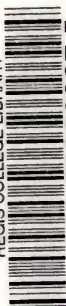


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JESUIT CARDINAL.

ROBERT BELLARMINE.

ROBERTO FRANCESCO ROMULO BELLARMINO first saw light in Montepulciano, a town of Tuscany, on the 4th day of October, 1542. Cardinal Roberto Pucci, of Florence, gave him those names at "the lustral font." The first, Roberto, clave to him all his life, in honour of the sponsor; the second name, Francesco, given in consideration of the saint adored on that day, St. Francis of Assisi, was to remind him of the seraphic patriarch whom he should invoke as his guardian saint, and whose virtues he might aspire to imitate; and as for the third name, Romulo, it might suggest and quicken aspirations after some Roman dignity. His father, Vincenzo Bellarmino, and his mother, Cintia Cervini, were of high families; and his maternal uncle, Marcello Cervini, sat on the apostolic throne as Marcellus II.

IN CHILDHOOD.

Wealth and honours attended at his birth, bidding for eulogies on such illustrious infancy. "Educated," to borrow the words of his biographer, Fuligatto, "in the bosom of most excellent parents, from being a diminutive infant, he had

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scarcely reached years of an enlightened discretion when he gave indications of his future greatness and incomparable probity. Indeed, some judged that he had found, in the hands of God, Creator of human minds, a good soul,—a soul in which Adam himself would not have sinned, as it had formerly been said of St. Bonaventure.”

This marvel of unstained purity, according to Fuligatto, loved religion in preference to play, and acted over again in the nursery the ceremonies of the Church. A stool served him instead of altar, whereat he mimicked mass. On the seat of a high-backed bench, just peeping over the top, and wearing something white, he preached, in his way, about the sufferings of Christ, much to the delight of his mother, who, like many others, taught her little Robert to play at religion when he was six or seven years old, and left him to play out the game with greater art at sixty or seventy.

She spared no pains, however, to bring him up according to the straitest sect of her religion, suffering him only to associate with elder boys, and they of his own rank; and, after he had risen to eminence, his elder sister Camilla stated that when only nine or ten years old he gave up childish sports, and was especially careful never to walk too quick. Public fame in Montepulciano retained the memory of that edifying gravity; and, in due time, many of the

old people deponed as much on oath. As he grew bigger, the same propensity to imitate Priests continued. It is related that when rambling in the country, he was wont to amuse himself with catching birds, playing on the fiddle, and preaching from the trunk of a tree. Being even then an ardent orator, he gathered audiences.

But, amidst all this childishness, young Robert had higher thoughts: perhaps observing that the path to eminence could only be trodden by the diligent, and certainly impelled by a strong desire after knowledge, he became a diligent student, and not only rose early for prayers, as required to do, but often stole from his bed at night, and by help of a flint and steel struck light, lit his fire, and outran the morning in pursuit of learning. But that pursuit must have been retarded by the observance of a round of ceremonial festivities, fastings, hours, litanies, rosaries, and processions. As nephew of a Pope, godson of a Cardinal, related to some of the highest families in Tuscany, possessing a vigorous mind, and having every advantage of education at command, nothing less than a veto of Divine Providence could have driven him back into obscurity. But it pleased God to permit the contrary. We shall attend this child in his advance to almost the highest station that the Church of Rome could give, and find him foremost in battle with the Reformation.

Partaking of that admiration of classic models which yet survived the days of Medicean glory in Florence, he found much delight in their study. From Virgil, especially, in due time, he drew a poetic inspiration, while Horace and the Satirists lent him their charms of number. He could early write Italian odes with equal facility and success, and after a few years some of his Latin verses obtained celebrity. The hymn in the Roman Breviary, in honour of Mary Magdalene, beginning with "*Pater superni luminis*," inserted there by command of Clement VIII., was from his pen. That the spur of ambition urged him, even in the gay morning of childhood, is undoubted. He used to tell a little anecdote of himself, which says as much. At church one day, with his mother, during sermon, and rather amused than edified, he diverted her attention by repeating, again and again, and loud enough to be heard by many, "Signora, do you not see that I am going to be made a Bishop and a Cardinal?" "Hush," said Cynthia, "hush, hush!" "Nay, lady," he shouted, pointing at the pictures of illustrious Doctors that adorned the building, "I shall be like one of *them*, some day." Jesuits have imagined that the boy prophesied.

AT STUDY.

In order to give him an education correspondent to the station of his family, his father

determined to send him to Padua, whither also a cousin, Ricciardo Bellarmino, was about to proceed; and as no Tuscan subject might go out of the state for education, without licence of the Duke, such a licence was obtained from Cosimo I. How to find a suitable companion and protector, who might first accompany him into the Venetian territory, and then take some oversight of him when at college, was a question that cost some anxiety; and, at length, it was resolved to confide that service to a member of the Society of Jesus.

The favourable disposition towards the Society that led to this choice was not accompanied with sufficient foresight in the father. The mother was fascinated with admiration of the new fraternity. The son, too, over whom Cynthia swayed the influence of a fond parent, imperceptibly drank in the spirit of asceticism and of romance that the Jesuits were diffusing throughout Italy; and even while the family were looking around them for a Jesuit companion, and the house was full of preparation for his departure to Padua, and the Ducal passport was to invest the journey with an air of official privilege, little Robert, shut up in his chamber, meditated on futurity, and his imagination already pictured an ideal of perfection.

Cynthia had instructed him in the very religion of Jesuitism, and her own example gave a vast emphasis to her instructions. Often had

the household heard the sound of a whip ; and Camilla, an elder sister, had told him how she had been in their mother's chamber, unperceived, and seen her lay her shoulders bare, and lash them fearfully, until reverence for the mother alone restrained the child from rushing out of her hiding-place, and ending the penance by snatching away the knotted scourge. Already he had written acrostics on VIRGINITY, and composed stanzas in dispraise of the world. And now he fancied that, in Padua, he might find some outlet from the world. The words of a Prophet, which he had often heard in chant, resounded again within him in the silence of his chamber : " O that I had wings like a dove ! then would I fly away, and be at rest." On this his mind lingered. In this his heart became entangled — "*and be at rest.*" Then, holding colloquy with himself, it seemed as if voices answered again from the depth of his bosom. Nay, it seemed as if an angel spake, advising renunciation of the world, provoking courage to abandon its endearments, and impelling him to fling away its honours.

In this frame of mind he left Montepulciano, and came to Padua ; not roused from the dream by the conversation of his travelling-companion and master, the Jesuit Sgariglia. One object henceforth absorbed his thoughts. He sought some religious order, within whose inclosure he might delight himself in the fragrance of discipline, contemplate models of perfection, plunge

into the depths of science, lay hold on what is most excellent, and learn to reject all that is mean and vile. And he was led to believe that such a home for his weary soul would be found in the Society of Jesus. Sgariglia directed his literary pursuits, and guided his aspirations towards the summit of repose. His cousin Ricciardo caught the flame, which now enveloped them both; and, consumed with desire after this heaven upon earth, they communicated intelligence of the passion—to their fathers? No. That would have been consulting with flesh and blood. Being now too spiritual to condescend so low, they sent up their prayer for acceptance to Diego Laynez, General of the Jesuits at Rome, beseeching him to admit them into the army of Jesus Christ.

An answer to their letter came without delay. Laynez offered them welcome; but, that Robert might gain his object by the gentlest way, (*ut qui vellet Robertum id quàm mollissimâ viâ consequi,*) directed them to ask leave of their fathers.

By this time Robert was about seventeen years of age; and when the report of his attachment to Jesuitism reached his father, the good man was astounded at intelligence which he might reasonably have expected, and began to bemoan the frustration of those hopes that he had set on the most promising of his children, having counted on him, chiefly, for a repair of the fortunes of the family, now considerably reduced. Both the

young cousins were in secret correspondence with the General of the Jesuits, their fathers being kept in utter ignorance. Vincenzo first, observing that his son Robert was frequently in private conversation with his cousin Richard, suspected what was going on ; but when the request came to permit him to take the Jesuit habit, it was bitter indeed. Robert talked high about a vocation of the Holy Spirit. The father, for fear of the Inquisition, durst not demur to the idea that the Holy Spirit of God called people into the bosom of Jesuitism ; but he wished to see some proof of constancy in the lad, some evidence of the Divine will. Robert persisted in pleading a heavenly summons to the Company, but his father sternly forbade him to enter a Jesuit church, or to speak with a Jesuit, for twelve months, and required him only to attend mass in a church of the Dominicans. The General had allowed them to remain at home for that period ; and the two mothers danced with joy when they found that, by a half-measure of the husbands, they and the boys had gained all their hearts' desire. Cynthia, however, found that her husband was firmer than he had seemed to be, and therefore gave him no rest, day nor night. He resisted. She fretted, and fell sick ; and then he relented for a little. The residence of Alessandro Cervini, at a place called Vivo, served as a temporary school. Alessandro himself acted as master ; and, adapt-

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out from all ecclesiastical preferment and civil dignities, the good man could have no idea that this lad would rise to be a Cardinal, but thought that he was thenceforth buried in sworn poverty.

WELCOMED AT ROME.

Bellarmino first saw Rome on the 20th of September, 1560. His cousin entered the city with him, but died four years afterwards in the College of Loreto. Going directly to the House of Jesus, Robert found a cordial welcome, such as might well be given to the representative of a Papal family. Enraptured with the attainment of the object so long coveted, he almost fancied himself numbered with the inhabitants of heaven. To his mind Ignacio, the founder, was perfect above all that ever had been mortal; and his ambition, while treading on the same ground, and living within the walls that had resounded with his voice, was to be more like Ignacio than like himself. On the very day of entrance he implored permission to take the vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty, "a threefold cord, not easily to be broken, whereby he might bind himself most closely to Christ and to His cross."

Ten days were spent in "the retreat," meditating, according to custom, on themes prescribed, exercising himself in that submission of the thoughts to the guidance of superiors, and that abnegation of the will in abandoning the thoughts to the direction of another mind, which

is at once the weakness and the strength of Jesuitism.* There they taught him his soul was to be nourished, a hidden life revived, and his heart cleansed from all the stains it had contracted since the day of baptism. Then he took the habit of the order, and entered on the duties of the house. Those duties were to exercise him in humility ; and, accordingly, the scion of the Bellarmini and Cervini went into the kitchen, officiated in the scullery, scoured the kettles, washed the dishes, cleansed the tables, and chopped wood. In the refectory, too, he served up the dinner. In the dormitory he made the beds. All over the house he swept the floors. Services beneath enumeration he performed, and all with exquisite self-satisfaction. "For, as a prudent novice, he considered this to be an opportunity of the highest value, that the tower of perfection might be erected on the foundation of humility."†

IN THE ROMAN COLLEGE. †

Scarcely had a fortnight passed from his first admission, when he was transferred to the

* For an insight into these exercises, and the discipline to which Novices are now subjected, I would refer to "The Novitiate : or, the Jesuit in Training," &c. By Andrew Steinmetz. London : Smith, Elder, and Co.

† Let it be understood that quotations, unaccompanied by any foot-note, are translated from the "*Vita Roberti Bellarmini*, &c., à Jacobo Fuligatto Soc. Jesu. *Italicè*

Roman College, there to study, and recognised as a member of Society. So rapid a promotion sounds very strangely now ; but it was possible in those early days. The year that intervened between his leaving Padua and appearing in Rome, during which time he had been under the observation, and perhaps under the guidance, of Jesuits, was counted as a period of probation. His vows, it must also be observed, were every year taken anew, until his juniority was fairly past. Perhaps the rapidity of his admission, with dispensation of a regular novitiate, was the effect of discernment rather than precipitancy ; but Laynez, setting aside the usual guard of probation, professed to do so in honour of the new comer's uncle, Marcellus II. ; but the precedent was dangerous, and the fifth General Congregation recorded a law, that no future General should be at liberty to dispense thus.*

Of his obedience, too, there was no question, and in that virtue, or quality, whichever it may be in the case of a Jesuit, he seemed cordially to delight. "I only wish," he said, some time after this, to the Secretary, Polanco, "to perform those things to which a holier and better will appoints me ; even if that will should command me perpetually to teach rhetoric, or to ⁺primum scripta : à Silvestro Petra Sancta Latinè reddita. ⁺Antwerpiae, M.DC.XXXI."

* Ristretto della Vita di Roberto Cardinal Bellarmino, &c. Dal P. Francesco Marazzani. Bologna. Capo II. ⁺

instruct children of the lowest class in Latin. For on this I calculated from the very day when I entered into this holy Society; and on this I have resolved, whenever I may leave Rome, and on this very day I wish it to be taken as a point settled. And that I may never ask anything for myself inconsistent with obedience, to change my abode, for example, or anything else, I this day beseech the General to grant me nothing under the idea of showing me a kindness, but only if, without regard to any request of mine, the most exact rule of obedience would require the very thing that I ask. For I would rather be preserved from error at the cost of pain, than to commit an error, and have what I desire. For assuredly I cannot err, so long as I obey." If all this had been addressed to God, instead of being written to Polanco, it would have been a good exposition of the Christian's daily prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Under the direction of Pedro Parra, a Spaniard, he completed a course of philosophy, extending through three years, and won great applause. But although his application to study was not severe, the ascetic discipline of the place broke his health, and for some time the physicians apprehended symptoms of consumption. This induced the superiors, considering also that their College at Rome was overcrowded, to send him to Florence, where he might breathe in

BEGINS TO TEACH.

the more salubrious atmosphere of his native province.

BEGINS TO TEACH.

Too scantily supplied with money, Robert set out for Florence, and would have had great difficulty in finishing the journey, if a Spanish gentleman, with whom he met, had not assisted him. Weary and pale, he made his appearance at the College, more like an applicant for admission into a hospital, than a master come thither to teach. A physician exhausted the resources of his art upon the patient with little effect ; but after some time he rallied, and application to his new duties rather hastened than retarded the restoration of health. For the first time he discharged the duties of a teacher.

And now the juvenile attempts at preaching were succeeded by more public and more effective efforts. Two sermons in the great church, delivered with much fluency, full of imagination, elegant, and not unlearned, drew the attention of the Florentine academicians. Then he appeared on feast-days, in the same place, reciting verses of his own, said to be remarkable for richness, melody, and figure, and charmed the ear of numerous assemblages. When opportunity occurred, he made himself and the Society conspicuous by disputing with the learned concerning the nature of the universe ; and although a report of those disquisitions would

now minister more amusement than instruction, we may be sure that they contributed much, at that time, to strengthen his influence over the pupils at the College, and to win admiration from the public. In short, he became a sort of oracle, and, after having been resorted to for the solution of numberless mysteries in sciences yet unlearned, he felt himself competent to explain, to a company of academicians, "the doctrine of the sphere of the world; questions concerning the situation and the magnitude of the heavenly bodies; concerning their going and coming; concerning the power of the stars; and particularly concerning their distribution under the figures of men and beasts." Perhaps it was about the very time of the appearance of Bellarmine in Florence in quality of astrologer, that Galileo drew his first breath in the same city; and he grew up to appear before the lecturer under an accusation of heresy in regard to the going and coming of those *corpora suprema*. But more of this hereafter.

After shining in Florence for one year, our youthful Doctor was sent to Mondovì, a town in the present kingdom of Sardinia, not far northward of the junction of the Apennines and Maritime Alps. There he announced an explication of certain books, and, especially, "Demosthenes, a Greek author," to revive the knowledge of Greek. "Robert was altogether ignorant of the

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Greek language ; but what was wanting in learning, mind and industry supplied." He converted the occasion into an opportunity for learning Greek, first mastering the rudiments of the grammar, which he set forth with magisterial confidence, telling his audience that "that foreign language was equally useful and difficult, but they must begin with the elements, in order to proceed more certainly." Advancing from alphabet to nouns—thence to verbs—thence to construing—and on to Isocrates, Demosthenes, or any other author, he at length acquired a pretty considerable smattering, and passed for master without much difficulty. The readers of Bellarmine may be recommended to bear in mind this origin of his acquirements in Greek while they weigh his criticisms. Although he revived Greek among the boys at Mondovì, they will not mistake him for a Chrysoloras.

At home he exemplified obedience and industry. One might have thought that all the burdens of the house rested upon him alone. He was last in bed, and first out. Early in the mornings he roused the fellows by putting lamps upon their tables, performing the function of waker-up. At table he officiated as reader. It was he who ran for a Priest when any one fell sick. At the door he answered as porter. For any menial office he was ready. At home he gave exhortations without end : abroad, he delivered sermons and grew popular. Everywhere

quite at home, he would step into a neighbouring convent of Dominicans, take a cheerful glass of wine, and away to his appointment. In the pulpit, a place where old men trembled, he knew no trepidation, and must have admired the simplicity of devout women, who, mistrusting the powers of so juvenile an orator, dropped on their knees, as he rose in "the superior place," and prayed for him to be helped through the sermon. Every one wondered at his versatility; grave Clerks clustered around him at the foot of the pulpit-stairs, and kissed his hands; and the Rector of the College of Mondovì, writing of his wonderful eloquence to the General at Rome, thought that it could only be expressed by the appropriation of a sentence that should have checked the flattery,—“Never man spake like this man.” When travelling, he stopped at each village, and gave a sermon to the rustics. He bent at the shrine of every saint that lay in his way, and strove to vanquish the unfriendliness of the older monkhoods by paying special reverence to their favourite saints, and by encouraging the common people to frequent their altars.

From Mondovì he went to Padua, the scene of early studies, and there acquired fresh fame. Francesco Adorno, the Provincial, sent him thither, deeming his talent necessary for the public service; and there, amidst brisk dispute concerning election and reprobation, he seems to

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have essayed his controversial powers with considerable effect. This took place in the year 1567. Sometimes he sat at the feet of Doctors, and heard them heavily emitting disquisitions on law and metaphysics; and thence rushed into the pulpit, and gave his mind free reaction in delivering popular addresses. At Venice, on one of the days before the carnival, when all Priests are expected to be very zealous in preaching down immorality, with the general understanding that there will be much of it abroad, he declaimed grandly against the licentiousness of those days to a vast congregation; and, at the close of that oration, several Senators did him the honour of kissing his hands.

Next we find him at Genoa, taking part in a meeting of the Jesuits of the province, receiving strong patronage from the superiors, and figuring high in those exhibitions of dialectic subtilty, whereby they were wont to impress the multitude with admiration of the learning and intellectual resources of the order. In rhetoric, logic, physics, and metaphysics, young Bellarmine had no superior within hearing; and at length the Provincial commanded the President of a great assembly to permit him to speak without restriction. He did so; and, after amazing the learned, he suddenly turned to the people, "passing from the chair of wisdom to the gate of virtue," and with impassioned gravity exhorted both Clergy and laity to take heed to themselves.

BELLARMINE

The more deeply read perceived that he had recited great part of a homily of St. Basil.

AT LOUVAIN.

The Fathers at Rome saw that his talent was too powerful to be limited to ordinary service, and resolved that the skill in disputation displayed at Genoa in academic skirmishing, should be spent in real warfare with the chiefs of the Reformation. In that view the Spaniard, Francisco de Borja, General of the Company, wrote to the Rector of the College of Padua, commanding him to send Robert Bellarmine to Louvain, there to prosecute the study of theology, and to preach in Latin. When the mandate came, the young Preacher had just surrounded himself with fresh applause, and the Rector, building large hopes on the profit to be derived from his zeal and popularity, was unwilling to lose such a workman, yet unable to disobey the General. He therefore acknowledged the receipt of the letter; but represented that the constitution of the young brother was very delicate; that physicians gave their judgment against his undertaking a journey at that season of the year, for it was winter, and it would endanger his life then to cross the Alps; and he also intimated that the loss to the Society at Padua by his removal would be irreparable, and an occasion of grief to every member of the Academy. But

remonstrance was vain. Pius V. was laying the foundation of the Palace of the Inquisition in Rome, and the Inquisitors were sweeping Italy of heretics without resistance. Controversialists had little to do in those parts where imprisonment, burning, and drowning silenced argument. Not so in France and Belgium, where armies had but half conquered the Reformation, and where the doctrine of the Gospel was known well enough to engage the assent of multitudes of the people, and even to bring over some of the Clergy to the side of truth. The General received other letters of remonstrance, written with extreme earnestness; but he knew that this Preacher would be more effectively employed in Belgium; and merely allowing him to remain at Padua over the winter, then required him to proceed to Louvain without more delay. The Church in that country was infected, he said, with the poison of heresy, and a skilful surgeon was wanted there to search her wounds.

