterestedness, he prohibited his minister, the Cardinal Pozzo-Bonelli, from either supporting or opposing any candidate.

So offensive an indifference, or rather disrespect, could not escape the attention of the sacred college. Joseph and Maria Theresa were the only Catholic sovereigns of the first rank who had hitherto had no serious quarrel with Rome. The cardinals, with a view to give a favourable turn to the precarious intimacy of their court with the emperor, resolved to pay him unusual honour; they overlooked the secular etiquette which closes the conclave to the highest princes, and entreated Joseph to attend its meeting: in consequence he did so, accompanied by the Grand Duke Leopold. All the cardinals went in procession to meet them, and one of the most distinguished members of the sacred college, who in public estimation held the highest rank, Cardinal Stoppani, took Joseph by the hand and introduced him to the conclave. The emperor, according to custom, was about to lay aside his sword; but with one consent the cardinals requested him to retain the weapon, which they declared was the defence and guard of the Holy See. Then they all surrounded him, and proffered him an expression of attachment and respect, whilst Albani, who was devoted to Austria, even feigned to weep with joy at the sight. Joseph received these extraordinary advances with polite coldness. He flattered the self-esteem of Bernis by addressing him in a marked manner; whilst on the contrary, when Torrigiani was presented, he merely observed, "I have heard much of you." But his first object was to inquire for the Cardinal of York. "Le voici," answered the grandson of James II.; "I am the cardinal whom your imperial majesty is pleased to honour with his remembrance." Joseph saluted the last of the Stuarts with a marked expression of feature, and requested to be admitted to his cell. "It is very small for your Highness," said the emperor, after visiting it:—in truth, Whitehall was larger.

When the emperor was about to take leave of the cardinals, their demonstrations of respect increased. "Sire," cried they,

"we trust that your imperial Majesty will protect the new pope, that he may put an end to the troubles of the church." The emperor replied, that the power to accomplish this rested with their Eminences, by choosing a pope who should imitate Benedict XIV., and not require too much; that the spiritual authority of the pope was incontestable, but that he ought to be satisfied with this; and that, above all, in treating with sovereigns, he ought never to forget himself so far as to violate the rules of policy and good breeding. After giving this advice, the emperor took leave of the cardinals, declining the fêtes which had been prepared, and started the same night for Naples.*

Undoubtedly despair alone brought the sacred college to bend thus before temporal princes, but necessity exposed them to humiliation. The conclave lasted nearly three months. The old cardinals, shut up in their cells, could not longer endure so protracted and fruitless a seclusion, and they recollected with horror that Lambertini's election had lasted six months. Some of them were almost decrepid, for in this important contest neither age nor infirmities could abate the ardour of party spirit. The fanatical old bishop of Viterbo, Oddi, ninety years of age, and Conti, the enemy of the Jesuits, who was already seized with a fatal disease, were both carried to the conclave.

The impatience of the cardinals increased; every morning they repaired to the scrutiny with a firm resolution to close it; but Lacerda and Solis, the plenipotentiaries of Spain, had retarded their journey. In order to shorten their route, they had at first announced their intention of going to Italy by sea, which created great joy in the Vatican; but this was soon succeeded by an equal disappointment, when the report came that Solis and Lacerda, on reaching the port of Carthagena, being seized with a childish fear of the noise of the waves, had

* All the details relative to the visit of the Emperor to the Vatican and to the *Gran-Gesù* were given by that prince himself to the Marquis d'Aubeterre, the French ambassador. Joseph enlarged complacently on his contemptuous policy towards the Holy See, and declared, in plain terms, that *he knew the Court of Rome too well not to despise it*, and thought very little of his admission to the conclave. "*These people*," said he, speaking of the Cardinals, "*tried to impress upon me the value of this distinction, but I am not their dupe. They wanted to examine me with curious attention, as they would have done a rhinoceros.*"

turned back and resolved to make a land journey to Rome. The heat began to be seriously felt. The Bourbon courts had objected to more than thirty candidates, and the circle of those eligible became narrower every day. These numerous exclusions were illegal, as each of the powers was entitled to only one *veto;* but the cardinals (such was at that time the state of the Court of Rome) considered themselves obliged to respect them *en masse.* The delay of the Spanish cardinals paralyzed the whole of the proceedings, and their colleagues were meanwhile placed in great embarrassment, and irritated by an affront which was the more galling as it admitted of no pretext or excuse.

France, during this interval, might have dictated the course to be followed by the conclave, and satisfied the king of Spain without the concurrence of her agents. D'Aubeterre advised this course; but Bernis, who was of a more ostentatious than energetic disposition, preferred outward homage to the substantial exercise of power. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that this affair was of secondary importance in the eyes of the Duke de Choiseul, and that by yielding a blind deference to the theological opinions of the king of Spain, he obtained the quiet acquiescence of that monarch in all European questions of peace or war. The plan of the court of Madrid was to bind the future pope by a promise, *written* and *signed*, to abolish the Order of the Jesuits: it appealed to the example of Clement V. and the Templars. The election of the candidate depended upon this. When urged by D'Aubeterre to anticipate the wishes of Charles III., Bernis drew back; his conscience became alarmed, and he declared such an enterprise to be not only impracticable, but useless. He urged that nothing could secure the execution of such an engagement; that a cardinal who was capable of pledging himself beforehand to such a contract would dishonour his future pontificate, as everything must ultimately come to light. D'Aubeterre, the ambassador of France, and the prelate Azpurù, minister of Spain, attempted to overcome the scruples of Bernis, by arguing that their project had obtained the approbation of the most enlightened cardinals. Bernis was struck by their importunity, and, being unwilling to incur their enmity, he promised to reflect upon the subject, and to consult a person

deeply versed in the canons of the church, one of the heads of the sacred college: he named the Cardinal Ganganelli.

We pause at this name; and before proceeding with our narrative, let us revert to the obscure life of this man, who was nevertheless destined, for a time at least, to attract the attention of all Europe. Lorenzo Ganganelli was born in the town of San Archangelo, on the 31st of October, 1705, of a plebeian family. His father was a labourer, or, according to others, a country surgeon.* He entered on a monastic life at an early age, and with sincerity of heart; indeed, his whole character was in accordance with a contemplative life. Solitude, which has only a corrupting influence upon many, suited Ganganelli; nor did the cloister stamp his character with misanthropy or moroseness. Although he devoted himself exclusively to the study of theology, and was firm in the faith and in every dogma of the church, he was never fanatical. His character, even more than his mental acquirements, had imbued him with a spirit of tolerance, and his mind was open to every tranquil and ingenuous impression. His features, although of a somewhat ordinary caste, were full of suavity, and truly reflected the temper of his mind. His heart was alive to friendship, and his attachment to a poor Cordelier, named Francesco, remained through life unshaken. He was also an admirer of the charms of nature: natural history and botany especially occupied his leisure, and he would often pass whole hours in dissecting an insect or a flower, or in wandering in the woods with a book in his hand. Ganganelli was both ingenuous and ambitious; his ambition was ardent, profound, inveterate, but at the same time full of good-nature, and characterized by a mysterious reliance on the future. Nor is this to be wondered at: those who have studied human nature, know well the fact, that contradictory qualities are not necessarily inconsistent. Ganganelli believed himself destined by Providence to fulfil a remarkable career, and from infancy this dazzling object was always present to his thoughts. He maintained through life a self-reliance, and a firm trust in his destiny. When his parents endeavoured to divert

* Caraccioli, who is followed by the *Biographie Universelle*, says that Ganganelli was descended from a noble family. This is quite untrue: Ganganelli was a plebeian by birth.

him from a monastic life, he reminded them that the monk's frock had frequently preceded the purple, and that the two last Popes Sixtus had risen from the order of St. Francis. The name of Sixtus V. was always present to his mind, in every turn of fortune. In Italy nothing can exceed the popularity of this name, which flatters the feelings of democratic pride in the highest degree. The goat-herd of the Abruzzi, and the labourer of the Sabine fields, reflect with pride that the haughtiest of the pontiffs was born in beggary, a peasant and a swineherd. Ganganelli was all his life a monk and a man of the people; no one indeed ever bore the stamp of Sixtus V. so strongly impressed on his character. The vague hope of his future advancement was fostered in his mind by predictions and presages, to which his ear was ever open; and, whatever his panegyrists may say, it may be shown from their own statements that he had formed the resolution to attain the summit of his ambition. The dignity of general of his Order offered itself; but he unhesitatingly rejected so mean a temptation, whilst, under the cloak of humility, he secretly cherished widely different projects. It cannot be denied that Ganganelli at first accepted, and even courted, the protection of the Jesuits. The general of that Order commended him to the nephew of the pope: Clement XIII. conferred on him the purple, and this single fact attests the influence which the society possessed, for Clement never took any step without consulting them. Upon the news of his promotion, Ganganelli threw himself at the feet of Rezzonico, beseeching him to confer the dignity on one more worthy; but he had the secret satisfaction of receiving a refusal, accompanied with an expression of displeasure. Notwithstanding his elevation, Ganganelli preserved his former simple habits: pomp and ceremony were less to his taste than a frugal meal, long rides into the campagna of Rome, the friendship of Francesco, the visits of a few well-informed strangers, and, above all, the quiet conversation of the fathers of the convent of the Holy Apostles. He was glad to possess the reality of power, but he never loved its pomp. These tranquil enjoyments, however, did not turn his attention from pursuing an assiduous and even crooked line of policy. His interest, conspiring with his prudence, led him to censure the resistance of the court of Rome, whilst he extolled

the power of the sovereigns. "Their arms are very long," he often said; "they reach beyond the Alps and Pyrenees."

Ganganelli did not hesitate to abandon the Jesuits and secretly join the party of the sovereigns. In the congregations he uttered (but with caution) opinions favourable to the princes, and the Duke of Parma found in him a discreet but sure supporter. The timidity of his political measures was compensated by an extensive and mysterious correspondence. Ganganelli wrote secretly to Father Castan, a member of his own order, who had retired to Avignon and devoted himself to intrigue. This monk had recommended him to Jarente, bishop of Orleans, who held the list of livings in the French king's gift. Nevertheless, at the time when the conclave met, the instructions from Versailles were not in favour of Ganganelli. All the historians assert the contrary, but erroneously. The cardinal was indeed mentioned in the list of *bons sujets;* that is to say, of persons who would not be unacceptable to the Bourbons; but his name, among many others, was accompanied with notes of reservation. France indeed, so far from preferring him to the rest of the candidates, suspected him of intrigue and duplicity; nor was Ganganelli's conduct in the conclave calculated to remove this impression. He had previously been on intimate terms with the French cardinals, and apparently attached to their interests; but during the whole sitting of the conclave he affected to shun them, remaining shut up in his cell, and avoiding his colleagues with a reserve which might easily be attributed to secret ambition. No one probably imagined, during the first few days of the conclave, the chance of Ganganelli's being elected to the throne: it is doubtful whether Bernis had a presentiment of it from the mysterious compact proposed by Spain. As he was himself averse to that measure, the French cardinal could not present it in an engaging point of view; perhaps he even betrayed his own repugnance, which forced the Italian to reject it with indignation. Be this as it may, Bernis and Luynes persisted in their scruples, and imparted them to Louis XV., who always yielded to dogmatical reasons the respect which he refused to moral arguments.

Time passed on, and the negotiation did not advance. The Spanish cardinals were alone able to bring it to a close, and at

length they arrived. They conceded to Bernis all the external show of influence, and flattered his vanity by a marked deference, while at the same time they resolved to act without his privity. Under the guidance of able conclavists, they observed at once the ostentation and weakness of their colleague's character, and they also detected lurking in his heart a secret pity for the Jesuits. This feeling, they saw, had not escaped the observation of the *Zelanti*, who had been emboldened by it. They therefore resolved to cajole Bernis, and at first secretly thwarted his negotiation to annex Avignon to France, pretending that the question regarding the Jesuits should be treated separately, as the intervention of any other affair endangered the success of the principal one. Finally they left Bernis to seek a candidate; and after obtaining private information of the disposition and purposes of Ganganelli, they entered into a secret negotiation with that cardinal. Solis, remaining shut up in his cell, corresponded privately with Ganganelli, who never quitted his apartment; whilst the latter, in his turn, communicated with Albani, the head of the faction of the *Zelanti*. At the time that these two cardinals were secretly concerting this great intrigue, the poet-cardinal was displaying all his court airs and graces, and receiving the compliments of the sacred college: in an effusion of vanity he complacently exclaimed, "The cardinals of France had never greater power than in this conclave!"

Nevertheless Bernis had considerable talent, and began at length to suspect some underhand proceedings; but the adroit replies of the Spanish cardinals disarmed his suspicion; they amused him by a false show of confidence, and continued their negotiations. Every authentic record testifies to the fact that Ganganelli aspired ardently to the tiara. He was of a good-natured, easy, and conciliatory disposition, an admirer of Benedict XIV., and desirous of reviving the cherished memory of that pontiff: he loved the arts, and wished to patronise them. The idea of bestowing his benediction from St. Peter's was the highest attraction to a priest, whilst the thought of living amidst the great works of art in the Vatican had scarcely less charms for him as an Italian. Clement XIII. had very nearly provoked schisms, and Ganganelli designed to restore concord between Rome and the sovereigns of Europe. This was a noble object, and might

influence such a mind as Ganganelli's, but it is questionable whether the means which he employed to accomplish it were equally worthy. Is it true that he entered into solemn engagements against the Jesuits? that, as the condition of his election, he yielded to the solicitation of the Spanish cardinals, and gave them a document in his own hand-writing, which, without formally involving the promise of destroying the institution, held out this expectation? Is it true that this note was conceived in such terms as the following:—*I admit that the sovereign pontiff may in conscience abolish the society of the Jesuits, still maintaining the canonical regulations?* Upon these questions we shall offer no reply.

The unanimity of the votes, however, which seemed to be fixing upon Ganganelli, excited violent suspicions in the mind of Bernis. The French cardinal hastened to get at the truth; and, although it was clear that he had been deceived, he wished at least to save appearances. The Spaniards willingly allowed him to play this specious part, which so well suited the ostentation of his manners. Bernis repaired to the future pope, and hoped to mislead him by making a boast of having influenced the votes in his favour. To this fiction Ganganelli lent a willing ear, and expressed the greatest professions of gratitude to France and to her minister. It may be imagined that this excess of dissimulation caused him some embarrassment, and he had undoubtedly some difficulty in expressing his pretended gratitude, which he conveyed in these strange words: "I bear," said he, "Louis XV. in my heart and the Cardinal de Bernis in my right hand." He accompanied these words with a studied protestation of his unworthiness, and even stammered out a sort of refusal. Bernis did not trouble himself to reply to these professions of humility; but, with the tone of a man who is called upon to decide the fate of the church, he requested to know distinctly the cardinal's intentions with respect to the Jesuits and the Infant of Parma. On the latter point, Ganganelli answered in the most satisfactory manner; he promised not only to grant a reconciliation to the Infant, but himself to consecrate his approaching marriage in the basilica of St. Peter's. With regard to the Jesuits, being doubtless acquainted with the secret thoughts of Bernis, he admitted the utility of their abolition, but

urged the necessity of proceeding in it with caution. Upon being pressed by Bernis, who fancied himself called upon to demand the immediate destruction of the society by a *coup d'état*, he begged him to keep his mind easy, and to believe that the future pope, when once enthroned, would not be satisfied with mere words. In short, Ganganelli promised to Bernis all that he desired; he even held out the possibility of the restoration of Avignon to France, and pledged himself to appoint such persons to the highest places in the ecclesiastical state as the court of Versailles should recommend.

Bernis, now imagining himself sure of having obtained all he required, hastened to the Cardinal Pozzo-Bonelli, who had received the secret intentions of Austria. That Court had manifested an affected indifference as to the result of this long contest: its representative now immediately gave in his adhesion to the choice of Ganganelli. Albani and Rezzonico, the heads of the Jesuit party, and Orsini, the Neapolitan cardinal, likewise repaired to Pozzo-Bonelli; and no sooner had Bernis spoken, than the cardinals, assembled in college, proceeded to kiss the hand of the pope elect. Ganganelli received their homage, and, after a purely formal scrutiny, Clement XIV. was proclaimed sovereign pontiff.* Thus terminated this memorable conclave, which, in the absence of official documents, has always been represented in a false light.

* As a sequel to the superstitious reverence which Ganganelli paid to the memory of Sixtus V., he wished to have adopted the name of Sixtus VI.; but his friends dissuaded him, by representing that such an assumption was somewhat ambitious, and they persuaded him to continue the name of Clement, which was borne by the author of his fortune.

CHAPTER IV.

Negotiations—The Cardinal de Bernis—The Count de Florida Blanca—Letter of Suppression—Clement XIV. dies poisoned.

GANGANELLI had at length attained the summit of his ambition (1769). His accession was the signal for a general burst of the most joyous and unequivocal enthusiasm, whilst France and Spain claimed the honour of having elected him. Satisfied with his popularity, and strengthened by the support of the Catholic powers, Ganganelli might very naturally fancy himself destined to heal the wounds of the church: on the day of his coronation his features were radiant with joy, and he gave way to all his natural gaiety. Upon entering the basilica of the Vatican, his eye fell upon a stone on which he had once stood, when a simple monk, to see the cortège of Pope Rezzonico pass by. "Look," said he, pointing it out to one of his suite, "from that stone I was driven ten years ago." One of the biographers of Clement XIV., Caraccioli, asserts that he slept so soundly on the night of his accession, that his attendants had great difficulty to awaken him: this is making a boast of his humility at the expense of his reason: such a sleep under such circumstances would have been a mere sluggish stupor. What a manner of passing so solemn a night!—a time when his mind must naturally have been filled and troubled with serious and solemn feelings. He had indeed attained the position which he had so long coveted; but what course was he now to take? how was he to redeem the pledge he had imprudently given, but which was not the less binding upon him? How could he suppress the Jesuits, or how save them? If he braved the resentment of the greatest princes in Europe, he would drive them to schism, perhaps into heresy. Was he to expose the Holy See to lose not only the possession of Benevento and Avignon, but also the filial obedience of Portugal, France, and Spain? On the

other hand, how could he abolish an Order which had been sanctioned and approved by so many pontiffs, and regarded as the bulwark of the church, as the shield of the faith? Reflections such as these must have filled the thoughts of Clement XIV., and driven sleep from his pillow; from the very first, indeed, so far from displaying that firmness and even obstinacy which his enemies and friends alike attribute to him, he resolved to temporise, to amuse the princes with promises, and to restrain the Jesuits by premeditated doubts,—in a word, to elude the danger instead of braving it. From that day, he devoted his thoughts to all the artifices which weakness and timidity could suggest.

Insurmountable obstacles opposed the execution of this project, which was in fact rather the absence of any project. Spain and France demanded authoritatively the immediate suppression of the Order; and Clement, in order to ward off their attack, redoubled his flattery and court to the two crowns; especially sparing no pains to play upon the vanity of Bernis, who succeeded the Marquis d'Aubeterre. When the cardinal went to pay his respects to the pope, the latter would not accept from him the customary homage: he forbade his genuflexions, repeatedly offered him his snuff-box, and even compelled him to be seated in his presence. Bernis retired with every mark of profound respect; but Clement replied in a familiar tone, "We are alone, and no person sees us; let us dispense with etiquette, and resume the old equality of the cardinalate." A few days afterwards, when Bernis presented a letter from Louis XV., Clement seized and kissed it with transport, exclaiming, "I owe all to France! Providence has chosen me among the people, like St. Peter, and the House of Bourbon has, under Providence, been the means of raising me to the chair of the prince of the apostles. Providence, too, has permitted," he added, embracing Bernis, "that you should be the minister of the king at the papal court: all these unlooked for circumstances seem to assure me of the protection of Heaven, which has granted me the support of such powerful princes. I place an unlimited confidence in you, my dear cardinal: let there be no indirect intercourse, no mystery between us. I shall communicate everything to you, and do nothing without

consulting you. Fear not that I shall follow the example of some of my predecessors, and employ other means than those of truth and good faith. You will always be the judge of this, for I shall never refer you to my Secretary of State, and I request you beforehand at all times to address me directly."

These assurances excited the vanity of Bernis, and he fancied himself master of Rome. The pope carefully kept up this illusion, and took advantage of the cardinal's weakness to make him an accomplice in his dilatory system. Thus Bernis was continually writing to his court, praying the king to sanction the delays which the dignity of the pope rendered necessary, and which he represented to be inevitable in matters affecting ecclesiastical discipline.* Charles III. was of an ardent and impatient disposition: on the contrary, the natural coldness of Louis XV. appeared to increase; his devotional prejudices and his continual fits of remorse inspired him with great indulgence for the pope. The zeal of the Duke de Choiseul also, who was disgusted with so long and tedious a negotiation, began to abate: he was not deceived, like Bernis, as to the motives of Clement XIV., and even exaggerated in his own mind the artifices which he attributed to perfidy; but he had grown careless as to the issue of a contest which he had himself originally provoked, and, appearing to forget the part he had taken in the affair, he no longer concealed in his despatches his weariness and disdain. "I will finish the history of the Jesuits," he wrote to Bernis, "by placing before you a picture which, I think, will strike you. I doubt whether it was a prudent measure to expel the Jesuits from France and Spain; but they are now driven from the states of the House of Bourbon. I deem it a still more imprudent step, after these monks were expelled, to have adopted open measures for the suppression of the Order, and published those measures to the whole of Europe. This step is taken, and the result is that the kings of France, Spain, and Naples are now at open war with the Jesuits and their partisans. Will they be suppressed, or will they not? Will the sovereigns carry their point, or will the Jesuits obtain the victory? This is the question which is now stirring the cabinets of Europe, and has become the source of intrigues, squabbles, and disputes in all the Catholic courts. In

* Bernis to Choiseul, in a great number of despatches.

truth, one cannot regard this picture with indifference, or without feeling the indecency of such a state of things; and were I ambassador at Rome, I should be ashamed to see Father Ricci the antagonist of my master."* Thus, with a fickleness which is quite inconceivable, Choiseul censured a measure of which he was himself the author! The pope, in requesting time, found therefore some support at the court of Versailles; and at the same time the king of France undertook to calm the anger of his cousin of Spain, who, from a deference to the family compact, consented, though reluctantly, to an adjournment of the question.

