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THE SOCIETY OF JESUS. (From the Metropolitan.)

Sint ut sunt, out non sint, was the sturdy reply of the general of the Order, Lorenzo Ricci, when the envenomed enemies of the Jesuits wished to dictate to them certain changes in their constitutions. "You have heaped injuries upon us," he said, "you have spared no arts, no calumnies, no falsehoods, to make us odious; you have attributed to us the very frauds which you practise upon us, and you would have us confirm your charges by weak concessions, made at your dictation. No, the Jesuits are innocent, let them be as they are, or not be."—*Sint ut sunt, out non sint*."

The reader of general history never finds himself more perplexed than in assigning to this wonderful Order a proper and due position; he sees a notice of it on every historic page since nearly the outbreak of the Reformation, and in every writer he finds warm friend or bitter foe; nowhere is the name of Jesuit announced in terms of common-place indifference. We believe there are few persons, Catholic or Protestant, who take the pains to supply themselves with accurate knowledge concerning this or any other of the various religious orders which have arisen, as if by a special Providence, at different periods, within the fold of the Church, yet their history is not only important, but it is generally also very interesting. It is true, one picks up facts here and there which give a bias to opinions, but without some little research it is impossible to put a due estimate on facts, or to separate the true from the false. We have known a number of gentlemen of fair intelligence, sit in grave discussion on the merits, or demerits rather, of the Jesuits, who had drawn their data from the infamous pages of Eugene Sue, coupled with the vague declaration against the order which had filled their minds with false facts from childhood. And yet, in spite of the most bitter and the most artful assaults, which had Catholics, Protestants, and infidels, have combined to make on this very remarkable society, it must and does frequently occur to the intelligent mind of whatever creed, that if genuine apostles have ever lived since the Twelve, Francis Xavier, Peter Claver, Brébœuf, Lallemant, Anchieta, Marquette, Daniel, and "eight hundred martyrs immolated for the faith; eight thousand missionaries of the order whose lives were consumed in the labors of zeal among the savages and infidels" must be admitted among the brightest ornaments of the modern apostolate.

The Jesuits have performed too important a part during the last three centuries to be ignored by either the learned or the unlearned; they have spoken to all men from the prince on his throne to the peasant boy watching his flocks; learned theologians, profound scholars, naturalists, astronomers, mathematicians, travellers, historians, all find in the Society their peers, if not their masters; and yet, abounding thus in full measures of divine and human wisdom, the accomplished Jesuit appears never more in his element than when teaching a class of village boys their catechism, or announcing the first tidings of salvation to the untutored savage.

The Order has now been before the world, whether in prosperity or adversity, since 1540, when it was approved by Pope Paul III., and it certainly is time that men should look upon it dispassionately, as something belonging to history, and not merely as an object of predilection or prejudice. "The Jesuits are to my eyes," says Gréneau-Joly, "what Vitellius, Otho, and Galba, were for Tacitus. I know them neither by injury nor benefit." This is certainly the proper ground from which to view them, and it is just where we would wish the reader to place himself.

Who are the Jesuits? When did they come into existence? What is the object of their Order? What is their theory? What their practice? What is their history?

What a variety of answers may be given to these questions! Every fiery bigot in the ranks of rebellion feels himself fully prepared to answer them by saying that the Jesuits are the most wicked of men who sprang up at some time of the dark ages to keep the world enslaved in ignorance. Their theory is to do evil that good may come of it; their practice is to do evil only, and their history is but a chain of evil deeds.

Every witness, of course, must be prepared for some cross-questioning; it may be therefore asked of this one, if he has passed some portion of his life among them. He answers, no, emphatically, with almost a look of horror. Perhaps, then, he has read their writings? Why, no,—yes,—extracts from their writings, which have satisfied him of their principles. Have these extracts been presented to him by their friends, or their enemies?—By persons who wished to expose their errors! Did it ever occur to the witness that the Bible may be made to say by an ex-

tract "There is no God?" The witness makes no answer. Has the witness ever seen a Jesuit, or conversed with one? No—yes—has seen many popish priests; supposes they are all Jesuits; never conversed with any, but knows they all deny it.

