

## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE JESUITS.

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FROM the first moment of their existence down to the present time, the Jesuits have had the privilege—or the misfortune—of being, in a greater or less degree, the subject of the constant preoccupation of public opinion. They are, nevertheless, very little and very incorrectly known, and I wish, in this article, to show them in their true light. Were they the lowest of men, they are yet entitled to a fair hearing. Is it not lamentable that in this age of criticism, at a time when so much is said about justice,—but at a time, alas! when justice is more applauded than practised—the Jesuits should still be represented as the black demons of fantastic legends, and that no accusation, however absurd and whatever its origin, has need of proof from the mere fact that it is levelled against them?

There are, however, upright and independent thinkers, who exercise the right of private judgment, who are not influenced by the common-places that sway the vulgar mind. It is to them that I address myself; they will read these lines, as I have penned them, without prejudice.

One cannot expect that, in so narrow a compass, I should relate, however briefly, the history of the Society of Jesus. My only aim is, as I have already stated, to show the Jesuits as they really are. I shall therefore lay before my readers only the most characteristic features of their organisation and of their manner of life. I shall then rapidly examine the principal charges that have been brought against them.

### I.

The Society of Jesus, founded August 15, 1534, in Paris, by Ignatius Loyola and six of his companions, was canonically instituted September 27, 1540, by the Bull of Pope Paul III., *Regimini*

*militantis ecclesiæ*. It comprises, as do all religious orders, two kinds of members: Fathers and Lay Brothers. The Fathers are either priests or destined to become so; but they do not definitely belong to the Society until after they have gone through a very severe and long term of probation of which the stages are as follows:

After a novitiate of two years, they take the three "simple" vows<sup>1</sup> of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and receive the title of "approved scholastic." In this capacity they apply themselves, at their superiors' pleasure, either to teaching or to the study of theology, philosophy, literature, or science until, having passed ten years in the Society and having attained the age of thirty at least, they are elevated to the rank of "spiritual coadjutor." From that moment they are eligible for all the posts of the Institute, with one or two exceptions of which I shall speak further on. They are employed, according to their capacity, in teaching, preaching, or in various ecclesiastical ministries, in the mission field, etc.

Ultimately, after they have been tested during a further term of several years, one of the three following decisions is come to with respect to them:

1. Either they are allowed to make their solemn profession, which includes the vow of obedience to the Pope, peculiar to the Society of Jesus,<sup>2</sup> and thus become professed Jesuits; they then belong irrevocably to the Order; they are, in short, really Jesuits and can occupy the posts that were closed to them hitherto.

2. Or, if they are found wanting in any of the necessary qualifications, they are retained with the title of "Jesuit of the three vows," which confers no further prerogatives.

3. Or they are expelled from the Institute.

The Lay-Brothers, who are much less numerous, take their vows after ten years' trial, if they are thirty years old at least. They are called "temporal brothers" and are employed as porters, cooks, sacristans, etc. It is needless to add that their influence in the affairs of the Institute is nil, and that, whenever Jesuits are spoken of, it is to the Fathers, and to them alone, that allusion is made.

<sup>1</sup>The chief, but not sole, difference between simple and solemn vows is that the former are binding for a time only, and the latter forever.

<sup>2</sup>According to the book *Constitutions and Declarations of the Society of Jesus*, composed by St. Ignatius himself, the exact import of this vow is as follows: . . . "Professed Jesuits make a special vow to the Sovereign Pontiff, which is that they will set out, without pleading any excuse, without asking aught for travelling expenses, and that they will go to any country whatever in the behalf of all that concerns the good of Religion." (Ch 1 § 1.)

The Society of Jesus has really but one head, the General, who, before the suppression of the temporal power of the Pope, resided at the Gesu in Rome. He must be a professed Jesuit of the four vows, and it is the professed Jesuits of the four vows only who take part in his election, which is by secret ballot. He has four "assistants" to help him, and an "admonisher," elected in the same way as himself, to keep him in, or, if need be, to bring him back to the right path. The electors of the General have the right of deposing him if he is guilty of a serious fault; in urgent cases the assistants have this right, but they must, however, ask the consent of the professed Jesuits by correspondence before exercising it. Thus, although in theory the General is elected *ad vitam*, he retains his post so long only as he shows himself constantly worthy of occupying the same, and so long only as he exercises his authority within the limits of the Rules and Constitutions.

It will, however, be readily understood that, although the General assigns to each member of the Order his work and residence, he, nevertheless, cannot effectively supervise *in person* all the multifarious and diverse details of the government of communities scattered over the face of the globe. He therefore delegates, usually for the term of three years, a part of his authority, in each community, to some member of the Society, professed Jesuit or no, who thus becomes, for the time being, the superior of his brother members. Furthermore, the various establishments of the same district form a Province, which is more or less extensive in proportion to the number of institutions it contains, having at its head another delegate, always chosen exclusively from among the professed Jesuits, who bears the title of Provincial.