Clement XIV. now breathed again; at the bottom of his heart he took great credit to himself for his adroit policy, and entertained the secret hope of finding fresh pretexts for an indefinite delay. This moment of illusion was the happiest, indeed the only happy one, of his pontificate: he enjoyed it with a kind of transport; the gaiety of his character came forth again unconstrained, and all who were near him at that time observed in his conduct no trace of a morose monk, nor of an upstart to power, inflated with the pride of newly acquired authority, but a good honest priest, of irreproachable morals, and whose society was full of charm. His elevation had in no degree altered his manners: with all the calmness of a disinterested spectator he looked back upon the immense stride he had made in power and rank; he recalled the humility of his early years, and the arduous commencement of his career, and spoke of this frequently, too frequently perhaps; for it imparted to his conversation more charm than dignity. With an apparent benevolence towards all, he conferred favour upon none: the sacred college, although graciously received by the pope, had no share in his confidence. Clement's discretion was proof against any attack, and the justice which was rendered him on this point flattered him singularly. But he carried this virtue to excess: fancying himself capable of executing all his designs alone, he allowed no one to share his labours, and thus wasted his time upon details too minute and insignificant to engage the attention of a sovereign. However, as a man cannot live

* Letter of the Duke de Choiseul to the Cardinal de Bernis: Compiègne, August 20, 1769.

alone and shut up within himself, he extended his confidence to inferior subalterns, whilst he denied it to persons of higher station. The impressions made on his mind during his monastic life had retained considerable influence over him, and his friendship for Brother Francesco was unabated. On the shores of the lake of Albano, and in the arbours of Castel-Gandolfo, the sovereign pontiff used to pass whole hours with this old companion of his youth. Francesco was his friend, his major-domo and his cook, and Clement never touched any food but the dishes prepared by his hand. Francesco had neither learning nor any knowledge of mankind; nevertheless, in conjunction with another priest, Father Buontempi, he exercised a great influence over his master. He surrounded him with persons unknown to him, but who were devoted to his interest. Ganganelli delighted to live amongst them, and was never happy but when in the midst of those who had formerly been his equals. It will be seen that this opened a secret channel of influence, which it was the policy of the Jesuits to take advantage of, and their efforts were aided by the sacred college and the nobles. But the cardinals and princes were deprived of all means of communicating directly with the pope, and to obtain access to him, they relied on the adroitness of the Society, which had always possessed the art of connecting the high classes with their private interests. In the palaces of Rome the Jesuits were the intendants of the husbands, the instructors of the children, the directors of the wives; at every table, in all the *conversazioni*, a Jesuit exercised a despotic authority. Their triumph secured that of the nobles. The pope, however, gave little heed to their advances; he did not receive them in public, and in private he merely returned evasive answers, which carried them by turns from hope to fear, and from discouragement to hope. Ganganelli endeavoured to play the same game with the sovereigns; and this illusory feeling of security gave him a short-lived happiness, and added another charm in his eyes to the beautiful scenes of Albano. But the illusion was of short duration; scarcely had Ganganelli returned to Rome, when he perceived that he had vainly cherished a hope of passing the remainder of his life on the shore of an enchanted lake in easy listlessness, holding the balance between the Jesuits and the sovereigns, and by turns

lulling their suspicions by promises, continually repeated but never fulfilled.

The importunity of the King of Spain, who was restless under so protracted a suspense, increased, and he even went so far as to hold out a menace. The Jesuits on their side had recourse to similar means: persuasion had failed, and they now resorted to intimidation. It did not require all the perspicacity they possessed to understand the character of Ganganelli: a single day was sufficient to reveal it to them. The day of his accession was destined to be that of their ruin; they expected this, and were resigned to meet the peril. Ganganelli hesitated; and from that instant the society despised an enemy, who, possessing the power and will to annihilate their Order, failed to accomplish his purpose. The Jesuits spared no pains to insinuate, by degrees, a feeling of fear into the mind of Clement. At first they represented to him the danger of irritating the sacred college and the nobles: they then alleged the necessity of conciliating the courts of Austria and Sardinia, who honoured the Society with their protection; but, as the menaces of Spain, seconded by France, outweighed these minor considerations, it was necessary to resort to arguments of a personal nature, and to intimidate Ganganelli, not on the ground of his political power, but for his life. Surrounded as he was by treachery, he could not resist these impressions: his gaiety of disposition soon disappeared, his health became affected, the signs of extreme uneasiness were stamped upon his features, he courted solitude with fresh ardour, and was more than ever anxious that all the dishes of his table should be prepared by old Francesco, the companion of his early days.

In the meanwhile, the messages from Charles III. became more frequent and urgent, whilst Choiseul, out of courtesy to Spain, seconded them strongly. Thus placed between two rocks, which were equally dangerous, Clement endeavoured to soothe the anger and impatience of the sovereigns. All his hope was in the Cardinal de Bernis, who had acquired a high reputation at Rome by the dignity and affability of his manners, and the almost regal magnificence of his establishment. The pope, from the first, had paid him great attention and respect, which afterwards grew into confidence, and Bernis responded to this

with warm sympathy. Ganganelli had studied to anticipate even the slightest wishes of the French cardinal; he had granted him unhesitatingly a number of minor favours, such as dispensations, secularizations, reductions of the fees in the datary's office, &c. This condescension claimed some return, and the moment was arrived for Bernis to testify his gratitude. The pope endeavoured in every way to conciliate the favour of the Bourbons, without involving himself in the measures of vengeance which they demanded should be taken on the Jesuits. One while he asserted the dignity of his office, which neither could nor ought ever to yield to force; at another time he alleged the necessity of deep reflection, before engaging in a measure of such importance. Closeted with Marefoschi and others profoundly versed in canonical matters, he called for and examined the books and documents relating to the society; and, to gain time, he even sent to Spain for the correspondence of Philip II. with Charles V. Then, after exhausting all these means, he involved himself in a labyrinth of frivolous excuses: he pretended to fear the resentment of Maria Theresa and other Catholic sovereigns; he even appealed to governments which were separated from the Church of Rome.—Prussia and Russia; and lastly, he promised to expel the Jesuits when he had obtained the consent of all the courts, without exception. This measure, which necessarily involved extreme delay and difficulty, favoured his weakness, since he hoped to extricate himself from his embarrassment by this very means. Other expedients, equally unacceptable, presented themselves to him: he promised not to appoint any successor to Ricci, to admit no more into the noviciate, and he even talked of convoking a council to depute the settlement of this important question to himself. All these propositions ended with the word *reform*. Such was the embarrassing position in which Clement was placed: in his interviews with Bernis, the cardinal endeavoured to revive his courage, and even reproached him gently. "Alas!" exclaimed the pope in his distress, "I was not born to occupy the throne: I become more and more aware of this truth every day. Pardon a poor monk the faults which he has contracted in solitude!" And then, with a kind of naïveté, he added, "I believe it to be impossible for a monk to throw off entirely the spirit that attaches

to the cowl."* Bernis was unable to reply: he perceived, from what Ganganelli said, that his heart was deeply moved. Whilst the pope was exhausting every resource of political arguments, the dread of poison haunted his thoughts; and Bernis, moved by compassion, and especially flattered to see a sovereign weeping in his arms—a pope all but prostrate at his feet, instead of animating Clement and combating his weakness, merely pitied and sympathized with him. Bernis entered at once into his views, and justified them to the French minister: he was delighted to exercise a kind of patronage over the holy father, and begged Choiseul to leave him entirely to his care, promising in his intercourse with Clement XIV., to lavish upon him that flattering attention whose persuasive power he considered irresistible. He represented this to be the only way to obtain anything from the pope; whereas any resort to violent measures would only render him contemptible, injure his health, and perhaps even endanger his life. On the contrary, by leaving him to the persuasive influences of Bernis, it was certain that he would yield sooner or later. In this manner, whilst the cardinal was studying to gain a command over the pope, he kept alive his indecision. It is true that, at the same time, he advised the French court to abandon their demand for the suppression of the Jesuits, and, instead, to insist upon the restoration of Avignon to the crown of France. This expedient was probably suggested by Clement himself, but the engagements which existed between the courts of Versailles and Aranjuez rendered its execution impossible. Choiseul ridiculed the pusillanimity of the pope, treating his scruples as mere monkish follies, and his fears as cowardice: he refused to entertain the notion that the Jesuits were capable of murder, adding, that no one would have a chance of dying in his bed if all intriguers were to become assassins. Charles III., who was of a more serious and ardent character than Choiseul, treated the pope's fears with the same incredulity, although he did not express it in contemptuous raillery. At the instigation of the minister Roda, Moniño, and the Duke of Alba, and with a view to deprive Clement of any pretext for refusing his consent, he offered

* Despatches of Bernis, of September 9th and November 20th, 1769; January 31st, April 29th, and June 26th, 1774.

to land 6000 men at Civita Vecchia, to defend the pope against his enemies; and then, suspecting the good faith of Bernis in this negotiation, he denounced him to the court of France and demanded his recall.

Bernis felt the shock which had almost overthrown him, and, in order to avert the danger, he changed his line of policy with regard to the pope. Instead of his previous easy acquiescence, he now became stern and exacting; and not seeing any better step to be taken, he urged the pope to write to Charles III. and make peace with him—a measure which Bernis' friends had recommended as the only means left of regaining the favour of that monarch. Ganganelli fell at once into the snare, and in his joy at escaping a present evil he overlooked the fact, that by pledging himself in writing, he was sowing the seeds of insuperable future difficulties. In his eagerness to conciliate the King of Spain, the promises given in this letter were conveyed in positive and irrevocable terms. He declined the assistance offered by his Catholic majesty, and requested time to accomplish the suppression of the Jesuits; but, at the same time, he admitted that this measure was indispensable, and avowed in plain terms that *the members of the Society had merited their fall, from the restlessness of their spirit and the audacity of their proceedings* (1770). This letter has been confounded by every historian with the subsequent and much more vague engagement which Ganganelli is said to have signed before his election. The facts, as here given, are derived from the most authentic state papers.*

* We quote the words of Cardinal de Bernis, in his despatch of the 29th of April, 1770: they are of the highest importance, and cannot be refuted.

"The question is not, whether the Pope would wish to suppress the Jesuits, but whether, after the formal promises which he had given in writing to the King of Spain, his Holiness can for a moment hesitate to fulfil them. This letter which I have induced him to write to his Catholic Majesty binds him so firmly that, unless the court of Spain should alter its opinions, the Pope will be obliged to complete the undertaking. By gaining time it is true he might effect something, but the power of delay is limited. His Holiness is a man of too much clearsightedness not to perceive that, should the King of Spain cause his letter to be printed, he would lose his character as a man of honour if he hesitated to fulfil his promise and suppress the society, a plan for whose destruction he had promised to communicate, and whose members he considered as dangerous, discontented, and turbulent."

Certainly nothing can be done more decisive than this. The Jesuits are

As soon as Charles III. had possession of this document, he was master of the whole negotiation, and no longer feared anything, since Ganganelli had put himself entirely in his power. Never was any affair conducted more unskilfully: Ganganelli ought either never to have bound himself by such positive promises, or, having done so, he ought at once to have dissolved the Order. But Clement XIV. had not that vigour of character which accomplishes great measures with promptness and decision. He had removed from him the cup of bitterness for a short time, and this temporary reprieve satisfied him: he wished, as he said, to familiarize himself to the cannon's roar before the battle should commence. As the first proof of the sincerity of his intentions to the sovereigns, he resolved, but with dread, upon a step unprecedented in the annals of the pontificate: he suppressed the reading of the bull *in Cœna Domini* on Holy Thursday. So serious a measure, indeed, although required by circumstances and urged by all the courts, caused the greatest astonishment in Rome. Complaints were made by the party of the *Zelanti*, but at the end of eight days these murmurs died away; and Clement XIV., who, until the very moment of action, had been in great fear and trouble, was agreeably surprised to find that no serious evil consequences had followed this energetic act.

right in asserting the existence of such a letter, but they are wrong in the date they assign to it. The Cardinal Ambassador is still more explicit, or at least more circumstantial, in a despatch of the 31st of August in the same year. "The current opinion here is, that the Pope is very subtle and acute: but there seem to me to be no grounds for this belief. Had he possessed such acuteness he would never have pledged himself in writing to destroy the Jesuits, nor have described them, in his letter to the King of Spain, as ambitious, turbulent, and dangerous. Having once expressed this opinion, he will be easily convinced that to act conscientiously he must suppress the Order. Had the Pope been an able and acute man, he would, in giving such a pledge in writing, have demanded as a condition the restitution of Avignon and Benevento, and he would easily have found good and plausible reasons for such a condition. The Pope's object in pledging himself thus could only have been to quiet the impatience of the court, to obtain tranquillity, and, by his correspondence with the confessor of his Catholic Majesty, to put off the evil day; and in the end to suppress the Jesuits if the Bourbon sovereigns persisted in their demand. This act depends, then, entirely on the wishes of the three monarchs, and its completion will be hastened or retarded entirely by the importunity or delay of their demands. Had the Pope only wished to trifle with our courts, he would never have given his promise in writing." It is clear by this repetition of the same argument, that Bernis was anxious to destroy a serious objection which he had foreseen.

Another still more important success re-assured the pope, and revived his drooping spirits. Ever since his accession he had maintained a secret correspondence with Portugal, and one of his most cherished hopes was to effect a renewal of the ancient relations which had existed between that kingdom and the Holy See. Pombal had vainly endeavoured to prolong the rupture, and the continuance of such a state of affairs had now become impossible. The highest class of nobles in Portugal was, as is well known, the proudest and most exclusive in Europe; they associated only with one another, and formed, as it were, a kind of family. The pope, however, discontinued sending dispensations, and any that emanated from other quarters were regarded as acts of sacrilege. The archbishop of Evora, to gratify Pombal, attempted to distribute them, but the gifts of the courtier-prelate were repulsed with disdain. Complaints, uttered at first in a low and timid tone, now burst forth loud and general:* the king of Portugal even was shaken by them; he began to entertain scruples, to conceive doubts, and to treat his minister with coldness. One day he deigned no answer to the repeated arguments of Pombal against the Holy See, but turned his back on him in the presence of all his court. Pombal became alarmed, and saw that he had gone too far; he redoubled his zeal for the Inquisition: hitherto that institution had only borne the title of Excellency, but an edict was now issued which conferred on it that of Majesty. The people of Lisbon sighed for a legitimate auto-da-fé; that of Malagrida, which was already almost forgotten, did not satisfy their pious souls. A new auto-da-fé was in consequence graciously bestowed by Pombal, and celebrated with great magnificence. The Portuguese of all ranks with one voice now demanded a complete reconciliation with the pope, and the immediate reception of a Nuncio at Lisbon; and, notwithstanding the habitual inflexibility of his character, Pombal yielded to this demand. The mild tolerance of Clement XIV. removed, in the eyes of Joseph I., every pretext for accusation. Ganganelli used persuasion, not threats. The king for the first time spoke with authority: Pombal obeyed, and acceded to a

* Despatches of Monsieur de Merle, of Monsieur de Saint Priest, and of Monsieur de Clermont, the ambassadors of France at Lisbon during the ministry of the Marquis de Pombal.

reconciliation with the pontiff, but only upon two conditions, that the pope would confer a cardinal's hat on one of his brothers, and give a formal promise to suppress the Society of Jesus. Both these conditions were accepted, but the latter remained a secret.

Rome extolled enthusiastically the talents of Clement XIV. The news of the reception given by the King of Portugal to the nuncio Conti, the appearance of this prelate borne along the Tagus in the royal galley manned by seventy rowers in splendid dresses, the shouts of the people who lined the banks of the river,—all these circumstances, heightened by the reports of them given in the journals, inflated the vanity of the Roman people. Clement XIV. was no longer the vassal of the crowned heads, but an independent and able pontiff who matured his plans in silence. The pope himself seemed intoxicated with success; he caused a medal to be struck, commanded rejoicings, proclaimed the return of the stray sheep to the fold of the church, and, in the excess of his enthusiasm and his gratitude to Pombal, Clement extolled that minister's virtues, and even boasted of his attachment to the Holy See. The illusion was however of short duration; this show of concession to which Pombal had yielded, in order to pacify the alarmed conscience of the king, and to satisfy the piety of the people, had in no way altered the projects of the minister. The nuncio indeed resided at Lisbon, in the midst of all the outward show of homage and respect, but he in vain claimed the restoration of the nuncial tribunal. The animosity engendered by this circumstance was carried to such a length that the nuncio more than once applied for his recall. Pombal, moreover, was not content with giving a decided refusal, but accompanied it with a host of petty causes of annoyance and mortification.

Tanucci, the principal minister of Ferdinand IV., King of Naples, even surpassed Pombal in discourtesy: his personal feeling of animosity to Ganganelli was not diminished by the omission of the Bull *in Cœna Domini*, and he daily gave fresh proofs of his enmity by insults which were not confined to theological disputes. One day, without giving previous notice, he ordered all the valuable marbles, which for upwards of a century had adorned the Farnese Palace, to be removed; and the Grand Duke of Tuscany followed his example, by stripping the Villa

di Medicis. It is true that these acts were sanctioned by legal right, but the indignation of the Romans was not the less deep and strong, when they saw the Hercules and the Toro Farnese carried off to Naples, and the family of Niobe taking the road to Florence. Insults like these are the more keenly felt, because they touch the most sensitive feelings of national pride. The indignation of the Romans knew no bounds, and the prolonged sequestration of Benevento and Avignon added fresh strength to this feeling. Clement XIV. gradually became contemptible in the eyes of his subjects: the people were indignant to see a pope humbled at the feet of princes, and humbled without hope: they demanded how soon Avignon and Benevento—those conquests so dear to Roman pride—were to become the price of the pope's abasement. His voluntary poverty, which had hitherto rendered him so popular among the Trasteverini, was now made a subject of raillery; and, instead of being imputed to laudable and virtuous motives of self-denial, it was censured as mere shameful avarice. He had neither favourites nor nephews, and he accumulated no wealth to enrich his family; but this gained him neither favour nor excuse.

In consequence of a long course of careless administration, there was now a famine in Rome. The cardinals, on the one hand, could not tolerate the pope's estrangement from their views, whilst the nobles and Roman dames possessed neither credit nor influence. They all confided their revenge to the Jesuits, who were just recovering from the first stunning effects of the blow they had received, and now assumed a haughty bearing. In order either to deceive or to compromise Ganganelli, they spread the most daring reports that the King of Spain had become more enlightened, and had abandoned his persecution of the Society. France too, it was said, supported them. Madame Louise, one of the daughters of Louis XV., had pleaded their cause with that monarch, and Bernis had promised them his support. They strove to blind all parties with the brilliancy of their pretended triumph. In fact, the pope saw that he was threatened by the three courts of the house of Bourbon; by Portugal, the price of whose cold reconciliation was the destruction of the Jesuits; by the Grand Duke Leopold and the Emperor Joseph, who had already commenced that

system of reform which they afterwards pursued so perseveringly. Rome had now no protector among all the Catholic powers: Charles Emanuel indeed remained faithful, but the assistance of the King of Sardinia could do little to smooth the difficulties in the pontiff's path, when opposed by the hostility of the two most powerful Catholic states.

The position of Clement XIV. was such as to excite interest, and indeed pity. His was not a mind formed to battle against the rude shocks of fate: gentle and courteous, he was amiable in every relation of friendship—not like Benedict XIV., from any original turn of mind or nice power of discrimination, but from a simple kindliness of disposition and equanimity of temper, devoid alike of insipidity and monotony. He never overstepped the decorum of his priestly office nor his dignity as sovereign pontiff, yet he did not object to innocent raillery. Those who seek to confer upon him a literary reputation, have greatly erred. Letters, it is true, have been published under his name by the Marquis Caraccioli, but the originals have never been produced; and, whether authentic or fictitious, they possess very slight literary value. The belief that a lengthened correspondence was carried on between Clement XIV. and Arlequin, is an ingenious but romantic modern fiction, and can only be explained by a spirit of party feeling.

Ganganelli tolerated all differences of opinion, provided the expression of them was decorous. Like his predecessors, he thundered his bulls against the philosophical writings of the age; but, at the same time, he kept on good terms with the philosophers themselves, without flattering them; and, although he would never enter into correspondence with Voltaire, as Benedict XIV. had done, yet he received some indirect compliments from him kindly. He enjoyed his joke, and intimated to the patriarch of Ferney, through his old friend the Cardinal de Bernis, that he would willingly take him to his heart, if he would end by becoming a good Capuchin. On another occasion, Voltaire had requested a friend, who was on his travels, to bring him the ears of the grand inquisitor. Clement heard of this, and sent word back to the gay old patriarch that it was long since the inquisitor had either eyes or ears. This tone of conversation, from a monk who boasted a mere scholastic educa-

tion, and whose knowledge of the world was necessarily very limited, was gracious and pleasing.

Every Italian loves the arts: although Clement XIV. was no connoisseur, he knew and felt that the arts are an ornament to the pontificate. He ordered researches to be made in various parts of Rome, in the Campagna, and in the bed of the Tiber: he collected from all sides master-pieces of art, and formed the museum since named the Musæo Pio-Clementino; although the chief honour of this association of the names of the two pontiffs is justly due to the successor of Ganganelli: Pius VI. enlarged and completed the project which Clement XIV. had conceived and commenced. We need not recur to the simplicity of Ganganelli's private life, which was more like that of an anchorite or peasant than a sovereign. He disliked the society of the great, whom he judged with perhaps too much severity, slighting their claims, and never admitting them to his confidence. The nobles detested him, whilst on the contrary foreigners showed him the highest esteem and respect: he entertained them worthily, with that noble spirit of hospitality which to the present day makes Rome the rendezvous of all Europe. By one of those accidents which could only happen in this city, Prince Charles Edward met the Duke of Gloucester, the brother of George III. Their carriages passed in the Piazza Navona, and, although rivals, the feeling of gentlemen was superior to every other, and they exchanged a formal salutation of courtesy. Ganganelli was the devoted friend of all existing governments, and, like all his predecessors, cared little about the claims of legitimacy: he never received the Pretender with the honour due to royalty, which would have been offensive to England; and he kept on good terms with that power, declaring his attachment to it so openly as to give great offence to Spain. Charles III. discovered the secret mission of the prelate Caprara at the court of London, and complained of this severely, accusing the pope of carrying on intrigues with the British cabinet. Ganganelli excused himself by alleging that his duty required him to watch over the interests of the church in Ireland; and, indeed, it appears that the English government had promised to grant some concessions to the Catholics of that country, provided their

clergy would agree to subscribe the declaration of the Gallican church. Clement XIV. conducted this affair secretly with Hervey and other Irish bishops, but the negotiation failed as a matter of course. Notwithstanding this, Clement always treated the English with sympathy and kindness, and they in turn paid him the same marks of respect as they had shown to Benedict XIV. In the mansions of many of the English nobility, distinguished by their political influence, are seen the busts and portraits of Clement. This good understanding between England and the pope did not escape the Jesuits, who determined to take advantage of it: they flattered the English, relied on their support and intercession with the pope, and boasted that a British squadron would be sent to Civita Vecchia, in case Spain should ever proceed to extremities, and demand the dissolution of the Order at the point of the bayonet.* In the midst of this strange conflict of interests, a still more decisive event revived the hopes of the Society—the fall of the Duke de Choiseul, which took place on the 25th of December, 1770. On the first news of this event, the exultation of the Jesuits knew no bounds; they pictured to themselves not merely their restoration, but their triumph, and even began to meditate schemes of revenge. Well knowing the enmity of the Duke d'Aiguillon toward his predecessor, they resolved to take advantage of this, and immediately presented an address to Louis XV., in which they professed the utmost respect for the king, and *prostrated themselves at his feet;* but they spared neither the late minister nor the pope himself, representing his Holiness as surrounded by a cabal, and entirely under the influence of its delusions. After boasting of their services, and protesting against the iniquity of the persecution they had endured, they demanded that judgment should be passed on the Abbé Beliardy and other agents of the Duke de Choiseul, and even entertained the hope of bringing the late minister himself to trial.† D'Aiguillon would

* We find these secret and curious details of the relations between the Pope and the Irish, and the assistance bestowed by the English on the Jesuits, in the despatches of Moniño, minister of Spain at Rome, addressed to the Marquis Grimaldi. These despatches are very interesting, but unfortunately very few in number.