Bellarmino professed himself willing to scale the Alps, although their heights were horrid with ice, and touched the skies, rather than lose an hour in hastening to the spot whither the supreme pleasure sent him. Great was the joy in Rome on seeing so noble a person as the nephew of Pope Marcellus present himself as a living victim on the altar of obedience; and as soon as the Alpine passes were open, the willing

messenger, accompanied with one Father Jacques, a Belgian, set out from Milan. One Irishman, and three Englishmen, among whom was William Allen, the incendiary of English Romanists, afterwards Cardinal, made up a congenial party. In good health and spirits, after a perilous journey, they reached Louvain, and he delivered his first sermon in that city on the 25th of July, 1569.

The Belgians wondered at the sight of so young a man in the pulpit; for although nearly twenty-seven years of age, he looked much younger. But this was nothing in comparison with the novelty of a layman preaching, in the eyes of people who had never seen the pulpit occupied by any except a Priest in sacerdotal vestments. If we might believe on the testimony of Andrew Wise, a Knight of Malta, and Grand Prior of England, the want of robes was more than made up by an envelopment of light that surrounded him when in the pulpit, while his face shone as the face of an angel. The Fathers of Louvain, therefore, besought their General to obtain a licence for the stranger to receive sacred orders, although regulations then in force made the ordination of any but a Jesuit professed depend on a special licence from the Pope. The licence was readily granted; and at Liege he received the first tonsure, the four lesser orders, and the diaconate. At Ghent the Bishop Cornelius Jansenius made him Deacon, and then

conferred on him the priesthood.* Robed in sacerdotal honour, Bellarmine returned to Louvain, and felt himself another man.

Invested, also, with pontifical authority, and with no less boldness than subtilty,—for he never knew diffidence,—he poured forth floods of eloquence that captivated those whom it did not convince, and they boast that “heretics” in great number came from Holland, and even from England, to hear him; and that not a few, overwhelmed by his talent, renounced Protestantism, and were reconciled to Rome. Whether there were any so simple, and, if so, how many, is a question of slight importance. Every one agreed that he was the most clever Preacher in all Popedom at that time. The Clergy of Paris earnestly desired to have him in their midst. The Cardinal-Archbishop Borromeo craved him for Milan. The Belgian Fathers kept a close hold on him for Louvain; but, in truth, it best pleased the Pope to keep him to that chosen field, where he might hold up the Roman standard, cultivate his peculiar talent, and serve Romanism better than any other man of his age.

He was now to teach theology in the University. Although he had preached from childhood,

* This Jansenius is not to be confounded with the famous Doctor of Louvain, whose followers are known as Jansenists. The name of each was Cornelius; but the latter, and more eminent man, was not born until the year 1585.

and even while a layman had risen to peerless eminence as a Preacher, he was not considered a divine. He had only spent one year in the study of scholastic theology at Louvain; but, in truth, he knew quite enough for the purpose, and, all formalities being dispensed with, he received the title of Doctor, and took the professorial chair in the beginning of October, 1570,—“first of the Society who, with most prosperous beginnings, taught *supreme wisdom* in that city.”

To combat with the scholars of reformed Christendom was no light undertaking, at the best; but having begun to teach polemics in the sight of Europe, he discovered, to a degree that he had not anticipated, his imperfect preparation for the work. The interpretation of holy Scripture by means of Hebrew learning, not, however, matured by liberal and profound study as it now is, gave character and immense advantage to the Reformation, as it brought men nearer to the fountains of revealed truth. But of Hebrew Bellarmine was as ignorant when he began to teach theology, as he was untaught in Greek when he began, at Mondovì, to lecture on “Demosthenes, a Greek author.” However, he mastered the elements of the grammar in a week, which was no very remarkable achievement; and then a vocabulary, not what we should acknowledge to be a lexicon, (*tantum adhibito codice vocabulorum*,) without any of the learning

really needed by an expositor, set him up. Furnished with this apparatus, he drilled his pupils in Greek and Hebrew, making those exertations serve himself as a study, and so he learned by teaching.

Gifted with a most rapid perception, and capable of iron perseverance, he turned over the Fathers, aided, of course, by Latin versions of the Greeks, and searched the Councils. Folio after folio passed under keen review. Others had gone before him in the same path; humbler brethren would aid in the mechanical processes of reference; and the exigencies already discovered and overcome by such men as Laynez, theologian at Trent, no doubt led to the accumulation of helps to be placed at his command. One man had the glory, although the resources of a fraternity were at his disposal; yet, even so, none but a man of great industry could have done so much as he did. And it appears, by his own statements, that the composition of his voluminous works was neither more nor less than the prosecution of a study. He entered at once on controversy, working his way through by means of material presented at the time, rather than producing, as those do who, in the latter years of life, bring things new and old out of long-gathered treasures.

On the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the year 1572, the rising Doctor earned a new reward of diligence by elevation to the order of

the Professed of four vows,—a distinction only conferred on those who are deemed worthy of entire confidence, and fit to be admitted into the secret of higher counsels. In obedience to the summons of his superiors, he took the fourth vow of obedience to the Supreme Pontiff, and his successors, “as to the Vicar of Christ the Lord, to go forth, without excuse, and without asking for any provision for the journey, to any nation whatever, at the command of His Holiness, either among believers or infidels, on such service as might tend to the worship of God and the good of the Christian religion.”* And it would appear, that he strove to sustain the new honour by those observances of sanctimony which were considered proper for one admitted into the first ranks of “the Religious.” And as the history of such an one demands the adorning of gifts correspondent to the favours of earthly superiors, the biography of Bellarmine is at this time embellished with a miracle. That no secondary representation may attenuate its grandeur, Fuligatto himself shall exhibit this first-fruit of his profession. Hear him, thus:—

“There was in the College of Louvain, while Robert was residing there, one of the Society” (no very independent witness in the cause) “who had had, for many years, a running ulcer in his leg.” (Ulcers, as the readers of my

* Constitutiones Societatis Jesu. Exam. Gen. i., 5.

biography of St. Francis Xavier may remember, furnish some interesting details for the history of the Society.) “Physicians and surgeons had tried all the succours of their art, but had not cured the wound. The patient, therefore, anxious in mind, and seeing that human care was mastered by the pertinacity of the disease, began to consider within himself whether there was any man made after God’s heart, (*factus ad cor Dei*;) by whose prayer a way to recovery might be opened to him; and while he was thus meditating within himself, Bellarmine appeared to be an effectual and grateful offerer of prayer to God; and a hope sprang up within him that he might at once recover, if, after sacred confession, he could also be refreshed *by him* in the communion. His faith was not vain. The Rector consented. He deposited the secret of his conscience in the ears of Robert, from his hand received the most holy eucharist, and, behold, his leg was restored to soundness. The surgeon was astonished, when in two or three days he saw the wound covered with living and native skin, and the slightest trace of so long disease did not remain upon the part.”

Most opportune was this miracle of healing on the sore leg. It was performed just at the exact moment when all expected it. The skin was native, even though the lesion of the skin had been artificial. The object of faith was Robert. The subject of faith was an obscure Jesuit bro-

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ther. The effect of faith was the cicatrisation of a sore. The instrument of faith was mass after confession,—an instrument most proper to be exalted for the confusion of heresy in Belgium and Holland. And the triumph of faith—unless popular unbelief should hinder—would consist in the glory of transubstantiation, of Robert, and of the Jesuits. Admirable calculation!

His intellectual power was displayed, far less equivocally than his power of working miracles, by the composition of a work in confutation of opinions put forth by Michael Baius, a scholar of Louvain. Yet, by avoiding the name of his antagonist, whose doctrine the Pope, Pius V., had condemned already, he covered himself from the inconvenience of an open combat, and no less merited the favourable consideration of his order and “the Sacred College.” Probably this achievement had hastened his assumption into the ranks of the professed.

DEPARTS FROM BELGIUM.

Before the expiration of the year wherein he took the fourth vow, the Belgian horizon darkened suddenly. Some cities of the province cast off their allegiance to Philip II. of Spain; and a rumour flew that the Prince of Orange was on his march with overwhelming forces to attack Louvain. The city was quite unprepared to stand against him, and men were all trembling, and Monks trembled even more than they.

DEPARTS FROM BELGIUM.

The religious recollected the horrid slaughterings committed by the Duke of Alva, and, conscious that they had themselves instigated executions, dragonnades, and inquisitions, they expected vengeance every moment. Then came the alarm that Orange was in sight, even at the gates. The population turned out under arms. The Monks decamped, swift, like a flight of scared pigeons. The Rector of the Jesuit College, unwilling to abandon a scene where, haply, he might have some part to play, directed all the inmates to change their clothes, shave their hair, and seek shelter in safe places. They quickly swept away the tonsured hair, took some cash in their pockets, vacated the house, and resolving the community into pairs, each pair of fugitives chose the house wherein to lurk, or the road by which to flee. Bellarmine and his companion preferred flight, chose to seek Douai as the place of shelter, and set out on foot, girded with swords, and quivering with fear. For his part, however, he had little strength for such a pilgrimage; and, after hurrying onward for some time, his limbs failed, and, panting, pale, and but half alive, he sank down on the road-side. There his companion, too, lay by him in sad fraternity of trouble; sounds of horse-hoofs, and shouts of Calvinists, seeming to beat upon their ears. Soon they descried a party approaching from the direction of Louvain; and while plunged in fresh terror by the thought

that they might be pursuers of such persons as themselves, they perceived a permanent gallows erected at some short distance, for hanging criminals, according to the custom of those times. "Take heart, my brother," sighed Bellarmine; "for, if I mistake not, we shall soon hang there. There only wants a Calvinist hangman." Flight was hopeless; for how could fainting footmen like them escape from the swift-wheeled chariot that neared them rapidly each instant? "All things appeared ready; and if those enemies should fall upon them, there were the instruments of martyrdom prepared."

Amidst these premonitions of death, they saw the chariot bound over the ground, as if the horses had been winged—the driver plied his lash—they came near, the passengers were themselves half dead with terror; but seeing two persons in an attitude of supplication by the way-side, took them to be fellow-sufferers, drew up, and kindly called them to come in. It was a company of "Catholics," also fleeing from the enemy, and finding that of the two men one was no less than a disrobed Priest, they took him in, and resumed their speed towards Douai. "Then," said Cardinal Crescenzo, when the incident had become historical, "by a miracle of Providence he was preserved from death, yet not defrauded of the glory of martyrdom, an occasion which he doubted not that he should embrace with alacrity of mind." This notion of *alacrity* was an after-

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thought; but the sight of a gallows had suggested the dread of martyrdom, and thus the shadow of a martyrdom comes in opportunely enough, and next in order after the narrative of a miracle. This event bespeaks canonisation.

After a short absence he returned to Louvain. Seven years' toil in Belgium had impaired his health, which was yet further weakened by the shock of war, and he became obviously unable to pursue his labours with such vigour as formerly. This the physicians certified by letter to Rome, and the Fathers there called him back to Italy.

To reach the monumental city from Douai, it befell the traveller to cross a region infected with Lutheran and Calvinian pestilence. In those places the habit of a religious man, and the name of a Priest, were hateful things. "Therefore the Fathers persuaded him to use the common dress of a man of the world, and to set out on his journey with such equipments as travellers of the laity use. He rode with belt and sword, and carried fire-arms on the pommel of his saddle." Clad in a habit "so unlike his virtue," he had scarcely left the city, when two travellers, heretics, whose names have not been accepted for the ornament of history, asked him to join company for Italy. His name, however, is made known, for he passed as *Romulo*; and the strangers were intensely pleased with the good fellowship and talent of their Italian companion. His knowledge of the language, and

even his acquaintance with some part of the way, made him useful; so much so, that they were glad of his services to give directions for the accommodation of the party at the inns. Most carefully he threw aside all that might betray his priestly character, joked as merrily as any, and often rode onward, as if in sport, or as if to reach an inn and order provision, but, in reality, to pull out his prayer-book, and perform his devotion. At length they crossed the Alps. As they drew near to Genoa, the Italian air brought him a flush of rekindling health, and he entered that city, in company with the heretics, under the same guise of a profane layman. Relaxing none of his attentions, he conducted them to a lodging-house, told them he was going to the house of a friend, and, thus saying, disappeared. A day or two afterwards, having strolled into a church, as curious Protestants are wont to do, the travellers beheld their assiduous friend, robed at the altar, saying mass; and recalling his features, which were very marked, —two keen eyes, a serene and broad forehead, an aquiline nose, and most expressive mouth,—they looked wisely at each other, and exclaimed, “There is our friend Romulo, changed into a Jesuit!”

At Genoa he found two orders from the General. By the first he was forbidden to go to Milan, where the Archbishop, Cardinal Borromeo, was anxious to have him as a helper against

PROFESSES CONTROVERSY AT ROME.

the cause of truth, that had long been largely diffused throughout Subalpine Italy, but which was now to be suppressed, if possible, by French dragoons. But the Pope's Vicar, Cardinal Savelli, wanted him in Rome. By the second order, he was instructed to go onward by way of Montepulciano, see his aged father, and endeavour to recruit his health.

PROFESSES CONTROVERSY AT ROME.

Gregory XIII., one of the Pontiffs that laboured most successfully to promote a counter-Reformation, and suppress evangelical religion by consecutive operations and well-constructed schemes, patronised Jesuitism, his chief instrument, with greater munificence than any of his predecessors. The subjects of the Papal States remember him as one of the most relentless Popes that ever wore them down with burdens of taxation. The Jesuits extol him with all that pomp of language that is so peculiarly at their command. No fewer than twenty-two colleges were erected for them at his bidding; and he disbursed, on the single account of maintaining scholastics, no less, it is said, than two millions of ducats during his reign. The system of Propaganda education then took the character which it retains to this day; for, after inclosing streets and allotting revenues, he saw the Seminary of all Nations opened, and heard orations in twenty-five languages, all translated into

Latin, on the day of opening. Each student was taught to consider himself as a young soldier, whose only duty would be to march to the conquest of Protestantism, under the banner of the Company. He was to be formed for victory.

Bellarmino, by common consent, was chosen to be the leader of this band; and the General informed him that it must be his duty to do at Rome, but on a grander scale, what he had been doing at Louvain. There, as Professor of Scholastic Theology, he had taught languages, and entertained the wondering students out of a sort of cyclopædia of erudition, while his writings against Baius, and the necessity laid on him to strive against the influences of the Reformation, had induced a strongly controversial habit, and made him famous as a disputant. He was extremely mild, politic, and winning, and therefore was just the fit man to train a generation of emissaries, to throw themselves into the heat of the battle throughout Europe. *One* Bellarmine was thought equal to conduct the enterprise, "just as one Hebrew woman, whom God armed with beauty, wrought confusion in the camp of Holofernes, and in the house of the King of Assyria." This conception was proud; but it indicated an apprehension that artifice would be needed in war with the Reformation, no less than force.

About the end of October, 1576, he entered on his new chair of controversial Theology in Rome. The "General Controversies," as they

are called, or Controversial Lectures, occupy four folio volumes of the edition before me, and are considered to be second to nothing that has ever been written in defence of the Church of Rome. But those who love the charm of great names, and could weep to see one such name despoiled of the charm, as a child would weep over the shattering of a lily, will not thank me for giving them the analysis of the first part of an address delivered by Bellarmine in the Gymnasium in Rome, in the year 1577. It is prefatory to the "controversy" concerning the Supreme Pontiff.*

Before entering on the disputation, he has to premise some observations on its utility and magnitude, on the antagonists in argument, and on the order to be followed. The matter now treated of, but which is called in question, is great indeed. "For of what are we speaking, when we speak of the primacy of the Pontiff? We speak of nothing less than the sum and substance of Christianity itself. For the question is simply whether the Church ought to last any longer, or to be dissolved, and fall to ruin. For what else can be meant, when you ask whether the foundation should be taken away from the building, the shepherd from the flock, the general from the army, the sun from the stars, or the head from the body; that the building may fall,

* Roberti Bellarmini Opera, Colon. Agrip., MDCXX., tom. i., p. 498, seq.

the flock be scattered, the army beaten, the stars darkened, the body die?"

The adversaries, he affirms, although disagreeing among themselves on every other point, agree in attacking the Papal See; and there were never any enemies of Christ and the Church, who did not also hate the Pope. "Isaiah seems to me to have long ago foreseen and predicted the magnitude and utility of this matter, when he said, 'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.' But he also predicts the contention and violence of heretics, when he calls this stone itself 'a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.' Which last words, although not put by Isaiah in the same place, the Apostles Paul and Peter so join all these words of the Prophet, that no one can doubt that they refer to the same end, and are to the same purport. And although we are not ignorant that these words principally apply to Christ, *we consider that they may not inaptly be made to suit the Vicar of Christ.*"

The foundations of Zion he understands to be the twelve Apostles, according to St. John; but the one singular and chief stone mentioned by Isaiah, he considers to be Peter; and for this he argues in the usual manner. Jews, Heathens, Greeks, and Turks have in vain spent their fury on this foundation-stone. Emperors have enacted tragedies in the Church. The devil has moved

the Roman people (often) to rebel against the Pope. Internal schisms have threatened the existence of the Papacy; but, even while anti-Popes were struggling in the chair of Peter, they could not break it. The gates of hell could not prevail against it; and, although there had been Popes of little worth in that chair, it had not sunk under them. It outlasted Stephen VI., Leo V., Christopher I., Sergius III., John XII., and others not a few, showing proof that its continuance does not depend upon purity and morality in its occupants. Notwithstanding all this wickedness, which our lecturer confesses without reserve, he maintains that it is divinely founded, and kept erect by guardian angels, and by the singular providence of God. That the Papacy is fitly called a corner-stone, and precious, he expounds in some pretty common-places; and then, as to its being a foundation-stone, argues thus:—

“*In fundamento fundatum.** ‘FOUNDED IN A FOUNDATION.’ For what is founded in a foundation, except it be a foundation after a foundation, a secondary foundation, not a primary? Of course, we are not ignorant that the

* So says the new Vulgate, in violation of the letter of the Hebrew original, מוֹסָד מוֹסָד—well translated in our own Version, “sure foundation;” by Lowth, “immovably fixed;” by the Jewish Ferrara, “cimientado á cimentado;” and so by others. The ancient Latin versions, as collected by Sabatier, all contradict the Vulgate.

first and principal foundation of the Church is Christ, of whom the Apostle says, 'Other foundation can no man lay, except that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.' But after Christ, the foundation is Peter; and no one can come to Christ, except by Peter." At this rate he travels to the end of his oration, and at the same rate he dashes through the controversy. A false translation, a bold substitution of one idea for another, an insolent contradiction of the plain text of Scripture, serves as a starting-point; and, this point once taken, there is no conclusion to which he cannot arrive by the most severe logic. Let him take his premiss, and you must grant him his conclusion. Great copiousness of patristic lore stands in the stead of sound elementary learning; and, like many others of his age, he passed for wise, because dressed in a grotesque robe of erudition, and seemed formidable to many who allowed themselves, enslaved by a fashion prevalent, to fall into the same illusion. Of this the Romanists gloried, and claimed the victory; but whenever these famous controversies are submitted to the test of such criticism as is now familiar to every well-educated Protestant theologian, the Bellarminian web is found to be thinner than gossamer.

