

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE JESUITS.

BY THE EDITOR.

ALTHOUGH the Company of Jesus¹ was founded² by Ignatius Loyola for the avowed purpose of conquering the world for the Church of Rome and of making the Pope the head of the Church, and although, as has rightly been said of its members, the Jesuits,³ they "alone [had] rolled back the tide of Protestant advance . . . and the whole honors of the Counter-Reformation are theirs singly,"⁴ it is an undeniable fact that the disciples of Loyola are far from being recognised as good Roman Catholics by other Roman Catholic orders. In fact they are frequently regarded with dread and suspicion by bishops, archbishops, and popes, and their order has repeatedly been suppressed by the Church. The Jesuits have been expelled by almost all Roman Catholic governments, and have deemed it wise to establish a most extensive settlement in Protestant Holland. What is the reason of this hostility between the Church and a body of its devoted sons, who have banded themselves together as a light-horse brigade, ready for immediate service in any part of the globe and, if need be, willing to die for its cause?

The Jesuits appear at first sight as an order which carries the principles of the Roman Catholic Church to its furthest extremes, and this in a certain sense is true. Yet there are some new features in the Society of Jesus which are foreign to the older monastic institutions. While the main purpose of the latter is religious, consisting in the sanctification and salvation of each individual member, the Society of Jesus absorbs the individual and makes it,

¹ Also called *Societas Jesu*. The original term "Company of Jesus" is intended to denote a band of soldiers.

² In 1534; confirmed by the Pope in 1540.

³ First so called by Calvin about 1550.

⁴ *Encycl. Brit.*, s. v. *Jesuits*, Vol. XIII., p. 648.

through discipline and spiritual exercises, subservient to its great aim, which is political, being the acquisition of power and a final conquest of the world, which is to be ruled by the Pope in Rome.

No doubt one reason of the occasional hostility between the Church and the Society of Jesus is due to the fact that the latter forms a most compact, powerful, and independent organisation within the Church, and the Pope is apt to be dominated and even tyrannised over by the Jesuit general, in recognition of which state of things the people of Rome call the Jesuit general "the black pope," and say that he is the real ruler of the Church, the power behind the throne.

That the Jesuit order bears remarkable similarities to the Mussulman secret societies, especially the Assassins presided over by "the old man of the mountain," cannot be denied, and the late Abbé Charbonnel has collected a number of striking facts to prove that both the idea and the organisation of the Jesuit order was actually derived from the Kwan Mussulmans.¹

Among other arguments M. Charbonnel collates the Mussulman and the Jesuit texts of the famous passage *perinde ac cadaver*, which describes the character of the obedience required of members of the society. The Mussulman text says the obedience must be as that of "a corpse in the hands of the washers of the dead," while the Jesuit rule runs as that of "a corpse that allows itself to be turned in all ways."

A short time ago a German pamphlet reached our office² which complains bitterly of the influence of the Jesuits in the Roman Church. It professes to be written by a Catholic clergyman, and the tone of the arguments shows that the author is deeply concerned for the welfare of the Roman Church. His lamentations are keenly felt, and he points to the Jesuits as the cause of the degrading conditions and reactionary tendencies that prevail in Roman Catholic countries. He claims that "one can be a good Christian and a worthy member of the Church although averse to Jesuitism" (p. 8). He quotes the opinions of Cardinals Wiseman and Manning and of other Church authorities against the Jesuits, and mentions the pamphlet of R. Grassmann, Stettin, which unveils the shady sides of the Jesuit moral theology.

The Jesuits have been attacked in all countries and expelled

¹ See Victor Charbonnel's pamphlet *L'origine musulmane des Jésuites*, Paris, Fayard Frères, 78 Boulevard St. Michel. Price, fr. 0.50.