As may be judged from this too succinct but accurate sketch, the Society of Jesus is founded upon very wise and very liberal principles: very wise, for there is but one authority, and I need not dwell on the advantages accruing from this fact; very liberal, since this authority emanates from the free choice of those who recognise it, and is never in danger of degenerating into tyranny, because it too is subject to the Rule whose observance by all it is its special mission to secure.<sup>1</sup>

What then is this Rule which has provoked so much discussion? It is the same, in the main, as St. Benedict's, which has

<sup>1</sup> Once in three years there is in every Province a congregation called *Provinciale*. The deputies, as soon as they arrive in Rome, decide by secret ballot, in the absence of the General, and before commencing their deliberations, whether there be occasion or no for calling together the General Congregation, to which body appertains the task of examining the conduct and administration of the head of the Order.

been adopted, with the modifications necessitated by the special object of each, by all religious Orders since the sixth century. It is the same, consequently, in principle, as St. Basil's, and those which the cenobites of the Egyptian and Syrian deserts followed under the leadership of such men as St. Anthony and St. Pacome, etc.<sup>1</sup> For example, a Jesuit possesses nothing. Now what says St. Benedict? "*Ne quis præsumat aliquid habere proprium, nullam omnino rem:*" "Let no monk presume to possess anything whatever."<sup>2</sup> Again, the Jesuits must obey their superiors; and has enough been said about this obedience? has indignation enough been poured out in torrents over the famous . . . "*perinde ac cadaver*"? Now, leaving on one side military obedience, which is much more absolute, much less enlightened, and, above all, much less voluntary, note how St. Benedict, ten centuries before the Society of Jesus was founded, required his disciples to obey: "*Nullus in monasterio,*" he writes, "*proprii sequatur cordis voluntatem*": "Let no one in the monastery do his heart's will."<sup>3</sup> "*Mox ut aliquid imperatum a majore fuerit, ac si divinitus imperetur, moram pati nesciunt in faciendo*": "As soon as an order has been given them by their superior, monks look upon it as given by God and know not what it is to delay its execution an instant."<sup>4</sup> "*Non suo arbitrio viventes, vel desideriis suis et voluptatibus obedientes, sed ambulantes alieno iudicio et imperio*": "Monks do not live as they like, they follow neither their desires nor their inclinations, but they let themselves be led by the judgment of others."<sup>5</sup>

It would be easy to multiply quotations. I will give but one more to show that, if St. Ignatius is the author of "*perinde ac cadaver,*" the formula only is his but not the idea. Let my readers judge for themselves. ". . . *Quippe quibus nec corpora sua nec voluntates licet habere in propria potestate*": "Not only have the monks no right to have their own wills in their possession, they have no right to possess even their bodies."<sup>6</sup>

It is true that the Patriarch of the monks of the Occident, as he has been called, seems, in one article of his Code, to have become less rigorous: he allows the monk, who has been ordered to do something that is *impossible* for him to accomplish, to humbly explain to his superior the reasons which prevent his obeying; but he must, nevertheless, finally submit, if he who gave the command maintains the same. Now note what St. Ignatius says in a similar case: "If it should happen that you are of a different opin-

<sup>1</sup> *Regula S. P. Benedicti*, Cap. 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* cap. 33.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* cap. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* cap. 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* *id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* cap. 33.

ion to your superiors, and if, after having humbly consulted the Lord, you deem well to lay your remonstrances before them, this is not forbidden."<sup>1</sup> The two legislators are thus animated entirely by the same spirit, and this spirit is, after all, less inflexible than it is wilfully misrepresented to be. In the army, for instance, to which I have already alluded, can one imagine a soldier, an officer, remonstrating with his chiefs on the subject of a given command? And yet military obedience has had none but vigorous apologists, obedience in religious Orders other than the Society of Jesus has had but rare and indulgent critics, whilst the obedience of the Jesuits has ever been the butt for attacks as numerous as . . . my readers would not allow me to say impartial.

The same is true of the supervision that the Jesuits practice,—wrongly, in my opinion, but I am not competent to judge—amongst themselves: this mutual supervision, in respect to which I am constrained to apply to myself the passage of St. Paul: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," is recommended by all masters of the spiritual life, and has, as its object, the perfecting of the members of the community. The Jesuits have been loaded with reproaches for allowing it, as if they were the only ones to practice it, whereas it exists in all religious bodies, even in the mendicant orders, which least resemble St. Benedict's, whence, as I have already shown, the principal prescriptions of St. Ignatius are derived. Thus we read in chap. 13 of the *Constitutions of the Preaching Friars*, founded by St. Dominic: "Each one must report to the Superior what he has seen, for fear that vices be concealed from him." And in chap. 17 of the *Constitution of the Friars Minor*, founded by St. Francis of Assisi: "Let none of us profess or believe that he is not obliged to denounce his brother's faults to the superior who must apply the remedy; for according to the sentiments of St. Bonaventura, of the Masters of the Order, and of all the General Chapters, it is decided that such an opinion is *pestilential and inimical to the Order and to regular discipline.*"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here is an official document which may serve as commentary on this text. It is an extract from a declaration signed by Father Etienne de la Croix, Provincial, and one hundred and sixteen Fathers of the Society of Jesus, which declaration was presented December 19, 1761, to the General Assembly of the Clergy of France.

"If it should come to pass, which God forbid, that our General should lay commands upon us contrary to this present declaration, we should, persuaded as we are that we could not obey without sin, consider those orders as illegitimate and null and as being such, even, that we neither should nor could obey, in virtue of the very rule of obedience to the General prescribed by our Constitution."

<sup>2</sup> The malady would appear to be contagious, for it has even broken out in the convents of the Church of England. See *Nunnery Life in the Church of England*, by Sister Mary Agnes, p. 110.