Has not every man who has mingled with the world met with just such witnesses who have gathered all their information from garbled extracts, calumny, and their own depraved conceptions? We have met them, over and over again, and among people too of tolerable information on all points, religious history excepted. Even our eminent lexicographer, Noah Webster, could not define the word Jesuit, without an insult and a sneer.

But what is a Jesuit? He is a religious of the Society of Jesus, founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1534, and approved by the Holy See in 1540. He is bound to devote himself to the salvation of souls in such manner as shall be appointed for him by an acknowledged authority in his Order (subject always to the Holy See) whether in the instruction of youth, in the conversion of infidels and heretics, or otherwise in the propagation of the faith, according to his vows. We will follow rapidly here the introduction of a candidate into full membership with the Society; we will trace him, step by step, so that the reader may judge whether he will be trained to that lofty position, so rare in the world, which combines eminent learning with great piety. *Boni simul et eruditi pauci inveniantur*, was a maxim before the days of St. Ignatius; it was his earnest wish, and it has ever been the aim of the Order, to combine the two, learning and virtue in their members.

We will suppose a young man of good dispositions and religious turn of mind, whose education is pretty well advanced, presenting himself as a candidate. Such is the ordinary character of candidates, as we ourselves, viewing from without, have generally noticed them. As the Society excludes honor and wealth, it is clear that human ambition cannot be a motive cause to induce them to seek membership. The candidate being admitted into the novitiate, passes through the course of *Spiritual Exercises* as an introduction to the new life in which he is about to engage. These exercises last four weeks, each week having its special considerations. The title comprises the great objects contemplated by the Exercises thus: "Spiritual Exercises for learning to conquer one's self and regulating the whole of one's life without taking counsel of any disordered affection."

What a marvellous epitome is comprised in these few words? During the first week of the Exercises the novice passes in review his previous life; he contemplates deeply the enormity of sin, and the crime of rebellion against God; he reflects upon the ends of life, he learns to look up ever to heaven, he searches the depths of his own soul, he takes counsel with his conscience; by day and by night he gives himself to prayer and reflection; an hour at midnight is given to devotion to elevate and purify the soul while the world is wrapped in silence and repose. "Happy night that which is added to the days best filled up!"

During the second week the candidate contemplates the life of our Lord, and the mysteries of the Gospel history as if passing before his eyes. He devotes himself boldly and generously to Christ as his leader and commander, he sees "the acts of the Man-God ever working the redemption of the world—they are not merely remembrances and histories of the past; their truth and their infinite power live and last ever present, ready to heal, ready to regenerate at every time the docile soul."

The Exercises however are not merely for contemplation and prayer; they indicate action; the novice endeavors to discover and elect the grade of perfection to which God in his providence calls him.

St. Ignatius says, as the exercises of soldiers are only to prepare them for the day of battle, so these exercises prepare the soul for the battle of life. The novice has presented before him, as it were, two armies in array; upon the banners of the one are inscribed, *Riches, Honor, Pride*—the commander full of brilliant but lying promises, is the ancient enemy of mankind, ever enlisting souls to their own destruction. Upon the banners of the other, *Poverty, Reproaches, Humility*, are the device which the lowly, yet lovely Saviour offers to those who would follow Him. Not the novice only, but every man, whether he will or not, is obliged to join the ranks of the one or the other; his own soul pays the forfeit if he choose the dazzling delusions of Satan; it is saved when he becomes a true soldier of the Redeemer. The novice is urged to pray humbly and faithfully to be admitted into the ranks of the Saviour; and he implores the aid of the blessed Virgin to assist him in entering upon the devoted service of her Divine Son.

* This hour of meditation is now generally transferred to some hour during the day.

