

in 1598 and priest two years later. At Toulouse, Vincent took pupils to board with him. A wealthy noble of the neighbourhood was so impressed with his learning and character that he wished to help him to a bishopric. But here, as ever, we see that marked humility that distinguished Vincent, that genuine poorness of spirit that later helped to win men's confidence and secured their co-operation in his schemes.

In 1605 he had occasion to take a journey by water and was captured by African Pirates and sold as a slave at Tunis. After some ill-treatment and changes of masters he was sent to the mountains to work under a renegade catholic who had given up his religion and lived like a Turk. The Turkish wife of this man became interested in Vincent. She ordered him one day to sing the praise of his God. He did so and gave her instruction. She became converted and brought her husband back to the faith. The couple then helped Vincent and his companions to escape and they managed to get back to Avignon where they were received with rejoicing. The papal Vice-Legate took Vincent to Rome where he met Cardinal d'Assat who had so high an opinion of him that he sent him to deliver an important message to King Henry IV of France. He executed the difficult mission with devotion and inviolable secrecy. The King, Henry IVth, was attracted by his charm of manner which was of that kind which springs from an exquisite kindness; from the instinct to love and condone, rather than criticize or blame. He also approved of the wisdom and honesty of this simple priest and had Vincent desired the path was open to him to play such a part as Cardinal Wolsey did or Richelieu, the great Minister of France; to become an ambitious prelate to whom the things of the world were more than the things of God.

But Vincent had no taste for the world and no wish for honor for himself and having discharged his mission he went to Paris. Here he lived very quietly teaching and helping the poor and doing on a small scale what he afterwards did on a big one. At this period he determined to enter more fully in the ecclesiastical state and spent two years with the Oratorian Fathers. He declined an abbot's