But we can go a step farther. This supervision, which is and always has been practised, I repeat (taking advantage of the opportunity of deploring it once again), in all religious Institutions without exception, presents this particularity in the Society of Jesus, that instead of being imposed by force, as it were, upon its members, as one of the rules to which they must either submit or take their departure, it is proposed to them in the suavest manner possible: "The postulant shall be asked whether, for his greater spiritual good, and above all for his more complete submission and humiliation, it would please him that his faults, his imperfections, and all that may have been noticed in him, should be made known to his superiors by whomsoever should have become aware thereof *apart from confession.*"<sup>1</sup> The cup is still bitter, but its rim has been coated with honey: "*Eadem, sed non eodem modo.*"

To resume, for my space is too limited to allow of further development such as my subject deserves, the Jesuits observe a rule of the greatest severity. Without having the picturesque costume,<sup>2</sup> without practising the extreme outward mortifications of monastic Orders properly so called, the Jesuits apply themselves, more perhaps than all others, to inward mortification; and it is difficult to understand the state of mind of a man who, having all the requisites of earthly happiness, knocks at the door of their novitiate. And yet youths, magistrates, priests, officers, noblemen, all classes of society, but especially the upper classes, furnish them with recruits, and, in Catholic countries especially, very few names that are to be found in the book of the Peerage, but are inscribed in theirs. How then is one to explain the accusations that are brought with such unrelenting animosity against Religious who, if they are guilty, have certainly not yielded to personal motives in becoming so? For what could the motive be? Pecuniary advantage? But the greater number of the Jesuits belongs to rich families and had to renounce their fortune to enter the Society. Ambition? But most of the Jesuits occupied enviable positions in the world, some having found them in their emblazoned cradles, others having won them by personal work and merit. Besides, the Order founded by St. Ignatius, which differs from others in so many ways, differs also in this that its members cannot accept any dignity either civil or ecclesiastical; they cannot become either Cardinals, Bishops, or even simple Canons,—unless the Pope forces them so

<sup>1</sup> *Examination of the Constitutions.*

<sup>2</sup> The Fathers are dressed like the secular clergy; the brothers' costume resembles that of the clergymen of the Church of England.

to do on pain of committing mortal sin. The words that Dante saw written in black letters over the gate of hell: "*Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate,*" would not be out of place on the doors of the houses of the Society of Jesus as applied to ambition.

Will some suggest that, whilst personally free from ambition, the Jesuits are yet ambitious for their Order, and that the evil they commit is done from obedience to insure its prosperity?

Let us argue the question. "I fail to see," said Renan, "why a Papua should be immortal." Let us not be as cruel towards the Jesuits as was the amiable sceptic towards the unfortunate Papuas, and let us allow them to believe that they have a soul; for it is precisely because they believe they have one that they enter the Society of Jesus, in order to work out its salvation more efficaciously. How can we admit after this that, having left the world and having made the greatest sacrifices in order to lead a life less exposed to sin, they should eventually fall so low as to obey a command to sin?

It is true that they consider obedience as a virtue, as the chief virtue of their condition; can it be then out of virtue that they become sinners? So strange a phenomenon might perforce be possible in the case of ignorant persons of uncultured minds; but what enemy of the Jesuits, however bitter, would ever venture to utter the words "uncultured" and "ignorant" in reference to them? "Speak for yourself," one and all would exclaim: "*Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur.*"

Will some suggest that when they became Religious they were not well acquainted with the Institute? I grant it. But if they do not know it when they first don the costume, they must assuredly know it, and know it well, when they take their vows. Nowhere else are so many precautions taken to dissipate illusions and to extinguish superficial ardor. No other body studies its subjects so completely, nor for so long a time, before admitting them; in no other body have the future members so many means of weighing, during so long a period, not in theory only but in practice, the advantages and disadvantages of the engagement they aspire to enter into. One must suppose then that, by a miracle of dissimulation, the Society does not reveal itself in its true character save to the professed Jesuits of the four vows: in that case the reproaches addressed to Jesuits in general would fall upon the former only who would thus become the scapegoats of the flock. But hold! "*Nemo repente fuit turpissimus.*" Is it to be assumed that men, who had been pure and upright till then, would not be re-

volted by suddenly discovering, to their profound stupefaction, that during fifteen years at least—*grande mortalis ævi spatium*—as Tacitus says, they had been odiously duped? that they would not quit with horror the hypocritical Society they had believed to be holy?

I will not press this point further or I should appear to be calling the common-sense of my readers in question.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

Let us now turn from these general considerations to the examination of the grievances alleged against the Jesuits. But we are stopped at the outset. We perceive at once that these grievances resemble the mythological Proteus; they assume every variety of form and thus elude our grasp. A typical specimen of the greater number of them may be found in the following anecdote, related by a writer who cannot be accused of professing an exaggerated fondness for the Jesuits. "The degree to which he (F. V. Raspail) was haunted by the supervision which he imagined the Society of Jesus to exercise over him was no less marked. When I went to pay him a visit at his property at Arcueil-Cachan, he took me into his garden and, showing me a magnificent pear-tree, said: 'It used to bear superb pears. Unfortunately the Jesuits came and watered it with vitriol. It is dead now.'

"However mistrustful one may be of the holders of the sword whose hilt is in Rome and whose point is everywhere, it is difficult to admit that they broke into Raspail's garden and, armed with a watering-can full of vitriol, committed the depredation he mentioned to me as being undeniable." (*Les aventures de ma vie*, by Henri Rochefort, tom. 2, ch. 8, p. 124.<sup>2</sup>)

On the other hand, can one be surprised at the vague, as well as odious, nature of the accusations brought against the Society of Jesus, when one knows their origin?

1 Sainte Beuve puts the following words into the mouth of Royer-Collard: "I have seen his pamphlet (*De l'Existence et de l'Institut des Jesuites*, by Father de Ravignan). It is good, but I said as I finished it: 'This is a man who believes himself to be a Jesuit! he has the candor to think himself one; it is true that, were one to show him what Jesuits are, he would not believe it. Such men have their place in the Order, but that proves nothing save for them individually.' " (*Port-Royal*, ch. X.) Thus Father de Ravignan, who, after having occupied one of the most elevated posts in the magistracy of France, had become Jesuit, did not know his Order when, having been a professed Jesuit of the four vows for a long period, he was one of its dignitaries and wrote his book! Then . . . what? Is it possible to argue under such conditions? I see indeed the accused, but where are the guilty?

