

THE ROMANCE OF A JESUIT.

From the French of De Bouigny d'Hagerne.

CHAPTER VII. (continued.)

I have to redouble my precautions in writing to you for I have now no room of my own, I have but a cell.

The novices have four large apartments. Each of these dormitories contains eight cells, which are constructed in the centre of the apartment to allow of free circulation round the room.

The cells are separated from each other by boardings; each one is the exact length of a bed and they are so arranged that if the woodwork were taken away the beds would touch one another, two by two. Each cell has a common cotton curtain and there is only about a yard's distance left between the bed and the curtain. By way of furniture there is a *prie Dieu*, which also serves as a desk and writing table and is placed by the head of the bed, whilst one chair opposite completes the whole.

The cells are so arranged that their occupants can not see one another; but, as the curtains are left open during the day, every one who passes can see the inmates. Nor does the wood-work reach either to the ceiling or the floor so that by climbing on to one of the pieces of furniture, or by stooping down, one novice can see what another novice is doing, and thus they can watch one another. You see the system of spying is carried out everywhere.

Nov. 9th.

To-day I will say a few words as to the Rule of the novices. We get up at four o'clock and go to bed at nine, and nearly all the intervening time is employed in pious exercises. Consequently my existence here is no pleasanter than before. However, there are two recreations daily and these are the only pleasant hours. These are either passed in the large room I have spoken of, or in a part of the garden which is reserved for us. The rule forbids any two to walk together, there must always be three; besides, one of the three must be a novice in his fourth year, and another must be a novice in his second year. Apart from these truly Jesuitical restrictions, these recreations are most agreeable.

Nearly all the novices are men who have been well brought up and many have held honourable positions in the world; they are gay, polite, and, generally speaking, well-informed, and able to converse agreeably.

Perhaps you will be astonished at my speaking so well of these people and you may imagine I am being won over. Do not be afraid. I hate my present way of life most thoroughly, and I am too much disgusted with the mummeries around me for me to think of remaining here a single quarter of an hour longer than is necessary. But I wish to be just; therefore, I say what good I can of these people, so as to be better able to inveigh against the evil which I am sure to find out. In the novices' rule, of which I send you a copy, you will see we have a conference at nine o'clock every morning.

This conference is given by the Father Master of the novices, who is no other than the Rector. It is devoted to the explanation of the Rules of the Institution so that I shall at length learn all about this famous Constitution of St. Ignatius. On my entering the novitiate a copy of it was given to me, but now I shall be able to hear it explained by a Jesuit to future Jesuits.

As chance would have it the part of the Rule which was explained yesterday and to-day was insignificant enough but in a few days more important passages will come under our consideration, and I hope to make some interesting discoveries.

CHAPTER VIII.

We have already mentioned that Elise Meynaudier had broken off her engagement with Arthur Lerouttier on hearing of his duel with Charles Durand.

Her father was much displeased with her for taking this step, for new elections were at hand, and Lerouttier the elder had great influence in the *arrondissement*, which had chosen Meynaudier as deputy, and which he hoped would re-elect him. Finding persuasion and argument fail in persuading

the young lady to alter her decision (which decision he had at first thought arose from some momentary displeasure), Meynaudier came to the conclusion that his daughter must have retained some affection for her former friend and lover Charles, and he questioned her closely on the subject. He found his suspicions were but too well founded; Elise acknowledged to still taking great interest in Charles and professed perfect confidence in his eventually making himself a name and achieving such success in life as would enable him once more to offer himself as her suitor. Her father combatted this idea in vain, till at length, as a last resource, and under promise of secrecy, he revealed to his daughter what was Charles' true occupation and employment at that moment; he related to her how the young man had accepted the position of a hired spy in the Jesuit College of St. Acheul. Grieved and shocked on learning this, the poor girl no longer opposed her father's wishes and Arthur Lerouttier was again installed as her accepted suitor.

Nor was Mons. Meynaudier at all pleased at the little progress made by Durand in furnishing the Government with data on which to found accusations against the Jesuits, and he wrote to St. Acheul bitterly complaining of this: "Our affairs are going very badly in Rome," he added, "for the Pope will do nothing for us. The French Government will soon be obliged to take up this dangerous Jesuit question itself, so do your utmost to find out something or other, and that as soon as possible, so that we may have some plausible arguments to bring forward."

"You have a right to reproach me," replied Charles, "I reproach myself daily. I am always on the alert and yet I find nothing to report. Up to the present time I could bring no serious accusation against these men, without having recourse to falsehood and calumny. I pass my time entirely in the novitiate and certainly the young men with whom I am associating are not initiated into the secrets of the Order and can teach me nothing.

"It is strange, but there is nothing to be said against the teaching these novices receive. They are first taught to carry out the laws of Catholicism in a way which may be called, according to each one's view of the matter, heroism, fanaticism, even idiocy, but which can do no harm to anyone but those who undertake thus to observe the said laws.

"Certainly if there could exist a society which really carried out the principles which I daily hear set forth and explained, such a society would be the realization of the most beautiful ideals that have ever entered the heads of the greatest philosophers. How can young men who have been thus prepared, ever become instruments of the crooked, destructive, odious policy practiced by the Order to which they will soon belong? This is what I ask myself daily and I find no answer to it. To solve this matter I must see more of the Fathers, of those who are really initiated. There are some ten or twelve in the house, for I see them in the chapel, the refectory, &c., but we have nothing to do with them and the rule forbids their having anything to do with us.

"I have often wondered what motive inspired the words I have underlined, for evidently some knotty point is involved in the restriction. There might be indiscretion on the one hand, whilst on the other young and generous spirits might revolt at what they discovered and therefore it is advisable that novices should be kept in ignorance until they shall have bound themselves by vows. Perhaps it is only when they have renounced their family, their country, their liberty of thought and action that the odious part they will have to play is revealed to them. But what infernal art is there that these men employ to prevent their victims turning against them and exposing their malpractices to the whole world? I would I could discover this mystery, for it is the key-note of all the rest.

"You tell me to hasten. I am myself more than anxious to have done with it all. If you only knew what I endure by being obliged to be forever on my guard, to be forever going through mummeries which I detest. If you only knew how I hate these Jesuits to whom I must show a smiling face and whom I must call Father or Brother! these Jesuits whose vices I have sworn to lay bare and in whom I can find nothing but virtues—*assumed*, probably, but still there they are!"