† This document still exists.

gladly have seconded these projects, but the necessity of proceeding cautiously with the King of Spain obliged him to relinquish any such attempt. At the news of the change in the ministry, Charles III., who was deeply grieved at the disgrace of his friend, did not conceal his distrust of the intentions of his successor. D'Aiguillon found it necessary to soothe and reassure the king, not to irritate him; and he saw that his only means of accomplishing this was to pursue an open and straightforward line of conduct in the affair which excited the king's ardour so strongly. D'Aiguillon yielded to this necessity, which was alike opposed to his wishes and his projects. He was attached to the Jesuits, and had in fact been raised to the ministry by their intrigues. By protecting the Society and restoring to it the power which it had lost, his patron, Madame du Barry, secured able and zealous defenders. The champions and panegyrists of Jesuitism were to be to her what the encyclopedists had been to Madame de Pompadour: nay more, by their complaisant and sanctimonious pens, the favourite became a Maintenon. This plan flattered both the ambition of the minister and the vanity of Madame du Barry. Still the demands of the King of Spain overcame these considerations: any successor to Choiseul was suspected by him. It was necessary to disarm his distrust, to gain his confidence, and give him some pledge; and D'Aiguillon in consequence began by one of those mean stratagems which have since rendered his administration so famous. The lukewarm measures adopted by Bernis had long proved unsatisfactory to Charles III. D'Aiguillon betrayed the despatches of the cardinal to the Count Fuentes, the Spanish ambassador.* These despatches indicated the cardinal's want of energy in his proceedings against the Jesuits. D'Aiguillon promised to put an end to this by severe orders, requiring at the same time an entire silence to be preserved with regard to Bernis. Such is the course pursued by governments which are weak and consequently treacherous. All the doubts which Charles III. had entertained were now dissipated: from this moment he forgot

* See the letter of Grimaldi to the Count Fuentes, Spanish ambassador in France, the 18th of May, 1772 (an accurate copy, certified by the signature of M. de Fuentes). Letter of Dom Joseph Moniño to the Marquis Grimaldi, Rome, 9th July, 1772.

Choiseul, and, to testify his gratitude to D'Aiguillon, he negotiated directly with him relative to the Jesuits. The ambassadors of France at Madrid, and of Spain at Versailles, carried their confidence so far as mutually to exchange their despatches.*

The situation of Clement XIV. was deplorable: all pretexts for delay were exhausted; the threats of the Jesuits resounded in his ears with increased boldness; and, in order to act more forcibly on his imagination, they assumed a fantastic shape. The approach of his death was announced by a set of impostors, whose predictions were readily believed by the people. Bernardini Beruzzi, a peasant of the village of Valentano, declared herself to be a prophetess, and predicted the vacancy of the Holy See by the mysterious initials P. S. S. V., *Presto sarà sede vacante* (the Holy See will soon be vacant). Although the pope was too enlightened and religious to admit the possibility of divination, he yet felt that it was easy for men to predict events which they themselves could control, and he feared lest poison or the dagger might be employed to aid the accomplishment of these predictions. In the various circles of society, almost in public and aloud, the partisans of the Jesuits accused Clement, heaping reproaches on his name, and even daring to insinuate the probability of his deposition. Insulting images and hideous pictures were put forth, announcing an approaching catastrophe under the form of the vengeance of Providence. Father Ricci, far from feeling any repugnance at the support of such shameless deception, did not even shrink from an interview with the sorceress of Valentano.† But the pope was exposed to more than one source of terror, for the princes troubled him as much as the theologians, and their anger, which had smouldered for two

* These letters throw great light on the negotiations of Clement XIV., and in a useful controversy correct the exorbitant praise bestowed on him by Cardinal Bernis.

† He met her at the house of the advocate Achilli. One has need of proofs for such startling facts; but the impartial reader will have no further doubt when he knows that these accusations are most positively put forth in a very long letter and one full of details, addressed to Pope Pius VI. by Florida Blanca, and that they are neither denied nor refuted in the answer sent by the pope (February, 1775). Besides, the sorceress of Valentano is fully defended by many pamphlets published at this time.

years, burst forth more violently than ever. Charles III. had now lost all patience, and threatened to bring dishonour on the pope by printing his letter. Clement, struck with terror on the one hand, and overcome with shame on the other, did not dare to raise his eyes in the presence of the foreign ministers, and even avoided meeting them. Under pretext of the care necessary to his health, he refused to give them the usual audiences, and retired to Castel Gandolfo, accompanied only by his faithful Francesco, and not even allowing Bernis to have access to him. But a fresh cause of embarrassment arose. Azpurù, the archbishop of Valentia, died, and Charles III., being resolved to fill his place at Rome with some one of decided character, appointed Moniño. No choice could have been more significant; his very name was a declaration of hostilities.

Francesco Antonio Moniño, afterwards Count Florida Blanca,* was a magistrate who had already acquired some celebrity in Spain. As *fiscal*, or attorney-general, he always energetically defended the rights of the empire against the encroachments of the priesthood, and his zeal in this cause was so ardent that it was generally attributed to personal animosity. He shared with D'Aranda, Roda, and Campomanès the danger of having first suggested the banishment of the Jesuits from Spain. Nothing could have appeared more formidable to Clement XIV. than the selection of such an ambassador. The Jesuits were in consternation at his arrival; nor did Bernis feel more at ease. He was already acquainted with the reputation of Florida Blanca, whose conduct D'Aiguillon had ordered him to follow, and he endeavoured to gain the confidence of his colleague; displaying in their first interview all that winning grace of manner which he deemed irresistible. He complained mildly of the prejudices of the court of Madrid, and, without forgetting his own merits, he engaged in an apology more plausible than real. Florida Blanca listened to him with great attention; but after the first civilities, he gave him to understand that the time for weakness was past, that thenceforth it would be distrusted, and that the king his master was determined to bring matters to a close. Bernis understood the tenor of this

* He was afterwards prime minister during the whole of the reign of Charles III. and the early part of that of Charles IV.

speech: he was attached to his place, which he filled with pleasure and reputation, and he saw that it was now in the hands of the King of Spain; to retain it, he must submit blindly to the will of Charles III.; and, therefore, from this moment renouncing all petty artifices, and all the subterfuges of the Œil-de-Bœuf, he promised a hearty co-operation in the views of the Spanish minister. In order the better to convince him of his sincerity, he readily acquiesced in the accusations against the pope, ridiculing the oracular tone which he had for some time assumed, insisting on the necessity of forcing him to an explanation, and even going so far as to cast some doubt on the good faith of the holy father. This was far more than Florida Blanca expected.

In the mean time Clement XIV. underwent the most indescribable sufferings. If he had ever possessed that greatness of soul and firmness of purpose which many historians have attributed to him, he certainly exhibited none of this at the present crisis. He heard of the approach of Florida Blanca with childish terror: in vain he affected the appearance of calmness; his features, his countenance, the paleness of his cheeks, betrayed clearly the trouble of his soul. But his conduct soon revealed the real state of his mind: he postponed for eight days an audience of the Spanish envoy, and at length, after this useless delay, he consented to see him.* Owing to the embarrassment of the pope, this first audience led to no result. Florida Blanca retired dissatisfied, and soon requested a second interview. The pope again sought pretexts for delay. Without any fixed project or any decided opinion, wavering between the Jesuits and the European courts, daring neither to confront his enemies nor to assist his friends, he hoped to flatter the vanity of Florida Blanca by treating Bernis with coldness; but the Spaniard, who was of a passionate temperament, although phlegmatic in his manners, disdained to accept so trivial a sacrifice. A semblance of confidence was not enough,—the complete success of his project could alone satisfy him. Denied access to the pope, he turned into ridicule his sudden departure, his pretended complaints, and his taking the waters at the wrong season. He openly declared that he would oppose a journey to Assisi,

* Bernis to D'Aiguillon, July, 1772; Moniño to Grimaldi, July, 1772.

which the holy father had proposed, and affected to ask whether his Holiness meant to shut himself up to play at nine-pins with Buontempi and Francesco; then, adding threats to sarcasm, he addressed himself to those who surrounded the pope, and bade them choose between the gold of Spain and the anger of Charles III. Won over and intimidated, the favourites promised him an audience. Ganganelli, harassed on all sides, implored the protection of Bernis; but the cardinal ambassador, who was himself closely watched, merely advised him to submit.

Florida Blanca again appeared before Clement; repeated interviews took place, and they were all humiliating to the pope. The successor of the apostles trembled before a Castilian lawyer, and, although respect was maintained in the forms of speech, the spirit of such demands was not the less imperious. At one time, notwithstanding his reluctance, Florida Blanca compelled the pope to listen to a project for the abolition of the Jesuits; at another time he declared that Spain might perhaps soon cease to be in subjection to the Holy See, and imitate the example of Gallican independence. Heresy itself would have been less formidable to Rome than such a prospect. Ganganelli strove in vain to stem the force of the current which was hurrying him along; he endeavoured to prove that, with the fear of a dissolution before them, the Jesuits were less formidable than they had ever been, and entreated Florida Blanca to await the approaching death of their general, Father Ricci. But the impetuous minister contemptuously rejected these further delays. "No, holy father," he exclaimed, "it is by extracting the tooth that the pain is stopped: by the body of Jesus Christ I conjure your Holiness to regard me as one who earnestly desires peace; but beware lest the king, my master, should approve the project, adopted by more than one court, of suppressing all religious orders whatsoever. If you wish to save them, do not confound their cause with that of the Jesuits." "Ah," replied Ganganelli, "I have long seen that this was the object at which they were aiming; but they are seeking still more,—the ruin of the Catholic church; schism, and even heresy perhaps, are in the secret thoughts of the sovereigns." After giving vent to these complaints, the pope attempted to gain over Florida Blanca by friendly confidence and gentle

naïveté; but he resisted this attempt with the most unbending stoicism. Compelled to abandon persuasive means, Clement sought to excite his pity; he spoke of the state of his health, but the Spaniard betrayed such incredulity, that the unfortunate Ganganelli, removing a part of his dress, exhibited to him his naked arms covered with an eruption. Such were the means that the pope used to act upon the agent of Charles III.;* for, in fact, he was suing for his life.

Nevertheless, Clement XIV., in spite of such degradation, occasionally resumed his dignity as a prince and pontiff. One day Florida Blanca supported his arguments by suggesting a motive of self-interest; he guaranteed to the pope the immediate restitution of Avignon and Benevento after the promulgation of the brief; but Ganganelli replied with courage, "Remember that a pope governs the church, but does not traffic in his authority." With these words, he broke short the conference, and retired in indignation. Upon entering his private apartments, his grief burst forth in sobs, and he exclaimed, "May God pardon the Catholic king!"

But the hour had struck; delay was longer impossible, and all further promises would be disregarded. In vain the Jesuits resorted again to intimidation; Ganganelli saw that he must yield. A faint hope, however, still remained: the Court of Vienna might possibly oppose the destruction of the Society: but even this hope failed, for Austria tendered her assent. This negotiation is related in several different ways: according to the most accredited account, the King of Spain dispelled the confidence between Maria Theresa and the Jesuits by sending to her her own general confession, which her director had transmitted to the Society. This account is improbable; but one thing is certain: no one can doubt that Charles III. used every means to procure the consent of the empress to the project. The determination of Maria Theresa is above all attributable to the importunity of Joseph, who, although he took little interest in the affair as it affected the Jesuits, yet coveted their possessions. One clause in particular reveals the principles, the interests, and the secret influence of the young emperor. The Court of Vienna consented to make common cause with

* Moniño to Grimaldi, July 16th, 1772.

the Bourbons only on the express condition of having the arbitrary disposal of the property of the Jesuits, excepting the compensation of individual losses by pensions. Moreover, if the desires of France and Spain were acceded to by that Court, it is not to be attributed to the French ambassador; for, according to the testimony of the Abbé Georgel, his secretary and friend, the Prince Louis de Rohan forgot his instructions so far as to commend the Society to the empress.*

After having undergone this last trial, Clement at length resolved upon what course to take: he decided upon the publication of the brief; but before executing this important act, the pope, as he himself expressed it, wished to announce the thunderbolt by some flashes of lightning. Considering that the discredit and disgrace of the Jesuits ought to precede and justify their fall, he employed that influence which the pontifical court exercises over the tribunals. Private individuals were permitted to prosecute actions which had long before been instituted against the Society, and suspended until this time by authority. The Romans heard with astonishment that the Jesuits were thus rendered amenable to the law: until then, they had never lost an action at law in Rome, as the pope himself told the Cardinal de Bernis.† Their debts, the bad administration of their schools, which had been hitherto veiled with religious care, were now unmasked to the public view. Three visitors, who were appointed to examine their famous *Collegio Romano*, confiscated the possessions of that establishment for the payment of its creditors. They deposited all the articles of value in the monte-di-pietà, and sold by auction the stores which had been accumulated. At the same time the establishments of the Order at Frascati and Tivoli were seized. Even a still greater rigour was exercised in the Legations; the Cardinal Malvezzi, Archbishop of Bologna, visited the institutions of the Society in his diocese, pronounced a general and severe censure, and on leaving the fathers seized their keys, and quitted them with threats. Nor was it long ere these threats were put

* Prince Louis de Rohan to the Duke d'Aiguillon; Vienna, September 11th, 1773. In another portion of this correspondence it is seen that the Prince de Kaunitz despised the sacred college, and persuaded their imperial majesties not to reply to their letters, *as a useless loss of time.*

† Bernis to D'Aiguillon, Jan. 21st, 1773.

into execution: the scholars and novices were sent back to their parents; the Jesuits were excluded from the offices of public instruction and ministering to the prisoners, and several of them were thrown into prison.

After these preliminary steps, Ganganelli no longer hesitated; he ordered the brief to be brought to him, reperused it, raised his eyes to heaven, took the pen, and signed it. Then casting a look upon the document, he said with a sigh, "There, then, is this act of suppression! I do not repent of what I have done; I did not resolve upon the measure until I had well weighed it! I would do it again, but this act will be my death-blow (*questa suppressione mi darà la morte*)."

At length, on the 21st of July, 1773, the brief, *Dominus ac Redemptor*, appeared. Immediately after the promulgation of this brief, the prelates Macedonio and Alfani repaired to the institution of the *Gesù;* whilst other prelates visited the numerous establishments attached to the Order. The Corsican soldiers who accompanied them took possession of the buildings. The members of the Society were called together, and the brief which dissolved them was read by the notaries. Seals were put upon the houses of the Order, and the deputies retired, leaving them in charge of the armed force. The following day the schools were closed, the Jesuits ceased their functions, and their churches were immediately served by Capuchins. The old general of the Order was the same day transferred to the English college, stripped of all marks of his dignity, and clad in the dress of a simple priest; he was guarded and kept constantly in sight, with a lay brother to wait upon him. The dissolution had surprised and afflicted him; as he himself said, he expected only a reform. The proceedings commenced; a commission was appointed, which interrogated him; he answered with simplicity, but his examination is perfectly uninteresting. Ricci enlarged upon the innocence of the Society, and protested that he had neither concealed nor put out to interest any money, but he admitted his secret relations with the King of Prussia. The commissioners protracted the proceedings, and after exhausting all the resources of a subtle procedure, the ex-general was imprisoned in the castle of St. Angelo, and treated with a degree of rigour which even the

enemies of the Jesuits neither expected nor required from the pope.* The encyclopedists extolled the courage and philosophy of Clement XIV., an interested and assumed tribute, which was merely a piece of party tactics. They did not seriously consider him in this light, and upon more than one occasion, in his private and familiar intercourse with the King of Prussia, D'Alembert ridiculed what he called *La maladresse du Cordelier*. This language was not held in public, but the pope was greatly blamed, in the circles of the philosophers, for having expelled the Jesuits from their possessions without securing to them a subsistence, and for not having reconciled humanity with justice —a cruelty which was the less excusable, as it could not be attributed to passion.

Clement was astonished at the success of his boldness, which quite intoxicated him; his humour had never been more gay, and his health even regained its vigour.† Whatever discontent they felt, the nobles and the sacred college itself remained silent spectators of the event. The Trasteverini, whose anger Ganganelli feared, hailed it with enthusiasm, and a timely reduction in the price of some provisions had prepared the way for this reception of the measure. The prompt restitution of Avignon by France, and of Benevento by Naples, crowned the popularity of the pope. An attempt at revolt, fomented by the conquered party, miscarried, and the whole of Rome appeared to have forgotten the brief *Dominus ac Redemptor*. Ganganelli was delighted; the slightest indications betrayed his joy, which, like his character, was naïve and infantine. One day, followed by the sacred college and all the Roman prelates, he went on horseback to the church of Minerva. Suddenly a heavy rain came on; *Porporati*, *Monsignori*, all vanished, and the light-horse themselves sought shelter: the pope, left alone, and laughing at the terrors of his escort, continued his way bravely through the storm. The people were delighted at this sight, and loud in their applause. These were not the feats of an invalid, and the bad health which the friends of the Jesuits represent Clement

* Processo fatto al sacerdote Lorenzo Ricci, già generale della Compagnia di Gesù.

† "His health is perfect, and his gaiety more remarkable than usual."—(The Cardinal de Bernis, November 3rd, 1773.)

as suffering, was not at that time perceptible. Excepting a cutaneous eruption, which relieved more than it harmed him, Clement XIV. had never experienced any infirmity; and we may believe the Abbé Georgel, who tells us that Ganganelli's strong constitution seemed to promise him a long career.* Nevertheless, in spite of appearances, secret rumours were afloat. At the very time that the pope was seen in the public ceremonies, streets, and churches, in short everywhere, in the enjoyment of health and strength, the rumour of his death was widely circulated: the pythoness of Valentano announced it with a characteristic obstinacy. These reports were premature; there was too much haste used in preparing the public mind for the event. All on a sudden, at the approach of the holy week in the year 1774, these rumours seemed to be realized. The pope was suddenly confined to his palace, and refused to grant any audience; even the diplomatic body could not obtain access to him. At length, on the 17th of August, the ministers of the great powers were admitted to his presence. The appearance of the pope struck them with surprise; a mere skeleton was before them. Clement marked their astonishment, and, guessing the cause, he declared that his health had never been better. The spectators welcomed this happy presage only from respect; they saw enough to convince them of the truth. From that day, the members of the diplomatic body intimated to their respective courts the prospect of an approaching conclave. How, it is natural to ask, had Clement passed in so short a time from strength to decrepitude—from life to death? After eight months of perfect health, the pope, on rising one day from table, felt an internal shock, followed by great cold. He became alarmed, but by degrees he recovered from his fright, and attributed the sudden sensation he had felt to indigestion. All at once his confidential attendants were struck by alarming symptoms: the voice of the pope, which had before been full and sonorous, was quite lost in a singular hoarseness; an inflammation in his throat compelled him to keep his mouth constantly open; vomitings and feebleness in his limbs rendered it impossible for him to continue his usual long walks, which he always took without fatigue; and his sleep, which was until then

* Georgel, Mémoires, vol. i. p. 160.

habitually deep, was incessantly interrupted by sharp pains. At length he could no longer get any repose: an entire prostration of strength, the apparent forerunner of dissolution, succeeded suddenly to a degree of even youthful agility and vigour; and the melancholy conviction of an attempt on his life, which he had always feared, soon seized upon Clement, and rendered him strange even to his own eyes. His character changed as by magic; the equability of his temper gave place to caprice, his gentleness to passion, and his naturally easy confidence to continual distrust and suspicion. Poniards and poison were incessantly before his eyes. Sometimes, under the conviction that he had been poisoned, he increased his malady by inefficacious antidotes; at other moments, with the hope of escaping an evil which he imagined not accomplished, he would feed himself with heating dishes, ill prepared by his own hands. His blood became corrupted; the close atmosphere of his apartments, which he would not quit, aggravated the effects of an unwholesome diet. In this disorder of his physical system his moral strength gave way in its turn: there remained no longer any trace of Ganganelli, and his reason even became disordered.* He was haunted by phantoms in his sleep; in the silence of the night he started up continually, as dreams of horror excited his imagination, and prostrated himself before a little image of the Madonna, which he had unfastened from his breviary, and before which for forty years two wax tapers had been kept burning night and day. Prostrated thus, in the horrible conviction of his eternal damnation, he exclaimed, while his voice was choked with sobbing, "Mercy! mercy! I have been compelled. *Compulsus feci! compulsus feci!*" He did not, however, make any retractation in writing, as has been erroneously affirmed by a writer attached to the Society.†

At length, after upwards of six months of torture, Clement saw that his end was approaching. At this moment his reason

* Pius VII., when a prisoner at Fontainebleau in 1814, exclaimed that in the end he should be made *to die mad, like Clement XIV.* "*The pope (Pius VII.) took no repose at night, and scarcely tasted sufficient food to keep him alive; so that* (the words are his own) *he should die mad like Clement XIV.*" This extract is taken verbally from the Memoirs of Cardinal Pacca (*Memorie Storiche del Ministero del Cardinale Bartholomeo Pacca;* Roma, 1830, p. 238).

† Georgel, Mémoires.

resumed its sway,—his mind rose superior to his infirmities. In the clear possession of his intellect, and tasting the full cup of bitterness and suffering, he approached his end. He desired to speak; a monk whispered a few words in his ear; immediately the words died away upon his lips, and life departed from his body. This took place on September 22, 1774.

The news of the Pope's decease caused little sensation; and the Roman people heard it with indifference. His enemies gave an indecent and unblushing expression to their joy, conveyed in the most infamous satires, which they themselves carried from palace to palace. This conduct was calculated to give rise to strange conjectures, and suspicions were indeed soon excited. The sight of Ganganelli's dead body was quite sufficient to produce this effect; it did not even retain those lineaments which nature leaves to our remains at the moment when death seizes upon them. Several days previous to his death, his bones exfoliated and withered, to use the forcible expression of Caraccioli, like a tree, which, struck at its root, dies away and sheds its bark. The scientific men who were called in to embalm the body, found the features livid, the lips black, the abdomen inflated, the limbs emaciated and covered with violet spots. The size of the heart was much diminished, and all the muscles detached and decomposed in the spine. They filled the body with perfumes and aromatic substances, but nothing could dispel the mephitic exhalations. The entrails burst the vessel in which they were deposited; and when his pontifical robes were taken from his body, a great portion of the skin adhered to them. The hair of his head remained entire upon the velvet pillow upon which it rested, and with the slightest friction all his nails fell off. But enough of this hideous and sickening subject.

The truth was too evident to admit of being overlooked from private considerations: no one doubted at the time that Ganganelli had met with a violent death. The physicians said little, but the funeral obsequies disclosed sufficient proof of the fact, and all Rome declared that Clement XIV. had perished by the acqua tofana of Peruggia.* Denial came too late. The mystery connected with this event has never been entirely removed; some assert that it was not poison, but the fear of poison, that caused the death of Clement; according to others,

* Gorani, an avowed enemy of the Holy See, denies however the poisoning.