2 The following remarks by Liebknecht, which appeared in the *Fackel* of Vienna, may be quoted in this connexion: "As to the Jesuits, I can say nothing; for in spite of the most laborious inquiries and reflexions, I have not been able to discover what the Jesuits had to do with the 'Affair,' nor what profit could accrue to them from the condemnation of an innocent person."



In 1630, an all-too-famous scholar, who lived and died despised by all parties, Scioppius by name, presented a petition to the Diet of Ratisbon, in which he asked that, in consideration of his services to the Holy Empire, he might be paid every year, as an emolument or otherwise, a sum sufficiently large to assure him an existence free from care. He had the effrontery to recommend this petition to those Fathers who, owing to their positions, could have helped him more efficaciously than any others, namely the confessors of the Emperor and of the Electors. The Diet was drawing to its close, and Scioppius, hearing nothing of his petition, understood the meaning of this silence. The mortification he felt at this rebuff, and his conviction that he owed it to the Jesuits, filled him with fury. Then it was that he wrote that enormous quantity of defamatory libels against the Fathers, which are sufficiently numerous to compose a library by themselves, and in which he attacks, not only their tuition, but also their Institute, their doctrine, their science, and their morals.

It is in this formidable arsenal that those who in all tongues and in all lands combat the Jesuits seek their weapons: "*Il n'y a rien de plus, rien de moins.*"<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, one accusation which, on account of the genius, the piety, and the gravity of him who echoed it, thinking the while perhaps that he was its author, merits being examined apart, all the more so from the fact that, differing widely from the rest, it is clearly formulated and is based on documents. I allude to Pascal's attacks upon the moral theories of the Jesuits in his *Provinciales*. Now, leaving out of account the literary qualities—which have nothing to do with the matter in hand, and which, I may say in passing, would have been much less extolled had Pascal been attacking other adversaries, such as the Capuchins, for instance, or the Carmelites—what is there, really, in this immortal *chef-d'œuvre*?

The condemnation of Casuistry.

"Casuistry," as, not a member of the Society of Jesus, but a member of the French Academy, M. F. Brunetière, excellently defines it, "is the profound investigation and codification of the motives that must regulate conduct in those numerous and difficult cases in which duty finds itself in conflict, not with self-interest in the very least, but with duty itself." And he adds: "Those only can contest its necessity who, by a special gift of moral insensibil-

<sup>1</sup> Ch. Nisard, *Les Gladiateurs de la République des Lettres*. See also Bayle, *Dictionnaire Hist. et Crit.* Art. Scioppius.

ity peculiar to themselves, have never lacked confidence in themselves and have never felt in the school of experience that life in this world is sometimes a very complicated affair.”<sup>1</sup>

Another writer, a celebrated mathematician, the late M. J. Bertrand, who was also no Jesuit, but was another member of the French Academy, and Secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie des Sciences, does not fear to affirm that “those who fight against Casuistry declare war against confession.”<sup>2</sup>

Pascal had certainly no intention of declaring war against confession, for he practised it; but he declared it against Casuistry, though he practised it too—and not the best sort—as when, for instance, he affirmed that he was neither an “inhabitant nor secretary of Port-Royal;”<sup>3</sup> and when he insidiously urged Louis XIV. to persecute the Jesuits;<sup>4</sup> when he, in fine, in all his letters, attributed to the casuists of the Society of Jesus only, the theses against which he protested, the greater number of which, if not all, date from before the foundation of the Society. Thus, for example, the famous proposition concerning duels, in reference to which Pascal tried, as I have just said, to bring down upon his adversaries the king's displeasure, has for its author, unless indeed it be of still more ancient origin, not a Jesuit but a Dominican, a canonised saint, the great theologian who has been called the “Angel of the School”: St. Thomas Aquinas (b. 1227, d. 1274) who enounces it in these terms: “It is lawful to kill a man to save one's honor, and a gentleman ought rather to kill than take to flight, or receive a blow from a stick.” The same saint teaches that a “courtezán does nothing wrong in receiving money for her hire, since by human law her profession is allowed.” Urbain V., Pope from 1362 to 1370, declares that he, who out of zeal for Holy Mother Church kills an excommunicated person, is no murderer. St. Augustin considers that “the action of Abraham appears at first sight to be that of a husband who delivers up his wife to crime; but it appears so to those only who know not how to distinguish, by the light of faith, good actions from sin.” The prophet Elisha (2 Kings v. 17–19) authorises Naaman to perform an act analogous to one that Pascal, in his fifth Provinciale, qualifies as idolatrous. Protestant Milton in his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano* extols regicide repeatedly, and is commended by Macaulay for so doing. One could go on *ad infinitum* quoting those who are guilty of having ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire et Littérature*. Tom. I., pp. 189–190.

<sup>2</sup> *Pascal, les Provinciales*, by Joseph Bertrand.

<sup>3</sup> *Provinciales*, letter to Father Annat, Jan. 15, 1657.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*, fourteenth letter.

pressed opinions against which Pascal has thundered. But to confine our attention to catholics, to theologians, to casuists, why did the rigid Jansenist use terms which convey the impression that the Society of Jesus was the only order implicated? He could not help knowing that this was not the case.

Pascal after all discovered nothing new. Those very propositions, upon which he exercises his talent with so much animation, and a great number of other *ejusdem farinae*, had been carefully collected by the celebrated pastor Du Moulin who, using them to assail Confession, had succeeded in showing triumphantly, and it added to the strength of his position, that the greater part of them were neither recent nor ascribable to any one category of doctors, but that they were, so to speak, traditional and upheld by monks of all frocks and colors, and that once Confession was granted they followed as a corollary.

