

[WRITTEN FOR THE TRUE WITNESS.]

THE JESUITS.

AN ADMIRABLE HISTORICAL REVIEW.

SOME OF THE MOST BITTER CALUMNIES REFUTED—THE SUBJECT OF ASSASSINATION—THE INQUISITION—PERSECUTION—JESUITS AS EDUCATORS—THEIR EXPULSION FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES—NO TITLES IN THE ORDER.

A certain gentleman from Verdun has been lecturing upon the Jesuits. To an ordinary student of history, it seems almost impossible to take his assertions seriously, or to separate truth from error, Jesuits from seculars, far less to get an inkling of historical dates, or the sequence of events. It seems, moreover, almost an offence, to the grandest religious organization of the world, to attempt a defence against attacks so petty. But these attacks may have some weight with the ignorant, and it is, of course, to the ignorant they are addressed. The Fathers of the Society must, therefore, bear with their friends, if, in the interests of those who may be deceived, a few notable exceptions are taken to this tissue of calumnies.

The subject of assassination seems, for example, to have a hold upon the orator's mind. He has mentioned some four or five sovereigns, who have been either assassinated, or at least attempts made upon their lives by the Jesuits. To single out two or three of these. Henry III. of France, who, by the way, was a very worthless sort of character, was slain by the regicide dagger of a crazy fanatic, Jacques Clement, who had no connection whatsoever, even the remotest, with the Society of Jesus.

Henry IV. of France was the victim of an attack upon his life by Jean Chastel, who had been for a time a student in a Jesuit College. Despite his solemn protestations, even under torture and with his last breath, that the Jesuits were absolutely ignorant of his design, the Parliament, under the Huguenot, de Thou, banished the Jesuits from the kingdom. They were recalled by Henry himself, who placed them in charge of his newly founded College of La Fleche, with the remark: "I believe them better fitted than any others to instruct youth." He was, indeed, from the time of his conversion to the Catholic faith, the special friend of the Jesuits. He perished by the hand of Ravallae, who, once more, had not the smallest connection with the Society of Jesus.

As to Elizabeth of England, the Jesuits, in common with other Catholic priests, were frequently charged with attempts at her assassination. Never once was it proved. Such charges were usually made to justify the putting to death of these heroic Fathers for conscience sake, and disproved, by the very fact, that in most cases the offer was made them of life and liberty, provided they would admit the spiritual supremacy of the Queen. This, of course, they could not do, for it seemed in those days that no sane man, much less a conscientious one, could so depart from the traditions of Christendom. A general charge of treason was then launched against all Jesuits, priests and ecclesiastics. The number of those who perished gloriously with More and Fisher, in defence of what had been so lately the universal faith of Christendom, was legion. Recent researches and access to state papers, are throwing a more and more lurid light upon those pages of English history, amongst the darkest in the annals of mankind. Well may the lovers of England rejoice that by humane and tolerant laws, and generous protection afforded to Catholic exiles from other countries, she has redeemed the past.

The gentleman from Verdun is under another delusion. He believes that the Jesuits founded the Inquisition. This they could not very conveniently have done, seeing that it was founded centuries before they came into existence, and was chiefly the outcome of Spanish State policy. On the contrary, the Inquisition was in its decline when Ignatius came into the field, and there is little doubt that the influence of the Jesuits hastened its final overthrow. Ignatius was himself for a time under its censure, and Francis Borgia, fourth general of the Society of Jesus, having by his ducal rank and as a grandee of Spain, the right to

sit as Grand Inquisitor, refused so to do, and discountenanced its proceedings. This is not speculation. It is matter of historical fact.

As to the Jesuits hunting and burning heretics, the truth is that the skirts of the Society have never been sullied with religious persecution. That certain ecclesiastics, blinded by the fanatical spirit of their age, did lend their sanction to the proceedings of the Inquisition, or to the semi-political persecutions in England, under Mary, is unhappily too true. That a single Jesuit was amongst them is utterly, unspeakably false.

That persecution was ever sanctioned, not, indeed, by the Church, but by certain of her ministers, no matter what the causes, the provocation, or the stress of circumstances, is a fact far more deplored by Catholics, than similar outbreaks can be by Protestants. Because the history of these latter's creed is bound up with religious persecution. It was begun under Luther and his associates, continued under Henry, Elizabeth, Edward, James I., Charles I., and II. It came out to the new world and was rampant in the Puritan colonies. It appeared some fifty years ago, in the Know-Nothing movement in the United States, and in England at the time of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. It is seen even in our own day, in the outbreaks of senseless intolerance lately witnessed in New England. It is perpetuated by such associations as the A.P.A., P.P.A., Orangemen, and unhappily, in some cases, by a more distinctively Christian body, the Protestant Ministerial Associations. To their credit be it said, such ebullitions are rare and evanescent. On the other hand, to Catholics, to Jesuits, for Fathers White and Altham actually sat at the Council board of the infant settlement, belongs the glory of proclaiming religious freedom for the first time in America, in the Catholic colony of Maryland, and when the spirit of intolerance was rampant about them. It is sad to see how they were repaid, some years later, when Protestants briefly had the ascendancy. In recently published annals of Louisiana, testimony is proudly set forth, that never was a single instance of religious intolerance witnessed in that Catholic State.