Simultaneously with his labours as Professor, he was occupied, under the command of the Pope and the General, in preparing a collection of his works for publication, the first folio

volume of which bears date in 1581. In the preparation of those volumes he was assisted by some of the most learned and subtle censors that could be found, but chiefly by Muzio Vitelleschi, the General, Benedetto Giustiniani, and Andreas Eudæmon Johannes, a Greek. These all testified that no one could be more willing to resign his own opinion, and pay deference to the judgment of his advisers, whose revision of his labours extended even to the last syllable. And in this we discover one great reason of his acceptance at Rome.

Not yet being made a Cardinal, he could not sit in the Consistory ; but constant use was made there of his information. The Cardinal of Santa Severina, Patriarch of all the East, and Chief of the Holy Inquisition, borrowed the counsels of Bellarmine in regard to all the eastern churches, then subjected to the fearful discipline of that Tribunal.

I have elsewhere* spoken of the atrocities perpetrated by the Inquisition in India. Let it suffice here to say, that Bellarmine took a most active part in the ruin of the Syrian Church. He saw Mar Simeon, Bishop of Malabar, and Mar Joseph, Bishop of Cochin, perish in Rome. He advised, with sanctimonious placidity, the nefarious felony of Alexo de Meneses in Diamper. But we shall have occasion again to note some other proceedings of Bellarmine, invested with full powers as Inquisitor.

* Brand of Dominic, chap. xx. *India.*

It was at this time, associated with S. Filippo Neri, father of the Oratorians, and another less famous person, that he took part in the examination of a woman from Naples, who called herself a Prophetess, and reported her unfit to exercise the gift. The Pope, therefore, sent her home again with an injunction to mind her own matters, and abstain from the use of prophecy for the time to come; as if the Pope could countermand a Divine mission, if such a mission ever had been given to the Prophetess of Naples. His fame as an author was exalted to the highest pitch; and he was proclaimed scourge of heretics, flower of divines, the Athanasius and Augustine of his age, slayer of monsters, bulwark of the Church, pillar of Christian faith, avenger of Catholic truth, prince of writers. "The breast of Bellarmine is the library of Christ!" With less exaggerated praises, and going so far as his talent was to be described, a Protestant might concur. But when eulogy grows extravagant, a suspicion rises that the extravagance is thrown over the subject as a veil to hide it from closer search.

IS SENT TO FRANCE.

Amidst controversial and literary labours, and frequent correspondence with Cardinals and Inquisitors, who came, after the usual manner of the Roman Court, to employ him as their consultant, this leader of controversies received an

order from the Pope to accompany his Legate, Cardinal Caetano, on a mission to Paris. His instructions required him to advise the Legate on all points relating to religion, or, in other words, to represent the ecclesiastical claims of the Pope, and watch for such an issue of the civil war, then raging, as might assure a conquest of the Reformation in France. Henry III. had been assassinated. Henry IV., successor to the throne, had been at the head of the Huguenots, although rather attached to them by family connexion and antipathy to the Guise faction, than by any purely religious motive. The Princes of the anti-Protestant league had risen in arms, to prevent the occupation of the throne by a heretic. The country was in a state of civil war. The first object of the Legation was, of course, to sustain the rebels, and to get rid of the Protestant King.

On his first appearance in this new character, the Parisians were disappointed. They expected to see a man who could figure with majesty in church, and, by a bold presence, command respect at court. But they saw a small person, more of a student than a courtier; and could scarcely believe that their eyes beheld the great Robert Bellarmine. A man of so high repute ought, as they deemed, to be of lofty stature. But he had no lack of courage, and displayed considerable zeal in carrying out the intentions of his masters. Strictly abiding by the letter of

instructions from both the General and the Pope, he kept aloof from all affairs that were merely political, so far, at least, as ostensible participation went, and kept within his proper department as theological consultor of the Legate. The chief service he rendered was in aiding to repress a movement of nationality among the French Clergy, who were on the point of assembling in Council at Tours ; not without a disposition to elect a Patriarch of their own, and to withdraw their obedience from the See of Rome. The Legate, fearing that such a procedure would be but the beginning of a succession of national schisms, ending in the disintegration of the Popedom, sent, from the pen of Bellarmine, a letter to all the French Bishops, telling them that even if the Church were diseased, she had no authority to heal herself,—that it did not become the patient to prescribe the medicine. No one, he said, had power to convoke a Synod in France, so long as a Legate was in the kingdom : * it was the office of the Holy See to decide everything relating to faith and discipline. And he threatened to excommunicate all who presumed to go to Tours for such a purpose, to lay an interdict on the churches, and to hurl the Priests from their dignity into the depths of canonical censure.

* It was the prerogative of the Bishop of Arles to convoke a Synod of the French provinces, but in such terms as implied a royal permission to hold it. (*De Marca, De Concordiâ Sacerdotii et Imperii, lib. v., cap. 17.*)

Threats of Roman thunder, and the sound of Navarrese artillery, deterred them from the execution of their purpose.

Meanwhile the situation of the Legate and his train became very critical. Henry IV., not yet acknowledged by the Parisians, sat down before the city, and made the walls tremble and all hearts quake. Bellarmine had seen some fighting in Italy, when a boy, and had fled at the sound of an enemy in Belgium; but here were to be encountered the horrors of a siege. People were feeding on dogs, and other unclean animals. The Spanish Ambassador and suite subsisted on horse-flesh; and the Fathers of the Jesuit College were indebted to him for occasional presents of this strange venison. Weeds, roots, or any vegetable substances, shoe-leather and harness, were employed to cheat the pangs of hunger. Prayers and litanies resounded for the deliverance of the city; and Bellarmine made himself admirable by the self-infliction of many penances. At length the siege was raised, and the Legate received instructions to withdraw from the seat of war, that Sixtus V. might not be so implicated as to incur the wrath of the stronger party.

The Legate, of course, had no disposition to remain. He had encouraged the Sorbonne to issue a declaration, that the people of the kingdom were absolved from their oath of allegiance and fidelity to King Henry; and that, without

scruple of conscience, they might assemble, arm, and collect money for the support of the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion against his execrable proceedings. Bellarmine attended at the secret meetings of the Legate, and his confidential adherents; rose from his seat, and withdrew to a corner of the room, when strong measures were proposed; gave ear to nothing that would shock his meekness; merely said, when the question, Who should be King of France, was agitated: "I have nothing to do with politics; but I want to see a King in France that will establish the decrees of the Council of Trent." This meant that he would have Philip II. of Spain; not Henry, the actual Sovereign. And the doctrine he strenuously taught, tended to dethrone every Protestant Sovereign in the world. Yet he declared himself innocent of politics. However, Henry had possession. For argument, Henry used the sword. Even the Romanists in France were divided on the question; but the victor decided it by the "last reason of Kings."

But that the Pope should hesitate, in a case where the King resisted was a heretic, seemed grievous to these Ambassadors. The Legate resolved to go back to Rome; and Bellarmine, with a suspicious faculty of prescience, foretold that the Pope would not live long; nay, that he would die within that very year. Four months before that event, Sixtus had been suffering symptoms that became aggravated gradually,

until the extinction of life; and “persons of good sense”—I now quote from Gregorio Leti—“thought it extremely probable that he had been poisoned.” This impression was confirmed by the physicians, on a *post mortem* examination. The Spaniards were suspected, at Rome, of this crime;* and it is notorious, that his failure from promises made to the League in France to support them against Henry IV., exposed him to the violent resentment, both of the Spaniards and the Jesuits. It was remarkable, therefore, that Bellarmine should have exercised a prophetic gift just at that time, and in that manner. The Legate, having left the Pope in good health, as robust and headstrong as ever, thought his death unlikely; but the Jesuit constantly insisted that he would surely die. Had he calculated the time necessary for the poisonous solution generally used in Italy for that purpose, to take effect, he could not have been more exact. Accordingly, on the morning of September 19th, 1590, “finding a bundle of letters on the table, just brought from Rome, while every one present was guessing at their contents, Father Robert took up one, and, after trying the weight of it in his hand, somewhat jocosely said, *Qui dentro vi stà un Papa morto*, ‘There is a dead Pope inside here.’” The Secretary of the Lega-

* L'Histoire de la Vie du Pape Sixte Cinquième, traduit de l'Italien de Gregorio Leti. Paris, 1698. Liv. x.

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tion opened this letter, announced to the company that Sixtus was really dead ; * and Caetano, anxious to take his place in the Conclave, instantly gave orders to quit Paris, and with his train, including the prophet, hurried back to Rome.

The pleasantry of Father Robert, weighing the letter laden with a dead Pope, is by no means unaccountable. Sixtus had branded him with heresy in the sight of the whole world, by placing his great work on the Controversies in the Index of prohibited books, because he only attributed to the Popes an indirect power over temporals out of Rome.† As soon as the Pope died, the controversialist was released from that literary durance. It was natural that he should anticipate the decease of so hard a master with pleasure, and even be off his guard in letting his pleasure be apparent. And it was equally natural that he should afterwards express himself in such words as these :—“ To speak plainly, so far as I think, so far as I know, and so far as I understand, he is gone down to hell.” ‡ If Sixtus had con-

* Marazzani, capo vi.

† In Mendham's reprint of the “ Index Librorum Prohibitorum ” of Sixt. V., the following prohibition occurs :—

Roberti Bellarminii Disputa-
tiones de controversiis Chris-
tianæ fidei adversus hujus } Nisi prius ex superioribus
tēporis hæreticos. } regulis recognitæ fuerint.

‡ Quoted from Watson's Quodlibets by Mendham, Literary Policy of the Church of Rome, p. 105 and note.

RETURNS, AND REVISES THE VULGATE.

sented to take a Jesuit Confessor, had flattered the Society, had supported Spain and the League more vigorously against Henry of Navarre, and had been satisfied with the doctrine of Bellarmine as to his power over the temporalities of Princes, it is not likely that we should have heard of this prophecy or of its fulfilment.

RETURNS, AND REVISES THE VULGATE.

A travel of six or seven weeks brought Caetano, his Prelates, his Jesuit, and their servants to the gates of Rome. The cavalcade entered with no small bravery. The Prince of the Church hurried with palpitating heart towards the Vatican, there to sit in Conclave, to create or be created Pope. Sixtus, indeed, had been replaced by another, Urban VII.; but Urban saw no more than twelve suns rise upon him, and was now departed, leaving the Sacred College to strive once more for a vacated throne.

Father Robert found himself at home in the College of Jesus, where loving brethren, "after the manner of the Society," covered him with embraces, in signal of liveliest affection.

Now, there was more work for him to do. Notwithstanding his inclusion with authors prohibited, Sixtus being gone, he was thought eligible for the most confidential service; and the new Pontiff, Gregory XIV., soon found him employment. The Council of Trent had not been satisfied with the editions of the Vulgate.

In pursuance of their decision, the Popes had directed it to be revised. Sixtus V. gave his authoritative sanction to the last revision, which was to be received universally as perfect. But it was pronounced very imperfect; and Gregory commanded a select Congregation to meet in his presence, and determine how such an edition might be prepared as would meet the expectation of the Church. Bellarmine was one of that Congregation. After various opinions had been given, he proposed that it should be confided to a few learned men to expurgate the edition of Sixtus from beginning to end, "collating it with old editions, and with manuscript copies, as well of the Greeks as of the Latins, and with commentaries of the Fathers; by which means the emendation of Sixtus V. might have been made such as he would have had it, and might have been brought to such a state of perfection as becomes the heavenly work." To this proposal the Congregation acceded; and it was appointed that Cardinal William Allen, Master of the Sacred Palace, Cardinal Marc-Antonio Colonna, Robert Bellarmine, and four others, should meet in the palace of Colonna, and there prosecute the revision. On Bellarmine, it is said, fell the chief part of the labour, and final arrangement of all their contributions. He also wrote the Preface. And on reading this Preface, I find more ingenuity than truth in the statement that, the defectiveness of the Sixtine Vulgate

IS MADE RECTOR AND PROVINCIAL.

was to be attributed to the *printer*,* while the fault lay—so far as that edition was really faulty—with the editors themselves, under the responsible sanction of the Pope. Those who have gone over the same ground, critically examining the patristic workmanship of Bellarmine, can best estimate its quality. After the revised, and more deeply Romanised, Vulgate came out in the pontificate of Clement VIII., Bellarmine asked his General, Aquaviva, to allow him ten years for the production of a commentary. Aquaviva, not disposed to encourage a multiplication of commentaries, refused permission; and we have no reason to regret that he did refuse.

IS MADE RECTOR AND PROVINCIAL.

A service of so great magnitude to the Church of Rome as the preparation of an ecclesiastical Bible,—as the Vulgate really is,—deserved something more than the Society could give. Promotion in the Society, however, might fitly precede elevation in the Church. The General, after taking the suffrages of his assistants, made Bellarmine Rector of the Roman College; and the new year, 1593, found him just entered on the duties of the office. Already Aquaviva had made him Confessor and Spiritual Father of the youth in that College; and there is reason to believe that, as a mild and exact

* “animadvertens non pauca in sacra Biblia *præli* vitio irrepsisse, quæ,” &c. (Præfatio ad Lectorem.)

disciplinarian, he was well qualified to govern. During a period of thirty-two years he had obeyed well, and could, therefore, gracefully command, and reasonably exact obedience. According to the custom of the College, he delivered a discourse, expository of the method of administration he intended to pursue; and took for theme the following words from the Book of Ecclesiasticus: *Rectorem te posuerunt. Noli extolli: esto in illis quasi unus ex ipsis—et non impedias musicam.** “They have made thee Rector. Be not lifted up: be among them like one of themselves—and do not interrupt the music.” Speaking much of the humility he desired to exemplify, he encouraged the inmates of the College, two hundred and five in number, to approach him with entire confidence, and placed himself at their service.

And in order to exemplify the virtue of humility, he descended to the humblest offices, and addressed each fellow with as much formality of respect, as if their position had been reversed, suffering none to be uncovered, or to stand waiting in his presence. Returning once from Frascati to the College, just in time to cook the dinner, it being *his turn* that day to perform the duty of cook, he walked into the kitchen, and applied himself, as usual, to the laborious operation. Every one admired the Rector, who could exercise such exemplary self-

* Chap. xxxii. 1—5.

denial ; although fatigue might well have served him as excuse for ordering any one to serve that day in his stead. Nor was he less jealous over the Society in regard to the virtue of poverty. A Father had some superfluous articles of apparel in his room, which the Rector caused to be removed to the common vestiary of the house ; and the Father, although suffering inconvenience by the loss, at the same time, of some necessary clothing, professed that he would rather lose his clothes than his poverty. It behoved a Jesuit to have nothing that he might call his own ; and therefore the Rector turned out of his own room every trifling ornament or superfluity, retained only the most necessary articles, and changed even those for others of meaner material or coarser fabric. And added to this assiduous display of poverty and humility, was great facility of language, and blandness of manner, which served to bring fairly into view a large store of knowledge, the fruit of long and laborious application : “ so that there was none who, returning from that oracle, did not say, ‘ Did not our hearts burn within us, while he spake with us by the way ? ’ ”

In the beginning of the reign of Clement VIII., he was deputed as one of two representatives of the Roman province to the General Congregation, holden in the year 1593.

By the common voice of this congregation, the General sent him to take the government of the province of Naples. His diligence in visita-

tion, and the manner of his government, won general applause; and, after spending twenty-five months in that office, he received a summons from the Pope to hasten to Rome.

IS MADE THEOLOGIAN OF THE POPE.

On the death of the Cardinal of Toledo, the Pope's theologian, Clement VIII. resolved to supply the vacancy by appointing Bellarmine. He had read with peculiar satisfaction one of his treatises, (*De Translatione Imperii*,) and had shown deference to his opinion by desisting from a purpose of introducing the Platonic philosophy into the school of the Sapienza in Rome. Bellarmine objected that the nearer resemblance of Plato to the inspired writers, rendered him so much the less eligible; and argued, that as a Heathen is less mischievous than a heretic, so is Aristotle less mischievous than Plato. The Cardinals Baronio and Aldobrandini also used their influence in his favour.

Now constituted oracle of him whose bare word is itself an oracle, it became necessary that he should dwell beside the chair of infallibility; and apartments in the Vatican awaited his occupation. But it was the uniform custom of the Jesuits in those days to profess abhorrence of honours and elegancies, when set before them; and where every one acted alike in such cases, it is impossible to conjecture how much of humility was to be attributed to an imperious custom, or

how much to the man. Bellarmine implored permission to withdraw from the Vatican, and live in the Jesuit House, which was quite near enough for his presence to be had at any moment; and thither he went to elaborate theology for the service of the Holy See.

And Clement was carrying this theology into practical application. Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, had lately died, leaving the dukedom by testament to Cesare d'Este, in default of hereditary succession. Don Cesare took possession, the subjects most willingly rendered him their oaths of allegiance, and other princes received, as matter of course, the usual intelligence of his accession to the ducal chair. Not so the Pope. He said that the Duke deceased, as his vassal, had no right to dispose of the state, which reverted to the Roman See by the extinction of the line. The Emperor interposed a remonstrance, and so did the Venetians, but in vain. Cesare set about self-defence, raising a little army, and fortifying the city; not hoping for power to resist, but venturing to hope that other states would see it their interest to espouse his cause. Rome rose in wrath. Money was levied, artillery collected, and 25,000 soldiers added to the forces of the Vicar of Christ! Aldobrandini appeared as General of the recruits, which were to be doubled, if necessary. A fortnight was given to Cesare to consider, whether he would fight or yield. If contumacious, a

sentence of excommunication hung over his head : and the same curse threatened Emperors, Kings, Republics, Princes,—all or any who might abet his rebellion against the Apostolic See. The Pope appeared, full robed, in the court of St. Peter's, had the sentence read, flung a lighted taper on the ground, to signify the plunging of the soul of Cesare into eternal darkness ; and the Cardinals threw down smaller tapers, to concur in the damnation of the rebel. The bells rang an alarum ; the drums rolled ; the hoarse trumpets poured forth defiance ; the cannon of St. Angelo confirmed the anathema. A proclamation on the gates of St. Peter's, and of the Lateran, and in other accustomed places, declared Cesare to be smitten with spiritual death, and to have incurred temporal death in consequence. The Lord of Ferrara bowed to the outrageous wrong, and ceded Ferrara and the Ferrarese to the Chief Priest of Rome ; but was allowed to subsist on his allodial estates, with the title of Duke of Modena and Reggio. The Pope decreed that the territory thus usurped should never be granted to any one in feudatory title ; and hastily set out to take possession, accompanied by most of the Court. Bellarmine, necessarily, went with him ; and it was observed that while at Ferrara, although his great simplicity compelled him to lodge with the Jesuits, he was constantly in presence of the Pope, was treated with unusual distinction, and

IS MADE INQUISITOR.

was marked as a Cardinal *in petto*.* Alarmed, of course, at the prospect of a red hat, he entreated his General to endeavour to avert so dreadful a calamity. Aquaviva mentioned this repugnance; but Clement understood the formalities, and just answered that Bellarmine, being a Jesuit, could not have such a dignity. But the courtiers, familiar with their own dialect, interpreted the Papal word as the vulgar were wont to interpret dreams, just to mean the contrary. And this, be it noted, is frequently the best interpretation of a pontifical sentence. The pen of Bellarmine earned its reward.

IS MADE INQUISITOR, &c.