During the third and fourth weeks the novice has before him for contemplation the loftiest thought that can fill the heart of man, *the Divine Love*. And now, at all times he contemplates the cross and its trials. Affliction, sorrow, and grief are man's inheritance; crosses meet him every where, and the true disciple, who is willing to devote himself to ignominy and death for his master's sake, seeks rather to meet and embrace them, than to fly from them. And what is to support him under trials and affliction—what is his reward for self-denial and mortifications? Earth answers not, but a small, sweet voice whispers to him, "*The Divine Love*."

After four weeks of such training, under an experienced director, when the recesses of the inner life have been explored, it is clear that the postulant must find himself a new being. He has seen his own soul reflected as in a mirror; he has contemplated vice and virtue, good and evil, face to face. He has learned the most difficult lesson in life, that is, to know one's self.

When the candidate has passed through the Exercises, the requirements and duties of the Society, according to the Constitutions, are placed fully before him, and it is demanded of him whether or not he is willing to comply with them; will he devote himself, as required, to poverty, humiliation, and suffering, to the dangers and fatigues of foreign missions; will he bear injuries, false testimonies, reproaches for Christ's sake; will he obey his superiors in all things in which there is no sin, will he accept and desire, with all his powers, what Jesus Christ, our Lord, loved and embraced?

Assenting to all these things, he passes through the two years of the novitiate, occupied with prayer, recollection, self-denial, correction of evil inclinations, and the practical study of perfection. At the end of the two years, having gone through a trying ordeal, he is examined and admitted then to binding vows.

At this time, with heart corrected and pride subdued, he commences a prolonged course of rigid studies. Four years or more are given to rhetoric and literature, philosophy, the physical and mathematical sciences; then comes the *regence*, or the teaching of the classes in a college. The young professor passes from four to six years of his life in teaching; beginning with the grammar classes, and rising year by year. After this, a term of from four to six years is devoted to theology, to the study of the Holy Scriptures, of the canon law, of ecclesiastical history, and perhaps of the Oriental languages. When the religious has passed through these courses, he undergoes a close examination, after which, if duly prepared, he is admitted to the priesthood. Matured thus by long courses of study and prayer, the Jesuit is supposed to be prepared for the most trying duties of life; he is armed as well with the lights of the age as with the zeal of his order, which does all things "*ad majorem Dei gloriam*." He is what St. Ignatius wished his disciples to be, "who in every thing, in history, in physics, in philosophy and literature, as in theology, do not remain behind their age, but are able to follow, or even aid its advances, yet without ever forgetting that they are vowed to the defence of religion and to the salvation of souls."

But the Jesuit has not yet gone through with his schooling; it is true, he is now a ripe scholar, a tried man, and a consecrated priest; yet once more has he to return to a year of contemplation and prayer. Apart from the world, apart from books, he enters the tertianship, or the third year of probation. Once again *in schola affectus* he humbles himself before God, and seeks in retirement and prayer, purity of heart and entire devotion in the service of his omnipotent Master. At some period after this year has expired, (perhaps one, perhaps many years,) the Jesuit, if he has given the proper evidences of his entire fitness, is admitted to the last vows of the Society—he receives from the Father-General the *gradus*, and he is now fully *professed*.

"The day of action at length arrived, for the greater glory of God, for the service of his brethren, the Jesuit will be more than ever indifferent to all places, all employments, all situations. He will only repel from him, and that with an invincible refusal, honors and dignities. He respects and admires them in others, as the height of devotion and of a glorious servitude. He too devotes himself, but always to obey, never to command—without reserve, without exception, without return.

