

THE JESUITS 1534-1921

A History of the Society of Jesus from Its
Foundation to the Present Time

BY

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PREFACE

Some years ago the writer of these pages, when on his way to what is called a general congregation of the Society of Jesus, was asked by a fellow-passenger on an Atlantic liner, if he knew anything about the Jesuits. He answered in the affirmative and proceeded to give an account of the character and purpose of the Order. After a few moments, he was interrupted by the inquirer with, "You know

nothing at all about them, Sir; good day." Possibly the Jesuits themselves are responsible for this attitude of mind, which is not peculiar to people at sea, but is to be met everywhere.

As a matter of fact, no Jesuit has thus far ever written a complete or adequate history of the Society; Orlandini, Jouvancy and Cordara attempted it a couple of centuries ago, but their work never got beyond the first one hundred years. Two very small compendiums by Jesuits have been recently published, one in Italian by Rosa, the other in French by Brucker, but they are too congested to be satisfactory to the average reader, and Brucker's stops at the Suppression of the Society by Clement XIV in 1773. Crétineau-Joly's history was written in great haste; he is often a special pleader, and even Jesuits find him too eulogistic. At present he is hopelessly antiquated, his last volume bearing the date of 1833. B. N. (Barbara Neave) published in English a history of the Society based largely on Crétineau-Joly. The consequence of this lack of authoritative works is that the general public gets its information about the Jesuits from writers who are prejudiced or ill-informed or, who, perhaps, have been hired to defame the Society for political purposes.

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Other authors, again, have found the Jesuits a romantic theme, and have drawn largely on their imagination for their statements.

Attention was called to this condition of things by the Congregation of the Society which elected Father Martin to the post of General of the Jesuits in 1892. As a result he appointed a corps of distinguished writers to co-operate in the production of a universal history of the Society, which was to be colossal in size, based on the most authentic documents, and in line with the latest and most exacting requirements of recent scientific historiography. On the completion of the various parts, they are to be co-ordinated and then translated into several languages, so as to supply material for minor histories within the reach of the general public. Such a scheme necessarily supposes a very considerable time before the completion of the entire work, and, as matter of fact, although several volumes have already appeared in English, French, German, Spanish and Italian, the authors are still discussing events that occurred two centuries ago. Happily their researches have thrown much light on the early history of the Order; an immense number of *documents inédits*, published by Carayon and others, have given us a more

intimate knowledge of the intermediate period; many biographies have been written, and the huge volume of the "Liber sæcularis" by Albers brings the record down to our own days. Thus, though much valuable information has already been made available for the general reader the great collaborative work is far from completion. Hence the present history of the Jesuits.

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THE JESUITS 1534-1921

CHAPTER I ORIGIN

The Name — Opprobrious meanings — Caricatures of the Founder — Purpose of the Order — Early life of Ignatius — Pampeluna — Conversion — Manresa — The Exercises — Authorship — Journey to Palestine — The Universities — Life in Paris — First Companions — Montmartre First Vows — Assembly at Venice. Failure to reach Palestine — First Journey to Rome — Ordination to the Priesthood — Labors in Italy — Submits the Constitutions for Papal Approval — Guidiccioni's opposition — Issue of the Bull *Regimini* — Sketch of the Institute — Crypto-Jesuits.

The name "Jesuit" has usually a sinister meaning in the minds of the misinformed. Calvin is accused of inventing it, but that is an error. It was in common use two or three centuries before the Reformation, and generally it implied spiritual distinction. Indeed, in his famous work known as "The Great Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ," which appeared somewhere about 1350, the saintly old Carthusian ascetic, Ludolph of Saxony, employs it in a way that almost provokes a smile. He tells his readers that "just as we are called Christians when we are baptized, so we shall be called Jesuits when we enter into glory." Possibly such a designation would be very uncomfortable even for some pious people of the present day. The opprobrious meaning of the word came into use at the approach of the Protestant Reformation. Thus, when laxity in the observance of their rule began to show itself in the once fervent followers of St. John Columbini —

who were called Jesuati, because of their frequent use of

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the expression: "Praised be Jesus Christ" — their name fixed itself on the common speech as a synonym of hypocrisy. Possibly that will explain the curious question in the "Examen of Conscience" in an old German prayer-book, dated 1519, where the penitent is bidden to ask himself: "Did I omit to teach the Word of God for fear of being called a Pharisee, a Jesuit, a hypocrite, a Beguine?"