The same may be said about Probabilism<sup>1</sup> which is inseparable from Casuistry. To judge from what Pascal says, one would think that the Jesuits created it. But that is an error and an impossibility. It is an error, for Probabilism existed long before the establishment of the Society of Jesus. It is an impossibility, for Ignatius Loyola in Chap. IV. of his *Constitutions and Declarations* writes as follows: "Let no one emit a doctrine contrary either to the current opinions of the Schools or to the sentiments of the most authorised doctors, but let each accept those opinions on every subject which are most generally held." In virtue of the very obedience with which they are reproached, the Jesuits could only be Probabilists from the fact that the most celebrated casuists taught Probabilism. I may add that they were not all Probabilists, for Probabilism is simply a system, as I have already stated, and as such is not comprised in the articles of faith. It is one of their number, Father Comitolo who, to refute the system, composed a treatise to which Pascal deigned to render tacit homage by appropriating its arguments: *Habent sua fata libelli!*

In any case, Pascal hurled his anathemas against Probabilism in vain; Rome did not imitate him; on the contrary she pronounced the beatification of a Franciscan monk, Father Théophile de Corte, and canonised Bishop Alphonse de Liguori<sup>2</sup> and, what is more,

<sup>1</sup> System according to which "an opinion is termed probable when it is founded upon reasons of some importance. Whence it sometimes occurs that a single doctor, of great gravity, can render an opinion probable." *Provinciales*, fifth letter.

<sup>2</sup> According to the solemn declaration of the Church: "St. Alph. de Liguori is one of those men, remarkable by their piety and doctrine, filled with the spirit of intelligence, whom our Lord Jesus Christ raises up when the interests of his immaculate Bride (the Church) demand it."

conferred on him the title of Doctor of the Church. Neither of them were Jesuits but they both, nevertheless, taught this doctrine which is still in vogue at the present time. I do not deny to Pascal the right of condemning it, but why expect the Jesuits to be more Catholic than the Pope? "We must be tolerant towards everybody," wrote F. Sarcy some thirty years ago," even towards the Jesuits."

It is true that the point was not to be tolerant nor to "be truthful, the point was to divert the public."<sup>1</sup> And Voltaire is not the only one who thinks thus. Writers of every communion and free-thinkers even have expressed the same opinion. In order not to multiply quotations of which I have made, and must still make, such frequent usage, I will give the judgment of two Protestants only on the *Provinciales*.

"It is a party book, wherein prejudice dishonestly attributes to the Jesuits suspected opinions they had long since condemned and which puts down to the account of the whole Society certain extravagances of a few Flemish and Spanish Fathers."<sup>2</sup>

"Pascal," says Vinet, "performs the functions of a prosecutor, not of a judge; the *Provinciales* are not a summing up but a charge . . . the art of interpretation, of the direction of motive, and of mental reservations has been practised in all ages by the most ignorant of mortals; if the word Jesuit had the meaning the Jansenists would have liked to give it, and which it has received by pretty general use, we must say that the human heart is naturally Jesuitical."

### III.

Granting all that precedes, some may say, the fact still remains that, whether justly or unjustly disparaged by Pascal, the Jesuits were expelled a century later from all Catholic States, and that the suppression of the order was decreed by their natural protector, a Pope, Clement XIV. Would such measures have been taken against innocent people?

In one of his remarkable works<sup>3</sup> Tolstoi complains with a little bitterness and much humor that one of his English critics excuses himself from proving his assertions on the plea of lack of space. I too, alas! have already had to bemoan my want of space, and, I regret it now more than ever, I have not sufficient wherein to tell a story which, with the necessary details, would fill a good-sized

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, ch. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Schoell, *History of the States of Europe*.

<sup>3</sup> *The Kingdom of Heaven is Within You*.

volume. My readers will therefore pardon me, I hope, if I call their attention to the most striking points only; and should my proofs seem incomplete, they will be good enough at least not to accuse me of having shrunk from facing the question.

The J suits who, according to the times and to prevalent opinions, are accused at one moment of being the enemies of the people, at another of being the enemies of the king, were expelled in the eighteenth century from all States governed by Princes of the House of Bourbon. It is well known how little the unfortunate Princes gained from this measure; it could not be otherwise, since it was suggested to them by the very persons who were urging them on to their destruction, whose perfidious counsels they followed with such inconceivable *naivet *.

“In all courts in the eighteenth century,” says a Protestant, Leopold Ranke,<sup>1</sup> “two parties formed; one made war upon the Papacy, the Church, and the State, whilst the other sought to maintain the existing order of things and to preserve the prerogative of the Universal Church. *This latter party was especially represented by the Jesuits.* This Order appeared as the most formidable bulwark of Catholic principles: *it was against it that the storm was immediately directed.*”

And Sismondi, another Protestant, declares that “the concert of accusations, and more often of calumnies, which we find in the writings of the period against the Jesuits, is something appalling.”<sup>2</sup>

It was through one of these calumnious accusations that the persecution broke out, in Portugal first. Joseph I. was jealous of his brother’s talents. Pombal, taking advantage of the monarch’s foible, accused the too talented prince of aspiring to the throne and the Jesuits of helping him. Neither this accusation, nor any of the others with which he substantiated it, in order to attain his end, were ever proved. The Jesuits were sacrificed, but is the mere word of a Pombal sufficient to prove they were guilty?

“What would become of history,” exclaims Sch ell, “what would become of justice, if upon the bare assurance of a Minister of State, *destitute of proofs*, it were permissible to attack the reputation of a man or of a corporation?”<sup>3</sup>

In France the persecution of the Jesuits was due to a still more despicable cause, as d’Alembert himself admits. “At the end of March, 1762,” writes this bitter enemy of the Jesuits, “the sad news of the taking of the Martinique was received; this conquest,

<sup>1</sup>*History of the Papacy.*

<sup>2</sup>*History of the French*, tom. 29.

