

of his own folly. Why, then, does your Holiness hesitate to accept the friendship of the protector of religion?"

"You ask the pope to commit a crime against religion in the same moment in which you proclaim yourself to be the protector of religion," answered Pius VII.

"I am not at all of your opinion," replied Napoleon. "The temporal power of the pope is not an article of faith. On the contrary, I think that this temporal power is an impediment to the strict discharge of the spiritual duties of a pope. Renounce, therefore, this power, and live free from all the cares of government, under the protecting wings of the French eagle!"

"Free in the claws of an eagle, sire?" said the prisoner, with a sad smile. "My fate is a striking proof that the Head of the Church can only fulfil his duties when he is free. The pope should not be the subject of any monarch, because the sovereign would abuse the dependence of the Head of the Church, and use it for political purposes. Divine Providence, therefore, has so ordained it, that, in the States of the Church, the popes have always found an asylum of liberty."

"Very remarkable indeed!" said Napoleon, in a sarcastic tone. "All the princes of Europe listen to my suggestions, all nations yield to my victorious armies. Only an old man, who is my prisoner, despises my friendship."

"Pardon me, sire! For me, the old, imprisoned man, the offer of friendship on the part of the Emperor of France is very flattering; but the pope must in conscience tell the emperor, what you demand is wrong,—doubly wrong, because you ask from the one who has special charge to watch over Christian faith and morals, an approbation and sanction of your robbery."

"Splendid, excellent!" exclaimed the offended Napoleon, "It seems that the vicar of Christ alone is permitted to say uncivil things in the emperor's presence."

"I am very sorry, your Majesty, if you consider truth to be uncivil."

"Better yet!" said the haughty ruler of Europe, and he rose from his chair in a passion. "Let us drop the matter. Your Holiness has despised my friendship, you shall now feel my enmity!"

"Sire," replied the pope, with resignation, "I lay your threats at the feet of the Crucified, and leave God to vindicate my cause, for it is his own."

"What nonsense!" said Napoleon contemptuously. "The