

France did not wish to be behind Spain. A decree of the Paris Parliament, dated May 9, 1767, expelled the Jesuits from all France, and ordered them to leave the country within fifteen days.

The king of the Two Sicilies followed. A decree of November, 1767, expelled the Jesuits from the whole realm, so those belonging to the south of Italy were thrown upon the Roman frontier, and the Pope was obliged to receive all these guests—unwelcome, although protected by him.

The general war started against the order and the measures adopted by Spain and the Two Sicilies to banish the exiles to the Pontifical States put into the mind of the friends of the Jesuits the thought that the only way to relieve them from their present embarrassment was their *secularization*. This word which was a softened synonym of *suppression*, pronounced first *sotto voce* by the diplomatic corps of Rome, penetrated soon into the Sacred College, and became the object of discussion in a congregation of cardinals held before the Pope—Dec. 30, 1767.

But Clement XIII. still stood firm in the policy followed up to that time; and, untaught by experience, he rejected the course which had been proposed to him by those very counsellors whose advice he had been accustomed to take.

The warning of the General of the Jesuits, that, by the secularization of the order, he would compromise his conscience, and even his eternal salvation, impressed the feeble mind of the Pontiff more than arguments.

A political incident supervened to increase the tension of the relations between the Catholic powers and the Roman See. The young Duke of Parma, Ferdinand, Infante of Spain, encouraged by the example of his relations, the greater sovereigns, annulled, with a pragmatic sanction, the jurisdiction and the immunities which the Church enjoyed in his small state.

The Pope opposed to the ducal decree one of his briefs—January 30, 1768—with which he cancelled all the innovations prejudicial to the Church introduced by the Duke, and threatened him and his ministers with ecclesiastical censure if they persevered in their attempts.

But the duke found powerful defenders. The Bourbon courts of Versailles, Madrid, and Naples remonstrated against the offence committed by the Pope against the temporal sovereignty of a prince who was connected with them by ties of blood. With a collective note they requested the Pope to revoke the brief, threatening him, in case of refusal, to occupy the dominions which the Holy See possessed in France

(Avignon and Venusia) and in the two Sicilies (Benevento and Pontecorvo).

Clement, who thought that the threat was not serious, refused, and the threatened occupation followed.

Matters having reached this crisis, the three Bourbon sovereigns struck a decisive blow for the overthrow of the Jesuits.

They sent to the Pope a collective memorial formally demanding of him the suppression of the order, January 18, 1769; and this was the *coup de grace* for this Pontiff. A few days afterward (Feb. 1) he died, distressed by the effect of his insane policy, but without repenting of his errors. He left to his successor a tremendous responsibility. The matter of the Jesuits had assumed universal importance, and upon the way in which the new Pope should decide this question depended the maintenance or the rupture of the unity of the Church.

Parties in the conclave were named according to the existing circumstances. On one side were the adversaries of the Jesuits, on the other their protectors; and because the first supported that of the Catholic courts their party was called that of the Crowns, while the other was called that of the Zealots or of the Fanatics.

Between the two parties the struggle was intense. At the head of the Zealots were the Cardinals Reszonico and Albani. Orsini headed the party of the Crowns.

At the commencement the Zealots prevailed because the foreign cardinals belonging to the opposite party did not, until late in the session, enter the conclave. By chance the two chiefs of the Zealots did not agree in the selection of the Pope, and this discord neutralized the preponderance of that side. Moreover, even without this, they would not have dared to elect the Pope before the arrival of the foreign cardinals. Owing to the strained relations of the Church with the Catholic courts a schism would undoubtedly have arisen from such an abuse. But the ambassadors of the three Bourbon courts, in the expectation that this might be done, had mutually agreed in such an event to leave Rome.

This threat had acquired more weight after the conversion of the court of Vienna to the policy of the other courts. Maria Theresa and Joseph II., who during the struggle between the Western courts and Clement XIII. had remained passive, now openly made known their decision declaring that, in the interests of the Church, the Company of Jesus ought to be suppressed. Sperges, the intimate adviser of Maria Theresa, signified this sentiment of the sovereign, to the nuncio at Vienna, saying that