The association of the term Jesuit with Pharisee and hypocrite is unpleasant enough, but connecting it with Beguine is particularly offensive. The word Beguine had come to signify a female heretic, a mysticist, an illuminist, a pantheist, who though cultivating a saintly exterior was credited with holding secret assemblies where the most indecent orgies were indulged in. The identity of the Beguines with Jesuits was considered to be beyond question, and one of the earliest Calvinist writers informed his co-religionists that at certain periods the Jesuits made use of mysterious and magical devices and performed a variety of weird antics and contortions in subterraneous caverns, from which they emerged as haggard and worn as if they had been struggling with the demons of hell (Janssen, *Hist. of the German People*, Eng. tr., IV, 406-7). Unhappily, at that time, a certain section of the association of Beguines insisted upon being called Jesuits. There were many variations on this theme when the genuine Jesuits at last appeared. In Germany they were denounced as idolaters and libertines, and their great leader Canisius was reported to have run away with an abbess. In France they were considered assassins and regicides; Calvin called them *la racaille*, that is, the rabble, rifraff, dregs. In England they were reputed political plotters and spies. Later, in America, John Adams, second President of the United States, identified them with Quakers and resolved to

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suppress them. Cotton Mather or someone in Boston denounced them as grasshoppers and prayed for the east wind to sweep them away; the Indians burned them at the stake as magicians, and the Japanese bonzes insisted that they were cannibals, a charge repeated by Charles Kingsley, Queen Victoria's chaplain, who, in "Westward Ho," makes an old woman relate of the Jesuits first arriving in England that "they had probably killed her old man and salted him for provision on their journey to the Pope of Rome." No

wonder Newman told Kingsley to fly off into space.

The climax of calumny was reached in a decree of the Parliament of Paris, issued on August 6, 1762. It begins with a prelude setting forth the motives of the indictment, and declares that "the Jesuits are recognized as *guilty of having taught at all times, uninterruptedly, and with the approbation of their superiors and generals*, simony, blasphemy, sacrilege, the black art, magic, astrology, impiety, idolatry, superstition, impurity, corruption of justice, robbery, parricide, homicide, suicide and regicide." The decree then proceeds to set forth eighty-four counts on which it finds them specifically guilty of supporting the Greek Schism, denying the procession of the Holy Ghost; of favoring the heresies of Arianism, Sabellianism, and Nestorianism; of assailing the hierarchy, attacking the Mass and Holy Communion and the authority of the Holy See; of siding with the Lutherans, Calvinists and other heretics of the sixteenth century; of reproducing the heresies of Wycliff and the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians; of adding blasphemy to heresy; of belittling the early Fathers of the Church, the Apostles, Abraham, the prophets, St. John the Baptist, the angels; of insulting and blaspheming the Blessed Virgin; of undermining the foundations of the Faith; destroying belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ;

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casting doubt on the mystery of the Redemption; encouraging the impiety of the Deists; suggesting Epicureanism; teaching men to live like beasts, and Christians like pagans (de Ravignan, *De l'existence et de l'institut des Jésuites*, iii).

This was the contribution of the Jansenists to the Jesuit chamber of horrors. It was endorsed by the government and served as a weapon for the atheists of the eighteenth century to destroy the religion of France, and finally the lexicons of every language gave an odious meaning to the name Jesuit. A typical example of this kind of ill-will may be found in the "Diccionario nacional" of Domínguez. In the article on the Jesuits, the writer informs the world that the Order was the superior in learning to all the others; and produced, relatively at every period of its existence more eminent men, and devoted itself with greater zeal to the preaching of the Gospel and the education of youth—the primordial and sublime objects of its Institute. Nevertheless its influence in political matters, as powerful as it was covert, its startling accumulation of wealth, and its ambitious aims,

drew upon it the shafts of envy, created terrible antagonists and implacable persecutors, until the learned Clement XIV, the immortal Ganganelli, suppressed it on July 21, 1773, for its abuses and its disobedience to the Holy See. Why the "learned Clement XIV" should be described as "immortal" for suppressing instead of preserving or, at least, reforming an order which the writer fancies did more than all the others for the propagation of the Faith is difficult to understand, but logic is not a necessary requisite of a lexicon. "In spite of their suppression," he continues, "they with their characteristic pertinacity have succeeded in coming to life again and are at present existing in several parts of Europe." The

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"Diccionario" is dated, Madrid, 1849. In other words, the saintly Pius VII performed a very wicked act in re-establishing the Order.

Of course the founder of this terrible Society had to be presented to the public as properly equipped for the malignant task to which he had set himself; so writers have vied with each other in expatiating on what they call his complex individuality. Thus a German psychologist insists that the Order established by this Spaniard was in reality a Teutonic creation. The Frenchman Drumont holds that "it is anti-semitic in its character," though Polanco, Loyola's life-long secretary, was of Jewish origin, as were Laínez, the second General, and the great Cardinal Toletus. A third enthusiast, Chamberlain, who is English-born, dismisses all other views and insists that, as Loyola was a Basque and an Iberian, he could not have been of Germanic or even Aryan descent, and he maintains that the primitive traits of the Stone Age continually assert themselves in his character. In reading the Spiritual Exercises, he says, "I hear that mighty roar of the cave bear and I shudder as did the men of the diluvial age, when poor, naked and defenceless, surrounded by danger day and night, they trembled at that voice." (Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, I, 570.) "If this be true," says Brou in "Les Jésuites et la légende," "then, by following the same process of reasoning, one must conclude that as Xavier was a Basque, his voice also was ursine and troglodytic; and as Faber was a Savoyard, he will have to be classified as a brachycephalous *homo alpinus*." Herman Müller, in "Les Origines de la Compagnie de Jésus" claims the honor of having launched an entirely novel theory about Loyola's personality. "The 'Exercises' are an amalgam of Islamic gnosticism and militant Catholicism," he tells