But to return. A month had not elapsed after the arrival of Bellarmine at Rome from Naples, when the Pope added him to the Congregation of the Sacred Roman Inquisition. Never was honour conferred more worthily. The theologian had reduced the doctrine of the Inquisition to summary, for the instruction of the rising priesthood. After citing the examples of Moses, Elijah, Joshua, Jehu, and Nebuchadnezzar in justification of the salutary practice of putting heretics to death, he gathered the following palmary arguments from the New Testament. I translate them closely.

“In the New Testament we have Matt. viii. to begin with, where we learn that the Church

* *In petto*—“in the breast,” or intention, of the Pontiff.

may reject those who refuse to obey, regard them as Heathen and publicans, *and then hand them over to the secular power*, as no longer children of the Church. Then we have Rom. xiii., teaching that the secular power may punish wicked men with the sword. 'For,' it says, 'he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.' From which two places it is evidently collected, that it is lawful to cut off heretics from the Church, who are rebels against the Church, and disturbers of the public peace, and deliver them to be punished with death by the secular judge.

"Christ also, and His Apostles, compared heretics to things which are, without controversy, to be repelled by fire and sword ; for the Lord says, in Matt. vii., 'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.' And in these words in Acts xx., 'I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you ;' heretics must certainly be understood, under the name of wolves, as St. Ambrose beautifully explains it in his commentary on the beginning of Luke x. But grievous wolves are most lawfully put to death, if they cannot be otherwise got rid of ; for the life of the sheep demands far higher consideration than the death of the wolves. Also John x. 'He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold,

but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.' Where, under the name of 'thief and robber,' heretics are to be understood, and all seducers, and inventors of sects, as Chrysostom and Augustine explain it : and every one knows how thieves and robbers are punished. And in 2 Tim. ii., heresy is compared to a cancer, which is not cured by medicaments, but must be cut out with a knife, or it will perpetually spread, and corrupt the whole body. Then in John ii., Christ drove the traders out of the Temple with the scourge. In Acts v., Peter killed Ananias and Sapphira because they had lied against the Holy Spirit : and Paul, Acts xiii., smote a false prophet with blindness, because he was endeavouring to turn away the Proconsul from the faith."

Then comes a long train of witnesses, from Constantine, and the "most religious Emperors," Theodosius, Valentinian, and others, down through a succession of saints, ending with St. Bernard. And, lastly, Bellarmine himself speaks.

"Finally. It is proved by natural reason, First : Heretics may be justly excommunicated, as all allow ; therefore they may be killed. The consequence is proved, because excommunication is a greater punishment than temporal death. Augustine (lib. i. *Cont. adv. Legis et Prophetarum*, c. 17) says, that it is more horrible to be delivered to Satan by excommunication, than to be smitten with the sword, consumed in flames, or thrown to wild beasts to be devoured.

“Secondly: Experience teaches that there is no other remedy. For the Church has proceeded gently, and tried all remedies. First, she only excommunicated; then she added pecuniary fines; then exile. At last she was compelled to come to death; for heretics despise excommunication, and say that it is but a cold thunderbolt. If you threaten them with pecuniary fines, they neither fear God nor regard men; but say that there will be no lack of simpletons to believe them, from whom they will get maintenance. If you shut them up in prison, or send them into exile, they will corrupt with their discourses all that come near them, and them that are afar with books. Therefore the only remedy is, to send them in good time to their own place.

“Thirdly: Falsifiers, in the judgment of all, deserve to die. Heretics are falsifiers of the word of God.

“Fourthly: In the estimation of Augustine, Ep. 50, it is worse for a man to be unfaithful to God, than for a woman to be unfaithful to her husband. If this is to be punished with death, why not that?

“Fifthly: There are three causes for which reason teaches that men should be killed; which causes Galen beautifully lays down in his book, ‘*Quod mores animi corporis temperamentum sequantur*,’ towards the end.

“The first cause is, that bad men may not

hurt good ones, and that mischievous persons may not oppress the innocent. And hence, most justly, as all agree, murderers, adulterers, and thieves are put to death. The second is, that by the punishment of a few, many may be corrected; and they that would not benefit the commonwealth by living, should benefit it by dying. And hence we also see that most justly, by common agreement, some horrid crimes are punished with death, although they have not hurt any one in reality, as necromancy; and certain unutterable offences, and offences against nature, which are so much the more gravely punished, that others may understand them to be extremely wicked, and not dare to perpetrate the like. The third is, because, even to the very men who are killed, it is often useful to be killed; that is to say, when they are growing worse, and there is no likelihood that they will ever come to a sound mind." And so on.*

No one could doubt the eligibility of such a pleader for the Inquisition to be himself an Inquisitor. His demeanour, too, when Consultor, and the disposition he had manifested in regard to the suffering Nestorians in India, and their kidnapped Bishops, had given entire satisfaction to the benevolent Patriarch who, for their own good, (!) extinguished the spark of life in many Syrian opponents of the Society of Jesus. And, to add emphasis to the irony,

* De Laicis, lib. iii., cap. 21. \

Bellarmino, illustrious advocate of capital punishment for heresy, was employed to give judgment on the petitions for mercy that might come up to the Pope from persons not yet incarcerated, on behalf of relatives or friends languishing in the dungeons. "Before a rescript of grace could be given, his judgment was expected." And where there was no petition, nor even any accusation of heresy, his lynx-eye descried it. Thus he detected Nestorianism in the profession of faith sent to Paul V. by the Patriarch of Babylon. Under his patronage, the terrible folio of Farinacci, succeeding to that of Eymeric as the Inquisitorial Manual, came to light. Nay, he revised, enlarged, and recommended it. Yet this Inquisitor could be marvellously tender to some persons. One day, for example, when on his way to the Holy Office, a heavy shower of rain came on. He stopped the carriage, requested some Prelates that were with him to sit close, that his Familiars might get in; and when an attendant reminded him that that was not the usage, he devoutly answered that the Familiars were his brothers in Christ, and if one of them were to fall sick from a wetting, he should have to render an account to God. But he would not condescend to count Galileo among his brethren in Christ. He made the astronomer choose between prison and recantation; and it was at his feet that Galileo knelt to renounce the heresy of the revolution of the earth.

While thus engaged, — I cannot find how many rescripts of grace he procured, — Cardinal Taruggi, an intimate friend of Baronius, requested him to write a Catechism for little children, accompanied by a more copious explanation for the use of their teachers. It was wise to employ the most effective writer then to be found for this important service; and, in fact, the best writers only have been able, in *any* Church, to provide this kind of literature. Bellarmine consented, and produced the “Christian Doctrine,” which may almost be regarded as the basis of Romish popular Catechisms throughout the world. Xavier and others had written similar manuals; but the “*Doctrina Christiana*” of Bellarmine went far to supersede them all.

Inquisitor, Theologian, and Catechist, our hero discharged also another kindred function, being made Examiner of Candidates for the dignity of Bishop. No man, presenting himself before so awful a personage, could presume to waver one hair’s breadth from the exact line of Roman orthodoxy.

Nor must I forget to note that he was also appointed Regent of the Penitentiary of St. Peter; that court wherein absolution is dispensed to those who can only hope for pardon through the mercy of the Pope himself. No Priest, no Bishop, can release them from the thralldom of certain sins. They must apply at Rome; and in Rome there is an office where such applica-

tions are examined, and when it is found that the transaction is in order, and when the necessary fees are paid, the Regent, or chief clerk, writes in the margin one or other of the forms appointed ; thus it passes to the Pope, and the Pope concludes the matter.*

IS CREATED CARDINAL.

Scarcely had the hand of Bellarmine rested for two months upon the helm of Roman mercy, when a rumour spread through court and city that Pope Clement VIII. intended to make a fourth promotion of Cardinals. A thrill of expectation ran through the bosoms of the Prelates. Down to the humblest Monk was felt an intense impatience to know on whom the boon would rest. Perhaps the Holy Father was not himself perfectly decided, either as to number or names ; but fame sometimes points to the final resolution, and in this instance Clement found that the public voice was pronouncing in favour of the new Regent of the Penitentiary. And this wandering suffrage reached the ear of Father Robert himself. From the Palace Apostolic he had heard nothing : the mind of the Pontiff was shut up in deepest silence. Only it was known that a Consistory would be held for discussing the merits of personages named as worthy of elevation to the purple. On the night before,

* *Relazione della Corte di Roma*, da Fr. Antonio Zaccaria, parte ii., capo 23.

he sent a memorial to the General of the Society, praying him to endeavour to prevent the descent of such a dignity, if haply it were imminent. Bellarmine further entreated Aquaviva to obtain for him an audience of the Pontiff, that he might throw himself on the floor of the Papal closet, and by force of tears, if words were not sufficient, divert His Holiness from such a thought. He also trusted that, if even this failed, no one could fancy that he had hankered after the purple while refusing it.

Next morning, March 3d, 1599, the Pope nominated "twelve august Fathers," reserving one *in petto*, and among them Robert Bellarmine, of whom he spake thus:—"Him we choose, because the Church of God has not his equal in learning; and because he is nephew of a most excellent and most holy Pontiff." While the Consistory was yet assembled, Cardinal Aldobrandini despatched a messenger from the Vatican to command him not to stir out of his house, under penalty of anathema, until the Pope should give him leave. That made it clear that he was to be Cardinal; but seeing that he was a Jesuit, and could only receive the hat by an act of sovereign authority in the Pope, it became him to reluctate, and he therefore sat in silence, like a man transpierced with grief. But when a few moments had passed away, he summoned all the Fathers of his College, and besought their counsel. After a

decorous hesitation, they agreed to think that his poverty was lost for ever. The Pope had named him, the Sacred College had accepted the nomination, and he was at that moment taken out of their hands and in the custody of the Pope himself. He could not resist Providence. Bellarmine alone dissented, or seemed to dissent. He sent a messenger to Aldobrandini to say, that, even with groans, he besought an audience of the Pope, to give his reasons for deprecating the dignity. Aldobrandini sent back to say, that the Pope wanted not reasons, but obedience.

“Then Bellarmine, seeing himself hedged round every way, and unable to escape, burst into tears. He bemoaned the loss of that sweet and tranquil peace that he had enjoyed for so many years in the Society; and therefore reiterated those words which, in like circumstances, the most holy Pontiff, Gregory the Great, had sighed out: ‘Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.’” While thus lamenting, they came to conduct him into the Pope’s presence to take the cap, and meet the others who would come for the same purpose, shaven and robed. But Bellarmine was immovable. He would not put off the black habit of his order. Then came his friend Aldobrandini from the Pope’s closet, with a special message; and him Bellarmine intreated that he might stay in his proper state of religion and poverty. But Aldobrandini

repeated that the Pope required submission, under peril of excommunication. "At this intimation the servant of God bowed his head, and in tears devoutest put on the purple; and thus weeping, was conducted to the Pope's feet, to receive the cap. And there, too, he wished to speak for himself; but the Pontiff, with new precept, and with threatening of excommunication, *latæ sententiæ*, quite shut his month."*

Thus ended that part of the ceremony which was required by a rule of his order,† and which used to be repeated on every like occasion, with

* Marazzani, capo viii.

† "It will also be of the utmost importance, in order that the happy state of the Society be preserved, most diligently to put away ambition, parent of all evils in every republic or congregation; and to close up the way against seeking, directly or indirectly, any dignity or preferment in the Society. All the Professed, therefore, must vow to our God and Lord that they will never do anything to obtain such; and that they will inform against all who do; and they shall be held incapable of any preferment of whom it can be proved that they have sought it. They must also promise our God and Lord that they will do nothing to obtain any preferment or dignity out of the Society; *nor shall any one, so far as he can help it, give his consent to any election of himself to any office of the kind, unless his obedience, who may command under pain of sin, shall have compelled him to it.* But let every one consider in what manner he can contribute to the salvation of souls, according to the humility and submission of our profession, *and that the Society be not deprived of those men who are necessary to the attainment of this end.*" (Const., pars x., sect. 6.)

a uniformity that renders it impossible to give the weepers any credit for their tears. He was compelled so to refuse as to render compulsion necessary. That being accomplished, nothing hindered acquiescence.

A circular letter from Aquaviva to the Provincials of the whole Society, on occasion of this event, may not be uninteresting to my readers.

“Perhaps,” he writes, “you may have already received, by letters from others, intelligence of what God has disposed concerning the recent assumption of our Father Robert Bellarmine into the order of Cardinals. Yet I consider it to be consistent with the duties of my office to write you more distinctly. For by relating what really took place, I shall extinguish, or at least moderate, that feeling which the Society entertains with regard to admitting any marks of honour; and with which feeling we earnestly desire that God may constantly keep us in our humility. I wish, therefore, all to understand clearly, that not only on the part of the Society was everything done, seriously to deter the Pope, by reasons laid before him, from bestowing honours and titles of the kind; but that Father Bellarmine himself signified to the Pope, with all possible humility, that he only desired one thing,—to live and die in the same manner in which he had lived so long. But the Pope thought that he had given the matter sufficiently careful consideration, and that the appointment

was pleasing to God. He, therefore, would not listen to the supplications of Bellarmine. And indeed, before he had received the first insignia of Cardinal, when he was beginning to speak for himself, and, while yet undressed, was refusing to be attired in the purple robes, the Pope forbade him to speak, under the penalty of instantly thundering censures upon him, if he said a word more about refusing. Perceiving how matters were, we all rejoiced, and see that nothing that could be done was left undone, either by the Society or the Cardinal. And we may also hope that this election will redound to the service of God. For since the Pope has freely conferred this dignity on a man of so great learning, integrity, and religion, as is Bellarmine, we may expect him to be a Cardinal of most praiseworthy example in the Church, devoted to public usefulness, and friendly to the Society. Now that God may favour all our desires, and give health to Bellarmine himself, with which he may attain to as great eminence in the purple as he enjoyed by his virtue in the Society, let all the Priests that are in your province offer one mass, and all the members that are not in orders one rosary to the Divinity. Meanwhile, I commend myself to the holy sacrifices and prayers of you all. Rome, March 6th, 1599."

To himself the usual visits and letters of congratulation came. Montepulciano was in a

BELLARMINE

rapture of pride and joy at the addition of another Cardinal to those of whom the town already boasted. In places where he had resided, the inhabitants kept holiday. At Taverna, a small town in Calabria, the rustics seemed beside themselves. The house-tops flamed with torches ; the people danced and sang through the streets ; tears floated in their eyes with joy, and the grand dames wept outright. The fraternities walked in procession for three nights, shouting *Te Deum* as they went ; adding by way of chorus at intervals, *Viva Gesu ! Viva Bellarmino !* And the multitude caught the cry, “ Long live Jesus ! Long live Bellarmine ! ”

DISDAINS THE PURPLE.

Where there is one spiritual despot to control the conscience general, every man who submits his particular conscience to that authority should obey without scruple. But if he cannot overcome his own scruples, he ought to break loose from the vassalage at once, and appeal to God, who is, indeed, the Judge of all. The Pope was acknowledged by the Jesuits to be the controller of their common conscience ; and as such he compelled Bellarmine to be a Cardinal under peril of anathema. Yet the new-made Cardinal rendered the Pope no more than a divided allegiance.

Here are questions of conscience which, using

the third person, he proposed in writing to his General, Aquaviva, with the answers rescribed.

X How has he entered into this dignity? By the true door? *Yes, by the true door.*

2. Can he live in that state without offending God? *Certainly he can.*

3. Could he go on better in the service of God, if he were to return to his former manner of life? *That is doubtful.*

4. Would not this be much better? *This, too, is doubtful.*

5. Is it likely that he could be permitted to return? *Scarcely.* +

6. Or would it be safer, simply to give ear to God who calls, and who commands by the voice of His Vicar, and not be solicitous about changing his state, but to become perfect in that rank in which obedience places him?

Aquaviva gave no answer to this last question. He told him, indeed, that he had entered by the right door, and might possibly be a Cardinal without offending God; but that, whether he could serve God better in that state, or whether it was better for him to continue thus, was doubtful. There was no hope of being extricated from this ambiguous position; and on the great question of submission to "the Vicar of God," the General did not pronounce. The General, for himself, was bound to serve the Pope; but he, and every other member of the Society, were by a special rule bound to the

Society, even after exaltation to a dignity beyond its precincts. There could be no absolute release from that order, as there might from others ; and Bellarmine, being perfectly imbued with the spirit of Jesuitism, would interpret most strictly the rule he had sworn to keep.* Resolved to be a true Jesuit to his latest breath, he entered on a course of asceticism, surpassing the requirements of the Society itself, and serving to distinguish him from every other member of the College. And he was "a poor Cardinal," dependent for subsistence on the allowance annually distributed to the poor Cardinals, and on the revenue of a benefice that had been previously given to him, but was liable to fluctuation. This poverty, however, had its advantages. He acquired a reputation of sanctity, and main-

* "He must also promise God that if, being compelled in this way, he accepts any preferment without the Society, he will ever afterwards hear the counsel of the General for the time being ; or that of any one whom the General may appoint for this purpose in his stead ; and that if he shall think that to be best which he " (the General) " advises, he will carry it into execution. Not that he who is made Prelate " (the word is here used in its general etymological sense ; but Prelates are, in common language, distinguished from Cardinals) " has any one of the Society to be his superior ; but because, freely, in the sight of God he is willing to be bound to do that which he shall understand to be best for the Divine service, and because he is pleased that there be some one who will propose it to him with Christian charity and liberty for the glory of God and our Lord." (Const., pars x., sect. 6.)

tained himself in a position of independence. Without much of the pomp, he enjoyed the privileges, of his rank.

Having taken possession of the palace, he engaged a steward whom he well knew, to carry out his plans ; and having ascertained the state of the establishment, as left by his predecessor, and made inquiry concerning the customs of those few Cardinals who had persevered in habits of asceticism, he made out an inventory of the furniture, submitted it to the inspection of Aquaviva, and begged him to direct how much plate, what articles of furniture, and how many servants he should have ; in order that he might not so much live for the glory of the purple, as for the observance of the vow of poverty which he had taken on entering the Society. Even after his revenue became larger, his voluntary humility continued. The "court" of a less ostentatious Cardinal had usually consisted of about sixty persons. Baronius, lauded as a great despiser of worldly pomp, counted forty-five in his train. But Bellarmine would have no more than ten gentlemen (*uomini di rispetto*), fifteen of inferior class, and menials, making up the number to thirty. For a peer of Kings this modesty was wonderful. On every suitable occasion he spoke of his robes as a grief and an incumbrance, flames of fire enwrapping his body, rather than a visible distinction of honour ; and it is related, that, once in

company, taking off his broad red hat, and holding it up, he burst into tears, and said, "God gave me this purple in punishment of the sins that I committed when I was in the world." He described himself as an object of pity rather than of envy, and, after a long speech, setting forth his misery, left the party sitting in silent admiration of humility and heavenly-mindedness in Princes of the Church so rare.

ADMONISHES THE POPE.

Cardinals are privileged to advise the Sovereign Pontiff; and Clement VIII. had desired Cardinal Bellarmine to tell him if he saw that anything might be better and more wisely done for the good of the Church. In obedience to this injunction, the Cardinal sent him a paper "concerning the chief duty of the Pope." Clement perused it carefully, and on each article noted a reply. This document came into the possession of Fuligatto, who gives it in his biography; and it certainly exhibits a remarkable example of plain dealing.

The Supreme Pontiff, Bellarmine began by saying, sustains in the Church a threefold representation of God. He is Shepherd and Ruler of the universal Church, Bishop of the city of Rome, and temporal Prince of the Papal state. But, of all his offices, the care of all the churches is indisputably the first, and incomparably the greatest. *First*, because St. Peter was consti-

tuted Shepherd of all the Lord's flock, long before he was made Bishop of Antioch, or of Rome. There are many other Bishops of most noble cities, and many other temporal Princes ; but the Pontiff of the world, the Vicar-General of Christ, the universal Shepherd of the Church, stands alone in dignity. *Greatest*, because, while the diocese of Rome is narrow, and the temporal principality of the Church is comprehended within contracted bounds, the Supreme Pontiff has no limits to his dominion, except the limits of the world itself.

