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THE NAPOLEONS AND THE POPES

OR

THE FALL OF THE ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

AN IMPRISONED POPE.

In a room of the Imperial Palace at Fontainebleau, there stood, in the year 1813, a richly dressed page. The young count, who had attained the age of fifteen, was a descendant of the house of Rethel; he was remarkably handsome, and had received his appointment from Napoleon I. At the time of which we write, sadness and heartfelt sympathy overshadowed the expressive countenance of the youthful noble. His eyes were filled with tears, which unrestrainedly fell upon the gold embroidery of his uniform; but no sound or gesture betrayed the overwhelming emotion of his heart. He stood firm and erect, like a soldier of the proud Imperial Guard. The cause of his grief is evidently the sight of a venerable man who sits in a chair in an adjoining room, and whom Joseph of Rethel, with weeping eyes, constantly gazes upon through the open door.

The aged man wears a long white cassock; no mark of dignity is visible; his modest and simple dress is in striking contrast with the grandeur which everywhere surrounds him. Traces of hard suffering are imprinted upon his fine features; his face is pale and worn, the cheeks are hollow, and the eyes sunken; but holy resignation is visible in the countenance of the sufferer, and it is this especially which affects Joseph so deeply. The whole appearance of the man clothed in white