Ganganelli died from the effects of remorse. Undoubtedly he suffered from fear, but it had not attacked the springs of life; with respect to his remorse he abandoned himself to it only during fits of dejection, and for more than a year after the Edict of Suppression he appeared to be wholly free from such a feeling. Why such tardy regrets? What crime had he committed in the interval? Does remorse admit of postponement? But whatever may be alleged, it is difficult to combat respectable and reputable witnesses. Bernis was always convinced of the poisoning of Clement; and a testimony from such a quarter is so important, that we shall quote his own words. The following is an extract from the official correspondence of Bernis with the French minister. The cardinal begins with doubt; but his very hesitation, which proves his candour, leads him only the more surely to the discovery of the truth, which he attains step by step. "*August* 28*th*.—Those who judge imprudently or with malice see nothing natural in the condition of the Pope: reasonings and suspicions are hazarded with the greater facility, as certain atrocities are less rare in this country than in many others. *September* 28*th*.—The nature of the Pope's malady, and, above all, the circumstances attending his death, give rise to a common belief that it has not been from natural causes. . . . . The physicians who assisted at the opening of the body are cautious in their remarks, and the surgeons speak with less circumspection. It is better to credit the accounts of the former than to pry into a truth of too afflicting a nature, and which it would perhaps be distressing to discover. *October* 26*th*.—When others shall come to know as much as I do, from the certain documents which the late pope communicated to me, the suppression will be deemed very just and very necessary. The circumstances which have preceded, accompanied, and followed the death of the late pope, excite equal horror and compassion. . . . I am now collecting together the true circumstances attending the malady and death of Clement XIV.,* who, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, prayed, like the Redeemer, for his most implacable enemies; and who carried his conscientiousness so far as scarcely to let escape him the cruel suspicions which preyed upon his mind since the close of the holy week, the period when his malady seized him. The truth

* We have in vain sought for this account; it has disappeared.

cannot be concealed from the king, sad as it may be, which will be recorded in history."

We may judge of the force of the cardinal's conviction, which drew from him such severe expressions against men whose unhappy lot he had previously compassionated; but there is another and a more imposing testimony to the fact—that of Pope Pius VI., the successor of Clement XIV.; it is transmitted to us also by Bernis, who speaks in the following cool and dispassionate terms more than three years after the death of Ganganelli. He wrote on the 28th of October, 1777, as follows: "I know better than any one how far the affection of Pius VI. for the ex-Jesuits extends, but he keeps on terms with them rather than loves them, because fear has greater influence on his mind and heart than friendship. . . . The pope has certain moments of frankness, in which his true sentiments show themselves. I shall never forget three or four effusions of his heart which he betrayed when with me, by which I can judge that he was well aware of the unhappy end of his predecessor, and that he was anxious not to run the same risks."

Unhappy end, indeed, and too little merited, unless weakness deserves to be punished as a crime! Had not Ganganelli come too soon after Lambertini, he would have played a great part in his age. Grimm says this truly. If he had ascended the throne about 1740 or 1750, Clement would have spent a perfectly happy life; he would have grown old, surrounded by public esteem, and have worn in peace that triple crown which he had so long coveted. After he had compromised himself by giving a pledge, there remained only one of two sides for him to take, and one was entirely honourable. The day after his accession to the papal throne he ought to have suppressed the Jesuits, who expected this; or, if the maintenance of the Society appeared to him a more sacred duty than the fulfilment of the promise he had given, his proper course was to have braved the anger of the King of Spain, to have printed his letters, and to have presented a haughty front to the sovereigns of Europe, supported by the bulls of his predecessors, and the bold apologies of the Order which he would have saved. Of all measures which were presented to him he chose the worst; weakness overcame his proper judgment and discretion; in fact, he possessed none of

the elements of greatness. His panegyrists, in their exaggerated attempts to elevate his character, have in reality only lowered it; and their cold rhetoric has failed to alter the proportions of his mind. Ganganelli, although enlightened and clever, possessed no knowledge of human nature or human affairs; he had little skill in handling difficulties, and only sought to evade them: his political course had neither elevation nor ability. This picture may perhaps appear severe; and when we turn to the other traits of his character, his constant moderation, his genuine spirit of tolerance, his morals, worthy of the primitive church, we shall readily admit that the life of Clement XIV. merits sincere respect, and his death lasting compassion.

In concluding this chapter, we desire that our motives may not be misunderstood: we have given a simple narrative of authentic facts, without arraigning any one. We do not attempt to explain circumstances veiled in impenetrable mystery—the secrets of the grave must be respected.

CHAPTER V.

Consequences of the death of Clement XIV.—Election of Pius VI.—His reign—The Jesuits and Pius VI.—Palafox and Labre.

In consequence of the Brief of Suppression and the death of Clement XIV., the Catholic states of Europe presented a singular spectacle. The sovereigns were freed from trouble and suspense; and the victory which they had gained seemed to them great and decisive. From their earliest years they had been accustomed to see their predecessors engaged with the affairs of the Jesuits and Jansenists more than other immediate and important objects. Two great interests had filled the first forty years of the eighteenth century—war and the bull; but in this unequal division of affairs, public attention had been less attracted by the successes of generals and plenipotentiaries than by the distribution of tickets of confession, the refusal of the sacraments, and the tricks of fanatics. Sovereigns like Charles III. and Louis XV., who had been brought up amidst the tumult of these theological controversies, had imbibed from them a deep and lasting impression. These squabbles were augmented in their eyes by all the trouble they had occasioned; and as the only interruption which had been offered to the peaceful exercise of unlimited power proceeded from these scholastic disputes, they could neither be wholly overlooked nor treated with a contemptuous neutrality. The spiritual combatants in these conflicts wielded the only visible power which did not emanate from royal authority—and this was a fact which kings themselves were compelled to recognise. In this position the reigning princes of the time had but one course to take,—either to adopt and protect this power, as their predecessors had attempted to do, or to crush it. There remained no alternative, no medium, between these two extremes; and, certainly, to induce a Bourbon to declare against the Jesuits, that is to say,

against the priesthood, was the greatest achievement of the age. No Catholic sovereign could, in the face of such adversaries, affect disdain. Thus, when they had accomplished the suppression of a few monks, these princes experienced great joy: they were freed from the only source of fear to which they were accessible, and reposed confidently upon the future exercise of their authority, which, as they firmly believed, had no other enemy to combat but the pope and his spiritual power.

The ruins of an old convent appeared to them thenceforth the immoveable foundation of the supreme power! We are tempted to smile at such a strange notion, which presents a curious picture to our minds; and in order to comprehend it rightly, we must transport ourselves back into those days of unlimited illusions and hopes that for a time preceded the thunderbolt which dissipated them all.

A strange contrast existed between the Jesuits and the philosophers; the latter, who had hitherto been the avowed enemies of the Holy See, were now loud in its praise; the pope became the hero of the *Mercure* and the *Nouvelles à la Main;* and whilst the memory of Clement XIV. was extolled in a quarter where this was little to have been expected, the Jesuits and their partisans proclaimed an anathema on the late pope. He had not abandoned them until after a long struggle, and he only yielded to absolute necessity in suppressing the society. But the Jesuits never pardoned the ill-fated pontiff for having made a sacrifice, which nevertheless cost him his life; they made no allowance for the difficulties of his situation, but thought only of their own fall. Defeated and exasperated, they did not hesitate to declare war with Rome, without reflecting for an instant upon the injury which their revolt would occasion to the faith. Instead of submitting, with that humility of which Fenelon had given them such a marked example, they called in question the validity of the brief, and even went the length of resisting and attacking the Holy See, regardless of the ridicule of the philosophers and the contempt of the disaffected. Their tongues were unrestrained, as their resentment was unlimited; and they surpassed even the school of Voltaire in audacity, mocking and insulting a virtuous pope. At the same time they neglected no means of ameliorating their condition; although

overwhelmed on every side, misfortune had only the effect of increasing their perseverance, and they found an unexpected source of hope beyond the circle of the Catholic states. But before we pause at this curious episode of so strange a history, we must know something of the successor of Clement XIV. The Jesuits and their partisans placed the greatest reliance upon the future election; they cherished the hope that the work of one pope might be destroyed by another—an event which was certainly possible, since it has taken place, but for the realization of which they had to wait forty years.

We will not take the reader again into the conclave; he has seen the motives that influenced the discontents and passions which prevailed in it. On this occasion Spain again assumed an imperious tone, and France supported its measures, whilst Vienna remained neuter. After a delay of a hundred and thirty-eight days, Florida Blanca, seconded by Bernis, decided the election. Cardinal Pallavicini, fixed upon by these ministers, declined with unaffected modesty to accept the office; he belonged to the moderate party. The pope could be chosen only from their ranks; but to obtain unanimity in the votes, it was requisite that he should be a friend to the princes without being an enemy to the Jesuits; and it was also desirable that the successor of the rustic Clement XIV. should be distinguished by a fine person and a liberal or even splendid style of living. Everything, even his very humility, was brought as a reproach against the memory of Ganganelli: he was accused of having lowered the majesty of the pontifical ceremonies by an affected simplicity, he had disturbed the faith, which has need of visible signs, he had repelled the assembly of the faithful, whilst in the sovereign pontiff he had betrayed the man. These murmurs were not confined to the circles of the prelates and nobles; the people of Rome took a lively part in them. Rome thirsted for a pontificate which should foster luxury and the arts, and the choice of another Leo X. became the ruling idea in the conclave.

Cardinal Braschi was elected, and assumed the name of Pius VI. Under Clement XIII. the new pope had been apostolic treasurer or minister of finance. In an ill-regulated government it is difficult to fill this post with honour; but Braschi exercised its functions with an integrity that has never

been disputed. Clement XIV. did not like him, but nevertheless he was just, and he bestowed the hat on Braschi. On the death of this pontiff, however, Braschi was disgraced and lost amongst the crowd of cardinals. Was it that a moral incompatibility existed between him and Ganganelli, or a difference of opinion concerning the fate of the Jesuits? Be this as it may, it was precisely the absence of connection between Braschi and any party that recommended him to the choice of all: he was not tied to any faction, and his previous conduct gave some grounds of hope to all parties. Each one remembered with satisfaction that Braschi had gained the esteem of Benedict XIV., the favour of Clement XIII., the patronage of Clement XIV., and the protection of the Jesuits. It was an arsenal where every one found weapons that suited him. Thus, thanks to the general desire for conciliation, and the secret hope of obtaining an influence over the new pope, all parties united in opening the doors of the Vatican to Pius VI.

At the solemn moment of election, a pope of the nineteenth century,* being asked, according to custom, whether he accepted or declined the office, candidly replied, "Since you wish me to be pope, I consent willingly." Such simplicity was not in Braschi's character: at the moment when his name was drawn from the balloting urn, he threw himself on his knees, his eyes filled with tears, and exclaimed, "Venerable fathers, your assembly is terminated, but how unhappy for me is its result!" His fears, however, quickly vanished before the brightest prospect that ever opened on a pope since the palmy days of the pontificate. The beginning of the reign of Pius VI. was all joy and splendour; in its dazzling and graceful pomp the Rome of the Medici seemed revived.

The new pope was destined to effect the external restoration of the Holy See; and if he was chosen with a view to this object, no assembly ever showed more tact and foresight. Everything contributed to fit him for this office,—his deportment, countenance, inclinations, and the style of his eloquence. More than once, during the reign of his modest predecessor, Braschi had deplored the neglect into which the traditions of the church

* Pius VIII. (Castiglioni), who reigned less than a year (1829 to 1830).

had fallen; and from the moment of his accession he determined to restore their lustre, which had been too long effaced. The Romans, accustomed to the delicate, intellectual, but unimposing physiognomy of Benedict XIV., the devotion of Clement XIII., and the vulgar good-humour of Ganganelli's features, were filled with the liveliest emotion when, at the ceremony of the holy year, they beheld advancing towards the mystic door an aged man, distinguished by an air of majesty. "This is indeed," they said, "the pontiff-king! how plainly does he assume the double character!" His stature was tall, the expression on his face sweet and august: not a wrinkle blemished his features, which were still animated with a slight colour: his forehead was bald, but a few white locks escaped from the tiara that rested upon it, shading his temples and neck. He walked wrapped in a garment of white spangled with gold, and a golden hammer glittered in his hand. He strikes the sacred door,—it falls; a thousand arms are raised to demolish it, and the people rush over its ruins. At length, followed by a long procession, he seats himself upon the throne, or rather the altar. It is needless to repeat the picture of the Roman ceremonies given by so many travellers and historians, to describe the cardinals bent in adoration before him who was yesterday their equal, or to paint the crowd of spectators, the ecclesiastical and temporal princes, the clouds of incense, the flax burnt in token of humility, the waving of long Indian fans, in short the mixture of oriental pageantry and Catholic pomp. In these ancient ceremonies there is nothing peculiar to the pontificate of Pius VI.; and yet, when seen in the midst of these solemnities, he seemed to have been the first to preside at them; it might even have been imagined that he had created them, so well did they become him, and so perfect was the harmony between the pontiff and the temple, Pius VI. and St. Peter's. It was natural that the Romans should welcome such a pope as a benefactor, and never was a pontiff received with more prompt, spirited, or heartfelt acclamations. It might be expected that habit would long ago have effaced these impressions, but, far from this being the case, the ceremonies of the church serve continually to renew them. The crowd of strangers attracted to Rome by curiosity are never tired of their repetition, still less the Romans, who find in them both their pleasure and

their pride. Born with an instinctive love for the arts, these people enter into the poetry of their native country; they feel that the ragged dress worn by a Roman assumes the dignity and grace of the ancient toga, and that in the women of the Transtevere is still to be seen the severe beauty of Cornelia. In their confused, but highly-coloured historical knowledge, the triumphs of the emperors are mixed up with those of the popes: Cæsar is as familiar to them as Sixtus V., and Donna Olympia as Nero. When they behold the concourse of men drawn to Rome from all nations, and witness the homage paid to the venerable man who rules them, the people of Rome fancy that they have not entirely lost the empire of the world. It is not surprising therefore that, in the earlier period of this pontificate, the devotion of Rome to Pius VI. was a kind of idolatry, and that at his appearance a woman was heard rapturously to exclaim, "Quanto è bello! quanto è bello!" while another replied with the same enthusiasm, "Quanto è bello, tanto è santo!"

At the same time, if he had confined himself to ceremonies the success of this expedient alone would have been doubtful. Rome must have festivals, but she also requires pictures and sculpture. Pius VI. shared this passion for the arts: he was born a pope, and, excepting in morals, a pope of the sixteenth century. He could not find a Michael Angelo or Raphael, nor supply the force and charm of those divine artists by the cold colouring of a Pompeo Battoni, the pedantic mannerism of Raphael Mengs, or the feeble talent of Angelica Kauffman, more interesting herself than in her works; but the views of Pius VI. were lofty, his expenditure royal, and his love of art enlightened and persevering. On this rests his fame: he had laid its foundations in the preceding reign; whilst occupying the post of apostolic treasurer, he was continually urging Clement XIV. to restore the Museum of the Vatican. Ganganelli listened to him favourably, and intrusted to him the charge of the undertaking. Pius VI. began it whilst minister, and as pope he raised it to the degree of magnificence which renders the pontifical abode the greatest palace, museum, and temple in the world. By his orders a number of statues were brought from the ruins of Antium, Preneste, and the villa of Tibur, where the Emperor Adrian had collected the masterpieces of art of

which he had despoiled the public monuments. Immense halls, opening on to the grand landscapes of the Roman Campagna, lined with jasper, and paved with mosaics, were raised to receive these treasures. The eye loses itself in the perspective of galleries, staircases, and porticos, which are as rich as they are numerous. The Apollo and the Laocoon, till then thrown aside in an obscure corner, were placed by Winkelmann in arched recesses, at each end of a vast rotunda, skilfully lighted, and kept constantly cool by the play of fountains. In short, the facility of access, the charm of a resort for study, convenient regulations, exquisite taste in the details as well as in the whole, were united with extreme magnificence; and although Pius VI. might exclusively claim the merit of this noble work, he contented himself with associating his memory with that of his predecessor. He gave the name of the *Museo Pio-Clementino* to that building where admiration everywhere met Braschi, and never sought for Ganganelli.

Literature was then in a languishing state. Pius VI. was gifted with eloquence, perhaps too verbose, but heightened in effect by his touching and sonorous voice; he was fond of speaking in public, but there is nothing to prove that he had a taste for literature. Doubtless, as a means of fame, he would have eagerly welcomed a *Gerusalemme* or a *Divina Commedia*;* but he only obtained sonnets. In the place of Tasso, he crowned in the capitol an old and indifferent poetess, the improvisatrice Corilla.

The enterprises of Pius VI. at this period of his pontificate were all brilliant, whatever faults he may be subsequently charged with. Crowds of strangers flocked to the city, and the report spread that Rome was resuscitated. These were not pious pilgrimages, but parties of pleasures boasting the most brilliant talent in Europe—philosophers, poets, magistrates, politicians, rich capitalists, elegant women, fortune, beauty, renown, all, of whatever sex or religion, came to kneel at the foot of the papal throne. Among the various motives that attracted people from all parts of Europe to Rome, religion was the only

* Monti, as well as Cesarotti, belongs only to the latter years of Pius VI.'s reign, and neither of them is a Dante, or even a Torquato. The coronation of Corilla suggested to Madame de Staël the idea of Corinne.

one excluded; in all this eagerness she had no share. Pius VI. perceived this, but felt that he must neither resent it nor exhibit too worldly a satisfaction. He received all this homage with the dignity of a pope and the grace of a man of the world; inheriting the tolerance of Lambertini and Ganganelli, but giving to it a more imposing character. He understood how to make outward sacrifices to the spirit of the times; and by adopting a peculiar tone and a well-discriminated choice of words, skilfully adapted to circumstances, he knew how to reconcile religion and policy. At the very time when, seated on his throne, he was taking part with profound veneration in the solemnities of the mass, the papal chapel was by his orders filled with protestants. Such an audience would not have been his choice; but, aware that Rome had ceased to be a universal confessional, he made it a bridge of alliance for the European nations. He offered a secure asylum to all religions, within those walls where formerly one alone was admitted. There was in fact nothing to fear from this diversity of opinion: strangers met at Rome on neutral ground, attracted and united by a common love for ancient art. Winkelmann had spread, even amongst the women, a taste for archæology, and it became the fashion to admire the ruins which had until then lain neglected. Pius VI. adroitly took advantage of this new impulse; he brought to light buried ruins, took measures for their preservation, and had them described in works printed in a style of beauty at that time rare. It was thus that he made ancient Rome contribute to the splendour of Christian Rome; the cause of the present was eloquently pleaded by the past, and kings left their palaces to contemplate that of the Cæsars. On this instructive scene appeared, in turn, the heir to the Russian empire, the King of England's brothers, the virtuous mother of the present King of the French, the sovereigns of Tuscany and Naples, Gustavus III. of Sweden, and lastly, for the second time, the Emperor Joseph II.

Pius was admirably seconded by Cardinal de Bernis, the French ambassador.* A wrong impression of the character of

* We say ambassador for the sake of clearness, for the cardinals never deigned to bear this title; they merely called themselves *chargés des affaires*. Cardinal de Bernis filled this post until the revolution.

Bernis must not be formed from the narrative of the difficult circumstances in which he was placed during the conclave of Clement XIV. With less straightforwardness he would have succeeded better: the temper of his mind did not lead him to manœuvre in a labyrinth of intrigue, but under the noble Pius VI., whose character was so analogous to his own, he upheld the French name in all its dignity. We have seen old men who remembered with transport Cardinal de Bernis's assemblies: no ambassador of France ever kept up greater state; prodigious splendour, combined with the finest taste, presided at the truly royal receptions of this prince of the church. Madame de Genlis, who lived at the brilliant court of the Palais Royal, says in her Memoirs: "I have never seen any magnificence surpassing that "of the Cardinal de Bernis . . . . he did the honours of his house "inimitably. There was a mixture of good-nature and pene-"tration about him, of dignity and simplicity, that made him "the most amiable man I have ever known." Every day he kept a liberal and open table, served with profusion: he had an immense number of livery servants, a crowd of *maestri di camera*, *di capella*, grooms and pages, and continual fêtes, concerts, conversazioni,—in fact, a court. On the master's part there was nothing like haughtiness or stiffness: the kindest reception was given to every body, suited, no doubt, to their rank and age, but not with such distinctions as to make politeness affronting. A tone of noble and decorous gallantry prevailed; many women were always present of high rank, of striking beauty, sometimes of light conduct, but there was never any scandal in the French palace: whatever is agreeable and graceful was to be found there—nothing more. In short, Bernis maintained throughout an air of the utmost grandeur, represented his country with imposing state, and enjoyed at the Vatican, as well as Versailles, unquestioned honour. In his palace in the Corso, the cardinal de Bernis had all the honours of sovereignty. He used to say, with graceful affectation, that he "kept the French inn in one of the highways of Europe,"—an inn, indeed, where kings rested.

The ideas of Pius VI. were not only gorgeous, but truly grand; and, what is rare in a pope, their greatness was applied to the progress of industry, to material and practical improve-

ments. If he had confined himself to the inferior reputation of an antiquary, history would have left his name to the catalogues of museums. She would have passed over the feeble imitator of the Medici, who, mistaking vanity for enthusiasm, vainly sought to recover Italy from her dying state. But Pius VI. had a mind of a loftier cast; his views did not stop at the marbles in his collections, or the groups of adorers prostrated at his feet. His love for humanity prompted him to relieve it, nor was he content with a mere customary charity, which is often exclusive; visits to hospitals, and indiscriminate alms-giving, could not satisfy his generous compassion. Too many popes have regarded Rome only as an assemblage of palaces and churches; but Pius VI. observed that at a short distance beyond lay the commencement of a desert—a beautiful desert, which no painter or poet would exchange for the most productive soil, but where men who are neither painters or poets may barely live, but never find health. He learned that this lovely coast, so often celebrated, the shore once covered with towns and villas, drained by canals, enriched by ports, the points and promontories surmounted by moles, lighthouses, and temples,—Laurentum, Ardeus, Lavinia, Antium,—in short, the whole theatre of the last six books of the Æneid, had returned to the barbarous times of Latinus and Evander. Grass had overgrown the ruins, and the cottages, which had once been supplanted by palaces, had re-appeared. What a country and what cottages!—a barren arid soil, and unpeopled plains undulating like the sea; the only objects breaking the monotony being a few arches of a broken aqueduct, or the shaft of an isolated column, with a troop of buffaloes, chased by herdsmen clothed in skins and mounted on untamed horses.

Further along the strand, under the shade of a tuft of cork or ash trees, might be seen a rude hut, the haunt of a few charcoal-burners or fishermen, pale and sallow with fever. Wretched district, where even theft is scarcely possible, not from the absence of immorality, but of inhabitants!—a shifting and pestilential soil lying at the very gates of Rome. At the foot of the Apennines, on the frontiers of the ancient Campania, a wide valley opens, extending to the sea. Two rivers, the Ufenso and

the Amaseno, fed by a multitude of little streams, convert it, especially in the rainy season, into a vast marsh: hence its name, the Pontine Marshes.*

Pius VI. resolved to render these marshes healthy, but unfortunate suggestions led to the failure of these wise projects. Superior as he was to his immediate predecessors as a statesman, he sank almost to their level from want of perseverance, and especially from a tendency to that complaint, unknown in our day, but which had been for ages hereditary in the papacy—nepotism.