That the lecturer is correct in saying that the Jesuits had, indeed, contributed much to the educational development of France, at a period when she attained the acme of her power, prosperity and intelligence, is beyond a doubt. Ample testimony is borne to the fact by writers and publicists the most enlightened and sincere. That they fell a victim to the corruptions of the succeeding reign under Louis XV. is no less true. The hapless Louis XVI. himself deploras the fact that Choiseul had robbed the government of such valuable allies in "training youth in obedience to the state, in the knowledge of arts, sciences and literature." "We gave up youth," adds he, "to systems of false philosophy, or to the influence of the most dangerous parliamentary opinions. By overthrowing the Jesuits, he has made to the great prejudice of education and science a gap which no other religious body can fill." That "the bloody revolution," to quote our elegant author from Verdun, was helped on to its disastrous culmination, not, indeed, by the Jesuits, but by their suppression and expulsion from France, is a fact commented on by many enlightened thinkers. To say that the Jesuits ever supported Louis XIV. or anyone else in Gallicanism touches the very acme of the absurd. Have not their enemies ever and always charged them with the extreme of what they choose to call Ultramontanism, an unqualified devotion to the See of Rome. As regards Jansenism, to their immortal honor be it said, that they, indeed, combated that hydra headed monster to which was due many of the evils subsequently afflicting France. By an exaggerated pietism, a harsh and gloomy view of the divine attributes almost approaching in its forbidding character the dreariness of Calvinism, they destroyed religious liberty, they made virtue and the practice of religion seem almost impossible, and drove thousands to the opposite extremes of infidelity and licentiousness. Unhappily, the Jesuits were suppressed before they had time to accomplish their utmost in the destroying of this plague spot. The struggle was mainly continued by the newly founded Order of St. Sulpice, charged with the education of the clergy.

In reviewing the history of the expulsion of the Jesuits from various coun-

tries, the writer, who has made not a little study of the subject, boldly declares at the outset that in every case it was under circumstances particularly honorable to them. Furthermore, that their opponents were of such character, aims and intentions in almost every case, that their very names are sufficient to condemn any cause.

Of their expulsion from France by Choiseul, to gratify the royal favorite, the infamous de Pompadour, the Protestant Schall observes, and his remark is of general application: "The decree of the Parliament has been too clearly stamped with passion and injustice to gain the approval of any honest, unprejudiced mind; the attempts to force the Jesuits to condemn the principles of their Order was to pronounce an arbitrary decision upon a fact of history manifestly false and made up for the occasion. But in such diseases of the human mind as infected the generations then on earth, reason is silent, the judgment is clouded by prejudice."

The expulsion was opposed by the hierarchy of France almost unanimously, by the virtuous and long suffering Queen, by the best of the people. Evil prevailed, and the Jesuits departed, to the great misfortune of the kingdom.

The expulsion of the society from Portugal, where, says the Abbe Dras, "the Jesuits had the distinguished honor of being the first sacrifice to the prey of the Sectaries," the situation is summed up by Voltaire, determined enemy of theirs as he was, in these words: "Thus," he says, "was the extreme of absurdity added to the extreme of horror."

As usual, these valiant champions of the faith met glorious deaths, and endured imprisonment and sufferings indescribable, through the machinations of the dark and intriguing Pombal. By the just reversal of parts in our own day, in his native city of Lisbon, a statue, by popular consensus, was erected to Father Malagrida, superior of that devoted band, who, at the age of 75, was burned at the stake by Pombal. An affecting incident is further told, that on the return of the exiled Jesuits to Portugal, some of their number made haste to pray at the dishonored grave of the fallen, ruined minister, their once deadly foe. They found the coffin covered by a pall left to fall to decay, in the corner of an obscure church, and they it was who gave it burial. Such is ever the vengeance of the Jesuits.

Of the expulsion from Spain, the dishonorable trickery by which the infidel Arranda and his associates brought it about and enlisted the King in their behalf, has been long ago made public and may be found in any reliable history of the Church.