<sup>3</sup>*History of the States of Europe*, tom. 39.

so important to the English, deprived our commerce of several millions. The foresight of the Government wished to anticipate the complaints that so great a loss would be certain to cause amongst the public. In order to create a diversion, they devised the plan of providing the French with another topic of conversation, just as Alcibiades devised his plan of cutting off his dog's tail in order to prevent the Athenians from speaking about more serious matters. The principal of the College of the Jesuits was therefore informed, that no other course lay open to him than that of obeying the Parliament."<sup>1</sup>

But the Parliament professed to seek the hurt of the Jesuits for the good of religion. Would my readers like to know how the most competent representatives of religion received such a pretension?

On May 23, 1762, the Archbishop of Narbonne, La Roche-Aymon, appeared before the King at Versailles and delivered him a letter drawn up and signed by the Members of the Assembly of the Clergy of France. We read the following passages in this missive:

"All speaks to you, Sire, in favor of the Jesuits. Religion commends to you her defenders; the Church her ministers; Christian souls, the depositaries of the secrets of their consciences: a great number of your subjects, the worthy masters who educated them; all the youth of your realm, those who are to store their hearts and minds. Do not reject, Sire, so many united entreaties; do not suffer that, in your Kingdom, an entire Society, which has not deserved it, be destroyed contrary to all laws of justice, to all laws of the Church and to civil rights. The interest of your authority demands this, and we profess to be as jealous of its rights as of our own."<sup>2</sup>

This is not all. When, thanks to the inertia of Louis XV., whose device was, "*Après moi, le déluge*," Parliament, urged on by Choiseul, was about to gain the battle, a voice, of greater authority than that of the French Episcopacy, made itself heard. In answer to the prayer of the Bishops of the whole world, Pope Clement XIII. issued the Bull *Apostolicum*, wherein he expresses himself thus: "We reject the gross insult which has been offered to the Church and at the same time to the Holy See. We declare, of our own accord, and of our certain knowledge, that *the Society of Jesus breathes out piety and holiness to the highest degree*, although one may meet with men who, after having disfigured it by malicious interpretations, have not feared to qualify it as irreligious and impious,

<sup>1</sup> *Destruction des Jésuites.*

<sup>2</sup> *Procès-Verbal des Assemblées du Clergé de France*, tom. 8. 2. partie, pièces justificatives, No. 4, p. 379.

thus insulting the Church of God in the most outrageous manner, accusing her of having erred so far as to have judged and solemnly pronounced pious and agreeable to Heaven that which in itself was irreligious and impious."

But this solemn protestation was destined to remain without effect. The Jesuits were doomed, and it was now Catholic Spain's turn to smite them. She made herself conspicuous in this execution which the very pious King Charles III. carried into effect with a cruelty that a Nero or a Domitian might have envied. As to the causes to which the destruction of the Society of Jesus was due in Spain, *no one has ever known them.*<sup>1</sup>

"Some one had convinced Charles III. of Spain," says Ranke, "that the Jesuits had conceived the plan of placing his brother Don Louis on the throne."<sup>2</sup>

Schœll,<sup>3</sup> Adam,<sup>4</sup> Coxe,<sup>5</sup> etc., think that the King was shown a letter, fabricated by the Duke of Choiseul and attributed to the General of the Jesuits, Father Ricci, in which the latter said he had succeeded in finding documents which contained the undeniable proof that Charles III. was not a legitimate son.

Whatever may be the truth about these hypotheses, the Pope himself having asked the King of Spain to make known at least to him the reasons for so radical a measure against a Society which it was his duty to protect, the Prince replied: "To spare the world a great scandal, I shall ever preserve in the secrecy of my own heart the abominable scheme which has necessitated this severity. *His Holiness must take my word for it.*" But Ferdinand VII. declared later on that the Society of Jesus was banished in virtue of a measure *that had been wrested by surprise by most artful and iniquitous intrigues* from his magnanimous and pious ancestor Charles III. This official attestation and the fact that the Jesuits were condemned *not only without having been permitted to refute the charge, but without knowing of what they were accused*, suffices amply, it seems to me, to enable us to affirm that in Spain, as in France and Portugal, the Jesuits were victims and not criminals.

They were none the less finally suppressed by Clement XIV. who, in 1759, was still a simple Franciscan monk; and who owed

<sup>1</sup> "His Majesty," declares the sentence passed by the special Council, "reserves to himself alone the knowledge of the serious motives which have determined his royal pleasure to adopt this just administrative measure, using the tutelary authority which pertains to him." It was forbidden for any one, whoever he might be, to speak, even favorably, of the Edict of Proscription, "because it pertains not to private individuals to judge and interpret the Sovereign's will."

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, tom. 4, p. 494.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, tom. 39, p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> *History of Spain*, tom 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Spain under the Kings of the House of Bourbon*

his Cardinal's hat to the influence of the Society of Jesus, just as Pombal owed to them his position as Minister of State. Many historians maintain that Ganganelli obtained the tiara in return for the promise to destroy the Order which the Bourbon courts, then allied by the *pacte de famille*, had injured too deeply for them to be able to pardon their victims. Whatever the truth may be upon this question,<sup>1</sup> which is *adhuc sub judice*, it is certain that it was only after brutal and violent pressure had been brought to bear by the above named courts<sup>1</sup> upon Clement XIV. that he gave way, thus flatly contradicting himself. For in his Brief, *Cælestium munerum thesauros* of July 12, 1769, he had eulogised the Jesuits whose "piety and active, enterprising zeal he wished to sustain and increase by his spiritual favors."<sup>2</sup> Six months after his elevation to the papal See, he had written to Louis XV.: "As touching the Jesuits, *I can neither condemn nor annihilate an Institute praised by nineteen of my predecessors.* And I can do so still less from the fact that it has been confirmed by the Council of Trent and, according to your French maxims, the General Council is above the Pope. If it is desired, I will call a General Council together where all shall be equitably discussed for and against, and where the Jesuits shall be able to defend themselves, for I owe them, as I owe all religious Orders, justice and protection. On the other hand, Poland, the King of Sardinia and even the King of Prussia have written me in their favor. Thus I could not by their destruction please some princes without displeasing others."