² *Eine Cassandra-Stimme. Mahnwort an das katholische Volk* von einem amtierenden römisch-katholischen Priester. Cæsar Schmidt, Zürich, 1901.

from many. They are openly denounced for "villany and perfidy," and the author of the last-mentioned pamphlet says: "No one who is free from prejudice can deny that there are not many reasons for these severe judgments" (p. 7). Pope Clement XIV. uses in his breve even stronger terms, accusing them of sowing seeds of discord and jealousy, of disturbing the peace of Christendom, of exhibiting an insatiable desire for worldly possessions. Hence have originated disturbances which are world-known and have caused the greatest grief and vexation to the apostolic see. Such are in brief the reasons why Clement discontinues the order and declares it as annihilated for ever (*sic!*).¹

We have no personal reason to be prejudiced against the Jesuits. We know some members of the order whom we respect for their scholarship and other praiseworthy qualities. We know at the same time from the testimony of impartial observers that the Jesuits are purer and more rigidly moral than any other Roman Catholic order. For instance, Professor Worcester, one of the American commissioners to the Philippines, speaks highly of the Jesuits on this account, and contrasts them favorably with the other Spanish monks. We also grant that the Jesuits are good pedagogues, although their scheme of instruction is scholastic, not educational. Their aim is not to develop manliness and independence but amenableness and obedience. Lastly we may fairly concede that many accusations of the Jesuits are unfair. Yet, on the other hand, we cannot help asking ourselves: How did the Jesuits incur this general hostility of the authorities of the Church whose honor they defend and whose power they endeavor to enhance?

The author of the article on the Jesuits in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* says (Vol. XIII., p. 649):

"Two most startling and indisputable facts meet the student who pursues the history of this unique society. The first is the universal suspicion and hostility it has incurred,—not, as might reasonably be expected, merely from those Protestants whose avowed and most successful foe it has been, nor yet from the enemies of all clericalism and religious dogma, to whom it is naturally the embodiment of all they most detest, but from every Roman Catholic state and nation in the world, with perhaps the insignificant exception of Belgium. Next is the brand of ultimate failure which has invariably been stamped on all its most promising schemes and efforts. It controlled the policy of Spain, when Spain was aiming, with good reason to hope for success, at the hegemony

¹Cf. Wolf, *Gesch. der Jesuiten*, III., p. 433, ff.

of Europe, and Spain came out of the struggle well-nigh the last amongst the nations. It secured the monopoly of religious teaching and influence in France under Louis XIV. and XV. only to see an atheistic revolution break out under Louis XVI. and sweep over the nation after a century of such training. It guided the action of James II., lost the crown of England for the house of Stuart, and brought about the limitation of the throne to the Protestant succession. Its Japanese and Red Indian missions have vanished without leaving a trace behind; its labors in Hindustan did but prepare the way for the English empire there; it was swept out of its Paraguayan domains without power of defence; and, having in our own day concentrated its efforts on the maintenance of the temporal power of the popes, and raised it almost to the rank of a dogma of the Catholic faith, it has seen Rome proclaimed as the capital of united Italy, and a Piedmontese sovereign enthroned in the Quirinal."

The present number of *The Open Court* contains an article on the Jesuits which is written in their defence and attempts to prove the justice of their cause by pointing out that they are good Roman Catholics and that their views are not peculiar to themselves, but are genuine, Simon-pure doctrines of the Church herself, having been held by her most distinguished thinkers and saints from time immemorial. He would seem to Protestants thus to throw the opprobrium which attaches to the Jesuits proper, on the Church herself, virtually identifying Jesuitism with Romanism. The apology our author offers may, thus, in certain circles, have the counter effect from what he intended.

M. Ladavèze is an able author, and we doubt whether the cause which he so ardently espouses could be better defended, at least on the assumption that Romanism is the truth. The Jesuits have lately been expelled from France, and it is probable that they will turn their faces toward the United States, where liberal institutions and the belief in Religious Liberty are so firmly established that a disturbance of their settlements is highly improbable. Will they find a congenial soil here? Will they adapt themselves with the same ingenious instinct of assimilation as they exhibited in China and in other countries? Will they succeed in making proselytes among the liberty-loving Americans? Will the United States, having inherited the Spanish colonies, adopt the policy of Spain? Or will Jesuitism rouse the opposition of the people, and will the enterprises of the society here too end in failure? All these queries are open questions, and who will venture to make prophecies!