Under his favour the Jesuits attempted to regain the place they had lost, but their efforts were not crowned with success. Pius VI. pitied them in secret, and only awaited an opportunity to declare his protection openly, but circumstances delayed this avowal. The Society of Jesus, which had been broken up, now gathered together its scattered members. Florida Blanca, in his eagerness and activity, sought to extort from the pope a new confirmation of the brief. The Spanish envoy resumed the prayers and threats which he had by turns employed upon Ganganelli, but his conduct was far from bringing about the same result. In Clement XIV. fear produced despair and insanity, whereas in the case of Pius VI. it cost him neither a day's health nor an hour of his life. The shock which overcame Ganganelli could not even move the fortunate Braschi; and what in Clement XIV. was a wide, deep, envenomed wound, in Pius VI. scarcely amounted to a trifling scratch. His courage was reserved for other trials, and the arts of the Jesuits and diplomatists had no power to disturb his serenity. Braschi knew the value of life, and did not throw away its emotions. It would therefore be useless to relate these intrigues, the faint image or feeble echo of the negotiations of the preceding pontificate. They may be told in a few words: Spain had lost none of her activity, and France followed in her steps from habit, whilst the pope opposed to these two courts the stratagems of perpetual adjournment.

* Count de Tournon, *Etudes sur Rome*, book v. chap. 9. This work is the most correct and interesting that has been published on the states of the church, considered politically and economically.

The principal question at this period was the fate of the general of the Jesuits; Ricci was languishing in captivity, and Spain demanded that he should be sentenced. Pius VI. wished at all risks to avoid this, and in order to gain time he negotiated the removal of his prisoner into Tuscany: his perplexity was great, but it was brought to a close by Ricci's death. The aged head of the Society died at the castle of St. Angelo, after protesting in writing his own innocence and that of his Order. Ricci winds up the simple recital of the purity of his intentions with these words: "*What I have said, I have said for the honour of my Order, and with no other motive.*" What is to be concluded from this restriction? Does it not give room to suppose calculation even at the last? Would it naturally be taken for the independent and sincere expression of a duty fulfilled? There is certainly some obscurity in this language, but it is not well to cavil at the words of a dying man; at the point of death a mistake is more ready than an untruth.

The departure of Florida Blanca followed soon after Ricci's death, and was another relief to the pope. The rude envoy of Spain was called to the head of the cabinet of Madrid; whilst his predecessor in the ministry, the gentle and inoffensive Grimaldi, succeeded him at Rome. Pius VI. gained by this exchange, but he could not hope to escape, even at a distance, from the restless watchfulness of Florida Blanca, who warmly insisted on his demands, and solicited with more vehemence than ever the long-desired canonization of Palafox, bishop of Osma.

History would pass over these details did they not contain the account of two very decided parties in the Romish church—the supporters and the opponents of the Jesuits. The Spaniard, John Palafox, born in 1600, had been bishop of Puebla de los Angeles in Mexico. He had become famous for his virtues, and still more for his struggle with the Society of Jesus, which he denounced to the court of Rome. Palafox died bishop of Osma in Castille, on the 30th of September, 1659. The Jesuits hated his memory, whilst the whole people of Spain were passionately attached to it. The king, clergy, peasants, and the mountaineers of the Sierra Morena, all demanded the apotheosis of Palafox; in fact it became a subject of national interest. Now-a-days it is

difficult to understand the importance of such a matter. In the eighteenth century the name of Palafox occurred perpetually in the despatches addressed to Rome: the king of Spain exerted himself indefatigably to obtain his canonization, and the other Catholic courts seconded his efforts. The resistance of the Jesuit party was as tenacious as the solicitations of Spain were ardent. Nothing could tire out the combatants. The debate lasted fifty-one years, under four pontificates (from 1726 to 1777), but still without any issue. Pius VI. held a meeting to determine the question, and he took the votes, but decided nothing.

The king of Spain insisted on a canonization: the Jesuits also wished to have a saint, and after a long search they found one,—a Frenchman. "Admire," said they, "that Providence, which draws its elect even from the midst of the Amalekites." He was a beggar, which was a still happier chance; his ignorance eclipsed the false lights of philosophy. His name was Labre: his dead body was found leaning against a curbstone, and preserving all the freshness of life. This report set the neighbouring town in a ferment: the entire population rushed to the church, where the corpse was exposed for three days. All threw themselves at the foot of the new intercessor; guards were obliged to be posted, and none but the sick admitted,—who came back cured. But posthumous miracles were not enough,—no one had ever heard of Labre before, and it was necessary to revert to his life. He was declared to be a prophet, but what his revelations had been, remained a secret; people's minds were however prepared for great things. A French painter, wishing to profit by the fashion, pretended to have known the saint, and produced his portrait; he had it engraved, and sold 40,000 copies in twenty-four hours. In short, the enthusiasm became so general, that the cardinal vicar named a commission of twelve persons to proceed to the beatification. Everybody left his name at the palace of the Cardinal de Bernis, and offered him congratulations on this accession of glory to France. Bernis received them politely; he was conversant with human nature, and wished above all to live in peace.*

* This is the tone in which Bernis spoke of Labre:—"They are printing here the Life of *the French beggar*, with a list of his pretended miracles;

The zeal for Labre was at its height, when at the end of a few months if ceased as if by magic. When the virtues of Labre were mentioned, the friends of the Jesuits scarcely answered; when his prophecies or miracles were spoken of, they were silent or changed the conversation. The ex-Jesuit Zaccaria, who was employed in writing the life of this worker of miracles, stopped the printing of his book. What had happened? Here was at first a mystery, but it soon came to light: the Jansenists were jealous of their antagonists: they had supported Clement XIV., but without success. Whether from bad management or spite, they found no one to replace him, and they set up a claim to the saint of the Jesuits:* to make a Jansenist of Labre was a party manœuvre. A report was spread that the saint used to read the works of a father Lejeune, a disciple of Quesnel; from this moment Labre ceased to effect cures, and prophesied no more.

The whole affair seemed at an end; Labre, belonging to Port-Royal, ceased to be of any importance. But the Jesuits did not consider themselves beaten, and obstinately maintained that Labre had never read the books of Quesnel's church,—the proof of which was that he could not read.†

This absurd anecdote seems quite unworthy of history, and would be so, if Labre, now completely forgotten, had not at this period attracted so much the attention of Europe: for a time every diplomatic despatch was filled with a mention of this man. Pius VI. took no active part in this reaction of Jesuitism:

the ex-Jesuit Zaccaria is the author. . . . . It is very certain that in this matter (the beatification of Labre) none of the rules established in the congregation of rites are attended to; enthusiasm carries everything before it. The least of its bad effects probably will be its absurdity."—Despatch of 18th June, 1783.

* The Cardinal de Bernis, after giving all these details, finishes with these words:—"A few days ago, any one who attached weight to these observations would have been held impious." He adds: "From the news I have just received from Rome, it seems that the Jesuit party will not give up the canonization of Labre. I know, however, that the sacred college has quite changed its opinion on this subject."—Despatch of 29th July, 1783, dated Albano, where the cardinal was bishop, and passed the summer. All this story of Labre belongs, as is seen, to the year 1783; and is given here by anticipation.

† Labre was only beatified under the pontificate of Pius VII. It was one of the consequences of the Jesuits' triumph.

he shut his eyes and let things take their course, absorbed by more pressing and weightier interests. In fact his relations with the court of Vienna required all his attention ; and the reader would be ill acquainted with the spirit of this epoch, if we left him in ignorance of what was passing between Joseph II. and Pius VI.—the pope and the emperor.

CHAPTER VI.

Joseph II.—His ecclesiastical reforms—Visit of Pius VI. to Vienna—1782 and 1804.

THE illustrious Maria Theresa had breathed her last, and Joseph II. ascended the throne. His accession to the hereditary sovereignty of Hungary, Bohemia, and Austria, signalized a new era in the relations of the church and the empire; or rather it revived, although in a very different degree, the days of their ancient antagonism. Maria Theresa had averted the explosion of these differences, which, it was easy to foresee, would break out at her death. Thus, a knowledge of all that relates to the early period of the government of Joseph, is indispensable to a correct acquaintance with the ecclesiastical history of this portion of the eighteenth century.

"Up to the present time," writes Joseph to Kaunitz on the very night of the death of Maria Theresa, "I have studied only to be an obedient son, and this is nearly all I have learnt." This was a great mistake; but in the first moments of his accession Joseph might deceive himself as to the past, and imagine himself an *obedient son*. Joseph and his mother never understood one another, and their lives had passed in a continual but latent contest; nevertheless death heals past differences, diminishes resentment, and substitutes a respectful and tender feeling of forgiveness for the bitterness of griefs or injuries. As soon as Maria Theresa was dead, every association seemed to endear her memory to Joseph,—habit, veneration, gratitude, pride, all in turn invested her character with affectionate reverence. Of all the honours which that great woman bequeathed to the young emperor, the highest was, in his eyes, the title of her son. When he surveyed the numerous portraits of her in the palace at Vienna, Joseph recalled, with a melancholy feeling of pride, the great and unexpected success which had marked her career, the numerous

advantageous alliances she had made, the marked renown she had acquired, her heroic courage in misfortune, and her spotless and unexampled purity, in spite of all the seductions of youth, beauty, and power. To crown all these reminiscences, Joseph remembered with pride that the infant whom Maria Theresa had held in her arms, when she presented him to the faithful Hungarians, was himself.

These impressions, however, although strong and serious, were not likely to retain their force: the emperor mourned for his mother; but after paying this tribute to nature, he turned his thoughts at once to the future. This was, indeed, a solemn moment for a young monarch of so ardent a temperament. Freed from all tutelage and restraint, he was now the head of a mighty empire. Death had dissolved the sacred ties of nature, and given him independence; and the imperial crown, which had been a plaything in his hands, had at last become the symbol of real authority. The command of the troops, which until then had been a source of vexation, was no longer a mere shadow of power; and when he called them to the field as their lord and master, his will would no longer be restrained by another; the love of glory would no longer be chargeable as an act of rebellion! The army was at his sole disposal, the decrees of one single will and authority were thenceforth to be the law of the empire, whilst the wealth and resources of four kingdoms were at his command to execute that will; nor had he longer to apply submissively to a minister for any little pecuniary grant. Here was an end to all quarrels and artifice, to all secrets leading to explanations, and explanations degenerating into disputes. Instead of constraint, discord, wounded vanity, and the perpetual failure of the best-concerted plans, Joseph might now look forward to general tranquillity, respect, and abundance,—the guarantee of success abroad, and the consequence of internal reform. The able minister who managed the affairs of the state would be retained; but he would thenceforth regard the emperor as his liege sovereign, perhaps as a friend, and no longer in the light of a courtier. Here was truly a vast and noble prospect; a great career opened to the emperor, to succeed and to reward his long and irksome period of probation.

Flattering thoughts and expectations such as these doubtless

occurred to the mind of Joseph II., and weighed in the scale against the regrets which he experienced as a son. He yielded to their influence readily, and his ambition was kindled by laudable motives and sincere intentions. Struck with the numerous admitted abuses which existed in Austria under the reigns of his predecessors, he directed his attention, as soon as he ascended the throne, not to their reformation, but abolition.

He desired the welfare of his subjects, but he wished to accomplish it in a uniform manner; he could not enter at all into the moral characters, habits, reminiscences, or prejudices of others—a faculty which is even more necessary to the sovereign than to the poet. His subjects were in his eyes merely ill-arranged masses, and he resolved to effect a general and arithmetical revision of them—that is to say, to treat all the various countries he governed, notwithstanding their discordant or opposite characters, as one whole, naturally connected and compacted together. Animated as he was by high and proud motives, and an ardent desire to promote the public welfare, Joseph recognised only one instrument of civilization—the exercise of a purely arbitrary sway: he went straight onward, following a narrow path, and not conceiving the possibility of any other. If, in these first moments of infatuation, his thoughts were turned to a popular revolt, caused by the despotic exercise of his benevolent views,—if he by chance imagined that a nation might refuse to be rendered prosperous and happy on these conditions,—he must have rejected this idea as a chimerical absurdity.

This direction of his thoughts, or rather this turn of his character, was confirmed by his pride. Joseph imagined himself gifted with every kind of talent—legislation, administration, war, appeared to be all natural to him, and he entered upon this vast career without fear or hesitation.* According to his own representation, the scruples of Maria Theresa had repressed his omniscience; from the height of his disdain he looked down contemptuously upon mankind; and, imagining himself delegated by

* Joseph II. often said that "Providence had endowed sovereigns with a peculiar instinct for governing, and that their opinions and advice ought to have a natural preference over the counsels of their ministers."—Despatch of Prince Louis de Rohan, July 10th, 1773.

Providence to the accomplishment of a great task, he engaged in it without pity and without fear.

Joseph II. resolved, above all, to destroy the ecclesiastical domination which had for ages been established in Germany: he was indignant that an emperor should bow before a Jesuit. The Order was suppressed in the hereditary states of the house of Austria, but its spirit still survived. Nor was the institution of St. Ignatius the only adversary which Joseph had determined to subdue: he coveted a power over all the clergy, and especially over their wealth. This was a project which had been long postponed, but his determination to carry it into execution was fixed and irrevocable. In this resolution he was confirmed by his brother the Grand Duke of Tuscany,* and especially, at the time of his journey into the south of France, by the Archbishop of Toulouse, afterwards Cardinal of Lomenia.†

Since the Reformation, and above all since the thirty years' war, religious liberty had entirely disappeared in the Austrian states. The schools and seminaries were exclusively in the hands of the Jesuits, a society which was still in its infancy, but born to command. Their doctrine was established, without opposition, in the palace of the emperors and the archdukes of Austria; it ruled the Electors of Bavaria, and thenceforth none of these princes imagined his soul to be safe unless it was in the charge of a Jesuit.

These monarchs were indissolubly attached not only to the Holy See, but to the temporal interests of the papacy, by religious zeal and habit, strengthened by hostility to the encroaching spirit of Protestantism. The weak-minded emperors of this period, such as Rodolph, Leopold, and Ferdinand, recognised unhesitatingly the power of the See of Rome. Nothing disturbed the repose of the imperial palaces, which were guarded and besieged by legates, cardinals, princely prelates, and Jesuits—a host of priests of every denomination and monks of every colour.

Notwithstanding the spirit of innovation which actuated the emperor Joseph I., the uncle of Maria Theresa, on the

* Breteuil to D'Aiguillon, July 26th, 1775.
† Caraccioli, *Vie de Joseph II.*, p. 84.

accession of that princess, the German clergy remained at heart attached to the Holy See. The empress, just escaped from so many perils and disasters, had paid little attention to religious reforms, whilst her piety also deterred her from so bold an enterprise. Gifted, however, in a high degree with that perfection of good sense which is the true genius of sovereigns, she had perceived, during her misfortunes, the extreme difference of civilization which rendered the Catholic portion of Germany so inferior to the Protestant States. She saw that this was no effect of natural causes, the soil of Austria being more fertile than the sands of Brandenburg; but that the true cause of the inferiority was to to be found in the circumstance, that Austria, fertile as she is, possesses too many convents and too few farms. Maria Theresa was struck by this fact: she attempted to diminish the former and to multiply the latter; but an invincible obstacle opposed this wise design, and that opposition (who would imagine it?) came from England, at that time the all-powerful and imperious ally of the young sovereign. We have already seen, at the time of the fall of the Jesuits in Portugal and Rome, the strange intervention of the Protestant powers in purely Catholic affairs.* In this case England became the apologist for mendicant monks. Had Austria turned her attention to the resources of her national industry, she would eventually have dispensed with British subsidies, and this was at all hazards to be prevented.

This position of affairs, favourable to the Holy See, might have long continued, and the pope might have been satisfied with a peaceful *statu quo*, guaranteed by the Protestants. Clement XIII., nevertheless, gave the signal for an imprudent contest: instead of flattering the servile disposition of the princely abbés and crowned prelates, he first attacked an ecclesiastical elector,

* The following is an example of this strange and characteristic alliance:—At the electoral diet of Joseph, as King of the Romans, a suit between the Cardinal-bishop of Spires and the Count Styrum, his coadjutor and afterwards his successor, divided Germany. The Elector of Mayence undertook to decide the question in concurrence with the Court of Rome, which desired to transfer the affair to its tribunal, and to claim the metropolitan jurisdiction. The nuncios, in order to paralyze the measures of this prince, endeavoured to gain the Protestant Electors to their views, and they succeeded. The Electors of Brandenburg and Hanover saw readily, that since there must be a head of the Catholic Church in Germany, it was better that he should reside on the banks of the Tiber than on the Rhine; and they voted conformably to the wishes of the Court of Rome.

the Archbishop of Mayence. After imposing some unusual taxes upon this sovereign, he ordered his nuncio to interfere in an unwarrantable manner with the jurisdiction of the archbishopric of Cologne, arbitrarily opposing the secularization of some monasteries which that Elector wished to erect into noble chapters in the archbishopric of Munster. In short, by arbitrary nominations, by an entire disregard of ancient usages, and, above all, by an illegitimate extension of the nuncial prerogatives, Clement XIII. confounded the temporal with the spiritual power, assailed the Germanic constitution, and drew upon himself the hostility of the ecclesiastical Electors, as Germans, as prelates, and as sovereigns.

The Archbishop of Mayence, putting himself at the head of these disaffected princes, retaliated by an open attack upon the Jesuits, suppressing two or three convents and several shrines. He drew up a long and detailed memorial, in which he accused the pope of having violated the Concordat of Aschaffenburg, concluded in the year 1448 between the Emperor Frederick III. and Pope Nicholas V.; of having usurped the collation of benefices which conferred political rights; and, finally, of having ventured to create princes of the empire. A circumstantial and acrimonious recapitulation accompanied this memorial. The Elector presented this document to the Emperor Joseph II., who received it with a feeling of inward pleasure, although with apparent coldness. The germ of all that he subsequently attempted is contained in this memorial of the Elector; and, as his own enterprises served as a model to the constituent assembly of France, the source of the great social reformation in that country may possibly be traced to Germany.

The emperor was impatient to assail the Holy See. We have seen that, by the agency of Count de Firmian, governor of Lombardy, he interdicted the use of the bull *in Cœna Domini*, and favoured liberty of conscience at Lemberg, the capital of his newly conquered territory of Gallicia. His mother had restrained him from any active measures; they were at that time agreed, although their motives were different. Maria Theresa wished to have all her children nobly provided for; whilst Joseph, comparatively indifferent to his family, was meditating that ascendancy in Germany which was the dream of his life. In order

to attain this two-fold object, they compelled Maximilian, the youngest of the archdukes, to take orders. This voluptuous prince felt an honest repugnance to enter on a career so little in conformity with his inclinations, but his resistance was soon ended; Maximilian perceived that no other resource was open to him, and that he could only obtain opulence and liberty by acquiescing in this decision. It was the injunction of a brother, who would soon be his sovereign, and perhaps of his mother also, and Maximilian yielded. Thenceforth the court of Vienna thought only of concentrating in its own hands all the great benefices of Germany.

Maximilian was appointed coadjutor of the Archbishop of Cologne; but the reversion of that electorate was deemed insufficient, and the court of Austria sought to procure for him other large bishopries, amongst which was that of Munster. The King of Prussia, the protector of the independence of the Germanic princes, attempted to frustrate this project, and threatened the chapters, but the influence of the court of Vienna induced the pope to yield.

The cabinets of Madrid and Versailles complained in strong terms of this measure. The latter, although circumspect in its conduct towards Austria, was less under the control of Marie-Antoinette than has been imagined, and authentic diplomatic documents prove that in more than one instance the opposition of the Vergennes ministry to Austria was resolute and persevering. Maria Theresa met this with tender protestations, and Joseph nourished in his heart a bitter enmity to France.

This was the extent of the complaints which the court of Rome could bring against the Austrian sovereigns, and they were certainly very slight. Although readily disposed to complain, the pope had reason to congratulate himself: as long as Maria Theresa lived, the relations of Rome with the house of Austria were friendly and peaceful; whilst the former was exposed to the attacks of all the Catholic sovereigns, and able to oppose to them merely the equivocal friendship, the humiliating protection of princes who did not recognize the authority of the Holy See, the pope found consolation only in the piety of the empress and the hereditary devotion of Austria. Rome had no longer any hopes but in Vienna.

It was natural to expect that the news of the death of Maria Theresa would cause great uneasiness at Rome. She had been the protectress of the Holy See, and had never yielded to the modern philosophy; nevertheless, even during her reign, clear-sighted observers had discerned the symptoms of a religious revolution. Pius VI., who was an optimist by nature, saw nothing, and wished to see nothing: the recognition of the Holy See is limited to circumstances which have already taken place.

At all events, prudence required that the conduct of the Papal Court, with regard to the election of a successor to the empress, should be marked with discretion and management: above all, it was requisite to avoid giving any offensive pretext to a prince whose turbulence was well known, and whose leaning to the philosophical party was suspected. If Joseph should venture to attack the prerogatives of the Holy See, it was politic to leave the responsibility of his measures to himself; and perhaps a just regard for the religious feeling of his subjects would induce him to defer, or at least to mitigate, his hostility. Whether this reasoning was strictly accurate or no, it was at all events the safest for the pope to act upon; and his first measure should have been to conciliate the Austrian monarchy, by a just expression of respect for the memory of Maria Theresa. But the pontiff wholly disregarded so reasonable and natural a line of policy; and, with an inconceivable forgetfulness of all the dictates of ordinary prudence, he insulted the memory of Maria Theresa and excited the anger of Joseph II.

On the death of Catholic sovereigns of the highest rank, the pope always assembles the cardinals in consistory, communicates to them the loss which the Church has sustained, and performs a funeral service in the chapel of the Vatican; this is an observance consecrated by immemorial usage. Pius VI. refused these last honours to the Empress of Germany, the Queen of Hungary and of Bohemia. His friends represented to him forcibly the inexpediency and danger of such an injurious proceeding: but Pius VI. argued that such marks of distinction had never been conferred on the consorts of the sovereigns. The cardinals, and especially Bernis, argued that Maria Theresa was not simply the consort of a sovereign, but a great queen in her own right, independently of any alliance; nevertheless Pius VI. persisted

obstinately in his resolution, which he carried so far as to prohibit his domestic prelates from wearing mourning.

Joseph could scarcely have anticipated that the pope would thus second his own projects; but as it suited the emperor's views to exhibit towards the Court of Rome disdain rather than indignation, he was satisfied with adding these words at the close of the despatch of his minister, the Cardinal Herzan, "It matters little to me whether the Bishop of Rome is polite or rude."*

This expression was not sincere; it was of great importance to him that the pope should be wanting in address, and he hesitated not to avail himself of the papal deficiency.

If Braschi had taken his cue from Joseph, he could not have served him more agreeably. So weak a motive could doubtless neither have originated nor decided the projects of reform which had entered the emperor's head: matured by constraint, they would naturally burst forth spontaneously, and no outward cause had increased the violence of such a desire. But Austria is Catholic, and attached to the ancient symbol of the faith; this religion, rooted in the habits and character of the country, could only be counterbalanced by the national love for the Austrian dynasty; and hitherto these two sentiments had coexisted and strengthened one another. Austria saw in her princes an example of reverence and submission to the Holy See. It was therefore the height of imprudence and bad policy in any pope to disturb the connection which existed between these two national sentiments: the disrespect shown to the memory of Maria Theresa was felt deeply by the people of Austria, and this circumstance afforded the best pretext to Joseph for testifying his displeasure toward the Court of Rome. An edict of general toleration proclaimed the plans of Joseph II. to the empire and the Court of Rome: it was conceived in the following terms:—

"Convinced of the pernicious effects of all violence done to the rights of conscience, and of the essential advantages of a true Christian toleration, his apostolical, imperial, and royal Majesty decrees, that the private exercise of their religion shall be permitted to all his Protestant subjects of the Helvetic Confession and the Confession of Augsburg, as well as to all his

* Breteuil to Vergennes, February 18, 1781.

subjects of the Greek religion, in all parts of the Austrian monarchy where they are found in sufficient numbers.