us; "but where did Ignatius

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become acquainted with these Mussulmanic congregations? We have nothing positive on that score, though we know that one day he met a Moor on the road and was going to run him through with his sword. Then too, there were a great many Moors and Moriscos in Catalonia, and we must not forget that Ignatius intended to go to Palestine to convert the Turks. He must, therefore, have known them and so have been subject to their influence." Strange to say, Müller feels aggrieved that the Jesuits do not accept this very illogical theory, which he insists has nothing discreditable or dishonoring in it.

Omitting many other authorities, Vollet in "La Grande Encyclopédie" (s. v. Ignace de Loyola, Saint), informs his readers that "impartial history can discover in Loyola numberless traits of fantastic exaltation, morbid dreaminess, superstition, moral obscurantism, fanatical hatred, deceit and mendacity. On the other hand, it is impossible not to admit that he was a man of iron will, of indomitable perseverance in action and in suffering, and unshakeable faith in his mission; in spite of an ardent imagination, he had a penetrating intelligence, and a marvelous facility in reading the thoughts of men; he was possessed of a gentleness and suppleness which permitted him to make himself all to all. Visionary though he was, he possessed in the supreme degree, the genius of organization and strategy; he could create the army he needed, and employ the means he had at hand with prudence and circumspection. We can even discover in him a tender heart, easily moved to pity, to affection and to self-sacrifice for his fellow-men." Michelet says he was a combination of Saint Francis of Assisi and Machiavelli. Finally Victor Hugo reached the summit of the absurd when he assured the French Assembly in 1850 that "Ignatius was the enemy of Jesus." As a matter of fact the

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poet knew nothing of either, nor did many of his hearers.

As far as we are aware, St. Ignatius never used the term Jesuit at all. He called his Order the *Compañía de Jesús*, which in Italian is *Compagnia*, and in French, *Compagnie*. The English name Society, as well as the Latin *Societas*, is a clumsy attempt at a translation, and is neither adequate nor picturesque. *Compañía* was evidently a reminiscence of Loyola's early military life, and meant to him a battalion of light infantry, ever ready for service in any part of the

world. The use of the name *Jesus* gave great offense. Both on the Continent and in England, it was denounced as blasphemous; petitions were sent to kings and to civil and ecclesiastical tribunals to have it changed; and even Pope Sixtus V had signed a Brief to do away with it. Possibly the best apology for it was given by the good-natured monarch, Henry IV, when the University and Parliament of Paris pleaded with him to throw his influence against its use. Shrugging his shoulders, he replied: "I cannot see why we should worry about it. Some of my officers are Knights of the Holy Ghost; there is an Order of the Holy Trinity in the Church; and, in Paris, we have a congregation of nuns who call themselves God's Daughters. Why then should we object to Company of Jesus?"

The Spaniards must have been amazed at these objections, because the name *Jesus* was, as it still is, in very common use among them. They give it to their children, and it is employed as an exclamation of surprise or fear; like *Mon Dieu!* in French. They even use such expressions as: *Jesu Cristo! Jesu mille veces* or *Jesucristo, Dios mio!* The custom is rather startling for other nationalities, but it is merely a question of *autre pays, autres mœurs*. A compromise

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was made, however, for the time being, by calling the organization "The Society of the Name of Jesus," but that was subsequently forbidden by the General.

As a rule the Jesuits do not reply to these attacks. The illustrious Jacob Gretser attempted it long ago; but, in spite of his sanctity, he displayed so much temper in his retort, that he was told to hold his peace. Such is the policy generally adopted, and the Society consoles itself with the reflection that the terrible Basque, Ignatius Loyola, and a host of his sons have been crowned by the Universal Church as glorious saints; that the august Council of Trent solemnly approved of the Order as a "pious Institute;" that twenty or thirty successive Sovereign Pontiffs have blessed it and favored it, and that after the terrible storm evoked by its enemies had spent its fury, one of the first official acts of the Pope was to restore the Society to its ancient position in the Church. The scars it has received in its numberless battles are not disfigurements but decorations; and Cardinal Allen, who saw its members at close quarters in the bloody struggles of the English Mission, reminded them that "to be hated of the Heretikes, S. Hierom computeth a great glorie."

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