

swo fiercely contending parties. It was discussed, attacked and defended, not only in the chairs of the universities, in the pulpits of the cathedrals, but also in the fields, in the very streets of the cities. And when the two parties had exhausted the reasons which their ingenuity, their learning, or their ignorant fanaticism could suggest to prove or deny the "Immaculate Conception," they often had recourse to the stick and to the bloody sword to sustain their arguments.

It will appear almost incredible to-day, but it is a fact, the greatest part of the large cities of Europe, particularly in Spain, were then reddened with the blood of the supporters and opponents of that doctrine. In order to put an end to these contests which were troubling the peace of their subjects, the Kings of Europe sent deputation after deputation to the Popes to know from their infallible authority what to believe on the subject.

Philip III and Philip IV made what we may call supreme efforts to force the Popes Paul V, Gregory XV, and Alexander VII, to stop the shedding of blood and disarm the combatants by raising the opinion in favor of the Immaculate Conception to the dignity of a Catholic dogma. But they failed. The only answer they could get from the infallible head of the church of Rome was, that "that dogma was not revealed in the Holy Scriptures, had never been taught by the Apostles, nor by the Fathers, and had never been believed or preached by the Church of Rome as an article of faith!" The only thing the Popes could do to please the supplicant kings and bishops and nations of Europe in those days, was to *forbid* both parties to call the other *heretics*: and to *forbid* to say that it was an article of faith which ought to be believed to be saved.

At the Council of Trent, the Franciscans and all the partisans of the "Immaculate Conception," gathered their strength to have a decree in favor of the new dogma; but the majority of the bishops were visibly against that sacrilegious innovation, and they failed.

It was reserved to the unfortunate Pius IX, to drag the Church of Rome to that last limit of human folly. In the last century, a monk, called Father Leonard, had a dream, in which he heard the Virgin Mary telling him: "That there would be an end to the wars in the world, and to the heresies and schisms in the church, only after a Pope would have obliged, by a decree, all the faithful to believe that she was "immaculate in her conception." That dream, under the