"Those who do not profess the Catholic religion shall not be obliged to take oaths containing any formula contrary to the principles of their sect, nor to assist in the processions and ceremonies of the established religion.

"In conferring offices the sovereign will not be influenced by any regard to the difference of religious opinions, but solely to the capacity and fitness of the parties.

"Mixed marriages will be permitted.

"No person is to be punishable on religious grounds, unless he has violated the civil law."

Certain restrictions and explanations were introduced into the body of this edict, but these were the great and fundamental principles upon which it was framed.

Another law followed the first, which caused no less surprise. The emperor ordered that the applications for marriage dispensations and other canonical matters should no longer be addressed to the pope, but in each diocese to the bishop, who was himself to cease to have any right of appeal to Rome. The following were among the provisions of this second edict:—

It declared the bulls or briefs of the pope to be of no effect without the imperial sanction.

It prohibited novices or persons in religious orders from giving donations to their convent exceeding 1200 florins.

Convents placed under the discipline of the diocesan bishops were declared withdrawn from the authority of the heads of their order, for the most part foreign.

The bulls *Unigenitus* and *In Cœna Domini* were to be torn from the church books.

The ordinations of priests were postponed.

The edict also decreed—

The suppression of monasteries, and principally those of the Carthusians;—the monastery of Pavia, a marvel of riches and architecture, included.

The suppression of the multiplicity of benefices.

The suppression of several chapters, and the application of their revenues to the public treasury.

The suppression of the theological schools established in the monasteries.

We must stop here: to extract all the ordinances which Joseph II. accumulated in the space of a year would be to defy, as he did, both time and patience, but we have given the principal ones. Scarcely had they appeared, when violent remonstrances were raised on all sides, which at the present day it is difficult to comprehend. Accustomed as we are to the natural consequences of the principles established by Joseph II., we can discover in them nothing to cause any surprise. But the point of view has changed: such principles were at that period formidable novelties, for although sovereigns had leagued with the philosophy of the age, they had not taken up arms in its defence. This was a precedent and an example which acquired increased weight, and was the more formidable, as it emanated from the throne of the Germanic emperors. We can scarcely enter into the excitement and astonishment which these measures raised; at the period of their occurrence it was all new,—at the present day we are accustomed to it all. We have witnessed revolutions until they almost cease to affect us, whereas that period was marked by tranquillity and repose; in fact life itself was only felt in actual conflict, but that conflict is now irrevocably ended.

The character of Joseph II. can only be correctly appreciated by divesting it of the traditionary prejudices of the past and of present impressions. The first characteristic of his conduct, we should say, was courage. The principle upon which his reforms in religious matters were based was equitable, regular, and irreproachable. Occupying the first rank among the sovereigns of Europe, Joseph was not daunted by political ideas which, founded as they are upon the natural rights of man, are at the present day recognised as such. He looked to the future, and thought to anticipate its progress; seeking a rapid and exclusive enjoyment of its promises, and forcing the development of his projects. In one single year—the year which followed his accession—he expended the glory of several reigns, and the success of his life was exhausted. But Joseph had another weakness,—he confounded great matters and small, just and unjust. He

imagined that he was legalizing the rights of conscience, whilst, from misunderstanding them, he carried his reform into the minutest details of an arbitrary discipline. In the same document we find, side by side, regulations respecting the free exercise of religious worship, and minute directions for processions and funeral rites. At one time, as a legislator, he stooped to strip the images of the Madonna, ornamented, according to the custom of the south, with glittering apparel and artificial flowers; at another time he would regulate the number of wax-lights to be used. Frederick, edified by his piety, called him "*mon frère le sacristain.*" Sometimes, too, his want of judgment frustrated his good intentions; the care which he bestowed on the repression of mendicity, by useful regulations, claims our respect; but we are disgusted at his causing an association to be publicly announced in the Catholic churches of the empire under the foolish title of the *Guild of Brotherly Love.* Inconsistency, moreover, diminished the value of Joseph's efforts, and gave them the appearance of capriciousness and prejudice. The emperor had suppressed the plurality of benefices, and deprived Cardinal Migazzi of the bishopric of Watzen because its tenure was incompatible with that of Vienna; but, whilst he took this wise step, he never thought of relinquishing any of the ecclesiastical revenues accumulated in the hands of his brother Maximilian; and, when the archbishop of Vienna indirectly alluded to this inconsistency, the emperor was obliged to reply by a sophism unworthy of his straightforward character, pretending that, in using the words "*Viros illustres*," with regard to the plurality of benefices, the Council of Trent had made an exception in favour of the children of sovereigns.

Such were the ecclesiastical reforms which Joseph II. effected. We have brought them thus together, because they preceded all the innovations which that sovereign introduced, and which, in some cases to his shame and in others to his honour, left no portion of his maternal heritage intact.

The European governments watched these measures attentively, not from any interest in a cause which they had ceased to defend, and still less from any foresight of the future results which must follow such a disregard of things until then held

sacred, but from a present fear of that bold ambition which all these innovations indicated. They regarded political probabilities more than the personal character of Joseph II., and imagined that they discerned in this ardour for reform a means rather than an end. Nevertheless none of the allies of Austria interposed its mediation between the pope and the emperor. Breteuil, the French ambassador at Vienna, and Bernis, chargé d'affaires of the king at Rome, had anticipated the instructions of their court, and adopted a conciliatory course, —the former at the solicitation of the nuncio, and the latter actuated by an *esprit de corps;* but they soon received precise instructions from France, directing them to observe the strictest neutrality. Vergennes, although he blamed the forms which Joseph adopted, saw nothing reprehensible in the spirit of his measures; he was moreover of opinion, and with reason, that remonstrances from a foreign court, even of an amicable nature, would have the effect of stimulating instead of calming the emperor's ardour; and he feared above all, that if France took part in affairs of this nature, she would excite theological contentions from which she was then happily freed, and which had for so long a time created divisions in the kingdom. All these considerations united made Louis XVI. resolve to remain a passive spectator.

As soon as Joseph had taken the first steps in this new career, the nuncio in dismay and alarm had appealed to the piety and justice of the Prince de Kaunitz; but the minister was little distinguished by the first of these virtues, and the second was in his mind subordinate to calculations of policy. He received the nuncio with coldness, and even severity; so far from quieting his fears, he increased them by intimating that the emperor would not consult any person with regard to the exercise of his authority; and, when the nuncio reminded him of the ties which had constantly connected the courts of Vienna and Rome, —manifested, as he said, by so many acts of spiritual favour, and especially by the admission of several subjects of the monarchy into the sacred college—Kaunitz, insensible to this argument, intimated that it was desirable there should no longer be any Austrian cardinal.

The nuncio requested an audience of the emperor, but the Prince de Kaunitz prevented this; the nuncio redoubled his complaints and entreaties, which he urged in writing, and Kaunitz replied in a note, the energetic tone of which will preserve it from oblivion. "The emperor," he writes, "has not been a little surprised to find in the note of Monsignore Garampi, nuncio of the pope, blame cast upon his recent ordinances. His imperial Majesty has read in that note, expressed in explicit terms, that *no prince remaining in the Roman Catholic communion had ever thought of extending the exercise of his authority so far.* His Eminence the Nuncio, without doubt involuntarily, leaves the odious consequence to be inferred from these expressions, that a prince, by extending his power so far, ceases to be a Catholic; he even appears to intimate the possibility of circumstances sufficient to release subjects from their oath of allegiance. The emperor is willing to attribute such expressions only to the too ardent zeal of his Eminence the Nuncio, and believes them uttered without the knowledge of the Holy Father. He would even have remained silent, had it not come to his knowledge that his Eminence the Nuncio had communicated his note to bishops of the hereditary states, and even to foreigners. In consequence, his Majesty orders the chancellor to reply to Monsignore Garampi in the following terms:—

"That the abolition of notorious abuses serves the interests of religion;

"That if such abuses had been inherent in religion, it would entirely have lost its venerable character, and that, so far from being received with the pious eagerness which the moderation of its principles and the excellence of its morality merit, the interests of mankind would not have permitted its adoption;

"That the abolition of any institutions whatever which do not relate exclusively to the spiritual care of souls, belongs to the temporal sovereign. In this number is the external discipline of the church, and, above all, that of the regular clergy,—an institution of human invention, since it is proved that monasteries were unknown in the first ages of the church, and owe their creation to the munificence of princes.

"In conformity with these fixed principles, his Imperial Majesty has been not only authorised, but obliged by a sense of duty, to assume the direction of all that does not specially concern dogma and matters of conscience.

"No alteration in religion is therefore contemplated. The apprehensions which his Eminence the Nuncio appears to entertain for the faith exist only in his own too sensitive imagination.

"The present instrument is executed by the court and state chancellor, in compliance with the strict commands of his Imperial Majesty, in order to enable Monsignore Garampi to conform his future conduct to its intentions, and to give an assurance of the personal regard of his Majesty for his Eminence the Nuncio.

"It remains only for the chancellor of state to repeat to his Eminence, &c. &c.

"Vienna, December 9th, 1781."*

The repeated advances of the envoy of Pius VI. sufficiently manifest the uneasiness of the court of Rome. Assailed as the Holy See had been through a religious order which it had reared for its own defence, and to which it was strongly attached, that power had already undergone a severe trial; but what was this local grief and mortification in comparison with the blow with which it was now threatened? In addition to the loss of her firmest support, the friendship of the house of Austria, Rome now saw herself even assailed by that power, not merely in certain prerogatives or on points of etiquette, but in her very constitution. It was no longer a question regarding particular ceremonies or outward observances; but the power thus assumed by Austria annulled the right of the priesthood to enter into the privacy of domestic life, to preside over all occurrences, and to follow and control the actions of a man from the cradle to the grave: at his birth, in his education, marriage, testamentary bequests, death, and burial, Rome was present and exercised her authority: priests were the legal witnesses of the civil affairs of citizens. But Rome was now not only deprived of these civil

* Correspondence of Vienna, December 12, 1781.

offices, but almost excluded from the sanctuary itself. Monasteries, convents, fortresses of Catholicism, scattered over the land for the defence of a common country, would henceforth constitute so many republics and colonies independent of Rome. Nor was this all: the blow directed against the exercise of her authority reached also the source of her wealth; she lost the revenues derived from America, her ecclesiastical dues, the income from briefs of eligibility, dispensations, anathemas, and reconciliations. In short, Rome was despoiled of all: even the liturgy, which in spirit as well as form was of right under her authority, was no longer screened from profane censure; the chants, prayers, invocations, and direction of the ceremonies were now subjected to secular authority. No event, since the Reformation, had ever assailed the Church so grievously; indeed the Reformation itself, although it led to deeper and more permanent results, was not calculated to bring it into such contempt.

At the former period, the blow had been dealt in the midst of a war, and the enemies of Rome boasted of the title; attack and defence were alike avowed and public. But in the present instance, instead of professing any outward hostility, the Catholic potentate who assailed the church of Rome maintained every appearance of respect: so far from renouncing the name of Roman Catholic, like the reformers, Joseph II. claimed it jealously; he was no declared enemy of the church. The pope had need of prudence and continual circumspection in dealing with such an adversary; although despairing at heart, it was necessary to affect serenity, as the least symptom of impatience would expose him to the reproach of having provoked schism. This was a painful state of dissimulation, but it was the more indispensable as the Roman people still preserve an hereditary respect for the name of emperor. Such was the situation of Pius VI.; never was there one more surrounded by difficulties, yet his courage rose superior to them all.

The pope entered upon the unequal contest, confiding entirely in his powers of persuasion, for which he often returned thanks to God. He determined to subdue Joseph II. by his eloquence, and the only apparent means of accomplishing this was to esta-

blish a correspondence with the emperor. He eagerly seized the first opportunity of exercising, as he thought, a sure ascendancy. The emperor wrote to him, requesting a grace, authorizing him to appoint to all the bishoprics and benefices in Lombardy. Pius VI. withheld his consent, forgetting how easily Joseph II. might dispense with it: he attributed that monarch's reforms to caprice, regarding them as perhaps the result of so trivial an accident as the funeral of Maria Theresa; and he entertained the hope of convincing a man whose head was of iron, and who in his heart was an enemy to the priesthood. Pius VI. wrote to the emperor, but he received a harsh reply; Joseph's inflexibility was all the greater, since the bluntness of his manner gratified his feelings and promoted his object at the same time. He sent word to his Holiness, that, in case of his refusal, he should proceed, in virtue of his own rights, to the collation of the ecclesiastical benefices in the Milanese territory. The attempt at persuasion by means of this correspondence having failed, Pius VI. changed his plan of proceeding, and affected an imperturbable phlegm and the greatest confidence in Joseph II. No one could imagine what had given rise to such a sentiment, and Bernis especially comprehended neither the cause of this tranquillity or this hope. The French cardinal, who was admitted to the intimacy of the pope, interrogated him in every possible way, but he was met with only perfect silence or enigmatical replies. Bernis could not understand a reserve which wounded his vanity; his curiosity and uneasiness were also stimulated by the half-confidential statements of several trusty prelates. "You will soon hear a great piece of news," said the Cardinal Conti to him one day; and whilst Bernis was striving to conjecture the nature of this news, he was informed through his private letters that a visit from Pius VI. was expected at Vienna. Astonished at such an extraordinary rumour, and offended at receiving the information through an indirect channel, Bernis went at once to the pope, who did not conceal his project. The holy father admitted that, after having exhausted all argument and entreaty with the emperor, he had proposed to him a conference in the capital of the empire.

Joseph accepted this proposal, which highly flattered his

pride; nevertheless he concealed his pleasure, affected indifference, and represented to the pope that, if by this journey he hoped to shake his resolutions, his Holiness might spare himself the trouble; but adding, that his respectful and devoted son would be happy to receive such a *singular favour*,—so the emperor expressed it in an autograph letter. Thenceforth the sovereign and his minister each acted his part: Joseph displayed attention and respect towards the pope, and left the less gracious office of affecting disdain and severity to the Prince de Kaunitz, who, when consulted by the nuncio, only enlarged upon the uselessness of this journey to Vienna.

The resolution of Pius VI. faltered for an instant; but the peror, when informed of his hesitation, laughed at it, and declared in public that, after having announced his visit, the pope would only bring ridicule upon himself if he refused to accomplish it. This taunt decided Pius VI. In vain did Bernis, forgetting the neutrality enjoined on him by his court, attempt to dissuade the pope from a step upon which he had not been consulted: in vain did his reason, rendered eloquent by his offended pride, represent to his Holiness every argument which might deter him from his project. Bernis was not listened to, and the resolution of Pius VI. remained immovable.

From this moment the French cardinal put himself at the head of the party which opposed the journey to Vienna,—a party which was numerous, because this removal of the head of the church would disconcert the routine of affairs at Rome. A kind of petty amicable struggle now arose between the pope and the cardinal, the former proud of having kept his secret, and the latter piqued at not having been intrusted with it. Remonstrances even were used to dissuade Pius VI., but nothing could move him.

The journey to Vienna was calculated to please him in several ways. To display in a foreign country that charm of manner and deportment, the effect of which began to wear out in Rome—to overcome the emperor in his own capital—to go direct into the heart and centre of that rebellious power, and bring back to the sheepfold the prodigal son, the descendant of the Cæsars—to arouse the intimidated zeal of the German

prelates on his journey, and possibly even to plead the cause of the Jesuits;—all these motives might naturally influence the decision of Pius. At length he set out: the news of this journey excited at first a general surprise throughout Europe, and especially in France; but this feeling soon gave place to one of indifference.

"At another period, perhaps," wrote Vergennes to Bernis, "seeing the emperor engaging in a revolution which was likely to affect injuriously his whole reign, it might have been good policy to urge the pope to oppose all possible resistance to the enterprises of that prince: such a course might have been recommended by the twofold advantage of obtaining a ruling influence at Rome, and of enlisting the friendship of all the discontented party in Germany. At the present day we carefully remove all ideas likely to trouble the peace of the church and state, and feed the passions, which are rendered more dangerous by the weakening of the barriers capable of restraining them. We should find nearly as much difficulty in attempting to prevent this kind of schism which is in preparation. The king thinks he does enough for the repose of the world by maintaining by his example the ancient institutions and the respect due to religion. The support which his Majesty is willing to extend to religion at the present crisis would perhaps add to the evils with which it is threatened. I am therefore persuaded, that whenever your Excellence converses with his Holiness respecting these fresh evils which afflict religion, you will be careful to do so in your character of a prince of the church, and not as the representative of his Majesty, who has hitherto made a point of not interfering in what passes between the Emperor and the Holy See."*

The journey of Pius VI. was a complete triumph. An envoy of the King of Spain met him on the road to offer the salutations of that monarch, and the towns which he honoured with his presence received him with idolatry. Thus, in the midst of continued rejoicings and triumph, and (if we may use the expression) borne in the arms of princes, prelates, and

* Bernis paid little heed to this advice, and wrote a strange letter to the Pope on his return from Rome.

people, the successor of the apostles reached the end of his holy pilgrimage.

At Vienna this pious enthusiasm was carried to the highest pitch; the pope indeed could little have anticipated such a cordial welcome. The whole city awaited his arrival prostrate; and all the women of Vienna, from the princess to the menial, lined the thoroughfares along which he passed. From the first moment that the intention of the pope was made public, no other affair was thought of; conversation turned only upon this single subject, which was commented on in a thousand various ways:—"The pope is coming! The pope is coming!" Immediately the preparations were commenced, and there was a general desire to welcome his Holiness with the most honourable reception. These preparations in his capital attracted the emperor's notice, and he felt that his own interest required him to receive the pope with every mark of filial veneration. Pius VI. wished to alight at the palace of the nuncio, but Joseph insisted that he should occupy Maria Theresa's own apartment in the imperial palace—an honourable mark of attention, which the emperor urged solely from the necessity of residing in the same abode, in order to have more frequent intercourse with the pope, and to conceal from the curiosity of others the hours and number of their secret interviews.

Joseph II. and his brother the Archduke Maximilian went to meet the pope as far as Neustadt, some leagues distant from Vienna. At the approach of his Holiness they alighted from their carriage, and Pius VI. immediately followed their example; he embraced the emperor, and the two sovereigns entered Vienna in the imperial carriage, in the midst of an immense assemblage of the populace, and the ringing of bells, which Joseph called the *artillery of the priests*. The poet was alone wanting in these solemnities: at the instant when Pius VI. entered Vienna, Metastasio breathed his last!

So flattering a reception was not calculated to make the pope repent of his resolution, and he took a malicious pleasure in communicating instantly to Bernis the news of his success. This was indeed complete. Had the pontiff limited his views to external effect, he had no reason to regret the course he had

adopted; never was a more august presence received with more sincere devotion and respect. The higher classes of society admired the nobleness of his deportment; the ladies of rank in Vienna, and the Baron de Breteuil, ambassador of France, thought his manners perfect and his demeanour grand; in short, all that constitutes a pope of high rank and captivating deportment seemed to be concentrated in Pius VI. The people were transported with delight at his appearance; their admiration was neither aristocratical, as in the high circles of Vienna, nor artistic, as in the Campo-Vaccino at Rome. The good Viennese troubled themselves little to investigate the lineaments of the pope; but, filled with a lively spirit of faith and a religious enthusiasm, their curiosity to see the Holy Father seemed insatiable, and they assembled in crowds in the streets, churches, and squares—in short wherever Pius VI. passed or was to be seen. Notwithstanding all the efforts of the police, accidents were of daily occurrence, caused by the immense pressure of the populace upon a single spot; but the public zeal did not diminish. Twenty or thirty thousand people followed the pope's carriage, or thronged the space under the windows of his palace, entreating his benediction with loud cries. The banks of the Danube were lined with multitudes, embarking with the pious intention of seeing the Holy Father. In short the concourse of people from the most distant provinces was so great in the capital that a famine was daily apprehended.*

This excess of joy and enthusiasm displeased Joseph,—perhaps it even caused him some fear.† He felt that he had not to deal with a philosophical people; and, whilst pursuing his own objects, he deemed it necessary to give convincing proofs of his attachment to Catholicism. An obstinate affection of his eyes had troubled him for a long time: secret insinuations attributed this to his want of faith, and some even ventured to affirm that, unless he came to a reconciliation with the pope, he would be

* Contemporaneous journals: *Les Martyrs de la Foi*, by the Abbé Guillon, vol. 3; *Oraison funèbre de Pie VI.*, by Monsignore Brancadoro, with notes by the Abbé Dauribeau, Venice, 1799.

† Breteuil to Vergennes.

struck with blindness by Heaven. Alarmed by these rumours, the emperor sent an *ex-voto* offering of golden eyes to the convent of Maria-Zell, and desired the nuns to offer up prayers for the preservation of his sight. But this was not all: he deemed it desirable to receive the communion from the hands of the pope himself, and waited upon him at the Lord's Supper. In an address which Pius VI. delivered in consistory, he forgot to allude to the piety of the emperor,—an omission which was very simple and natural; but Joseph required its reparation, and requested that an expression favourable to this problematical piety should be inserted in the printed address.

A mixture of good and bad understanding existed between Joseph and Pius VI.,—a situation which was not only ridiculous, but false and difficult to maintain. The emperor treated the pope with every appearance of respect and veneration, whilst the holy father professed a truly paternal friendship for his majesty. Nevertheless, in the midst of these touching protestations, Pius VI. gave vent to the most bitter complaints, confessing that he had emptied the cup to the dregs; and indeed the strange and inconsistent conduct of Joseph gave sufficient cause for these complaints. At the very instant when, with a bootless zeal, he was fulfilling the functions of pontifical assistant in the various ceremonies,—in the midst of all the marks of reverence and respect which he lavished upon the holy Father,—he counteracted the effect of all this show of honour by an ironical treatment. As the pope passed through the streets of Vienna, his eye was arrested by edicts opposing his authority paraded on the walls; an express prohibition was intimated to some monks to approach his Holiness or to request any spiritual favours. The work of Febronius, and the pamphlet entitled *Quid est Papa?* met with public encouragement. One trait will suffice to characterize the policy of Joseph in this instance. The bishop of Grätz in Styria, a man of exemplary character but limited intellect, had emerged from obscurity and distinguished himself by a warm opposition to the imperial ordinances. Joseph, irritated at this conduct, chose the day when the pope proceeded to Grätz, to announce to some nuns of that town that they were released from their vows, and

to send the prelate to the Court. With the same object, he delayed the reprimand of the bishop until the arrival of the pope at Vienna. He then summoned the bishop, and treated him in a severe and humiliating manner. The intimidated prelate yielded, and the emperor immediately remanded him to his see, without permitting him to kiss the pope's foot.