Of the expulsions from England enough has been said. They were the consequence of the penal laws, which weighed as heavily on other Catholic ecclesiastics and even upon the laity. The expulsions in our own day have been, for instance, in France by succeeding infidel governments, each of which endeavored to drive the very name of God from their country, to terrorize schools and even hospitals. They were an honor to the Jesuits and their brethren in the faith, and need not be touched on here, save to show that the assailers, not alone of Catholicity, but of Christianity, of law, of social order, ever take the Jesuits as their shining mark.

Bismarck, perhaps the most respectable of their opponents, expelled them, indeed, from Germany. But it was in pursuance of his false scheme of nationalism, and in the enforcement of his iniquitous May laws, another instance of Protestant intolerance, which brought about their own punishment and their author's humiliation. The glorious Windhorst, the apostle of religious liberty, died with the battle cry upon his lips, which had so often echoed through the legislative halls of his country, "that the Jesuits must be restored to their Fatherland." The popular sense of the country is evidently with him, and there is every indication that the Jesuits will soon return there to serve as a bulwark against anarchy and unchristian socialism.

The suppression of the Jesuits by the Pope is expressed thus by a notable Church historian, "that as the master of a ship sacrifices his most precious goods to allay the fury of a storm, so the Pope hoped to avert the threatened tempest, by sacrificing the Society to the fury of the sectaries."

By a careful consideration of the career of that Pontiff, it will be seen

that such was the case. He had been the friend of the Jesuits, he had even issued on his accession a bull, in which he commended the active and enterprising zeal and piety of those beloved laborers in the vineyard of Christ. For more than two years he resisted the combined machinations of their deadly enemies. He shed tears at the persistency of certain sovereigns in this regard, and prayed that God would forgive them. To the hour of his death he sincerely regretted the act, which was simply a human weakness, and a sad error of judgment, as the Jesuits would have been a most powerful help in the hour of tribulations to come. Needless to say this act had no connection with Papal infallibility, as has been sometimes foolishly said. It was no ex-cathedra utterance, nor did it relate to doctrine or morals. The Pope had a right to disestablish what he himself had established.

Clement XIV. was weaker than his predecessor, Clement XIII., who had spent much of his reign in combating the onslaughts of the enemy against the Jesuits, in rebuking their persecutors, in encouraging themselves with words of affectionate commendation. He was weaker than Pius VI., his successor, who openly declared his esteem and affection for the Society, in the midst of the very tempest of tribulation in which his own life was passed. Weaker, too, than Pius VII., who, on the request of the bishops of Christendom, gloriously restored the society. "If," says de Bonald, "a Pope under compulsion suppressed the Jesuits, a Pope in freedom restored them."

Meantime, of course, their existence was providentially preserved by the permission obtained from the Pope by Frederick the Great of Prussia and Catherine I., of Russia, to retain them in their domains, as the best educators of youth they knew.

The Pontiffs ever since have accorded to the Society of Jesus the honor and encouragement justly their due, though, of course, the arrant nonsense that has been written of their influence over the Pope, and of Black Popes and so on, can scarcely be seriously believed even at Verdun or—Longue Pointe.

As to the assertion that the Jesuits want to educate the youth of the land, it is, of course, absurdly unfounded. In common with bishops and priests everywhere, they declare that parents have the God-given right to educate their children as they please, that it is, however, the duty of parents to give their children a Christian education, and that unquestionably Catholic parents must send their children to Catholic schools, wherever there is a possibility of so doing. They declare, in common with other Catholics, that it is an injustice to compel parents to pay taxes for schools which they cannot conscientiously make use of, having at the same time the burden of maintaining separate schools. They further hold that secular and godless schools are a grave peril to the state and fosterers of anarchy and social disorder. But no Jesuit ever said that the Protestant minority of Quebec, for instance, had not the right to educate its children according to its convictions.

Even when the Quebec Government settled the long-vexed question of the Jesuit claims and restored to the order a modicum of the vast sums accruing to it, from grants made by the French king and others, all unjustly confiscated at the Conquest, in defiance of the treaty, the Protestant minority received \$60,000 for educational purposes. Nor did any Catholic object.

As to Dr. McCarthy, it may be said, *en parentheses*, that the Jesuits have no doctors among them, and that if that gentleman be not a myth, his connection with the Order of Loyola is certainly mythical.

As to education and the Church of Rome, why, even at Verdun, it must be known that the world primarily owes all its boasted civilization and enlightenment to that very Church. To her it owes nearly all its great universities, which are of pre-Reformation origin; to her it owes the gem at least of many scientific discoveries, which adorn our own age; to her the mightiest works of art; to her the deathless poems that ring through the centuries; to her the vastest systems of philosophy, the grand synthesis of Christian truths; to her the civilizing of hordes, to her the noblest works of philanthropy and charity; to her the free schools established by canon law, amid all the difficulties of the Middle Ages; to