"The class of the seventh form at College, the laborious superintendence day and night within the walls of a study room, or a dormitory; China, the Indies, the savages, the unbelievers; the Arabian, the Greek; republics, monarchies; the heat of the tropics, the ices of the north; heresy, unbelief; the country, the cities; the bloody resistance of the barbarian, the polished struggles of civilization; the mission, the confessional; the pulpit, studious re-

searches; prisons, hospitals, lazarettos, armies; honor, ignominy; persecution, justice; liberty, dungeons; favor, martyrdom; provided that Jesus Christ be announced, the glory of God propagated, souls saved, all is to the Jesuit equally indifferent. Such is the man whom it has been the object of the constitutions to give to the apostolate. Doubtless we may lament before God that we do not always attain this end with the persevering courage which he demands; at all events it must be confessed the end is great and to consecrate thereto one's life, is perhaps to give it some value."

We have thus hastily traced the Jesuit's life from his initiation in the Society to the last vows which he takes as a professed member, which covers a term of from fifteen to twenty years. It is obvious that men thus trained, who have undergone such stringent probation, must be prepared to make a powerful impression on the world, and that they must naturally bring upon themselves, from different sources, almost equal measures of love and hatred. They are men to be in the world, but not of it, therefore the world will hate them. They are not strangers to this. They have bound themselves to suffer persecution for justice' sake; nay, their founder looked upon persecution as their shield and their safe-guard. He therefore prayed that it should follow the Order always as a perpetual blessing. If the faults or errors of some individuals among them have brought obloquy on the Order, more intense hatred has sprung from the inflexible adherence to duty of others. When Mad. de Pompadour wished to have her appearance at court legalised as *dame du palais* of the queen, she wished to deceive the latter by pretensions of repentance and virtue, and she chose the Jesuit De Sacy as her confessor, expecting to find in him a flexible agent to conceal and promote her designs. She was mistaken. De Sacy declined taking upon himself the direction of her conscience unless she would break off from the king, and turn really to solitude and repentance. He did his duty as a Christian priest, but the king's mistress, and her confederate Choiseul, took revenge upon the Order, by obtaining their banishment from France, against the wishes of the whole body of bishops of that monarchy.

We will sketch in the briefest manner the government of the Society, and point out the landmarks of its history. A thorough system of discipline pervades the Order throughout. "Obedience is the first duty of the soldier," is a military axiom; the Jesuit also acknowledges it. He is bound to obey his superiors in all things which are in themselves lawful. The officers of the Society are the Father-General, resident at Rome, elected by delegates or electors, two from each province, (chosen by the professed members throughout the world,) for life; but subject to impeachment, which, however, has never yet taken place, and probably never will. The general has a number of consultors, drawn from different nations, with whom he has to take counsel; and an admonitor, who stands by him to admonish him in regard to personal affairs. These are all appointed by the Society. The general has the authority over the Society that the commander-in-chief has over an army, subject however to the Holy See, just as the commander of our army is subject to the president.

The other officers, (appointed for a term of years) are Provincials or superiors of the Order in their respective provinces, and a local superior over every religious house of the Order. The officers have likewise their Counsellors and Admonitors. They are bound to hear advice on all grave questions, but to act each on his own judgment and decision.

"Such is the form of government of the Society; the unity of power, with multiplicity of consulting opinions. Wisdom possesses thus all its light, and action all its force."

The Society dates from 1534, when it was founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola, whose conversion from the soldier and the worldling as he lay wounded in the castle of his father, to a soldier of the cross and a servant of Christ, is so familiar to the world. His illustrious companions *ab origine*, are all historical names, Lainez, Salmeron, Bobadilla, Francis Xavier, Rodriguez, and Pierre Le Febvre.

St. Ignatius is the author of the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions*, which have given to the Jesuits their distinctive character. Pope Paul III., by a special Bull, formally established the Society in 1540, with extraordinary privileges. By the Constitutions the members are bound to special obedience to the Holy See, to poverty, chastity, and obedience, as all the other orders, but to something more than ordinary obedience, that is, to be ready at all times to go without warning, without preparation, and without recompense, wheresoever their services may be deemed most useful, as missionaries among infidels, heretics, or heathens; and to devote all their powers to the services of the Church, if necessary, at the sacrifice of all temporal goods, and even of life.