As we have before said, the reforms which Joseph introduced were unexceptional and laudable in themselves: his views were not without justice, but from want of genius he was unable to advance to his ends by a straight and broad road, following instead crooked paths, in which he generally lost himself. Throughout this affair of the pontifical visit, his conduct was mean, tricky, and even cruel: he should not have allowed the pope to come to Vienna, but, having once given this permission, he ought not to have rendered it less gracious by miserable chicanery and mortifications. The emperor was not called upon by the circumstance of the pope's visit to change his course of action; and indeed to abandon the principles he had adopted would have been an act of weakness; but an inflexibility on this point was reconcilable with outward courtesy. In great characters grace is only the repose of strength; but to pass by turns from ridiculous and pusillanimous mummery to a brutal procedure toward an old man—a pontiff—toward that *honest Braschi, who had drained the Pontine Marshes*,—was most ignoble and unworthy of a monarch; and it is to be lamented that Joseph II. had not a mind comprehensive enough to understand, that, without any external aid, the presence of a pope in the metropolis of the Germanic empire was itself sufficient to redeem with interest the ancient affronts of the emperors of the middle ages. Frederick judged thus, but Frederick was a truly great man.

The homage of such a prince might console Pius VI. Frederick could not allow such an opportunity to pass without establishing a striking contrast between the emperor and the king. The Baron de Riedesel, minister of Prussia, received instructions to lavish every mark of respect upon the pope, whilst these external manifestations served as a cloak to a secret negotiation, which was crowned with complete success. Frede-

rick II. (it will perhaps excite surprise) strongly desired the recognition of his royal title by the sovereign pontiff, and he obtained it at Vienna.

The Prince de Kaunitz followed a different line of policy. In his office as minister, and as an eminent nobleman, it would be expected that he should have set an example of refined courtesy; but the intoxication of power too frequently supersedes the influences of cultivation. It would be difficult to decide which, in reality, is the coarsest-minded,—a rude peasant or a spoiled favourite: the one is ignorant of what man owes to himself, and the other has forgotten it.

Pius VI., after having vainly awaited a visit from the Chancellor, blinded by his authority, had the weakness to anticipate the visit of the minister. On a fixed day the pontiff arrived, and alighting from his carriage, he found the family of the prince dressed with magnificence, and ready to receive him with pious respect; but he sought in vain his host. The Pope was introduced into his apartments, and passed through several rooms without meeting him. At last Kaunitz appeared at the further end of a picture-gallery, in an unceremonious morning-dress, and received the pope with a smiling countenance and careless demeanour. Instead of kissing the hand which the holy Father extended to him, he seized and pressed it with an air of familiarity. The pope concealed his displeasure, and expressed his admiration of the gallery of the prince, who merely acted as a cicerone, dragging the pope backwards and forwards, under pretence of placing him in the best light to view the pictures. Pius VI. hastened to put an end to this interview, for which the Prince de Kaunitz was far from offering any apology; his insulting coldness even repelled the advances which the sovereign pontiff too freely offered.

The most christian patience would find it difficult to excuse such an absence of the simplest marks of respect. Finding it impossible to obtain justice, Pius VI. ought to have quitted the court of a prince who permitted and perhaps commanded these insults. But he was intimidated, whilst at the same time he desired to succeed in his object; and, what is singular enough, he felt a secret attraction towards Joseph. This sympathy

appeared to be reciprocal: but although it was a genuine feeling in the mind of Pius VI., it must have been less sincerely shared by the emperor. Be this as it may, Joseph had succeeded in convincing the pope of his good faith: Pius believed him in his heart to be an excellent Catholic, and did not attribute to him any intentional error. The emperor made no concession to him, but he avoided at the same time to deprive him of all hope, leaving an opening for the possibility of relinquishing his projects, and at the same time retaining his personal attachment by an ease of conversation and a lavish expression of his confidence. Joseph disclosed to the pope the jealousy of his mind; he drew a satirical picture of all the sovereigns and courts, and related to him startling anecdotes, sparing neither his brother-in-law, Louis XVI., nor his sovereign allies. Pius VI. imagined himself admitted to the confidence of the emperor, little thinking that this necessity of disclosing his secret thoughts was the result of a malady which had become chronic. From these conversations, which were mere superficial gossip, Pius VI. could not gather any solid assurances; and, deceived by the affected simplicity of the emperor, he even granted concessions, which he regarded, or feigned to regard, as instances of success. Leaving undetermined the questions relating to the benefices of Lombardy, or rather, having lost all hope of retaining the disposal of them, Pius VI. relinquished to the bishops the right of granting dispensations, except in serious criminal cases, with the empty reservation of considering the bishops as legates *à latere*. The pope *still had the consolation of having set limits to toleration*; that is to say, he obtained the consent of the emperor to the decree, that, after any Austrian subject had made a declaration of the religion in which he wished to live, he should be treated as an apostate if he afterwards changed his religious profession:—a strange victory, indeed, to which Joseph must have yielded without difficulty; for nothing is less conformable to the spirit of the Catholic religion, the strength of which lies in proselytism. Pius VI. only succeeded in one point: he saved the clergy from the necessity of a political oath,—a project which Joseph II. had conceived, and which was unhappily realized at a

later period in France,—not by a sovereign, but by a sovereign assembly.

Such was the issue of the negotiations of the pope: hope abandoned him on every side, and he only now thought of retracing his steps. In his defeat, he was consoled by magnificent presents, and by the highest honours. The emperor, followed by the archdukes and all his court, accompanied the pontiff: he returned him thanks for his glorious visit, promised to pay his Holiness one in return, and beseeched him to reserve for him *the spectacle of a canonization.* They parted, in tears, at the convent of Maria-Brunn, three leagues distant from Vienna. A touching inscription was ordered by the emperor to commemorate this event, and he intrusted the care of this to the monks of Maria-Brunn; nevertheless the same evening their convent was sequestrated.

The pope returned to Rome: the defenders of his policy asserted that, by this visit to Vienna, the pontiff had rendered a great service to the church, and they declared that the eloquence of the holy father had prevented the scandal of a schism. Nevertheless this journey met with little general approbation, and was deemed fruitless and humiliating.

The same event was renewed at the commencement of the present century, but it produced different impressions: in our days it caused neither ill-will nor derision. It has doubtless not met with unanimous applause: prejudices, interests, and convictions have loudly denounced it, but without irony or disdain, and even with a nobleness and gravity. This marked contrast originates in the spirit of the age, in the character of men and of affairs. There is no parallel between the two emperors, nor any resemblance between the two pontiffs. The Pope who was seen at Notre Dame was humble and gentle; his features reflected a heavenly tenderness, and were a true mirror of his soul. His extraordinary paleness and emaciated countenance, together with manners which were rendered august by their very simplicity, although they did not captivate the eye, yet touched the heart. Pius VI., who was above all a prince, required striking actions, imposing and almost theatrical scenes: he journeyed to the capital of Austria, followed by the taunts of

the different courts* and of the philosophical saloons. Pius VII. made his progress to France, accompanied by all the power of a religious re-action. Pius VI. opposed Voltaire,—Pius VII. went hand in hand with Chateaubriand.

* See the following *bouts-rimés*, by the Count de Provence, completed by the Marquis de Montesquieu:—

> " C'est en vain que de Rome aux rives du *Danube*,
> Notre antique mufti vient au petit *galop*.
> Aujourd'hui pierre ponce, autrefois pierre *cube*,
> Il distillait l'absinthe, à présent le *sirop*.
> De son vieux baromètre en observant le *tube*
> Il doit voir qu'on perd tout lorsqu'on exige *trop*."
>
> Grimm, *Correspondance*, t. xi. p. 61, ed. Furne.

CHAPTER VII.

The Jesuits repudiate the Brief for their suppression—Their retreat into Prussia—Frederick the Great protects the Jesuits and quarrels with the French philosophers — Causes of this disagreement — The Jesuits in Russia—Their opposition to the Holy See—Ambiguous conduct of Pius VI.—Bull for their re-establishment.

According to the laws of the Romish Church, the Society of Jesus was legally dissolved. The anathema which was hurled from the apostolic throne, and sanctioned *ex cathedrâ*, was explicit and irrevocable: it would have been criminal to appeal against it. Some branches of the Catholic church, and some spiritual corporations, had vainly tried to refer the arbitrary acts of the Holy See to the revision of Councils; but that opinion, if not always punished, yet certain to be blamed at Rome, and constantly refuted by the Jesuits, could not possibly obtain their assent: the contradiction would have been too manifest. They were not restrained by the past, but abjured it, in order to turn the future in their favour; they seized the only plank of safety which remained out of their wreck, and, with amazing courage, several amongst them, impeaching the legality of Clement XIV., appealed to a higher council.

Some of the Jesuits, enfeebled or exhausted, consented to forgo the name and dress of the Order, and to conceal themselves under the new titles of *Fathers of the Cross*, *of the Faith*, &c.; but this artifice, which met with encouragement at a later period, was highly offensive to the pride of those energetic men who composed the society. They disdained to employ a cowardly subterfuge, and, relying on the intentions of the successor of Clement XIV., they resolved to wear the insignia of Loyola in the presence of the powers who had publicly proscribed them. While they were the objects of persecution to the Catholic sovereigns, they looked around, and saw clearly that the Protestant monarchs were about to become their patrons. In

that age of sophistry, the Jesuits owed their protection to the spirit of contradiction.

It was not enough for them to find a power which treated every different sect with neglect; they required one alike insensible to the influence of all, and which exacted from every church the renunciation of those ties which held it bound to a foreign authority. It was further necessary that such a power should be disposed to free the rebellious Order from the yoke which it had so long proudly borne, and, of late, so publicly broken. The Jesuits required to be protected against the Court of Rome. Through a strange confusion of things and of ideas, all their hopes rested thenceforth upon the aid of some prince who should be unconcerned on the subject of theology, but extremely tenacious of kingly power.

Frederick the Great was the prince to whom, even before the publication of the brief of Clement XIV., the Jesuits had had recourse. Father Ricci had kept up a regular correspondence with the Court of Berlin, and Ganganelli had vainly endeavoured to put an end to it. A nucleus of the society already existed in Silesia. The Jesuits established in Prussia had paid no regard to the brief for their suppression. In order to escape from its consequences, they had built up a theory which was to bear them out, and, according to which, a multitude of examples supported them in their resistance. Without going back to St. Paul, who withstood the chief of the apostles, there was John Peccador, a brother of "La Charité," who refused to obey the brief of Clement VIII. for the suppression of his Order, and yet John Peccador had actually been canonized by Clement XIV. himself. They added, that a bull is not binding in a state, so long as the sovereign has not approved of its tenor and authorised its execution; especially when the pontifical writing is not in the form of an injunction, but merely of exhortation, like that of Clement XIV. This was a principle true in itself, but applicable only to the relations of princes to the pope,—not to those existing between an Order and the Holy See: it was, moreover, a principle which had never before been acknowledged by the Jesuits.

They set up however this new theology, and Frederick approved it as excellent, and as sufficiently Catholic. The Jesuits

became numerous in his dominions; and very shortly, in spite of bulls and briefs, houses were built, and superiors elected to them. The Bishop of Breslau thought he was doing his duty in trying to suppress this rebellion in the name of the Holy See; but Frederick interposed, by the sequestration of the bishopric, and by a declaration that he had taken the Order under his royal protection.

Pius VI. was satisfied in his own mind; but being hardly pressed by Spanish and French diplomacy, he made some timid attempts at expostulation. Frederick had expected this; the real sentiments of the pope had not escaped his penetration, and he liked to flatter his secret designs, while he pretended to brave him in public. What an extraordinary piece of good fortune for a Protestant king, to be solicited by the pope to send away the Jesuits, and solicited in vain! The caustic temper of Frederick was amused at the originality of his position; and being determined to carry on this political comedy to the end, he sent secret agents to Pius VI. This pope, who was an enlightened man, but greedy of applause, let slip some expressions which were far from diplomatic in their character. He pitied the Jesuits, and lamented their lot; the Prussian agents joined in his lamentations, and German address triumphed over Italian cunning.

Unhappily for Pius VI., Frederick was neither a frank talker nor a discreet confidant: he felt a mischievous delight in divulging the effusions of the holy Father, and thus perplexing the courts of Madrid and Naples. Florida Blanca, the prime minister of Charles III., wrote to Rome in terms so harsh that the Pope made his complaint at Berlin. Frederick laughed in his sleeve at the vexation of the Holy Father, answered him with the haughty tone of an independent monarch, and displayed his tender regard for the Jesuits more publicly than ever. After this answer, there was a fresh explosion at the court of Spain.

Pius VI., sorely distressed, sues for pardon, which Frederick grants. He declares that, "in order to please the Pope, he allows the Jesuits to abandon the dress of their Order—a change which he deems necessary to its preservation; but as to all other points, revenue, education, &c., it was his sovereign will that they should

remain inviolate." Upon this the Pope, with infinite satisfaction at having got rid of a heavy responsibility, writes to the King of Spain—"I have done all in my power, but the King of Prussia is master in his own dominions."

But was all this a pastime only, an amusement? If so, Frederick would soon have tired: his perseverance would not have held out through the contest, but that other motives, more weighty and important, instigated his conduct in this affair. These motives were of two different kinds; some were ostensible, others secret. Frederick had too much regard for public opinion to delay the declaration of his avowed motives: he made them known in the journals of the time—that is, in his correspondence with the French philosophers. He says to D'Alembert, "I did not offer my protection to the Jesuits while they were powerful; but in their adversity I regard them as learned men, whom it would be extremely difficult to replace in the office of educating youth. This important object renders them most valuable in my eyes; for among all the Catholic clergy in my kingdom the Jesuits alone are given to letters; do not expect me then to part with them for the mere asking."

Such was the motive which the King of Prussia openly avowed for the protection he granted to a society of monks, but there were others which he did not acknowledge. It was possible that the interest he took in the education of the young Catholics of Silesia, and the desire of winning their attachment in this newly conquered province—the adroitness of the Jesuits in seconding the governments which declared in their favour, and the use to be made of their influence in Poland—it was possible that all these motives were sufficient to engage the King of Prussia to tolerate them: but these secondary matters of policy had nothing in them to kindle the stoical temper of the conqueror of Rosbach—nothing to account for the sort of protection he granted them, which was not only marked and conspicuous, but studied and self-willed.

The philosophers were amazed, mortified, and indignant; but Frederick paid no regard to their anger, no attention to their complaints: he had even a malicious enjoyment in disappointing the hopes of the sect on a matter of so much importance to them. In his case there was neither remorse nor apology. Frederick did

not turn to adore what he had burned; he made no retractation—he remained faithful to the catechism of the encyclopedists, and piously subscribed to the statue of Voltaire.

Nevertheless, in the midst of these good works, the fruit of so edifying a devotion, he proved himself less orthodox in the acts of his home administration, and carefully followed the method which the philosophers had themselves taught him, and which found expression in the burlesque axiom, "Il faut donner des nasardes aux gens, en les comblant de politesses."*

D'Alembert was not deceived by all this management. In the hope of constraining Frederick to cast off his new allies, he appealed to heaven, to earth, to philosophy, to the most sacred oaths, and, as a last resource, to political arguments. He wished that "neither the king nor his successors might ever have cause to repent of granting an asylum to intriguers;" and that these men might prove more faithful than they had been in the last war of Silesia.† Finding these arguments fruitless, D'Alembert tried the monarch on the side of his vanity: he took the liberty to doubt "whether the Jesuits would ever pay his Majesty the honour of admitting him to their Order, as they did the great Louis XIV., though he could well have dispensed with it; and to the poor miserable James II., who was much more fit to be a Jesuit than a king."‡ After having exhausted every kind of personal argument, he proceeded to more general considerations. "It is not on your Majesty's account," says he, "that I dread the re-establishment of these formerly self-styled Jesuits, as the late parliament of Paris called them. What harm indeed could they do to a prince whom the Austrians, the Imperialists, the French, and the Swedes united have been unable to deprive of a single village? But I am alarmed, Sire, lest other princes who have not the same power as you have to make head against all Europe, and who have weeded out this poisonous hemlock from their garden, should one day take a fancy to come to you and borrow seed to scatter their ground anew. I earnestly hope your Majesty will issue an edict to forbid for ever the exportation of jesuitic grain, which can thrive nowhere but in your dominions."§

* Frederick to Voltaire, March 16th, 1770.
† D'Alembert to Frederick, Dec. 10, 1773.
‡ Ibid., Jan. 1773.
§ D'Alembert to Frederick, April 24th, 1774.

Frederick merely answered, that he had it too much at heart to keep the Jesuits, to give away the seed to any body, and that "never had such gall and bitterness entered into the heart of a truly wise man."*

D'Alembert was furious, but he kept his language within moderate bounds. He owed the competence on which he subsisted to the friendship of the Prussian monarch, and he dared not, therefore, give voice to his resentment, which was the more intense because it succeeded to a warm attachment. D'Alembert restrained himself, but his bile overflowed in spite of his efforts. At once passionate and prudent, he spared neither words of double meaning, nor affected reserve, when either of these could serve his purpose. He endeavoured to make Voltaire his associate in the work of revenge. "What do you think I am at work upon now?" said he; "the expulsion of the Jesuit rabble from Silesia. That your quondam disciple has the greatest mind to get rid of them, there can be no doubt, considering the treason and perfidy which he endured from them during the last war. In every letter I write to Berlin, I declare that the French philosophers are amazed to find the king of the philosophers so slow in imitating the kings of France and Portugal. These letters are read to the king, who is very sensitive to what the true believers think of him, as you are aware; and this grain will doubtless produce a good effect, by the grace of God, who, as Scripture truly says, turneth the hearts of kings."†

D'Alembert's efforts to draw his friend into his project were fruitless: Voltaire answered in studied phrases, simulating zeal which he was far from feeling, and doing nothing: in fact the Jansenists were at that time the great object of his aversion. Since the counterpoise of the Jesuits was removed, the Jansenists had become too powerful; and he hated them so cordially, that "his old blood boiled in his old veins," when he beheld their omnipotence in parliament. This most variable of men remembered that the Jesuits had been his preceptors, and was almost inclined to feel regret for them; besides, their downfall did not appear to Voltaire to be an event of the first magnitude; he coveted something more important. Nor was this the only con-

* Frederick to D'Alembert, May 15th, 1774.
† D'Alembert to Voltaire, Dec. 15th, 1763.

sideration which led him to be cautious. He had often disagreed with the King of Prussia, and their quarrels had not answered well to either party; he was therefore unwilling to run the risk of a rupture, and D'Alembert got no other answer to his clamours than commonplace consolations. "Frederick," said he, "has certain prejudices which must be excused: kings are not kings for nothing:—you must take kings and the gods as they are."* Moreover, the strange part which it now pleased the Solomon of the North to enact amused the anarchical imagination of the aged Voltaire. It diverted him beyond measure to think of Frederick as general of the Jesuits: *he hoped this would inspire the Pope with the idea of becoming Mufti.* D'Alembert took the matter less gaily; he found no better consolation than that of acquainting the King of Spain with the conduct of the adroit society towards the King of Prussia:—"*Apropos* of those thieves; did I tell you what the King of Prussia said to me in a letter of the 8th of December? 'I have given audience to an ambassador from the general of the Ignatians, urging me to declare myself openly the protector of their Order. I replied that when Louis XV. had thought proper to disband the regiment of Fitz-James, I had not seen fit to intercede for that body, and that it was for the pope to make whatever reforms he pleased in his own states, without the interference of heretics.' I gave a copy of this passage of the king's letter to the Spanish and Neapolitan ministers, who, sharing our tender regard for the Jesuits, sent the extract to their respective courts, as we are told in the *Gazette de Hollande.* I trust that the friendship of the King of Spain for the Society will increase, and that this little circumstance will serve, as Tacitus has it, *impellere ruentes.*"†

The protection afforded to the Jesuits by the great Frederick indicates an important change in the spirit of the eighteenth century. From that moment a schism took place between the crowned heads and the philosophers of the age. However it might be concealed or disguised by precautions taken on either side, however its effects might be retarded by a long interval of general war, this schism was not the less profound, and from its very origin irremediable.

* Voltaire to D'Alembert, June 11, 1776.
† D'Alembert to Voltaire, Jan. 9, 1773.

Frederick was disposed to like the French philosophers; their union was formed by common principles, and cemented by gratitude. The philosophers were his most sincere allies; they took part in his glory as if it was their own, and celebrated his successes with personal exultation. How often during the war did that little group, strolling under the chesnut-trees of the Tuileries—Diderot, d'Alembert, Marmontel, Morellet—rejoice at the reverses of Maria Theresa! The King of Prussia was attached to the leaders of the new school by a genuine friendship. The event which broke up their union could not but be one of serious importance; and although Frederick's conduct deserves severe reprehension after he had quarrelled with his former masters, we must appeal to their own principles for an explanation of the riddle in which their dispute originated.

At this second period of its history, the school of the French philosophers had undergone a transformation. Its former axioms were now extended to fresh corollaries, and its attacks were no longer exclusively directed against the institutions and doctrines of religion. They had descended from the things of heaven to the things of earth; and the philosophy of the eighteenth century, which had begun in religion, morality, and speculation, ended in the more positive and practical application of these subjects to politics. In writing the history of this remarkable sect, the different periods of its rise and progress have not been accurately distinguished. Men speak of it as if it had sprung into existence completely armed; whereas in fact it passed through the common gradations of the world, and had, like every other living thing, its infancy, its boyhood, its youth, and its manhood. Without tracing its history further back, Fontenelle may be regarded as the representative of the earliest period of the philosophy of the eighteenth century,—of whom it was said that "his hands were full of truths, though he took good care not to open them." He did indeed open them sometimes, but always with circumspection.

Fontenelle was followed by Voltaire, who, in spite of the unprecedented boldness of his style, still retained a certain degree of caution in his literary labours. The following fragment of one of his letters contains the substance of his life:—

"No, my dear Marquis (M. de Villevieille), no,—a modern

Socrates drinks no hemlock. The Socrates of Athens was, between ourselves, a most imprudent fellow, a pitiless caviller, who had made a thousand enemies, and affronted his judges very much out of season. Our philosophers of the present day are much more adroit; they have not the foolish and dangerous vanity of putting their names to their writings. Fanaticism is pierced from one end of Europe to the other, but the hands that aim these shafts of truth are invisible. Damilaville is just dead; he was the author of the '*Christianisme dévoilé*,' and many other productions. Nobody ever knew it—his friends kept his secret as long as he lived with a fidelity worthy of philosophers. No one knows who is the author of the book published under the name of Fréret. In the last two years more than sixty volumes have been printed in Holland against superstition, the authors of which are wholly unknown, though they might boldly declare themselves. The Italian who wrote *La Riforma d'Italia* certainly did not present his work to the pope, but the book has had a vast effect. A thousand pens are writing, a hundred thousand voices are raised, against abuses and in favour of toleration. You may be sure that the revolution which has taken place in people's minds, within the last twelve years, has done much towards the expulsion of the Jesuits from so many states, and has encouraged princes to aim a blow at that idol of Rome which formerly made them all tremble. The mass of the people indeed is stupid enough, but yet the light penetrates even to them: be assured, for instance, that there are not in Geneva twenty persons who do not forswear Calvin as heartily as the Pope, and that there are philosophers in the shops of Paris.

"I shall die happy if I see true religion, namely that of the heart, established on the ruins of false pretence. I have always preached in favour of worshipping God, and practising beneficence and toleration. With these sentiments I brave the devil, who has no existence, and the real devils of fanaticism, whose existence is but too evident."

