

story is told in a letter that the King, Joseph I., wrote December 5, 1767, to Clement XIII. in answer to the brief in which he was requested by that Pope to restore the harmony between his court and the Holy See, disturbed on account of the Jesuits who had been expelled from Portugal. "It is not to me that is to be ascribed the blame, if an order of monks has for its end the conquest of the world, for its method the assassination of sovereigns and the sedition of their people, and if in the very court of your Holiness it has established the centre of its government, to hatch wickedness and lay snares for me even within my own palace. It is not from my side that so many plots and snares come, by means of which, notwithstanding the justice and tenderness of your most religious sentiments, the heads of this abominable conspiracy have found, even to this day, in the very court of your Holiness, a scandalous protection for their gatherings, through which they have commenced, and still continue, to disturb the public peace of my kingdom and of the states subject to my dominion, not only by their acts, but also by their writings published in all Europe with universal scandal."

Pope Clement XIII., a weak man and influenced by the Jesuits, who represented to him that the war started in Portugal against the order was a signal of a great war of extermination plotted against Catholicism by philosophy, did not listen to the accusation of King Joseph. The rupture, therefore, between Portugal and the Holy See instead of being healed, became worse and continued until the death of Clement XIII.

The initiative taken by Portugal in the war against the Jesuits brought about a general uprising against the abhorred order.

After Portugal came France. A scandalous cause tried before the French Parliament, prepared public opinion for the great struggle which government and parliament were disposed to undertake against the powerful corporation. The Jesuit Lavellette, head of the order in a province of America, having become a trader, had accumulated an immense capital, with which he carried on a large trade with the principal maritime places in Europe. The order was associated in his speculations, furnishing him with money and backing him with its own credit. The business was prosperous until the war which broke out in 1775 between France and England, brought upon Lavellette a great reverse in fortune. Several French commercial establishments were thrown into bankruptcy, and had recourse to the tribunals, asking that the order should indemnify them for their losses. The complaint was brought before

the French Parliament, which condemned the order to pay the entire debt of Lavellette, amounting to about two and a half million of francs. But the material loss was nothing in comparison with the moral detriment and loss of prestige caused to the corporation by this trial.

The Pope's nuncio at Paris, Prince Colonna, sent an account of it to the Secretary of State, Torregiani, which represented clearly the state of the public mind as follows:

The sensation produced in Paris by this affair is incredible. Whilst it was being agitated in the Parliament and the lawyers of both parties contended and pleaded, the Jesuits suffered the greatest insults and abuse; an innumerable multitude was present at these discussions. Last Friday they besieged the doors of the Parliament to learn the decision, and after it was pronounced, great joy was manifested and very noisy applause was heard. This matter ought to have been adjusted any way, or the entire amount paid, rather than bring such things to the knowledge of the public, who have drawn from this trial the most lamentable conclusions, not only against the Jesuits, but even against the whole body of the ecclesiastics, and especially against the regular clergy; and it must be admitted that the complicated course of this trial has given every justification for these conclusions. Besides, the decree will carry with it the saddest consequences for the Jesuits, not only in this kingdom, but in all other countries, the more so as the Parliament intends to examine next month the constitutions of the order, and it is much to be feared that these magistrates, the greater part of whom are already by nature and principles hostile to the Jesuits, will resort to extreme measures regarding the constitution and even the existence of the order, at which I should not be surprised, and in this case no help or protection can be expected from the court.

In another letter the same nuncio wrote:

The animosity against the society of the Jesuits is general in the kingdom.

The king soon felt impotent to resist the public opinion which demanded the expulsion of the order, although in August, 1761, Louis XV. made a final effort to save it. He prorogued Parliament for a year, and ordered the Jesuits to consign to the royal council the charter of their houses in France within six months. In this supreme moment, in which the question of their existence was debated, the Jesuits of France performed an inconsiderate act which hastened their ruin. To gain the favor of the French episcopate, in which they had many adversaries because they were suspected to be dangerous to the power of the bishops and to that of the king, they subscribed to the four celebrated Gallican propositions of 1682 as follows:

First: To the Pope and to the Church is granted by God power over all matters which are spiritual and pertaining to eternal happiness, but not over temporal and civil matters, which are under the exclusive power of kings and princes.