This office, so ancient, so great, so singular, the Pope might easily fill, if he were to appoint good Bishops over all the churches, and compel them, if necessary, to do their duty. And if the good Bishops would choose good Priests, good Preachers, and good Confessors, everything would be right. But the Priests, Preachers, and Confessors were not good. The writer hinted that the failure began with Clement himself ; and therefore said, "Trusting in the Apostolic benignity, I will confide to the bosom of the most pitiful Father, or rather, I will lay at his feet, my scruples, which, I must confess, will not let me rest."

To this exordium the Pope answered :—" We, too, are alarmed. But as the hearts of men are only known to God, and we can only elect men, two examples comfort us. One is, that when our Lord Jesus Christ elected twelve Apostles,

after spending a whole night in prayer, which we know not that He did on any other occasion, there was yet one Judas among those whom He elected. Then the twelve Apostles, all full of the Holy Spirit, elected seven Deacons, of whom one was Nicolaus, afterwards so notorious a heretic. Which examples we suppose Almighty God left in the Church for the comfort of those who elect."

Bellarmino proceeded to enumerate six points of reformation that could not be overlooked without peril.

Churches were left without Pastors, a deficiency which it was the Pope's duty to supply. Clement confessed that, in this particular, he had sinned, and still was in sin. But fit men, he said, could not be found. Many, very many, were recommended, but he could not trust them; and, besides, he had determined to lay hands suddenly on no man.

The second point of censure was the promotion of useless Prelates. Churches ought to be provided for good persons, not persons with good churches. The Council of Trent says, that they to whom it pertains to make promotion sin mortally, if they do not observe this rule. The implied conclusion is, that the Pope is in mortal sin. His Holiness answers: "This we know; and, so far as we can, we always keep it in view, endeavouring to provide for churches, not for persons. 'But the Church must be the first

and greatest object of consideration.' This is true; but if we are to be confined to the more worthy (*dignioribus*), the Church will never be provided for, because we have no means of knowing who is the more worthy. And as for the Bishops themselves, we are here again in difficulty; for if we will not give bishoprics to those who ask for them, or to those whom others recommend, we know not how the churches are to be provided for, especially the smaller and the poorer ones. If your lordship knows how to manage this better, we shall be glad to hear your method, and to adopt it. Many good things may be said on this subject; but when we come to practice, we encounter great difficulties."

The third point was the absence of Bishops from their churches; for of what use is a good man if he is not at his work? Many Bishops are Apostolic Nuncios, who do not see their churches for years together, but are busy elsewhere with politics. And many are at Rome, doing work that might be done by others, leaving their dioceses to ruin. "In this matter," writes Clement, "we confess that we have sinned, by too readily indulging Bishops with permission to come to Rome; and when they are come, it is difficult to get rid of them. You may remember, however, that formerly there were far fewer resident. As for the Nuncios, we think it far more becoming that Nuncios should be Bishops, *because they command Bishops, and*

are of greater authority than Princes and people; * and if we were not so badly off for men, we should change them sooner." And then he extenuates the blame of employing ecclesiastics in civil magistracy.

The fourth evil was that of "spiritual polygamy," or, as we should speak, *pluralities*. Against this Bellarmine severely arrays the sentences of saints and canonists. "As for this polygamy," rejoins the Pope, somewhat angrily, "at present it only consists in those six cardinalitial bishoprics, in which we do not intend to make any change; for this matter has been examined by our predecessors, even since the Council of Trent, and is fixed. And to disturb the order of the College, and throw blame on the acts of our predecessors, and of so many Cardinals, seems to us a thing that could not be done without scandal."

The fifth sin reprehended was the facile translation of Bishops from one see to another. It was branded as a breach of spiritual marriage. "For it is well known, from *cap. Inter corporalia*, &c., that the bond of spiritual marriage is, in a certain sense, greater than the bond of bodily marriage, and therefore cannot be dissolved, except by God, or by the Vicar of God declaring the will of his Lord." And it is in-

* Here is a reason why the Pope will not send a layman as Ambassador to England. His representative here must exercise *jurisdiction*.

ADMONISHES THE POPE.

credible that God could approve of such breach of marriage for the sake of pecuniary gain. The Pope quietly answers that, on that subject, he has given good advice to Princes.

Lastly, Bellarmine condemns the resignation of bishoprics without lawful cause, and, worst of all, when the retiring Bishop keeps the revenue. "It is as if a man should divorce his wife, and yet keep the dowry." Clement justifies his permission of this exorbitancy by saying, that such resignations are always effected with difficulty, and always preceded by due examination in the Consistory of Cardinals.

And after the discussion of these abuses come professions of humility from Bellarmine, and professions of good intention and good-will from Clement.

But this kind of counsel from a poor Cardinal, who carried himself as loftily as if he had been privileged as highly as "the Nephew," and whose poverty, being the expression of a severe and censorious cynicism, marked him to the public eye, must have made his presence more and more vexatious to the courtiers.

Although the semblance of good-will, at least, continued between the Pope and his monitor, its cordiality was weakened. The famous controversy between the Dominicans and Thomists on one side, and the Jesuits and Molinists on the other, divided the Romish theologians, for several years, into two adverse hosts. Molina, a

Spanish Jesuit, led the opponents of predestinarianism, and to him the Society adhered. The Pope convened Doctors of both parties, entered warmly into the question, and was anxious to use his prerogative and enforce decision. Bellarmine, devoted to Jesuitism, strenuously defended the Spaniard; and, seeing that the decision would not leave his party in possession of the field, laboured hard to dissuade the Pope from carrying his wish into execution. He and his colleagues succeeded in putting off the threatened decision, that would have pronounced their doctrine contrary to that of St. Augustine and St. Thomas. The quarrel was hushed at Rome. Nations espoused it; and if the Holy See had condemned either party, the other might have revenged itself in schism. The divines refrained from a precipitation of the affair, and Bellarmine, honoured with the archbishopric of Capua, was put out of the way. By his own censure of absentees, he was bound to reside within the diocese; and thus, wedded to Capua, he was removed from Rome.

ARCHBISHOP OF CAPUA.

Cardinal Baronius had often applied to the Pope on behalf of his friend, soliciting appointments to rich benefices as they fell vacant; but hitherto without success. The annalist represented to His Holiness that, having created Bellarmine a Cardinal, he ought to make the favour complete by giving him a sufficient maintenance.

ARCHBISHOP OF CAPUA.

Clement sometimes expressed regret that he had not found opportunity to do so ; and Bellarmine as often replied, that he wanted nothing ; but comforted himself, when reflecting on his dependence, as a poor Cardinal, on the bounty of the reigning Pontiff, by considering that, when Clement died, he could go back again to the Jesuit College, and there be sure of the same fare as his brethren.

On the vacation of the archiepiscopal see of Capua, Clement thought well to dismiss the stern monitor, and the stubborn champion of Molinism, with a good grace. On Sunday, April 21st, 1602, the second Sunday after Easter, the Gospel for the day being, "I am the good Shepherd," the Pope consecrated him with great pomp as Archbishop, and gave him the pallium two days afterwards in the Vatican. On the second day after this investiture, he was on his way to Capua, hastening, partly to avoid the trouble of ceremonial visits, and partly to enter on the new station without delay.

He made his entry into the city on the 1st of May. The populace were rejoicing in the prospect of indulgences, which he had promised to all who should merit them by going to mass, and thus be the first to take benefit of his ministrations as their Metropolitan. The Clergy met him first, then the laity, and, under shelter of a silken canopy, he rode into Capua. The six gentlemen elected to the government of the peo-

ple carried the canopy. The nobility surrounded him ; some at the bridle, some at the stirrups, some on either side the horse. And this was in expression of a homage that the Church exacts on all similar occasions.* The cross preceded, to show that he took possession of the province. The way was strewed with flowers. From the belfries of the twenty parish churches, and from those of the numerous monasteries, came clashing peals of welcome. The crowds, kneeling, received his blessing as he advanced ; and, at the cathedral, into which he was carried over the heads of the crowd, it seemed to him that St. Stephen, the protomartyr and guardian of the place, extended the right hand of recognition. And if it be true that an arm of the saint, whom devout men buried, was disinterred, and if, in defiance of the waste of sixteen centuries, it remained entire in Capua, that very limb was carried in procession round the church, and in this fashion exhibited for two days, by command of the new Archbishop, and to the delectation of the people. On the feast of Ascension, although it was not usual to preach on that day, he set aside the custom, took the pulpit, and delivered a sermon on these words of the Prophet : “ See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and

* Fuligatto and Marazzani relate what the *cæremoniale Episcoporum* of Clement VIII., (still in use,) lib. i., cap. 2, prescribes. These honours, therefore, were not spontaneous.

over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant." But the Capuan pulpit had been poorly occupied; the inhabitants felt little desire to hear sermons; and it was not until after great exertion and perseverance that he could gather numerous congregations. Then he wrote an earnest letter to the Pope, entreating that, while such cities as Rome, Naples, and Milan, were supplied with excellent Preachers, second-rate cities, like his own, should not be left destitute. "In these," he says, "if the Bishop does not speak, all are mute, except during the days of Lent. In Lent, indeed, there are many Preachers to be heard, whom pay, rather than charity, attracts, and who rather gape after gain of money than seek souls. These, therefore, are miserable cities, desolate fields, which Heaven, while it waters all the rest, rains upon for one month only in the year; and from such fields you can gather nothing but thorns and weeds."

In reply to a friend who asked him, some years afterwards, by what means he made himself so good an Archbishop during his residence of three years in Capua, he gives this account:—"As when one looks into a mirror, I set my mind to consider intently the life and conduct of the most admired Bishops that had been in the Church before me; endeavouring, by God's help, to throw off all that was imperfect in myself,

and assume a new exterior, resembling theirs as nearly as possible, that so I might adapt my actions thereunto. I therefore read constantly the histories of those Bishops, perusing in order the volumes of Surius; and I read, especially, the lives of the holy Popes Ambrose, Martin, Augustine, Germanus, Anselm of Canterbury, Antonine of Florence, Lawrence, Patriarch of Venice, and others. But I derived the greatest advantage from the narratives of those most holy Prelates who went before me in Capua, Ansbertus and Andoënus; for both of them perfectly sustained the name and office of Pastor, nourishing the souls of their subjects with the constant preaching of the word of God, their bodies with liberal charities, and themselves with the wholesome food of prayer."

If Bellarmine had written to gratify the eye of Protestantism, he would scarcely have exhibited so artlessly the earthly model of perfection that he had chosen for imitation, or have disclosed so fully his utter forgetfulness of Him who left us an example that we should walk in His steps. If instead of the lives of Bishops he had studied the word of God, his profiting would have been indeed apparent, and his career as an ecclesiastic far more equal. Still we must acknowledge that he was, in his way, a sincere and successful imitator; and if it be a virtue in a man who has no domestic tie, and who is free to consume all that comes into his hands, not concerning

himself as to widow or child, his virtue was heroic. He gave away his income almost as fast as he received it. The poor, indeed, for whom scarcely any other provision was made, could only look to the Clergy for help. The Church revenues were held with the understanding that almsgiving was due from the Incumbents. By his steward, or with his own hand, he gave money daily to crowds of beggars ; and as he was not churlish in the distribution, so neither did he make any careful inquiry into the necessity or the character of the beggars that beset his door. In all such cases, therefore, charity is but artificial, and we are obliged, in order to find any ground for praise, to observe the temper in which he dispersed his bounties ; and here it is pleasant to find indications of an exceedingly benevolent nature, with an air of simplicity so captivating, that I have experienced a sensation of disappointment in passing from a cursory reading of the biography to a careful study of his life.

His proceedings as a disciplinarian give us occasion to note the state of the Italian churches in those times.

Gambling, with its attendant vices, prevailed generally in Capua and the neighbouring towns, in spite of royal edicts to the contrary ; and the local authorities did not interfere. The Archbishop, at first, intended to launch spiritual censures on the offenders, but on consideration

perceived that such a measure would only bring himself into contempt. His predecessor, an eminent decretalist,* had never interfered with the amusements of the people, and they had been too long pursuing their own course to be brought suddenly under ecclesiastical restraint. Secretly, that the magistrates might not suspect his interference, he sent a messenger to the Viceroy of Naples; obtained a new law for the prohibition of gambling-houses; and had the Governor dismissed, and another put in his place. An edict came from Naples, the new Governor enforced it, and they regarded Capua as reclaimed "by those arts, to a sense of modesty."

The laity being thus involuntarily reformed, the Archbishop set about the reformation of the Clergy also, who were not less addicted to the same sin. The Priests, in general, laid aside the dice, or tossed them in private; but after all those efforts, one of them was brought up as incorrigible. "How is it," asked Bellarmine, "that you, an ecclesiastic, and a Priest beside, did not fear that the sound of dice would be heard, but played even in open day, either for pleasure or for shameful gain?" "Because," answered the Priest, "I am destitute of maintenance; and

* Cesare Costa, thirty years Archbishop of Capua, who was employed by Clement VIII. to edit a seventh book of Decretals, with glosses and notes. (Ughelli, *Italia Sacra*, tom. vi., p. 359.)

unless I get money by play, I must starve." The good Archbishop gave him as much as he would have won by a lucky throw, bade him come to him whenever he would otherwise have gambled, and promised that each time he should receive as much. The Priest, seeing that he was caught, became another man.

In visiting the churches, Bellarmine found that in many of them there was seldom any sort of ritual performance, but that the Priests themselves bought and sold in them, as if they were market-houses; the hucksters actually exposing their wares in the naves. Porters traversed the aisles with burdens, and trade was carried on so briskly in the porches, that the Priest could not be heard to sing mass. This indecency the new Archbishop diminished, but could not abolish.

Priests of the first class were seen to solicit the meanest occupations for the sake of a living, and appeared seldom at church. This degradation he forbade, and commanded them to attend at lectures established for their instruction. He convened the Canons frequently in chapter, and himself presided, restoring ceremonies, and settling disputes. In the absence of Canons from their stalls, laymen had been accustomed to occupy those convenient seats; but he would not suffer them even to enter the choir, which was not a place, he said, for "profane persons,"—for the laity were all held to be profane. Every

day he attended in the choir once, and on festivals at all the hours. To encourage attendance there, each Canon, when present, was allowed a small sum of money. Bellarmine took his own daily, and then applied it to some charitable use. By his presence, too, he compelled the Canons to refrain from chanting immodest words with sacred music, and from levity in church. He was also careful to obtain young men of as good character as could be found, to be educated for the priesthood, free of charge.

When visiting his diocese, he presumed to imitate our blessed Saviour, by sending forward two Jesuits, whom he likened to disciples, to announce the approach of their master. Several Jesuits were generally to be found in Capua, and he maintained them in his palace. For twenty-two years there had not been a Provincial Council in the metropolitan church, nor a Diocesan Synod; but he caused Synods to be held annually, and ordered a Council once in three years; but Bellarmine had scarcely fulfilled one triennial cycle, when he was called to Rome again. For the sake of showing hospitality, he enlarged and repaired the archiepiscopal palace. The cathedral, too, he repaired; restoring and decorating the chapel of St. Paul, which had been converted into a lumber-room. Nor did he forget to remove the body of his predecessor into a sumptuous tomb, and place a neat inscription over it.

Near the church of St. John there was a

nunnery, where the depravity of the inmates had become so scandalous that a Congregation of Cardinals had forbidden any more females to be admitted as novices. The community had dwindled down to six, and those six "religious women" were covered with infamy. On the arrival of Bellarmine, they applied to him for something more than he could give,—a restoration to good report. They asked for mass to be said in their chapel once again. It was granted, and a sermon besides, when they fell on their knees, wept, implored interest at Rome for the grant of a new character, and offered to submit to any rule that their Archbishop would impose on them. The patrons of those "sacred virgins" plied Bellarmine hard for a restoration of character at Rome, and permission to return again "to a form of holier life." The men of Capua complained that the nunnery, having a revenue of three thousand ducats, and therefore capable of receiving many women, to the relief of poor families, was no longer available for that use. Bellarmine wrote to the Sacred Congregation, and prayed them not to shut their ears against returning virtue. The Cardinals could scarcely imagine such a reformation to be possible; but they yielded to his importunity, and gave licence for other females to be admitted to recruit the society of the repentant virgins, under condition of their vacating the nunnery where no one would ever imagine that aught good could dwell, and

taking up a new abode. Bellarmine superintended the change ; having first of all purified the Nuns by eight months' absolute seclusion, under two ladies from another house, bought other premises, made enclosure with very lofty walls, and only permitted one small spot for communication with the world,—a small grating, so close that not a feature could be seen through it by the most prying eye. Encouraged by this success, another disordered community, that of St. Francis and St. Clare, was committed to his hands ; and by kindly diligence he succeeded in placing those Nuns, also, on a more creditable footing.

Attracted by his fame as a Prelate, multitudes of young men resorted to him for ordination ; and when any were to be sent out as Missioners to China or to India, the Rector of the Roman College was wont to send them down to Capua, that from his hand they might receive the indelible character of priesthood. At this time he also enjoyed the credit of having so great power with God, that nothing could be denied to his intercession. Sick persons were brought to him for healing, and others possessed with devils for exorcism. One woman was brought from a neighbouring village, said to be possessed by many. The Cardinal knew her to be an energumen, but commanded her to go home again. Afterwards, intending to use every means for her recovery, and fully conscious of the power which

Christ our Lord had given him, he began more austere than usual to break the strength of the demons by fastings and prayers. By this they felt his power, and exclaimed with indignation, "What has Cardinal Bellarmine to do with us? He torments us more than he ought; he commands us to go forth; he compels us to depart hence; therefore we will depart." Having repeated these words several times, they left the woman in the church, much exhausted. Many sick persons they say he healed; and "on the bodies of the diseased he laid a small piece of paper, cut out of the epistles of St. Ignatius, on which was his name written by his own hand; *and by that* many were restored to health."

Be it remembered that these fables are told of one of the cleverest doctors of whom the Church of Rome can boast, and that they were published, as soon as possible, after his death, both in Italian and Latin, by the command of Muzio Vitelleschi, General of the Society of Jesus, with dedication to Urban VIII.,* who might himself

* "It would have been glorious, if, as thou didst intend, thou hadst written concerning Bellarmine, in the dignity of manners and of purple in which thou wast. But it is more glorious that thou wast so prevented; and that the impediments were, *to thy feet*, the kisses of the world; *to thy hands*, the bounties of heaven; *to thy mouth*, answers and oracles of truth; *to thy soul*, God and the management of His affairs." (Dedication by Silvester Petra Sancta, the translator, to Urban VIII.)

BELLARMINE

have been the biographer, but for his elevation to the pontificate. Such are the finer pencillings wherewith a Roman artist, of most approved manner, finishes a portrait that is to be offered for the admiration, if not the worship, of the Church.

IN CONCLAVE.

The biographer and his followers thought it necessary to invest this "servant of God" with the gift of prophecy. If, as they say, Bellarmine predicted, on leaving Rome, that Clement VIII. would die within three years, his character rises not in our estimation. We remember a former presage of the same very suspicious kind. The death, however, did take place when the Archbishop had been two years and ten months in Capua; and after preaching a farewell sermon he made haste to take part in the election of a successor to the pontificate.