This letter was written in the end of 1768, and contains not a word of politics; it is all about religion, toleration, and speculative philosophy. In fact, the absence of the political element is the distinctive mark of that philosophy whose high-priest was Voltaire, and whose prévôt was D'Alembert. We who live in

the nineteenth century can hardly comprehend this. Politics were nothing to our fathers' fathers,—they were much to our fathers, and to us they are everything. The eighteenth century was absorbed in general ideas, and looked forward into an immense and dim futurity: it dwelt upon the indefinite perfectibility of the human race, and disdained to discuss the different forms of government. A subject which is so interesting in our eyes, and so important in itself, appeared to our predecessors a secondary consideration. Taking their stand upon a fancied elevation, the human race appeared to them the principal object; and in those days, the leading men of talent left the subject of politics to kings, ministers, secretaries, and mistresses. Voltaire, while in England, gave his thoughts to popes, to deism, to Lord Bolingbroke, to the logic of Locke; and three or four lines in the *Henriade* were all he bestowed to pay his debt to the representative government.

There was one man indeed who, though completely imbued with philosophy, felt that politics might be placed in the same rank: he saw no inferiority, because there was applicability. By an effort of genius, which it has now become difficult to appreciate at its true value, he perceived that to pass from generalities to practical measures was not to recede but to make progress. *L'Esprit des Loix* appeared in the middle of the century, but it appeared alone, and was in fact a wonderful accident. The philosophy of the day, and the very different direction of the public mind, caused the book to be completely misunderstood. The apparent frivolity of certain passages was taken literally, and those who could not reach the profundity of Montesquieu's thought, accused him of treating his subject superficially. Strange as this accusation seems, it was sincere. When the author consulted the President Helvetius about his manuscript, he regretted that he employed his time and sought amusement in such trifles: —"What the devil does he mean to teach us with his treatise on fiefs? is this a subject of research for a wise and reasonable man? . . . . In youth his fine talent had risen to the height of the *Lettres Persanes*. . . . . Our friend Montesquieu will now be nothing more than a lawyer, a gentleman, and a wit: I am grieved for him, and for mankind, whose interests he might have served so much better!" (Letter from Helvetius to Saurin.) The

work of Montesquieu was therefore far from dazzling the world at its first appearance. It was produced too early, not for itself, but for its judges; and its renown did not travel from France throughout Europe, but was imported from Europe into France. The first school of philosophy, morals, and theology moved around this colossal statue without touching it at any one point. *L'Esprit des Loix* was not understood until after the appearance of *Le Contrat Social.* Rousseau, who introduced into philosophy the matter-of-fact of politics, and into politics the vagueness of philosophy, belonged nevertheless to the first school, although he founded the second. But of him we shall not speak here—his name alone is a complete revolution.

This political school, derived indirectly from Rousseau, and directly from Raynal and Diderot, deviated widely from the principles of Montesquieu, but nevertheless it proceeded entirely from him. It was full of native and vigorous freshness, and contained the germ not only of the Constituent Assembly, but of the Convention.*

We repeat, then, that the French school of philosophy had entered the arena of politics. As long as Voltaire retained his place at their head, every attack was directed against Christianity: other institutions were not assailed, but on the contrary, were indulged and favoured. The rich, the noble, and the powerful did not think themselves interested in the assaults

* To be convinced that this school was young in politics, it suffices to read the correspondence of Diderot with Mlle. Voland:—"Father Hoop and I have been walking together tête-à-tête, from half-past three o'clock till six. He pleases me more and more. We were talking politics: I asked him a hundred questions concerning the English Parliament, which is a body composed of about 500 persons, holding its sittings in a very large building. Six or seven years ago the house was open to everybody, and the most important affairs of the state were discussed in presence of the nation, assembled and seated in vast galleries above the heads of the representatives. Can you believe, dear friend, that any man would dare, in the face of the whole people, to get up and propose a mischievous project, or oppose a useful one, and so declare himself stupid or bad? You will, no doubt, ask me why the debates are now carried on in private. Father Hoop informed me (for I put the same question to him) that there are a multitude of affairs whose success depends upon secrecy, and that was found to be impossible. 'We have,' he added, 'men who possess the art of what is called short-hand writing, who can write faster than the words are uttered.' The debates in the Houses of Parliament used to appear in print, both at home and abroad, exactly as they took place, which was attended by much inconvenience."

Would not any one suppose it was Gulliver giving an account of Lilliput?—and this was written in 1770!

against religion. Joined as they were by fashion in the anti-Christian league, the sovereigns and nobles found a safeguard in the confederation which they thus formed. The men in place, the ministers for the time being, and those who hoped to become such, feared the return of cardinals and prelates to be masters of the kingdom. Thus, far from restraining the audacity of the new philosophy, the rich, high-born, and powerful made it a point of honour to encourage, strengthen, and increase it. Without their help it would never have come to maturity, whilst it is also true that the support which aided it in infancy did it injury at an advanced period. Then it was not enough to have the support of a few choice spirits; numbers were necessary to its existence; it must reckon on the adhesion of the masses, and of course was forced to give up the aristocracy as allies. The rupture with the higher class was soon effected, and began on the side of the philosophers. This new direction given to the popular mind, so unlike the vague and indefinite notions which had prevailed, soon became an imperious leader. There was no want of interpreters, who undertook to disseminate the new doctrine with all the zeal of novices. The emphatic Diderot, the declamatory Raynal, d'Holbach, Naigeon, and several more, got hold of the Encyclopedia, the Mercurys, the pamphlets of the day, in short of everything which took the place of the journals. They infused into their attacks, which had hitherto been general, a degree of personality most alarming to the higher classes; sparing neither religion nor the priesthood, and from the sacred temples of the Christians presuming to attack the Œil-de-Bœuf. To the great astonishment of the court, and to the amusement of the town, a gentleman of the bedchamber and a lady of quality were travestied and insulted in print; nay, what was still more atrocious, they were called by their names.*

* See, in the contemporary memoirs, the quarrel of Marmontel with the Duke d'Aumont and the pamphlet entitled *La Vision*. Voltaire expressed his displeasure at this:—"They have very absurdly brought forward the Mareschal de Luxembourg's daughter into the quarrel with Palissot. Authors may, if they please, fling rotten apples at each other, but they are not to fling them at the Montmorencies. I'll have nothing at all to do with these quarrels. The marchioness and the duke have honoured me with their kindness, the king is my patron, and I lead a pleasant life." (Voltaire to the President de Brosse, p. 126. Correspondence published by M. Foisset: Paris, Levavasseur, 1837.)

But the culprits were threatened with the Bastille. The great treated Christ and his apostles with irreverence, but they would not endure the like towards themselves. Forgetting their character of philosophers, they became sensitive only to what was due to their rank, and even the Duke de Choiseul was forced to yield to the *esprit de corps*. Voltaire, who came in for his share of blame, was in an agony of fear: he wrote to his friends, reproaching them sharply for their imprudence, and foretold inevitable disasters if they persisted in such a course; but the plebeian soul of D'Alembert had no pity for the complaints of the old aristocrat; the foundling of St. Etienne-le-Rond enjoyed every insult which was offered to high birth. Voltaire tried in vain to shield his court friends from attack: nobody minded his entreaties, and he was fairly left behind. When compelled to give up the courtiers, he endeavoured at least to save the princes. As long as the shafts were aimed only at the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, Voltaire did not give up all for lost. The other courts of Europe were not friendly to Versailles; they had no sympathy for the vexations of a French marchioness or duke, nor any pity for the humiliation of a class whose frivolity they pretended to despise, even while they envied its elegance. The foreign courts, therefore, were not much alarmed; and, indeed, the dereliction of Voltaire, though actually true, was not publicly known. In their dependence upon him, crowned heads slept in peace, and placed their reliance upon the good taste, the perfect tact, and the great ability of their secular correspondent. Princes thought they had a right to say, "The pupil of the Vendômes and the Du Maines, the table-companion of Frederick, the *protégé* of his mistresses, will surely be our defender: he will know better than to place us along with a Fréron, or with the *Ass of Mirepoix*." They reasoned rightly enough: Voltaire would have been glad to maintain the dignity of rank, but he had no longer any power: his disciples were become his masters, and demanded an opposite course. Their former deference for him was gone: instead of imploring, they commanded the patriarch, and held a language to him which was haughty, dry, and harsh; instead of asking his advice, they demanded wages. Voltaire detested their yoke, but nevertheless submitted to it: he feebly attempted to disparage the

fortunate of the earth, whom he had lauded so profusely, and encumbered his numerous works with dull and miserable second readings, contradicted by his habits and refuted by his recollections.

Frederick pitied such weakness: Voltaire, thus broken down, could give no alarm; but, as a monarch and absolute chief of a military state, he felt the danger to be apprehended from the imperious disciples of his *protégé*.

The King of Prussia had ever been remarkably insensible to personal attacks, but he grew uneasy at the repeated censure which his political conduct excited. He was keenly alive to the change of principles and system which he saw going on, and which threatened a complete moral revolution. The new philosophers, in speaking of his renown, used no longer the same flattering terms as formerly: he was no longer an idol, and they dealt out to him conditional praise. Thus Raynal, in his *Histoire des deux Indes*, terminates a pathetic appeal with this uncourtly sentence:—"Oh, Frederick, thou hast been a warlike king; be more! thou didst yield up thy money to Jews, thy finances to foreign robbers." Diderot, in the same style, made a double and ridiculous allusion to the king's talent for music and the arid soil of Prussia. "What a pity," says he, "that the mouth-piece of that flute is stopped up by the sand of Brandenburg!"* Frederick had often been attacked superficially, but the weapon was now plunged deeper: instead of common accusations against his ambition or despotic character, ironical sneers about his morals and temper, and the like, he had now to endure a serious examination into his administration, his means of government, and financial resources—in short, a severe criticism, in the place of satire. While suffering acutely from these attacks, the King of Prussia maintained, in public, an appearance of scornful indifference, and his secret vexation was discoverable only in private intercourse. Those words of his have been often repeated, "If I had a province which I wished to punish, I would give it over to the philosophers." This was the sum and substance of his familiar conversations. One day, moved by intense bitterness of feeling, he took Thiebault aside, and said to him with a scornful smile, "How is it I have not

* Encyclopedia, first edition.

heard from you the confession, that the philosophers of our time are indeed men of wonderful and lofty genius? Why are we so ungrateful? Let us admit that there has never been anything to compare with them, though we may lament that they are not more within our reach. What a pity it is that they cannot descend from their elevated sphere, so that we poor mortals might profit by their instructions! When a lucky star, however, leads me to any of their admirable works, I employ my best efforts to penetrate into their sense, and improve myself by them. I have nothing to reproach myself with on this head; I study them with my utmost courage and perseverance. You must agree that the philosophers of our days are great men! If they appear to you obscure or perplexed, be assured the fault is in you, who are too insignificant to reach to their genius."*

The exasperation of Frederick could not be restrained any longer, and he awaited only a fit occasion to break out, whenever the personal attacks should be changed into general ones. This character they very shortly assumed, and the conflict between the philosophers and their royal patron was decided. The first matter of dispute was the commonplace topic of war. Voltaire, with his usual versatility, followed the impulse given: the panegyrist of Fontenoy, the poet of Henry IV., became the satirist of military glory, and treated war as if it were the art of cutting men's throats.

Frederick considered this language a profanation not to be endured, and resolved to avenge the science which had made his glory, and whose praises he had sung. Voltaire foresaw what would happen, and thought to cajole the monarch by one of those ingenious uses of familiarity which in favoured times had so well succeeded; but the case was altered, and he failed. He sent the king some of his charming verses, just as he used to do twenty years earlier, but they were ill received.† Instead of

* Thiebault, *Souvenirs*, vol. iii. p. 153; Paris, Bosange.

† "A Frederic surtout offrez ce bel ouvrage,
Et soyez convaincu qu'il en sait davantage.
Lucifer l'inspira, bien mieux que votre auteur.
Il est maître passé dans cet art plein d'horreur.
Plus adroit meurtrier que Gustave et qu'Eugène."
Poësies légères, la Tactique.

favour, they were met with a settled severity, which was not to be disarmed by their grace and elegance. The king pretended to be angry at the boldness of the offering, which he would formerly not have failed to reward. He reproached the philosophers with endeavouring to destroy, at their source, the noble sentiments of honour, military courage, and patriotism. From the time when the unfortunate *Tactique* appeared, his letters were full of discontent and bitterness. Instead of thanks, Voltaire received cutting reproaches:—"Your *Tactique* threw me into a severe fit of the gout, from which I have not yet recovered. Nevertheless, I am determined to answer you, seeing that the great men of the earth choose to be promptly obeyed. Governments, regardless how cynics rail, keep on their course, and fever does the same. What remains but some well-constructed verses, which testify to astonished Europe that your genius is not superannuated? You might as well declaim against the snow and the hail as against war; they are, all of them, necessary evils, and it is unworthy of a philosopher to engage in useless undertakings. A physician is applied to that he may cure a fever, and not write against it: if you have any remedy for war, pray propose it—if you have none, have pity upon our misfortune. We must say with the angel Ithuriel, 'If all is not right in this world, it is endurable, and we must learn to be content with our lot.'

"In the meantime, your Russian heroes follow up victory by victory on the banks of the Danube, in the hopes of subduing the Sultan's obstinacy. They read your libels, and then begin fighting. Your empress too, as you are pleased to call her, has sent another fleet to the Mediterranean; and while you are trying to write down the art of war, and calling it infernal, I could find more than twenty of your letters which encourage me to mix in the troubles of the East. Reconcile these contradictions, if you can, and have the goodness to show me their agreement." *

Voltaire retracted in part, and his apology caused a suspension of hostilities; but they recommenced more sharply than ever, and became implacable after the publication of *Le Système de la Nature*. Nothing had yet appeared, even in the eighteenth century, so bold, so incoherent, so strong in some of its details,

* Frederick to Voltaire, Jan. 4th, Feb. 9th, July 30th, 1774.

and yet so miserable as a whole, as the work in question. In its pages everything was disputed—God and man, created things and institutions, morals, the soul, Providence, virtue: this book, which was teeming with revolution, had cost its authors no more trouble than a vaudeville would in our time—planned, conceived, and merrily completed by a knot of giddy young fellows in a café. A similar proceeding had given rise to the *Système de la Nature:* it was a kind of pic-nic work, to which each man contributed the arguments he espoused.

In the centre of luxury and dissipation, under the patronage of the Baron d'Holbach, who gave his name to the firm, like the head of a merchant's house, thirty daring and excited individuals, heated by conversation and good cheer, made a compact to leave nothing untouched in heaven or earth, or, what was worse still, in the heart of man. And whence sprung this deplorable zeal? Were they men of bad life, or of wicked intentions? The opposite party have pretended that they were, but such is not the truth. No serious reproach attaches to the remembrance of their private life, in which there was little to condemn or to blame. They possessed, like the generality of mankind, a mixture of good qualities and infirmities: they were not driven to this work of destruction by any pressing necessity, nor by any personal hatred. None of them were gloomy or misanthropic. Diderot was sometimes in a state of excitement resembling the Pythoness; but he was careless, indolent, and easy-tempered as a child. The little Abbé Galiani, who had a character for sublimity, if he had penetrated into everything, yet retained no hold upon anything. Helvetius was never surpassed in princely beneficence, nor the noble and virtuous use of a large fortune. Grimm was a man of fashion, met with everywhere—a sort of amphibious creature, half diplomatic, half literary—gallant, agreeable, polite, covered with white, ingenious, learned, and a truly remarkable man in a rather narrow intellectual circle. The countenance of the Baron d'Holbach was radiant with joy; his contemporaries styled him *un homme simplement simple.* Raynal gathered up the leavings of Diderot's improvisation, and with infinite labour made them into big books: in his enthusiasm he was still a plagiary; but Raynal, Naigeon, and some others, came in at the tail of the association; they were prepared to follow, but not to

lead. Thus then, in all good-humour, without pretension and without bitterness, they set themselves to share the work like jovial companions, and they actually drew lots for it. Each man found something to take to pieces: one began upon the soul, another the body; one attacked paternal love, gratitude, conscience. Nothing escaped them: all subjects were examined, dissected, disputed, denied—condemned loudly, and without appeal. It was a kind of Old Testament, which prefigured the New by types and symbols—an intellectual committee of public safety. There is no denying the pernicious influence of writings such as these: if they were not accountable for all the errors of the changes which followed, they cannot be absolved from the crime of having produced great excesses: it would be ignorance or falsehood to pretend otherwise.

Frederick read this hideous but prophetic book: a fatal light gleamed across his mind, and made him dread the future. The ancient monarchical form of government seemed to totter to its base; but he was too proud to alter his course, or to enter upon a retrograde or vindictive policy. His subjects were not made to feel the effects of his vexation and regret: the kingdom of Prussia remained in its usual state. Frederick resolved to combat the philosophers with their own arms—not by edicts or the sword, but by argument.

This moderation in such a passionate nature was a proof of real greatness; for the new philosophy had wounded him in the most sensitive part. The old Voltaire school had always carefully separated the cause of the ancient royalty from that of the clergy, but the Holbach school insisted on combining them: they were alike held up to the ridicule of the people, and, with bitter raillery, advised to make common cause. Placed in this new point of view, the alliance of the king with the philosophers became truly inconsistent, and even almost ridiculous. Frederick complained of it seriously to Voltaire and D'Alembert. They had been so far dazzled and overpowered as to applaud the *Système* at its first appearance; but, alarmed at the effect of the work upon the king, they became eager to deliver it up to his indignation.

D'Alembert carried his hypocrisy so far as to refuse the title

of philosopher.* Voltaire bestowed upon the audacious libel the same injurious epithet of which he had ever been prodigal. But Frederick was not to be turned from his purpose by these disavowals: he was too well initiated in the characters of his former friends, to form a wrong estimate of their sincerity, and maintained towards them the same severe aspect. In his intercourse with them he caused them to tread such a thorny path, that nothing but the dread of publicly forfeiting the illustrious adept, who was in fact already lost to them, could have induced them to endure such contempt. The correspondence which continued bore evident marks of lassitude; in vain did the royal letters contain the old declarations of friendship—they could not conceal the hatred which rankled in his heart.

"Let there be no war between unbelievers," exclaimed Voltaire to his friend D'Alembert. "Take care that the enemies of philosophy do not find out discord in the camp of Agramant. A certain dissertation is going to appear!" This dreaded dissertation was a public refutation of the *Système de la Nature* by the King of Prussia. Voltaire thought to parry the blow, by hurling a philosophic ordonnance against the work itself;† but Frederick was not to be caught by this manœuvre, and moreover determined to shed his withering influence over the new doctrine, which had been supported, and laid down, and taken up again so many times, by Voltaire.

It would be impossible to give any abstract or epitome of this work of the King of Prussia: it requires careful examination, and close attention to follow its thread. Frederick must be heard in his own peculiar language, which is unpolished and incorrect, often devoid of grace, but never of strength: equally free from affectation and vanity, it is the simple expression of his royal good sense.

Thus Frederick the Great, in the decline of his glorious career, denounced the Encyclopedists, and held them up to the attacks of

* D'Alembert to Frederick, June 8th, 1770: "Je ne veux pas de ce titre là, il y a trop de faquins qui le portent."

† Voltaire often changed his opinion about the *Système de la Nature:* at first he thought it full of excellent things, and strongly argued; but this partial judgment did not last. (Letter to D'Alembert, July 16, 1770.) He was a yet more determined enemy to atheism than to Christianity.

future generations; but he forbore to cast reflections upon the past. Though he had quarrelled with the philosophers, he remained faithful to philosophy, and gave no signs of a late repentance. Such weakness he left to the men whose hearts were too weak to bear the weight of their passions, and take the responsibility of their opinions—the men who, incapable of doing themselves justice, whether in youth or in age, had in early life given themselves up to the most absurd application of a salutary principle which they could not comprehend, and disgraced their old age by unworthy disavowals and cowardly repentance. Frederick did not choose to bring the past to battle with the future, but it was evident to that great king and wise man that an embankment must be made against the overflow of the torrent; and it was less with a view to the benefit of his new conquest, Silesia, than from general motives of policy, that he tried to counteract the Encyclopedists, by upholding with his powerful hand the remains of the Society of Jesus.

Catherine II. was also their protector, but the motives which made her so were very different from those which actuated the King of Prussia. The empress kept up a correspondence with the philosophers, but it was within the bounds of moderation, and perfectly exempt from enthusiasm. If she tolerated the boldness of their views, she did not adopt them, or give way to pleasantry. Always calm, and often serious, she never went too far, nor compromised herself in this very difficult intercourse. The reasons, therefore, of her favouring the Jesuits were essentially different from those which we have thought it right to attribute to Frederick; if not entirely different, they were so in a great measure. They were not speculative causes, but solely and purely practical. Catherine looked for nothing beyond political auxiliaries in the Jesuits. On this ground she retained them in White Russia, which was an ancient Polish province; and her confidence was not abused—the Jesuits were of immense service to her in her designs upon Poland.

In the year 1772, the æra of the first partition, the Fathers resided at Polotsk, in a magnificent college, surrounded by a wide extent of lands belonging to them, and possessing, under the name of serfs, about 10,000 peasants, partly on the left, partly on the right bank of the Dwina. They exercised a pro-

digious influence over the whole country. When they found themselves, after the bull of Clement XIV., obliged either to submit to their entire suppression, or accept the protection promised in another land, they did not hesitate; but leaving the left bank of the Dwina, which was still Polish, for the right, which was become Russian, they swore allegiance to Catherine, and kept their state, their habit, and their name, notwithstanding the brief, the publication of which they also obtained to be prohibited in all the Russias.

From this period they maintained a sort of primate or patriarch of the Catholics, the prelate Siestrencewiecz, who was originally a Calvinist, and married; and who became a priest, but of very equivocal orthodoxy. They favoured his nomination to the metropolitan see of Mohilow; and to prove that he was the man of their choice, or at least that they approved of his election, they appointed a Jesuit of the name of Benislawski, his coadjutor. Upheld by the authority of the empress, and armed with earnest letters from this princess to the pope, the Jesuit Benislawski set out for Rome, went straight to the Vatican, and accosting the Holy Father with a commanding tone, required him to grant the pallium to the Archbishop of Mohilow. Not being able immediately to obtain this favour, he declared that if he had to spend his life in the antechamber of the pope, he would never quit it until he was satisfied on every point.* His demand was complied with, and very shortly a nuncio was despatched to St. Petersburg. From that moment Pius VI., who was disposed to favour the Jesuits, gave way to his inclination, and openly maintained the suppression of the Society, while he favoured their growth in Russia, condemning and encouraging them at the same time. In 1782 the Fathers of Polotsk met in congregation, and elected a vicar, who governed the college for two years. In time they grew tired of such expedients, and the vicar took the name of General of the Order. And yet the brief of Clement XIV. existed, together with the anomaly of a religious order in rebellion against the holy Father, yet approved by him in secret,—upheld by all the powers separated from Rome, against those powers who remained in her communion,—and, more extraordinary still, the papacy at war with itself!

* Bernis to Vergennes.

The nursery of the Society was kept up in White Russia, and owed much to a man whose great ability resembled the now extinct Jesuits of former times, a real successor of Aquaviva and Laynez. This father, whose name was Grouber, and who was made General of his Order, kept within the bounds of a politic prudence. The ardent and indiscreet zeal for proselyting, which discovered itself at a later period, led to the expulsion of the Society from the kingdom which had afforded them a constant asylum; but this settlement in the north was no longer needful for them. Pius VII. relieved them from their degradation, and the bull of this pope (*Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum*), dated the 7th of August, 1814, revoking the brief of Ganganelli, formally set it aside, and re-established the Society of Jesus throughout the world.

THE END.

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