Clement XIV. unhappily had not the same force of character as Gregory VII., who, at his last hour, could give utterance to this magnificent testimony: "I have loved justice and hated iniquity; that is why I die in exile." He therefore signed on July 21st, 1773,<sup>3</sup> the Brief, *Dominus ac Redemptor noster*, declaring the suppression of the Society of Jesus. A Protestant historian, whom we have quoted several times already, Schœll, appreciates this document as follows: "This letter condemns neither the doctrine, nor the morals, nor the discipline of the Jesuits. The complaints of the courts against the Order are the only motives alleged for its suppression and the Pope justifies his measures by precedents; other Orders

<sup>1</sup> See, a little further on, the letter of Cardinal Antonelli on this point.

<sup>2</sup> The Court of Vienna finally joined them on the express condition of being permitted to dispose at will of the Jesuits' property: *Virtus post nummos!*

<sup>3</sup> According to canonical rules, this Brief ought to have been promulgated the same day; the Court at Vienna had the publication deferred, in order to have time to take possession of the Jesuits' property.



having been formerly suppressed in compliance with the exigencies of public opinion."<sup>1</sup>

By the side of this judgment of a Protestant, let us place that of a Catholic. The Archbishop of Paris, Christophe de Beaumont, addressed, April 24th, 1774, this severe reply to the Pope who had written demanding acceptance of his Brief: "This Brief is nothing but a private and personal opinion. . . . The Church would therefore deceive herself and us in wishing to make us admit the Brief which destroys the Society of Jesus, or in supposing the Brief to be on an equality, either as regards its legitimacy or its universality, with the Constitution of Clement XIII., *Pascendi munus*, which has all the force and authority which are attributed to a General Council, since it was not pronounced until after all the Catholic clergy and the secular Princes had been consulted by the Holy Father. . . . This Brief is pernicious; dishonoring to the tiara and prejudicial to the glory of the Church and to the conservation and extension of the orthodox faith. Moreover," continues the courageous Prelate, "it is impossible for me to undertake to invite the clergy to accept the aforesaid Brief. I should not be heeded on this subject, even were I unhappy enough to be willing to lend it the assistance of my office which I should thereby dishonor." And he concludes in these words: "These are some of the reasons which induce me, and *the whole of the clergy of this kingdom*, to refuse to permit the publication of such a Brief, and to declare to your Holiness, as I do by the present letter, that such is our state of mind and that of *all the clergy*."

Did this severe but merited rebuke awaken the Pontiff's slumbering conscience? In any case, whether from remorse or from some other cause, Clement XIV. became insane; he wandered about his apartments night and day repeating amidst his sobs the words: "*Compulsus feci! compulsus feci!*" Death came nearly a year after the crime (Sept. 22nd, 1774) and put an end to his torments.

The Jesuits have of course been accused of his death: an accusation all the more absurd when one reflects that, if they must at all costs be represented as knaves, they should at least not be taken for fools. Men, capable of not recoiling from murder, would have had recourse thereto before the Brief, not afterwards. They would have employed the same means to rid themselves of all their enemies. But far from so doing they bore all this injustice and all

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, tom. 44, p. 83.

this suffering without flinching,<sup>1</sup> without even a secret murmur; we have undeniable proof of this assertion in the fact that, all their papers having been suddenly and unexpectedly seized in Portugal, in France, in Spain, and in Rome at the Gesu, the head-quarters of the Society, not one of them contains a word against their most violent persecutors. Nothing could have been easier than for them to foment a revolution in the Spanish colonies where their influence was immense. "They showed on the contrary," says Sismundi,<sup>2</sup> "a spirit of resignation and humility allied to calmness and firmness truly heroic."<sup>3</sup>

They received the reward of their patience, for the triumph of iniquity, thank God, is ever ephemeral. Already in 1775, Pius VI., successor of Clement XIV., had asked the opinion of the Cardinals on the subject of the destruction of the Institute. Cardinal Leonard Antonelli drew up a report, in the name of his colleagues, deciding that the destruction was *illegal and therefore null*.

"Your Holiness," says the report, "knows as well as the lord Cardinals, for the thing is only too manifest, that Clement XIV., to the scandal of the world, offered of his own accord and promised to the Jesuits' enemies, this Brief of Abolition, whilst he was still but a private person and before he could have been in possession of all the facts concerning this momentous matter. Since then, as Pope, he was not pleased to give this Brief an authentic form such as the Canons require. . . . This Brief has caused so great and so general a scandal in the Church that scarcely any but impious persons, heretics, bad Catholics and libertines, rejoice therein."

Pius VI., however, dared not risk the danger to which an immediate condemnation of his predecessor's policy would have exposed him. He contented himself with allowing the Jesuits to exist in Russia and in Prussia where they had been hospitably received.

Thanks to political events, which were not long in showing the Bourbons into what a terrible abyss they had allowed themselves to be cast, this clandestine existence, as we may almost call it, continued until July 30th, 1804, on which date Pius VII. canonically re-established the Society of Jesus in those countries which had afforded its members a refuge in the time of their misfortune.

<sup>1</sup> Thus in France out of four thousand Religious there were but eight coadjutors and five professed Jesuits who left the Society; the rest preferred banishment to apostasy; the proportion was about the same everywhere.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, tom. 29, p. 372.