Clement expired March 3d, 1605; and on the 14th day of the same month, sixty Cardinals shut themselves up in Conclave.* In the first scrutiny it was found that Bellarmine had the largest number of votes. Eleven gave him a nomination. Eight bestowed a similar honour on Baronius. After Baronius, many received insignificant numbers of tickets, or single votes.

* A description of a Conclave, and of the ceremonial now observed in the election of a Pope, may be found in the Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine for 1851.

The Cardinals were not yet prepared to act in earnest; for the intrigues and contradictions which kept them there until the 1st of April were but beginning; and therefore they gave a sort of random vote for the least likely persons. Each Cardinal-Deacon had one, at least, except San Cesareo, who jocosely mourned that no one wanted him for Pope. Bellarmine sternly told his friends that the levity of the Conclave was offensive; "for although Bulls, and the honour of the blessed God, bound the Cardinals to give their votes to the most worthy, they had voted for boys of fifteen, treating that as a jest which demanded infinite respect, and thus committing mortal sin." The suffrages for Bellarmine diminished, as soon as their Eminences fell to work, and grew more numerous for Baronius, who displayed his satisfaction in the usual manner by perversely quoting Scripture. The passage most in his lips was, "The pains of death have compassed me about." But when at the very last another interest rose into ascendancy, Alessandro de' Medici received the tiara, and came forth as Leo XI. Four weeks' duration and contention had wearied out the aged Princes; and several of them were already driven to their palaces by gout, fever, or vexation.* Conclaves, in those days, were more tumultuous and scandalous than they are likely to be at present, under improved regulations.

* *Conclavi de' Pontefici Romani. MDCLXVIII. Leone XI.*

A fatality haunted new-made Popes. Twenty-eight days had been consumed in the creation of Leo XI., and in twenty-six he ceased to be. Again, therefore, fifty-nine Cardinals went into the Vatican. On Sunday morning, May 11th, and without keeping any Sabbath, for there is none at Rome, they proceeded at once to form themselves into parties. In this Conclave Bellarmine became a person of importance. Sforza, his relative, and Aquaviva, nephew of the General of the Jesuits, applied themselves in earnest to collect votes for him; and on the scrutiny fourteen were counted in his favour. For a short time a rumour prevailed that Bellarmine was likely to be elected, under favour of some of the most eminent members of the College. But, in reality, some of his supporters merely used him for the time to divert support from another candidate; and the prospect of having a Jesuit Pope alarmed all the Cardinal-Friars, who raised a clamour instantaneously. The reporter of the proceedings of this Conclave says, that "Bellarmine had great friends in consideration of his learning, and singular goodness; but his being a Jesuit, and of delicate conscience, made him to be little loved by many, who moved every stone to ruin him.....The remembrance of Bellarmine's disgrace under Sixtus V., who caused his work on the power of the Pope to be prohibited, was revived. There were earnest discourses concerning all the consequences that

RISES TO NEW DIGNITIES.

might be apprehended from the exaltation of a Jesuit, and the management on the other side was carried on so vigorously that the project was quickly set at rest." * After close fighting for five days, the Cardinal Borghese emerged from the crowd of competitors as Pope Paul V. The cries of adverse factions, and the din of canvassing, that had resounded in those chambers, were now hushed; and the new Pontiff was robed, worshipped, and proclaimed in Rome as "Universal Father."

RISES TO NEW DIGNITIES.

When Bellarmine left Capua, he thought it likely that his services would be acceptable at Court. His wordy patron had been equally careful to remove him thence, and to measure out revenue so moderately, that no very influential treasury should be at his disposal. Clement being no more, he had, probably, good reason to infer from the correspondence of old friends that his position would be altered. And in a valedictory sermon, he even ventured, "although not a prophet," to predict that the new Pope would not suffer him to quit Rome, and that, therefore, the Capuans would not see his face again. The stroke of pathos told upon the congregation, and there were who cried aloud: "Good shepherd, do not leave us." "Leave us not fatherless." "We have sinned against thee, Father, but will

* Ut supra, Conclave di Paolo V.

be better children for the future." Such acclamations were not unusual in Italian congregations, and even now are sometimes to be heard.

As he divined it came to pass. Leo XI. first desired him to stay in Rome; and Paul V. also showed him favour. Having so often condemned Prelates who dismissed their wives, the churches, and yet retained the dowries, he could not consistently retain the archbishopric of Capua, but surrendered charge and a great part of the revenue to Paul. He received, however, an annuity of four thousand crowns, rich compensation flowed from other quarters, and he remained a pillar of the Roman Church, bearing no small weight of responsibility for counsel, while more courtly men were employed in diplomacy and political administration.

My leading authority, Fuligatto, is just now singularly barren. No small proportion of his volume is occupied with details intended to illustrate the wisdom and piety of his hero; but some of them are incredible, and most of them are trifling. As for his wisdom, it was expended in Congregations and in monasteries, the affairs of which cannot interest the reader. And as for his piety, I shall presently refer to other documents. Enough to say, that he governed the bishopric of Montepulciano, his native place, with diligence, although he never visited the diocese, but took the office of ecclesiastical governor with an understanding that the duties

of residence and visitation would be devolved upon a Vicar.

In common with other Cardinals he exercised rights of patronage. "Among other occupations undertaken by the Cardinals at Rome, that they may assist the Supreme Pontiff in the government of the universal Church, are numbered patronages; not only of kingdoms and provinces, but also of religious orders. The Pope himself distributes prefectures of this kind among them. Cardinal Bellarmine had to discharge this function; and the order of Celestines, a monastery in the city of Sacred Virgins of St. Matthew, and the College of the Germanic Nation, were placed under his protection." Protection, however, and patronage, are merely words that cover the idea of supreme government. Nominally, supremacy belongs to the Pope alone, and to him only it is ever attributed; but sixty or seventy Cardinals actually govern. They are called Patrons or Protectors, to save the fundamental doctrine of a monarchy that scorns to share its honours with another; and to exalt the personage that would imitate Him who is indeed almighty and omnipresent.

Bellarmino, acting as a lieutenant of the Pope, sometimes gave proof of much practical wisdom. In his patronage of the Celestines, for example, he restored a wise provision of the founder himself, Celestine V., that although the Supreme Abbot was only elected for three years,

he might be re-elected for a similar term. Pope John XXII. had abrogated this power of the fraternity, under the idea that ambitious brethren would manage to get repeated appointments to the exclusion of others. The necessity of changing the government of the community every third year, thus induced, however effectually it might frustrate, ambition, and also tended to chill the hopes and depress the spirit of the brotherhood. "It was found by experience that the space of three years, when the Abbot was a good one, was too small for the continuance and establishment of what had been usefully begun." He obtained authority from Paul V. for the restoration of the primitive licence, and saw it twice used with great effect. Both the sexennial Abbots took heart, in prospect of lengthened occupation, and revived the order in France, Belgium, and Italy. The Court of Rome saw that in the struggle with Protestantism no advantage of consolidation and persistency was to be lost even to one of the least of their institutions. And this may be recorded as one of the best examples of the wisdom of our Cardinal, by whose means the improvement was effected.

PROMULGATES TREASON.

Occasion soon came for giving Bellarmine far more important work than the patronage of monkeries. His own patron, Paul V., was resolved to make such a stand as had not been made since the

PROMULGATES TREASON.

Reformation against anti-Papal doctrines throughout the world. Everywhere the temporal powers resisted him; but almost everywhere he overawed them by some stroke of authority that none but himself would have attempted. Princes condescended to be absolved and reconciled, after having done no more than their duty in objecting to his exorbitant assumption of power over their subjects by means of canon law. One state, however, refused to follow the general example of submission. Venice had been subjected, in common with others, to the extortion of the priesthood. Delegates from Rome demanded power over the Venetians by means of the Inquisition and other ecclesiastical courts. The Venetian Clergy were required to surrender national privileges, and submit to be absorbed in the vortex of Roman jurisdiction. The Congregation of the Index prohibited, one by one, the best books printed in Venice, the sale of which constituted a main part of Venetian commerce. The printers had put forth their utmost energy, and by issuing magnificent Missals, and other Church-books, were partially recovering themselves, when a revision of those formularies superseded the existing editions, and a prohibition of printing new editions, except in Rome, threatened them with ruin. The spirit of the Venetians was aroused. Then Rome endeavoured to encroach on the boundaries and on the fisheries of the Republic. The Republic made

reprisals. For the sake of self-defence restraint was laid upon the rapacity of the Clergy. The Senate enacted a law of mortmain to protect families from robbery by Confessors who beset the death-beds. The civil authorities treated Papal decrees and constitutions with just contempt, whenever they were contrary to the law of the land. Some seditious Monks were imprisoned, and the Nuncio in vain demanded their release. On the 17th day of April, 1606, to crush the temporal power, Paul set the seal of the Fisherman, in fury, to an excommunication of the Doge and his assessors, and an interdict laid on the Republic. It then became necessary to justify the Roman aggressions and extortions by a plea of Divine right. For doing this Bellarmine was best fitted by a concurrence of principle and habit; and him, therefore, the Pontiff set to work. It was in a juncture when the excommunication was despised and the interdict resisted, and when the Jesuits, as adherents of the Pope, were expelled from Venice, that Bellarmine again pleaded for Papal supremacy, as coolly as if all Europe were content to suffer it.

This is his doctrine: * Princes have no power over Clergymen, who by the testimony of all Catholic lawyers, and by the letter of God's law, are exempt from earthly jurisdiction. It is

* *Controversiæ Memorabilis inter Paulum V. Pontificem Max. et Venetor, &c., Acta et Scripta.* In Villa Sanvinciana, 1607. An instructive collection.

PROMULGATES TREASON.

manifestly false to say that the Most Christian King has power from God over the French, the Catholic King over the Spaniards, or the Republic over the Venetians; for Sovereigns possess their dominion by some human right only, never by Divine. The Pope has received from God the immediate grant of sovereignty over all Christians. Kings may surrender their states, because the tenure is only secular; but the Pope cannot surrender a province, a town, nor even an individual: for his kingdom, like that of Christ, is inalienable and without end. His tenure is Divine and eternal. If Princes have no power immediately from God over the laity, certainly they can have none over the Clergy; nor can they deal with the Clergy as if they were subjects either by Divine or human right. It is true that every power is of God. Some power is immediate, as that of Moses and the Pope; and some is from the people by election, or other means. The Clergy, therefore, first obey him who has power immediately from God, and then they obey such human and secondary laws as are not contrary to the Pope's laws. But if a Clergyman breaks a human law, no human power can justly punish him. Secular Princes, it is acknowledged, are called gods of the people, but the Priest is god of the Prince. Priests may judge Emperors, but an Emperor may not judge a Priest. Priests are shepherds, and laymen sheep: sheep cannot rule their

shepherd. "As in a man reason and flesh are united, and so make up the man; even so in holy Church there is the ecclesiastical or spiritual power, and the secular or temporal, which both make up the mystical body of the Church. And as in the man reason is superior to flesh, not flesh to reason, except when it rebels; so reason leads and governs flesh, and even subdues and punishes flesh with fasts and watchings, but flesh never guides or punishes reason. Thus is the spiritual power superior to the worldly, and therefore both may and can guide, govern, command, and punish it, when it does wrong. But the secular power, not being superior to the spiritual, cannot guide or govern it, except *de facto*, and by way of rebellion and tyranny, as heretical Princes have sometimes done." Princes are hired servants of the people, but Priests are ministers of God. All persons and all things are theirs. Whatever heretics may say, the Church has the right to put heretics to death; for she has two swords, temporal and spiritual. In her great tenderness she refrains from using the former, but requires the temporal power to use it in her behalf. From these propositions, and much, very much more of the same kind, Bellarmine teaches the Venetian Republic how fearfully it has offended God by imprisoning those Priests; and at the close of one of his writings he broadly hints that the Doge will be worried to death by his own subjects, who will act as ministers of

Divine vengeance. He tells him that he will perish, as other tyrants have perished, in punishment of resisting Rome, unless he repents and yields.

The quarrel was compromised at last, leaving the Pope conqueror in reality, and in full enjoyment of the benefit of this outrageous theology. But outrageous as it was, it was precisely the dogma that Rome needed to have established. What could be more grateful to the vulgar ear than a denial of the Divine right of Kings? What could be more politic for the Papacy than to depress royalty to the level of republicanism? Henceforth Roman diplomatists and Priests might coolly accommodate themselves to any change of government; or they might aid in subverting kingdom, empire, or commonwealth; or become accomplices with any despot, or with any demagogue in tearing up ancient landmarks. *They* were not to be respected, because they were but accidental, only the effect of some compact or of some capitulation. The Church could sit calmly amidst revolutions of her own creation, and obtain from the dominant faction, or the *de facto* government, the price of her complicity. Under this theory, and with the practice corresponding, especially as seen in Europe within the last five years, there is nothing in the world sacred, and nothing safe: there was not a sentiment conveyed in the controversy with the Venetians that had not been published long before, in his treatise *De Pontifice Romano*. Yet

this was one of the confidential correspondents of James I. of England ; for a statement of Bellarmine himself in his answer to “ the triple knot ” of that King is amply corroborated by other evidence. The Cardinal, speaking in the third person, says, that “ the King had written to the Pope himself, as well as to the Cardinals Aldobrandini and Bellarmino, letters full of civility, in which, besides other things, he desired that some one of the Scots should be created Cardinal of the holy Roman Church, in order that he might have some one at Rome by whom to transact business with the Pope more easily.” But afterwards, about the time of the Gunpowder Plot, King James performed the part of a zealous Protestant, either through fear of the Jesuits, or for the sake of keeping up his character in England ; and then he wrote a book against the Pope and Bellarmine. The coolness of the latter enabled him to appear much better on paper than his royal antagonist. An incidental specimen of his coolness appears in a letter from his hand, which I find in manuscript in the British Museum, and translate underneath. It is addressed to the Cardinal D’Este,* and

* “ My most Illustrious, most Reverend, and most Respected Lord,—It having pleased the King of England to write a book against the holy Catholic faith, and against my person, I have thought it necessary to answer him to defend the holy faith, and myself also. However, I send you the enclosed copy, hoping that you may be willing to

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would suggest even to a reader, uninformed of the constant usage, that all these controversial productions underwent censorship, and therefore expressed authentically the mind of the Court of Rome.

Tyrannicide, as the phrase went, that is to say, the killing of Kings, was openly advocated by Jesuits, and defended at Rome. When Jean Chastel, a student of the Jesuit College in Paris, attempted to assassinate Henry III., and the Court of Parliament proceeded against the criminal, their act was censured at Rome.* The Spanish Jesuit, Mariana, wrote a treatise † tending to establish the same horrid doctrine; and Bellarmine, in answer to a work of an Englishman, George Barclay, maintained the same. This work, which is a fair exposition of Roman doctrine, may be found in its place.‡ It exhibits an array of sentences confirmatory from “illustrious writers” of Italy, France, Spain,

see and read it. Praying that you may enjoy the next Christmas festivities, and not having to give you any further trouble with letters of this kind, I commend myself to you *in gratiam*. From Rome, November 11th, 1609. Of your most Illustrious and most Reverend, the most humble and devoted servant,

✕ THE CARDINAL BELLARMINE.”

(Additional mss. from 1782 to 1835 in British Museum. Eg. 44.)

* Le Tocsin, Paris, 1610.

† De Rege, et Regis Institutione.

‡ Seventh volume of Bellarmine's Works. Cologne, 1617.

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Germany, England, and Scotland, with sentences of Councils. The alleged prerogative of the Supreme Pontiff, and the duty of the people in regard to heretical Princes, are laid down under great variety of argument, precedent, and figure. The conclusions are such as these :—

Princes, in these latter times, may be deprived of their principedom without any detriment of the people, and without any injustice, by authority of the Church.

Kings are the rams of the flock. If the rams injure the sheep with their horns, they must be put away from the flock by the shepherd. The Pope is the universal shepherd; and if Kings tyrannise over the people, he has the right to put them out of the way, and is under the obligation so to do. However, as he does not use the sword himself, he must necessarily call on armies, magistrates, or people, to employ such means as may effect the purpose.

Heretical Kings are wolves that destroy the flock. The good shepherd will drive away the wolf; (and elsewhere Bellarmine has said that wolves are to be killed;) and even so the Pope, supreme power on earth, and universal shepherd, should require the services of all who can render it, to drive those wolves away.

These books not only made great stir in Venice and England, but wrought powerfully in France among the Clergy and on the least worthy part of the laity, as appeared May 13th, 1610, when

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Ravaillac stabbed Henry IV., who fell mortally wounded ; and it became evident that the followers of Mariana and Bellarmine, with all the vassals of the Roman Court, deemed that act to be heroic and meritorious. On the 10th of June the Parisian Parliament ordered the book of Mariana to be burnt before Nôtre Dame ; but, unhappily for France, the deceased King, blind to the fact that the Jesuits, the Romans, and the Spaniards were combined to overturn his throne, had patronised the Jesuits, and made one of them tutor of his son. They had, therefore, sufficient influence at Court and in Parliament to shield their order, and suppress in the Arrêt of Parliament the designation of Mariana as a Priest of the Society of Jesus.

Still the Jesuits were accused of being accessory—at least by consequence of their teaching—to the murder of the King, and a day was appointed for their cause to be pleaded at the palace. The Rectors and Doctors of the Sorbonne came in a body to the widowed Queen, ready to establish their complaint ; but the Jesuits had succeeded in persuading Her Majesty to merge the duties of a Queen and the affections of a widow in the submission of a devotee ; and she dismissed her most faithful subjects with an injunction to cease their pleading. The Sorbonne obeyed ; but the same day the public prosecutor demanded judgment of the Parliament against Bellarmine's answer to Barclay, and on

that day week an order was issued forbidding “all persons under penalty of treason to receive, retain, circulate, print, cause to be printed, or expose to sale the said book, tending to the overthrow of sovereign powers ordained and established by God, to the revolt of subjects against their Prince, to the withdrawal of their obedience; inducing them to make attempts against their persons and estates, and to disturb public quiet and tranquillity.”*

Thus did that court fulfil its duty, refraining only from ordering Bellarmine's book to be burnt, in consideration of his rank as Cardinal, and of the Queen's love of the Jesuits. But their loyalty was displayed in vain. The Nuncio hurried away in anger to the palace, and threatened that, unless the Queen made reparation, he would no longer stay in France. She was alarmed, summoned the Parliament into her presence, and demanded the reason of their proceeding. They gave it with great firmness. The first President represented that she and her son, now King, were brought under subjection to the Pope, and in danger of being deposed whenever it should please him. Bellarmine, they said, at a time when the Pope ought to have sent her a letter of condolence and consolation in her sorrow, had published that book in France, and so thrown a firebrand of sedition among her people. Her husband, they believed, would have gone to

* Extraict des Registres de Parlement.

Rome and demanded the person of the author. But Henry was murdered now, and the book was a canonisation of Ravallac his murderer, and an authentication of the crime. "Madam," he added, "we have found the sword drawn against you and your state: we had been traitors to you and to our places, if we had not raised our arms to parry the blow." She could not reprove the Parliament, but she bade them suspend the execution of their order for the present. Meanwhile the Nuncio persisted in his complaint. The Jesuits gave her no rest. Bellarmine, on hearing what had happened, wrote a letter to defend his doctrine, protesting that he only meant it to be applied for the deposition of Princes that were heretics, as in England, and assured Her Majesty of his good intentions. The Queen professed herself well satisfied, all opposition was turned aside, and the King-killing doctrine was propagated without restraint.* The Tocsin, a publication that its authors were compelled to issue anonymously, at a time when it was dangerous to be a patriot, was suppressed, and gathered up with such religious diligence that even the British Ambassador at Paris could not obtain a copy. One copy, at any rate, is preserved, and it has afforded me a reference on a preceding page.

