

THE ROMANCE OF A JESUIT.

From the French of De Beugny d'Hagerne.

CHAPTER III.

From its very first commencement "The Society of Jesus" has been subject to many vicissitudes. Princes and nations would, by turns, demand its establishment in their midst and then heap insults on it and drive it from the country, only to re-demand its establishment later on; and whilst welcomed in one kingdom, it would be driven out from another. Towards the end of the eighteenth century it was suppressed in France by a parliamentary decree, and shortly afterwards it was driven out of Spain, Portugal and the kingdom of Naples. At length it fell beneath the blows of its adversaries and on July 21st, 1773, Pope Clement XIV., yielding to the demands of ambassadors from various Catholic powers, signed the Bull, *Dominus ac Redemptor*, suppressing altogether the existence of the Society.

The members of the Order which had been founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola, yielded due submission, and without offering any resistance they quickly dispersed.

There were, however, two non-Catholic sovereigns, Frederick II., King of Prussia, and Catherine, Empress of Russia, who had some years previously invited the Jesuits to take up their abode in their respective kingdoms; and both of these monarchs, on hearing of the decree of suppression which had been pronounced against the Order, requested the Fathers of the Society to continue their work, since both sovereigns refused to recognize that the Pope had any right to interfere in the affairs of the countries over which they alone ruled with sovereign authority. The Fathers of the Company received this request joyfully, for it favoured their own desire of continuing to live under the rule which they had voluntarily embraced. They hesitated to comply with it, however, on account of their rule, specially imposing on them an absolute submission to the decisions of the Sovereign Pontiff.

The Provincial of the Order in Russia wrote to Catherine Sep. 29th, 1773, and informed her of the scruples felt by himself and his brethren. Although the Empress was but little accustomed to allowing any of her decisions to be discussed, yet, appreciating the noble motives which impelled the Jesuits to oppose her wishes, she undertook to apply to the Pope, and to ask that an exception be made in her favour.

A few months before the death of Pope Clement XIV., on June 7th, 1771, that Prelate addressed a rescript to the Prince Bishop of Warmia, authorizing the Jesuits in Russia and Prussia to remain *in statu quo* until a further decision.

Pius VI., who succeeded Clement XIV., and ruled over the Church during a period of exceptional difficulty, did not think it well to re-establish what his predecessor had put down, but he gave tacit consent to the efforts made by some former members of the Society, together with some younger men, to re-establish St. Ignatius' Order in France and Italy under the name of *Puccinarists*, (otherwise *Baccanarists*) and afterwards *Fathers of the Faith*.

It would seem as if Providence had specially allowed the preservation of the Order in Prussia and Russia in order that its traditions might be kept intact, for no sooner was religious peace restored to Germany and the Latin countries, than the Emperor of Russia expelled from his kingdom these very religious whom Catherine had welcomed there and to whom she had extended her all-powerful protection.

Immediately the "Fathers of the Faith" and a number of Jesuits who had been secularized (or performing the functions of secular priests), joined themselves with those of the Russian province; and very soon afterwards, Pius VII., by the Bull *Sollicitudo omnium*, dated April 7th 1814, solemnly decreed the restoration of the Company.

Under the name of "Fathers of the Faith," the new Jesuits were tolerated by Napoleon and also by the Government of the Restoration. However, they were not to remain long without being attacked.

Being called on by the bishops to preach missions in the principal French towns, the Fathers met with such success as to arouse the fury of the enemies of the Church. In Brest and elsewhere there were serious disturbances got up against

them. For a time the extreme prudence of the bishops and the Jesuits themselves appeased the tempest, which, however, soon broke out again on another pretext. Father Delpius had founded an association called the *Congregation of the Blessed Virgin*, in order to foster and increase the piety of such among the men as already professed obedience to the laws of the Catholic Church. This *Congregation* soon attained large proportions, and men of every rank and class formed part of it, bishops, magistrates, officers of every grade, artists, learned and literary men, being found in its ranks, besides the simple workman and the poorest of the lower class people. The spirit of evil beheld its own danger and profited by the opportunity to stir up public opinion against the Jesuits who were the originators and directors of the *Congregation*. The liberal oppositionists and the anti-Christian press made so much noise and worked so hard that they obtained from the weak-minded king, Charles X., an order for closing eight houses of education directed by the Jesuits.

Two years later, when the king was obliged to flee before his revolted subjects, he learned by his own sad experience that no throne is ever rendered safer through concessions being made to anti-religious ideas and demands.

The enemies of the Jesuits profited also by the Revolution of 1830, to pillage the novitiates of Montrouge and St. Acheul.

However, in spite of these petty persecutions, the Jesuits had not left France. By degrees they got back to their former houses, and, for a few years, enjoyed a relative peace, which was, however, but of short duration.

At the commencement of the year 1843 there appeared a book entitled: "The University Monopoly destructive of Religion and the Laws," (*Le Monopole Universitaire destructeur de la religion et des lois.*)

The name appended as author was that of "l'Abbe des Garets," a Canon of Lyons. This book was an indictment and contained accusations which were supported by all the necessary proofs.

The University looked on this attack as a death-blow, and in order to turn it aside denounced Canon des Garets as a slanderer in the pay of the Jesuits.

Michelet, Quinte, Libri and many of the professors at the French College and the Sorbonne, both from their tribunes and in their journals opened a noisy volley of invectives, sarcasms and lies directed against religion, the Church and the Jesuits.

The bishops, the clergy, Christian families, all loudly demanded various concessions that had long been promised them and were still withheld, but, above all, they demanded the liberty of teaching; the Revolution and the University replied to them by abuse and by threats. It was at this critical moment, and in order to defend his Order that was being daily reviled, that Father Xavier de Ravignan came forward and published his book: "The Existence and the Institution of the Jesuits," (*De l'Existence et de l'Institut des Jesuites*) a luminous and eloquent epitome of their doctrines, their resources, and their aims.

The *Constitutionnel* replied by publishing Eugene Sue's "Wandering Jew," a ten-volume calumny. The dispute grew more virulent and the liberals clamoured for the expulsion of all the Jesuits from French territory. The ministry commenced to be alarmed. On the one hand it had no wish to persecute, but, on the other hand, it feared public opinion, or rather, what is frequently called by that name, *fr. c.*, the opinions of the opposition journals, of those who call out the loudest. After much tergiversation, it decided on sending a Minister Plenipotentiary to Pope Gregory XVI., and it also decided to send a man who would pride himself on obtaining from that Prelate a condemnation of the Jesuits. This man was an Italian named Rossi, who, after having been a Commissary of the Revolution in Bologna, in 1815, had taken refuge in Geneva, where he had professed anti-Catholic doctrines. Later on, a happy chance having led him to France, this Italian and naturalized Swiss had become a favourite with the party in power, and had had the doors of the Faculty of Law, of the University and the Chamber of Peers thrown open to him. Such was the man whom the French Government had chosen to treat of the Jesuit question with the Holy See. The choice was a most singular one, and we shall