<sup>3</sup> *The Annual Register*, tom. X., year, 1767, ch. 5, p. 27, and the *Mercure Historique* for Dec. 1767, p. 354, confirm this fact.

At last on April 7, 1814, the Jesuits were definitely re-established by the Bull *Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*.

All those countries whence they had been banished opened their doors to them in turn and, when in 1829 they re-entered Portugal, they were welcomed on their arrival—striking example of the vicissitudes of fate—by the Marquis of Pombal and the Countess d'Oliveira, the heirs of their implacable enemies. “They overwhelmed them with signs of affectionate regret, and the first boarders that the restored college of Coïmbre received within its walls, at the same time as the Fathers, were the great-grandsons of the man who had taken the most active part in the destruction of the Jesuits.”<sup>1</sup>

#### IV.

It is time to conclude. However imperfect, however incomplete this sketch may be—and no one is more conscious of its defects, nor regrets them more than myself—it yet, so it seems to me, proves conclusively that a Jesuit is not the “*monstrum nulla virtute redemptum a vitiis*” that the word too often evokes. A Jesuit is simply a Catholic, a priest, a religious, and we must confess that he is all three to a surpassing degree if we consider, belong to what communion we may, that the highest authority of the Roman Church, the Pope, is the most competent to pronounce on this point. Now, all the Popes who, since Paul III., have had occasion to speak of the Society of Jesus, all, without excepting the one to whom they owed their momentary suppression, have done so in the most eulogistic terms; they have vied one with another in loading this Society with the most comprehensive spiritual privileges; one and all have proclaimed it the most valliant troop, the bulwark of Catholicism.

I do not mean to infer that we have not the right to judge the Jesuits from a different point of view to the Popes'. But then even, then especially, we must remember, before so doing, that maxim of Marcus Aurelius: “There are a thousand circumstances with which we must acquaint ourselves in order to be able to pronounce on the actions of others.” Now, if we acquaint ourselves with these “thousand circumstances,” we end inevitably by recognising that all the reproaches with which we may feel entitled to load the Jesuits in the name of reason, of philosophy, etc., etc., fall equally upon all Religious Orders, and upon the Church her-

<sup>1</sup> Crétineau-Joly: *Histoire Religieuse, Politique et Littéraire de la Compagnie de Jésus*. I take advantage of this opportunity of recommending this excellent work which has been of much use to me in writing this article.

self of which they have ever been the most brilliant ornament. Why then address these reproaches to the Jesuits only? If we acquaint ourselves with these "thousand circumstances," and if we study the Jesuits, not as members of a corporation, but as priests and missionaries, we are inevitably compelled to share the opinion that a Protestant writer has so well expressed: "However much one may detest the Jesuits, when religion is allied to intellectual charms, when it is gentle-mannered, wears a smiling face and does all gracefully, one is always tempted to believe that the Jesuits have had a hand in the affair."<sup>1</sup>

If we consider them from a purely lay point of view, we are astonished at the services they have rendered, and at the number of distinguished men they have produced, in the space of three centuries, in tuition, in science and in letters: "There are amongst them," says Voltaire, "writers of rare merit, scholars, orators, and geniuses."<sup>2</sup> "No other religious society, without exception," confesses D'Alenbert, "can boast of having produced so large a number of men famous in science and in letters. The Jesuits have practised every variety of style with success; eloquence, history, antiquity, geometry, profound and poetic literature: there is hardly a class of writers in which they have not men of the first order."<sup>3</sup>

"I saw a great deal of them," wrote Lalande, the illustrious geometrician (an atheist), just after their expulsion from France: "They were a company of heroes. . . . Mankind has lost forever that valuable and astounding body of twenty thousand members ceaselessly occupied, without any personal gain, in tuition, in preaching, in missions, in peace-making, in aiding the dying, in all those functions in short which are the dearest and the most useful to humanity."<sup>4</sup> "I cannot behold the application and the talent of these masters in cultivating the minds and in forming the morals of youth, without recalling that saying of Agésilas touching Pharnabaze: 'Being what you are, would you were one of us.'" Who expresses this desire? Bacon.<sup>5</sup> And to link this testimony, one of the most remote, to another which is on the contrary one of the most recent, and whose import will escape none of my readers, this is what the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands think of their educators: "If the Tagals include in the same detestation Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians, and Recollects, they make an exception in favor of the Jesuits who, charged with classical instruction, *have therein acquired a reputation for tact and liberalism.*

<sup>1</sup> Victor Cherbuliez, *Après Fortune Faité*, ch. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Dictionnaire Philosophique.*

<sup>3</sup> *Destruction des Jésuites.*

<sup>4</sup> *Annales philosophiques.*

<sup>5</sup> *De dign. et augm. scient.*

Those who are to-day leading the revolt were educated under their direction. Many of the insurgents have declared that they cherished real gratitude towards their former professors." "We have seen for the first time," said one of them to me, "what just and enlightened masters can be."<sup>1</sup>

Shall we consider the Jesuits finally as private persons? There are very few amongst them, as everybody admits, who give any serious cause for complaint; no other body has ever counted so few unworthy members. It is always their spirit that is attacked. But I have already said that their spirit is the spirit of Catholicism whose best representatives they are. Let their opponents reproach them with being Catholics, if reproach them they must; but let those of us, who are conscious of the injustice of such a reproach, recognise the good in them; as to the rest, let us remember that they are human, and therefore subject to the faults and failings we all share, but against which they strive far more constantly and efficaciously than do so large a number of ourselves; so large a number, above all, of those—the race shows no sign of extinction, alas!—who having expended all their severity upon others have nothing but unbounded indulgence at their disposal when it comes to dealing with themselves:

“. . . ‘*Egom et mi ignosco,*’ *Mænius inquit.*”

<sup>1</sup> *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Feb. 15, 1899.