* Winwood's Memorials, vol. iii., pp. 231-233, 234-240, 241. Cretineau-Joly, Histoire de la Compagnie de Jesus, tome iii., chap. 3. Fuligatti Vit. Bel., lib. ii., cap. 7.

The general reader must here be cautioned against the artfulness of some writers and the simplicity of others, who would cover the guilt of partisans in those days with the cloak of misrepresentation, or the mantle of a blind charity.

Cretineau-Joly, for example, says that our Cardinal wrote to Arch-Priest Blackwell, in England, blaming the proceedings of the Romanists here. He wrote, indeed, to Blackwell; but what did he say? His letter, written not long after the Gunpowder Treason, contains an assertion,—anything but true,—that no Pope had ever killed any King, or approved of any such murder, and treats the fear of danger to the life of James I. as idle. But the writer says nothing condemnatory of the conduct of the traitors of the 5th of November. On the contrary, he censures Blackwell most severely for taking an oath of allegiance, which he calls unlawful. “Neither, dearest brother, could that oath become lawful by being presented to you in any way tempered or modified. For you know that such modifications are nothing else than snares and tricks of Satan.....For it is certain that in whatsoever words an oath may be framed by the adversaries of the faith in that kingdom, it can only tend to transfer the authority of the Head of the Church from the successor of St. Peter to the successor of Henry VIII. in England.” And as by taking an oath of allegiance to his rightful Sovereign he has fallen like St. Peter and St. Mar-

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cellinus, he entreats him, in the Lord's name, to repent like them, and renounce that allegiance ; thus returning to the path of truth and virtue. He endeavours to stimulate the Arch-Priest to lead all the Romanists in England to withdraw their allegiance from the King, against whose life, as he well knows, enemies are plotting, both at home and abroad. And he tries to stir them up to sedition by arguments from Gregory the Great, St. Leo, and the Jesuit Sanders ; and by the examples of the Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More. "For the sake of that single and most weighty article of doctrine alone" (the dominion of the Pope over the King) "they were leaders unto martyrdom of very many others." A clear confession that the Romanists who suffered in the reign of Queen Elizabeth were not punished for any other article of their "religion" than that which led them to sedition and to regicide. And we must not attribute zeal for this article of doctrine to the Jesuits alone, inasmuch as Paul V., following the traditions of his fathers, announced the same repeatedly, and especially in a Brief published more than five weeks before the famous letter of the Cardinal.*

* The Bull was dated August 21st, and the letter September 28th, 1607. The letter was intercepted, and forthwith printed by authority, with a "Large Examination taken at Lambeth, according to His Majesty's direction, point by point, of M. George Blackwell, made Arch-Priest of England, by Pope Clement VIII., &c., &c., &c. London, 1607. Barker."

It is therefore evident that Bellarmine, far from condemning treason, inculcated most earnestly the doctrine by which treason is a virtue; and having no official reason for writing to the less disloyal Arch-Priest of England, went out of his way to do so, just on the strength of having known him more than forty years before.

His blessing or his curse was always ready to be addressed to the friends of his Church and order, or to their foes. While prosecuting, with unflinching perseverance, the ruin of every Protestant Sovereign, and of every untractable state, he repaid subservient Princes with his best offices. For example: The crown of Bohemia, being elective, was to be set on the head of a new ruler; and as the doctrines of the Reformation had gained ascendancy in the land of Huss, until the Jesuits succeeded in bringing round what is called a counter-Reformation, our Cardinal and his Company set their heart on bestowing that kingdom on the King of Hungary. Although not Superior of Jesuits in Bohemia, or anywhere else, Bellarmine kept up correspondence with the Society in that country, carried their letters into the Pope's closet,* and, being assured that Matthias would raise them up into power, and spare no means to slaughter his subjects of the Reformation, engaged the highest interest that the Popedom could afford to dethrone his brother Rudolf, the tolerant Emperor, and obtain the

* Winwood, vol. iii., p. 270.

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election of Matthias to be King of Bohemia, King of the Romans, and then Emperor in his stead. Matthias promised the Bohemians toleration, to obtain their votes, and offered the Jesuits patronage for the same reason; and having, by assistance of the latter, gained his point, he let them loose upon the others. To the conscience of Bellarmine, this management was all "for the greater glory of God."

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This Cardinal theologist had a vast advantage in the propagation of doctrine, inasmuch as he was also an Inquisitor. And, although the Inquisition had not a tribunal in France, it had agencies and power there, as it has in every country where the Church possesses influence, either direct or indirect. Take a proof.

During the outburst of indignation in France on the proclamation of death to heretical Kings in the answer to Barclay, and after the execution of death on King Henry IV., who, having sought peace with Rome by apostasy, fell by the dagger of a Jesuitised assassin, the Parisian preachers were divided. Many passed over the subject in silence. A few lauded the Society of Jesus. Some dared to speak the truth, but with various degrees of hesitation or of liberty. One honest Frenchman, an Abbé de Bois, "a man very famous for his gallant preaching, and for his knowledge in matters of the world," preached

freely in one of the largest churches in Paris, both against the Pope's assumption of temporal power, and against the practices of the Jesuits. The Jesuits, however, being supported by the Nuncio, compelled, or persuaded, him to make in private a kind of recantation; and, as he abstained from any further animadversions on their doctrine or conduct, he might have thought himself at peace. But not so. He happened to be the Queen's almoner, and, by some allurements of the Nuncio, was induced to go to Rome, with a commission from Her Majesty. No sooner did the Abbé come within the jurisdiction of Bellarmine, whom shame never could restrain when he felt the impulse of bigotry, or was bidden by his General, than he was convicted of heresy, and thrown into the Inquisition.* The act exceedingly offended "all the world" in Paris, and especially the Clergy; but the force of public opinion could not be felt by Inquisitors at Rome.

About this very time (A.D. 1611) Galileo first appeared as a culprit in the presence of Bellarmine. The Jesuits, more earnestly than many, had taught the physics of Aristotle, as well as his philosophy. Aristotle knew nothing of the system conjectured by Copernicus, and by others before him, and even propounded by that learned German in Rome less than a century past. Therefore the Aristotelians, and most especially

* Winwood, vol. iii., pp. 307, 308.

the Jesuits, abhorred the notion of the revolution of the earth ; and, although the book of Copernicus, “*De Revolutionibus*,” did not appear in the Index of prohibited books, it was in all probability suppressed. Bellarmine had once taught the immobility of the earth to his hearers at Louvain ; and now Galileo, the Tuscan innovator, was to be put to silence. Provincial censors denounced his theory as absurd and false in philosophy, and expressly contrary to holy Scripture, and therefore heretical. The case was laid before the Congregation of the Holy Office, who caused it to be examined by theologians ; the theologians in their wisdom confirmed the hard sentence of the Florentines, and Galileo was commanded to appear at Rome. He dared to go ; or perhaps it would be more correct to say, that he durst not attempt to flee. He was brought into the Minerva, and found Inquisitor Bellarmine there, seated as his judge. He might have pleaded that, under apostolic licence, the same theory had already been propounded in a book printed in the eternal city ; but no argument could avail, and the Cardinal gave him his choice—to be shut up in a dungeon in that fearful palace, or to make a promise never to teach the revolution of the earth again by word or writing.* Not to ignorance, but to impatience of contradiction, must be attributed the sentence.

I have no means of estimating the extent of Bellarmine’s labours in the Inquisition, but find

* Botta, *Storia d’ Italia*, lib. xxi.

that instructions were then issued for levying charges on victims for each act of accusation, for each witness in accusation or defence, for clerks, for familiars, for tormentors, for jailors ; so much for the sentence, and so much for the stake.* The precision of these arrangements, and the regard paid to the dignity of the Superiors and the compensation of the subordinates, indicate the same hand that prescribed capitular and monastic reformation in the archdiocese of Capua, and sustained so exact discipline in the Roman College. At least, it is unquestionable that the same hand gave the sanction and enforced the execution. The same hand, also, wrote some pieces of mystic devotion, which were done into English by clerical admirers in this country, and circulated among the simple folk, with prefaces laudatory of the pious and learned Cardinal. The translators might have been far more usefully employed.

LOOKS TOWARDS THE TIARA.

Perhaps no one would have made a better Pope than Bellarmine. That he was not without hope of attaining to the supremacy is apparent from a paper once written by himself, when secluded for "spiritual exercises," as they were called. It is very short, and shall be translated entire, thus :—

"Wednesday, September 26th, 1614. Being

* Instructions for the Vicars of the Holy Inquisition. Modena, 1608.

in the House for Novices, St. Andrew's, occupied in spiritual exercises, and after mature deliberation, at the sacrifice of the mass, when I was about to receive the most holy body of our Lord, I vowed a vow to the Lord, in this form : I, Robert, Cardinal Bellarmine, of the Society of Jesus, a Religious professed, vow to Almighty God, in the presence of the blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the court of heaven, that if haply (which I do not wish, and pray God may not come to pass) I be advanced to the Pontificate, I will not exalt any of my relatives, by blood or by affinity, to the Cardinalate, or to be temporal Prince, or Duke, or Count, or to have any other title ; neither will I make them rich, but will only help them to live comfortably in their civil state. Amen. Amen." That is to say, he vowed that he would still be a Jesuit, and would enforce the same artificial humility upon his relatives. This is all. The spiritual exercises of that month did not produce any grand purpose for the reformation of the Clergy, nor any fervent resolution to promote the glory of Christ.

Again was manifested a marvellous faculty of prevision. But four months after these very pious resolutions, the throne was vacated by the unexpected demise of Paul V. So vigorous was his constitution, that he seemed likely to bury all the elder Cardinals, when the stroke of death fell on him, and, after three days' suffering, he breathed his last on the 28th of January, 1615.

The Roman population abandoned themselves to the irregularities that are repeated on such occasions, and every appearance of good order and morality vanished both in town and country. "Highnesses, adored and idolised by courtly flattery, were suddenly laid low, and covered with confusion. He that had shown a spirit of lordliness and pride, contending for the highest station, found himself humbled in the first days of that interregnum. Then he might be seen bowing, and paying low obeisance to the man that he had despised but a few days before. Then the ancient magistrate laid aside his pomp, and another, that was thought quite unequal to open or to close the ascent to the sublime region of the Pontificate, took courage, and carried himself sternly towards persons with whom he had been formerly courteous and obliging. The authority of the tribunals ceased, and every one was free to speak and write at pleasure, and say things openly that a moment before he would have kept hidden in the silence of his own thoughts." * The tumults of the city were such as ever had been when the reins of Papal authority were snapped; but each Conclave has had a history of its own, and anonymous conclavists have divulged several. When fifty Cardinals went in procession to the Vatican, they resolved themselves into factions, domestic and political, and, before the solemn closing of the doors, the

* *Conclavi de' Pontifici Romani.* Greg. XV.

Ambassadors of all the foreign courts were closeted with their adherents, and labouring to *exclude* all Cardinals obnoxious to their masters, but leaving the field open to the rest. The first night of their entrance into the Vatican was nearly all spent in this way. As for Bellarmine, it was not his manner to hold much intercourse with Princes: therefore, he quietly crept into his cell, and went to sleep. In the dead of the night Cardinal Borghese ran to solicit his vote for a member of his faction; but he coldly bade him wait until the morning, when they might all say mass, according to the rules, and pray for inspiration to elect a fit person. Again, before break of day, taking other Cardinals with him, he bolted into the cell, awoke him, and asked his vote. "This is not an hour," said he snappishly, "to make the Pope. These are works of darkness: pray let me rest." Borghese begged his pardon, but entreated him to say what he meant to do. "I can tell you nothing now," replied Bellarmine, most angrily: "I want to sleep. If you want to know anything, the chamber of Ubaldino is near: go there, and let me sleep." Thus did he spare himself the trouble of leading a party, or the indignity of serving one, receiving applications from hostile candidates, or their agents, but not giving his interest to any, and also receiving, as before, the first votes of the undecided, who meant to transfer them, in due time, to some one concerning whom they might agree. With this tacit

understanding he had more votes than any one else, again, at the first scrutiny, but not one afterwards. At length Cardinal Alessandro Ludovisio, transformed into Gregory XV., received the adoration of the Conclave,* and Bellarmine came out with the others, never more to take part in a similar transaction.

IS AN ASCETIC.

Neither did he appear very conspicuously in public affairs during the remainder of his life. Here, therefore, we may review his religious character, as it is depicted by his friends. They say, that he was exceedingly affable and courteous to all who came near him, and so humble in demeanour, that unless they had remembered him to be a Cardinal, nothing in his manner would remind them of it. To Jesuits he always showed the greatest kindness, calling them his brethren, sons of his mother, the Society. And to the Superiors of the Society he paid as much reverence as if he had been a junior under their direction. So strong was his attachment to the Roman College, that he would fain have dwelt within its walls, if such an arrangement had been compatible with the discipline of the place. But he lived near, and, still not content, endeavoured to make a subterranean passage whereby to gain access to his brethren secretly; but the difficulty of excavation, or some other obstacle,

* Conclavi de' Pontifici Romani. Greg. XV.

prevented the fulfilment of his purpose. Then he solaced himself with listening to the sound of the bells, and by them regulated his hours of devotion, both by day and night. And throughout his life he observed minutely the laws and customs of the Society. Every year, as we have already noted, he withdrew, by permission of the Pope, to the House of Novices at St. Andrew's, for the performance of spiritual exercises. If any of the Novices were sick, he paid them frequent visits, entertained them with pious conversation, or of that kind, at least, which they deemed pious, and sprinkled them, if the sickness was severe, with holy water.

At those times he most carefully avoided even the slightest indulgence. He would not even walk in the garden, nor allow himself relaxation for a moment. If he wished a book, he would not suffer any one to bring it from the common library; but went thither in person, carrying an inkstand and pen-case to make extracts, much to the admiration of the young students, who had never seen a Cardinal condescend to mingle with inferior company. He would only eat the plainest food, at any time; for he thought that the use of food did not consist in the delectation of the palate, but in the supply of nourishment.

When he needed the services of the domestic barber, he would not send for the man, but went down into his cell, "descending by all the steps of humility," in order that he might lose his

hair more happily than Samson, and, by the loss, increase his virtue. Comforts he eschewed, and barely tolerated necessities. He always added a higher degree of rigour to the "customary severities of a religious life." Sometimes, after recovering from sickness, his upper servants would entreat him to allow himself to be carried in a sedan chair; but, although so feeble as to be scarcely able to walk, he would not submit to such a luxury. Other Cardinals were so carried; but if the physicians would not allow him to go out, except in that way, he remained in his chamber, in preference to departing from his resolution.

Twenty-two years elapsed from his creation as Cardinal to his decease. But he wore the same purple that was given him by Clement VIII., and no consideration could induce him to put on a new gown. When the sleeves were worn off his arms, he would have new ones attached to the old garment, for so much was necessary, but no more. An under garment, worn with the attrition of many years, he would never put off, and, on his death, it was found on his body, patched with coarse rags. He did not allow himself enough even of this most sordid clothing. In winter, when suffering from the cold, he would rather go shivering in wind and rain, than wear a cloak, and refused to wear gloves, until his hands became so swollen and chopped, that their exposure would have been offensive to others. In the winter months he rose long

before day, and lit his lamp ; but no fire cheered his room until the hour of audience, when it was lit for the sake of the visitors. The General, Claudio Aquaviva, advised him to have a fire on his hearth in the coldest part of the season ; but he had read in the life of the most holy Pontiff, Pius V., that that saint had done without fire, and therefore he wished to follow the high example. He might have added, that Pius V. reserved his fire for the heretics ; and in that, also, he was willing to emulate, if he could not equal. After visitors had withdrawn, he was used to take off the burning coals, and so reduce the temperature of the apartment.

On Mondays he ate eggs only. On Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, in Lent, in Advent, and on the profestal days, or days which preceded the feasts of saints, he fasted until night. In the latter years of his life, his Confessor compelled him to diminish the fasts a little ; but still he fasted, like the ancient Pharisees, thrice in the week. In this abstinence he persisted to the last ; and, although he often lay awake whole nights for want of food, on the evening of a fast-day he would only take one smallish piece of bread, dipped in wine, and then drink once. He never seemed pleased with a dish well cooked ; but rather preferred meat ill-dressed or ill-flavoured, a meal that would sustain nature without gratifying taste. He drank at meals only, and would never drink

merely to quench thirst, neither would he eat fruit for that purpose. In the heat of summer he would not refresh himself by washing in cold water; and persevered through six months, towards the close of his life, refusing to assuage the heat of a fever by a draught of water. It behoved him, he said, to imitate thirsting martyrs, who most resembled, by the copious shedding of their blood, our Lord Jesus Christ when on the cross athirst.

Still Bellarmine thought that he had not filled up the measure of his vows, and, by severer mortification, strove yet more perfectly to subdue the flesh, and imitate saints who had inflicted the severest suffering on themselves. In this hope, he began to feed on herbs and pulse only; but that crude diet made him sick, and the physicians compelled him to desist. Often did he scourge himself in secret, and afflict himself with sackcloth, in hope of pleasing angels and God. So long as his mind revolted from anything unpleasant, he thought that the flesh was not yet subject to the spirit. To subdue the spirit, he ate things that would make other stomachs nauseate. He had corns, and, although he could scarcely bear to walk, would not have them cut; for others, he said, who tasted the bitter pains of purgatory and of hell, were suffering more.

As he endured cold, so did he expose himself to heat. When the sun blazed into his chamber

in the hottest days of summer, he would not exclude the beams, but sat there, covered with perspiration and oppressed with languor, writing, for hours together, with as much apparent tranquillity as if he had been shaded in the most delicious bower. His servants, unable to enter the oven-like apartment, flung themselves to rest in some sheltered place. He, on the contrary, used to sit in such positions like a statue; and while gnats, or other insects, lighted on him, he sustained their stings without once making a wry face, but welcomed them as messengers from God to try his patience. He moved not a hand, nor would he suffer any one by any means to disturb the flies that sported on his head and face; saying, "with a sweet voice," that those little animals had no other paradise than liberty in flight, and power of lighting on the spot that pleased them. Or he would more gravely substitute profanity for wit, and say, "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it." The bystanders, of course, were edified by that sublime piety, and forgot the imprisoned heretics, whose only paradise was a good conscience.

To this wondrous patience and humility he added a multitude of devotions, and was reputed to be, eminently, a man of prayer. Besides the prayers which all Priests are required to recite, he added every day two offices, that of the blessed Virgin, and that of the dead. At mid-

day, after dinner, not indulging in conversation, it was his custom to leave the table, walk to and fro alone, with head uncovered, and say a rosary of the Virgin, "and another crown of Christ the Saviour." Early in the morning, after an hour's prayer, he spent another hour on his knees in meditation. Thence proceeding to the altar, he performed mass after the most approved manner. Not only in Rome, but in London, he passed for a great saint ; and our King James, while he wrote against his book, "De Potestate," read, with admiration, the tract, "De Gemitu Columbæ." His voluntary humility and childish mysticism wrought upon weak minds that his politics and polemics had irritated ; and this kind of blind acceptance procured him too great a name. Among the books of devotion which he used, we find not the divine hymns of the Old Testament, nor the life-giving words of our Lord and Saviour in the New. And if ever the example of Him in whose steps the Christian ought to follow appeared among the examples of Popes, Prelates, and Monks, it was only in some small particular of circumstance, or in some display of divine or magisterial authority, which, therefore, was *not* to be imitated by any mortal. Thus, in visiting his province of Capua, the Archbishop sent two Jesuits before him to announce his approach, in imitation of Jesus, who sent two of His disciples. Not even in those favourite virtues of humility and poverty did he

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imitate the Lamb of God so much as a favourite saint. Certainly, as an Inquisitor, he did not imitate Him who came to save men's lives, and not to destroy them. When aiming at the most perfect exercise of devotion, he displayed an arrogance that we cannot observe without disgust: for, in going into his annual retreat, he chose the month of September, *because in that month only the High-Priest went into the holy of holies*. Any but a spirit the most intensely proud would have shrunk from the comparison implied in that arrangement. But he dwelt on it, doubtless, with complacency. And, as an ascetic, his practice, together with his doctrine, was as much opposed to Christianity as is the kindred system of Buddhism in the East. And yet Bellarmine is, by some persons, extolled as a mirror of piety! If he was, his admirers must confess that Simon the Stylite was a yet brighter mirror.

