

THE JESUIT OF FICTION.

I.

"Combating the present evil, preparing future good, preaching the Word in the thickest of the schism and especially where the truth is assailed; going in search of ignorance and error even to the confines of the earth; teaching the little ones to spell, youth to believe, manhood to think, men, women and all to love God, the country and the family; doing nothing prejudicial to truth, nothing against justice, nothing against charity; teaching the powerful clemency, the feeble resignation, the rich generosity, the unfortunate pardon; all the holy love of charity, behold your life!"

—*Ignatius Loyola*

With these words, one morning on the summit of Mont-matre, Ignatius Loyola ushered into life the Society of Jesus.

It is the custom among its accusers to place the infancy of the institution above reproach, and to affect towards its founders an appearance of courteous impartiality. Forced to admit that the first hours of its existence were beautiful, and pure, and grand, and the early Jesuits, Christians of a quality Christ-like, marvellous, heroic, they affirm that the sequel did not fulfil the bright promise of the beginning, and that the famous motto of the Society—"Ad majorem Dei gloriam,"—has represented, as its policy and motive, the embroiling of cabinets, the concocting conspiracies, kindling of wars and procuring of assassinations. And yet, ascending to the period of its establishment, it is easily perceived that the public and avowed object of the Society was, in religion, none other than to defend the Catholic Church against the Lutherans and Calvinists and the advances of unbelief, and, in politics, to protect social order and the established government of every country against the torrent of anarchical opinion attendant on religious innovations. At the time of its inception, there was imminent need of such an order in Europe. Error had everywhere made headway, and, from the beginning of the sixteenth century, that subversion of ideas and spirit of revolt, was plainly to be seen, which, sweeping the world like a violent wind, left in its train those evils which have for their names now in history, Protestantism, Jansenism, Philosophy and the Revolution.

The Society of Jesus has never denied that it had one sole end in view, and that it was instituted for a special and well-defined purpose. Luther, armed with his mutilated Bible, arose against the Church. The Jesuits opposed him, and the contagion which he propagated, which had spread unhappily with fearful rapidity, was checked in a considerable number of the nations of Europe. Jansenius, disguising and disseminating in the pages of a spurious St. Augustine, the principles of a false and illegitimate protestantism, met in turn their detection. They closed the route against him, he was cut off from the Church and condemned as a schismatic. The philosophers of France, in the eighteenth century, tore up the Bible, denied tradition, and undertook to crush the Church. The Jesuits again came forward. They fell, betrayed by the royal authority which they defended, and royal authority worked its ruin in their fall. And thus in this era of error of every species, of infidel philosophy, and of principles subversive alike of religion and morality, the Jesuits by their moral and intellectual superiority, their personal culture, and the unimpeachable purity of their lives, were not only a barrier to the advance of heresy and unbelief, but the source, pure and uncontaminated, from whence the Catholic youth of Europe imbibed religion and education. "Wherever," says M. de Bausset, "the Jesuits made themselves heard they preserved all classes of society in a spirit of wisdom, order, and consistence"; and again (in his life of Fenelon), "it will never be explained by what spirit of giddiness the governments of which the Jesuits had best deserved, were so unwisely led to deprive themselves of their most useful defenders. The puerile causes, the laughable accusations, which served as a pretext for their proscription are now scarce remembered, but it is remembered that the judges

who declared the whole order to be convicted of the grossest crimes, could not point out among all the members who composed the order, a single guilty individual." But it is perhaps not wholly surprising that, despite its marvellous achievements in the cause of religion and humanity, the Society of Jesus, which watered the world with the blood of its sufferings and martyrdoms, which brought whole continents to the faith, and which presented, in the opinion of La Lande, the celebrated but infidel astronomer, "the most astonishing union of science and virtue ever known," should, in assailing the heretical errors then prevalent, and in opposing and defeating the statescraft by which the circle of philosophers composing the propaganda of atheism in Paris, designed by the abrogation of religious teaching, the ultimate triumph of Reason and Philosophy, have been chosen as the object of unceasing calumny and persecution.

To know the reason of the implacable hatred against the Jesuits, it is enough to know who were their principal enemies. They were for the most part infidels, or men more or less clearly opposed to the authority of the Church, the hostility of many of whom might be supposed to commend itself to all Christians as an honourable incident in the history of the Order. An exception, perhaps, is to be made in the case of Pascal, who personified in the community of readers the type of the enemy of the Jesuits in polemics. The polemical opposition with which he identified himself, was the outcome of the great struggle entered into by the Society of Jesus, and the Jansenistic sect of Port Royal. Combated with the full vigour of the Jesuits, menaced by the anathema of the Holy See; yet, secretly encouraged by cliques in the Parliament and University, the Jansenistic heresy, powerless to defend herself, found means, thanks to the pen of Pascal's to malign the Jesuits.

To his *Lettres Provinciales* which followed, a series of infamous letters abounding in false and mutilated texts, in insults, and at times indecency, it is largely due that the Jesuit of popular conception exists for the most part as a pious assassin, indoctrinating a morality justifying homicide, regicide, personal vengeance and cruelty, excusing massacres; palliating usury and avarice; inducing to prevarication, perjury, and the violation of all law, civil and ecclesiastical; menacing governments and society, accomplishing diabolical ends by diabolical means contrary to the law of God, the example of Christ, and the teaching of His apostles, the Jesuit, in a word, to be found only in fiction. "The whole of these letters," says Voltaire, "are built upon a false foundation, as the extravagant notions of a few Spanish and Flemish Jesuits are artfully ascribed in them to the whole body." This, to every one who peruses the answers to them of Fathers Daniel and Bourdaloue, must appear evident. To the whole of their doctrine every Jesuit assents; to the whole of the doctrine imputed to them by Pascal every Jesuit dissents. Which should be deemed the doctrine of the Order?

Pascal, it is true, never professed to be other than a Catholic, but he was intimately connected with the leaders of Port Royal, and numbered even among its recluses. We shall have occasion to speak further of him; for the present it is enough that the decision of the Holy See which upheld the Jesuits and pronounced the Jansenistic theories heretical, placed also his letters on the *Index Expurgatorius*, and provoked him to a retort which had little in it in common with his previous professions of submission and entire obedience to it.

The several charges of complicity in the murder of Kings brought against the Society have, for the most part, been abandoned by all impartial historians, while all are contested. These charges are closely connected with the doctrine of the rightfulness of tyrannicide. To what extent this was a doctrine of the Society, may be learned from the fact that it was maintained by fourteen Jesuits, and opposed by more than sixty, that those who admit it confine it to a few exceptional cases and allow it to be committed *only by a nation*, that the General of the order, Aquaviva, by a decree forbade any member publicly or privately to uphold the doctrine that it was lawful for any one under any circumstances to attempt the life of any