ON HIS DEATH-BED.

Life and health were both declining when he came out of the last Conclave. His petulance and inaction there had indicated indisposition to mingle in the stir of court; and frequent attacks of sickness, with great weakness consequent, must have admonished him that his race was nearly run. Then he redoubled his efforts to save himself from eternal pains, and thought that salvation could be wrought out by temporal suffering. For conscience' sake he ate herbs,

endeavouring to please God by an imitation of the Therapeutæ, of whom he had read in the course of his patristic studies, and whom the eastern Monks had followed. He thought ordinary prayers and the penances prescribed insufficient for salvation, and therefore added more. He exhibited a puerility of artificial patience that betokened, at the same time, a clamorous conscience and a weakened mind. Few spectacles can be more affecting than that of so eminent a man struggling for peace in his latter days; and we shall do well to wait at his bed-side, and observe how he passes through the valley of the shadow of death. Our witness is one of his own Society, who saw him there, and whose admiration of his character, and zeal for the honour of the order, leads him to paint a highly-coloured picture; but we will take it as we find it, and not even conjecture what darker touches might have been added by an impartial hand.*

A consciousness of approaching death impelled him, in the year 1621, to make earnest suit to Gregory XV. to be released from Court, Consistories, and Congregations, and from all offices, with permission to retire altogether to his accustomed place of retreat, the Jesuit Novitiate. He therefore dismissed the greatest part of his family, allowing them, however, to remain in his

* A True Relation of the last Sickness and Death of Cardinal Bellarmine. By C. E., [Coffin,] of the Society of Jesus. Permissu superiorum, M.DC.XXII.

palace until they could be placed elsewhere. The 25th of August, which is in Rome sacred to St. Bartholomew, he observed with great solemnity, that day being also the anniversary of the "slaughter of the Huguenots" in Paris. But one business of great moment yet remained in the Congregation of the Index, which much required his presence for dispatch. There, on the 28th day of the month, he joined the Cardinals; and, the business being finished, he took his leave of all the Congregation, and went into the Novitiate.

That very night he was taken sick, and went to bed. There he lay with great patience, repeating prayers on his rosary, or crossing his arms upon his breast. The physicians advised him to take the sacrament of the altar, and he, in turn, desired them to tell him his condition. They did so; and he assured them that he had no fear, but rather a wish to die. On the fourth day of his sickness the doctors consulted whether or not it was expedient that he should receive "the blessed sacrament of the altar by way of viaticum," and agreed that it was not expedient to give it him in that manner, because he might continue many days, but only by way of ordinary communicating.

"Upon this warning given," says Coffin, "he prepared himself to confession, and in such manner as if that confession were to be the last that ever he should make in this life; and such was

the innocency of the man, that albeit he were in his perfect sense, yet could he hardly find what to confess ; insomuch as his ghostly Father was in some perplexity, as wanting matter of absolution, till by recourse to his past life he found some small defects of which he absolved him : and when the blessed sacrament was brought, he would needs rise to receive it, as he did, and prostrated himself on the ground, to the great edification and amazement of all the beholders."

"Such was the innocency of the man !" Ay ; such was his self-satisfaction. No misgiving as to the tendency of his teaching troubled him. No doubt as to the lawfulness of the rebellions and civil wars that he had promoted. Two of his disciples had assassinated two Kings in France ; but he did not hear the voice of their blood crying from the ground. Victim after victim had he seen bound—weeping—racked—burning ; but no image of anguish or death came before his eyes. Prayers from the Syrians of India—remonstrances from invaded churches—groans from the pits of the Minerva—deprecations of the dying—curses of the living—troubled him not while searching his memory for sin, just for something to be pardoned. Neither cruel deaths nor treasons were sins to his apprehension, if only the victims were heretics. He said that he had no sin. He was a liar, therefore, and the truth was not in him.

With the same fixedness of will that was wont

to triumph in its power over the reluctant or the fainting flesh, he persevered in mechanical devotion on the rosary; but the physicians required him to pause after each ten beads, lest the incessant recitation should hurt his head. This troubled him, and he gave utterance to his disquiet thus: "Methinks I am become a secular man, and am no more religious; for I neither say office nor mass. I make no prayers, *I do no good at all.*"

On the fifth day of his sickness, the Pope came to see him; and as Gregory entered the chamber—as if it had been the Lord himself—Bellarmine saluted him with this sentence: *Non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum.* "I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof." The Pope gave him words of great kindness, and after he had withdrawn, the Cardinal said to a Jesuit present, Father Minutoli, "'Now truly do I well hope that I shall die; for the Popes are never known to have visited Cardinals but when they were in danger of death, or rather past all hope of life;' to which effect he alleged divers examples." And then, his apprehension of death being quickened by the portentous incident of a Papal visit, he proceeded to describe the state of his conscience, in the words following:—

"Now nothing troubles my conscience, for God (His goodness still be thanked therefore) hath so preserved me hitherto, as that I do not remember in the whole course of my life to have committed any scandalous action, which perhaps,

if I should live longer, may befall me : for weakness of body draws oftentimes with it weakness of mind, by which good men may be seen to have relented from their former vigour and virtue." And here I cannot but observe that a saying attributed to Bellarmine at this time, does not appear in any narrative that I have met with. The tale is that when he was asked, "Unto which of the saints wilt thou turn?" he answered, *Fidere meritis Christi tutissimum* : "It is safest to trust in the merits of Christ." The question was not likely to be put by any of his visiters ; for it is precisely such an one as would have come from the lips of a Protestant. And even if he had used the words attributed to him, they would have been but consistent with the notions of a Jesuit who preferred the tutelage of Jesus. The story has been repeated by Protestants as exhibiting the concession of an adversary ; but it is also repeated to sustain the conclusion that, in the judgment of charity, such persons may be saved. As for the person before us, there is no evidence that he had the faintest idea of trust in Christ alone as the Saviour of sinners.

When it was agreed that some one should announce to him that he was near his end, Muzio Vitellschi, the General, gave him the intelligence ; and on hearing it he exclaimed, "Good news ! good news ! O what good news is this !" *And then* to which of the saints did he turn. Let us hear from Father Coffin. "*After this*

he caused one to read unto him the death of St. Charles Borromeo ; as desirous in his own to imitate it ; which being ended, he desired to receive the sacraments of holy Church, and that as soon as might be, lest after he should be less able for indisposition both of body and mind to receive them ; and to prevent also any sudden accident that might in this weakness take him away, ere he had armed himself with this so sudden and necessary defence.” The General complied, and gave him the wafer and the wine, to receive which he would get out of bed. Six or seven hours afterwards he was “anneyled,” and after each anointing devoutly said, *Amen*.

The dying man was now looked on with superstitious reverence, as no more belonging to this lower world, and people came to survey the miracle of sanctity. “Some sent unto the Cardinals and great personages ; some entreated the Fathers ; some used the help of his servants ; and others made other devices, and this not only to see him, but to kiss his hands, his head, or some other thing about him ; and when therein they had satisfied their devotion, they would touch his body with their books, their beads, handkerchiefs, crosses, medals, and other the like things, and that very reverently on their knees : and in this kind none were more forward than the Cardinals themselves ; who by reason of their more frequent conversation did most know him, *and some of them mentioned his canonisation* : and when once they knew of his

sickness, they came very often unto him, and ten of them sometimes in one day, who all desired his blessing, but he constantly refused to give it; and one of them taking him by the hand kissed the same, and then touched his eyes and head therewith, at which Bellarmine marvelling, when the other was gone asked those about him what kind of courtesy this was, and how long it had been in use among the Cardinals."

This grew to a revolting excess, when Cardinals demanded his blessing and he begged for theirs; but no one would presume to bless him, and they seized his hand and blessed themselves with it. Then they congratulated him on his prospect of going straight to heaven, and begged him, when there, to pray for them. To this he answered: "I shall think it no small favour to be sure of purgatory, and there to remain a good while in the flames that must purge and cleanse the spots of my offences, and satisfy the just wrath and justice of Almighty God. But when I am come home, I will not fail to pray for you all." Then came prayers for his relics. Cardinal Farnese wrote from Caprarola, to ask for his Breviary, or for a pair of beads, when he should have died.

"The three last days before his death, when he was sometimes sleepy, sometimes with his eyes closed in prayer and meditation, he neither marked who they were that came, nor heeded much what they did; in which time the foresaid Cardinals, Bishops, Prelates, and others sent many little caps of silk, such as they use to

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wear under their square caps ; and others sent white night-caps, which they desired might be put on his head as they were ; and with them they sent also little crosses of gold and silver, reliquaries, prayer-books, and other things to touch him, and that in such multitude, as there were more than one hundred and fifty red, white, and other caps put on and taken from his head during this time ; and since his death that number hath much increased. Many things were taken away by such as came to visit him, and those also by great personages." The medical attendants vied with the most devout in honouring their patient. When applying leeches, in hope of reducing inflammation, and restoring him from delirium, they used clean white handkerchiefs whereon the creatures might disgorge, and carried them away, stained with sacred blood, for distribution among their friends. In the midst of this tumultuous delusion came a great favour from the Pope,—a *plenary indulgence*. This was to frank him into glory. Despite the judgment of Almighty God, the Pope undertook to send him into heaven ; and he, the pride of Romish theology, the hammer of heretics, then having eternity full in view, ventured to confide in that indulgence, and "the better to gain it, he said a Confiteor with his divers other prayers." Last of all "a great crucifix" absorbed his attention. They laid it upon his lips, and let it rest upon his shoulders, and so

lulled him into the last slumber. In the morning of September 17th he died. The body was carried to a room in the church of the Jesuits, whither the people crowded, and kissed it kneeling. Lofty Prelates pushed through the crowd, and kissed the fingers that had written so much for the Church. Then the Pope's physician took the body to embalm it, distributed towels, handkerchiefs, and sponges, stained with its blood, and took for himself a small piece of bone from the hinder part of the skull, as payment for the service, esteeming it "a peerless jewel and inestimable treasure." This done, the embalmed body was exposed in the church, with a repetition, on a larger scale, of the same noisy and exorbitant veneration. The vestments were nearly all stolen piecemeal from the corpse, in spite of a strong guard of soldiers; and two Bishops were walking away with his Cardinal's hat, when a Jesuit and two guards forced them to give it up again. Marvellous tales ran through the city, of miracles done by the relics; and—says the narrator—"the same morning that the Cardinal departed this life, his voice was heard to speak unto some in the city, (of the number I am uncertain,) and to say unto them, *Addio, adesso me ne vado in paradiso*. 'Adieu, I am now going into paradise.' Which voice, among others, was heard by the Duchess of Sforza, a very virtuous lady, now living in Rome."

The reader has now a complete example of a

CANNOT BE CANONISED.

Roman death. How Christians are enabled to depart in peace ; what kind of testimony they bear to the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ ; and how utterly self is lost in sight of the great atonement, in the presence of the most high God, and in the apprehension of His judgment, we know. But nothing that marks the departure of a Christian can be recognised in this case ; and I have transcribed largely the very words of a Jesuit who witnessed the scene that he relates, in order to avoid the possibility of misrepresentation.

CANNOT BE CANONISED.

When death tore the Cardinal from their bosom, the Jesuits would fain have made good the loss by the acquisition of a Saint. Even while Bellarmine lay on his death-bed a whisper of *canonisation* ran through the chamber ; and the Fathers were not likely to let the idea be forgotten. Urban VIII. seemed to render the attainment of their object impossible, by certain decrees adverse to the frequent creation of saints ; and it was also required that an interval of half a century should elapse from the death of a “servant of God” before the Congregation of Rites could proceed judicially to examine evidences of saintship. But the Jesuits were not to be thwarted by a Bull, nor was the Pope himself to be limited ; and he received their supplications to authorise an extrajudicial inquiry

into the merits of Bellarmine, in Rome, Montepulciano, Capua, and Naples. The Congregation of Rites issued this licence on the 15th of January, 1627, and on the 5th of May, 1629, the reports were submitted to the auditors of the Rota; but still the antecedent limitation of Urban conflicted with the purpose of the Jesuits, who could only hope to compass the point by evasion and by patience.

When a generation had passed away, Alexander VII., yielding to a revival of the importunity, authorised Cardinal Brancati, in 1655, to renew the investigation. Still it advanced but slowly, and it was not until 1674 that the Cardinal-Vicar thought it right to confirm the application; nor until yet another year did the Pope, Clement X., sanction the confirmation. At length, on the 7th of September, 1675, the Congregation of Sacred Rites went into solemn disputation concerning the theological and cardinal virtues of Robert Bellarmine; and it is said that they came to a favourable decision, the Cardinals, although not very warm in the cause, being fortified by the sentences of twenty-two Consultors.* But that Congregation displayed a "pious facility" that appeared highly objectionable to some members of the College of Cardinals, and when they met again,

* Charles Albert Card. G. Cavalchini fills a large quarto with his relation of the cause of the venerable servant of God, Card. Bellarmine, presented to Benedict XIV. on the Ides of September, 1752, whence I take these dates.

on September 20th, 1677, under the presidency of Innocent XI., seven Cardinals out of eighteen voted against the admission of Bellarmine into the Calendar. The Congregation then dispersed, leaving the question open, and it was privately discussed with exceeding earnestness.

One of the documents prepared on that occasion is now within reach in the more authentic form of manuscript, probably written by the hand of its author, the Cardinal Dezio Azzolino, who filled some of the highest offices in the Court of Rome, and who evidently wrote for the eye of the Pope alone. With that document before me,* I note the reasons that were then urged why our Jesuit should not be made a saint.

A certain pious facility of making saints without sufficient proof of sanctity has latterly crept into this Court of Rome; and when such matters are dispatched in the gross, "people will all say, and with reason too, that we not only *can be* deceived, but that we *wish to be*." In order to avoid this imputation, certain precautions have been taken, at least during the twenty-three years that Azzolino has been a member of the Congregation of Rites; and, according to an approved doctrine, the proofs of sanctity should be "clearer than meridian light, and leave no place for doubt." To maintain the credit and authority of the Holy See, both in the Catholic Church and out of it, "particularly now that we

* "Additional MSS." in the British Museum. Num. 8373.

are under so great disadvantage, everywhere losing ground, and especially in exceeding discredit on account of this matter of canonisation," through the frauds and negligencies of parties concerned, we are bound to advise our Lord to impose yet greater strictness. In the present case, if seven Cardinals out of eighteen vote against the proposal, will there not be a dissidence in the world corresponding to that of the Congregation? And if so, with how great scandal! It may be very well to decide by majorities in Councils, where decisions must be had, *and where infallibility is certain*. But here, where certainty depends not on spiritual prerogative, but on human proofs, no room should be left for doubt: but while even one dissents there is room left for doubt. Now to come to the merits of the case.

Did Bellarmine ever do anything surpassing human power, showing himself to be a partaker of the Divine nature? Never. The model of holiness is Christ; but heretics use the immorality of the Clergy and the Cardinals as a weapon against us and our doctrine: wherefore our best defence lies in canonising those only who resemble Christ. If we do not so, men will say that instead of *being* saints we *make* saints, and these modern saints will bring the old ones into suspicion. Besides, we must acknowledge that it is not necessary to make saints, much less such saints as have been made of late.

It is wearisome to hear many worthy men, who have been asked to attest the sanctity of Bellarmine, excuse themselves by saying that he was a good Cardinal, but no saint. Many witnesses think—consider—scarcely recollect—do not know, that the servant of God said—did this or that—they know not that he ever told a lie, and so on. No one speaks distinctly, and the Cardinals, of all others, speak most vaguely. Such a degree of evidence as is now produced would not suffice to banish a robber; much less should it suffice to make a saint. And besides the irregularity of all the proceedings in this cause from first to last, there is an utter want of evidence to prove his virtues, and the witnesses contradict each other on every important point. They say, indeed, that Bellarmine was innocent, because he could find no sin to confess when on his death-bed; but we want not a negation of sins, but the presence of perceptible virtues. When S. Filippo Neri was deputed by Clement VIII. to try the spirit of Sister Orsola of Naples, whether it was of God, he gave her, unexpectedly, a very severe slap in the face. Instead of resenting it, the Sister meekly knelt at his feet, and prayed him to give her his commands; and therefore he judged that she possessed the good spirit in heroic measure. But by what has the spirit of Bellarmine been tested?

Was his faith heroic? Knowledge, not faith, is apparent in his writings, which are in many

points unsound, even after the Jesuits have mended them from beginning to end; and every one knows that they were placed in the Index Expurgatory. He always obeyed his General rather than the Pope. He fled from martyrdom, instead of wishing for it, as all great saints have ever done. Assuredly his faith was anything but heroic.

Was his hope heroic? It could not have been. For he confessed that he abstained from prayer, through doubt of obtaining what was expedient for him.

Was his charity heroic? No. Defective at all points. Heroic charity impoverishes itself for the sake of others; but he merely gave away the surplus of his income after providing well for himself. "The servant of God," says the process, "*kept his table a little better than when he was in the Company.*" And who will say that to live a little better than a Jesuit constitutes heroic abstinence? On the contrary, it is proved by calculation from the statements of himself and his friends, that he lived as well as most Cardinals, and much better than Pope Pius V. But he took the choicest dainties, if a servant would only say that nothing else was to be had; and so exhibited a scandalous defect, not of heroic, but of common, virtue.

They say that he was humble. But assuredly he was anything but humble, or prudent either, when, in France, he pretended to prophesy the death of Sixtus, after learning from the courier,

from private letters, or even from the triple seal of the heads of orders, that the letter over which he jested contained intelligence of that Pope's decease. Not very humble when, preaching at Capua, he compared himself to St. Gregory the Great. Not very humble when he wrote his own life, and penned those monstrous eulogies of himself that Fuligatto copied. Not very humble when he said that his Superior wrote of him to Rome, "Never man spake like this man."

This life of his, first written by himself, and then published with additions by Fuligatto, is full of scandal, and perilous to the faith. "I conceive," says Azzolino, "that it is of the utmost importance that Your Holiness should provide against the most enormous mischief that would result from carrying this matter forward. I think it necessary that you should get possession of his Life, written by the Father-General of the Company, and make sure that a single copy of it does not remain. Let all the impressions that are with the printers be gathered in; and let all the Cardinals and Consultors have an order to give up any copies they may have, *causing the whole to be burnt with the greatest secrecy*. I humbly implore Your Holiness to press this matter; for the thing is too grave, and the peril too great, to be passed over." His works ought all to be subjected to a severe censorship, and dealt with according to the propositions they contain; but if you make him a saint, the Apostolic See con-

firms them all, and adopts that sentence of his that both Pope and Council may err in questions of facts.

If, by making him a saint, you confirm his writings, what will you say to France, when she charges you with giving sanction to his principles? And if you thus confirm his writings, what will you say to England, where the heretics quote his statements in regard to the revision of the Vulgate against the Church. It was but the other day that a learned Cardinal showed me a book that is in his library, intituled, *Bellum Papale, &c.*, written by an English heretic, printed in London in 1609, and dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury. That book points out the contradiction between the Clementine and the Sixtine Bibles, "which truly is most notable, and renders palpable in practice the enormous prejudice that would follow, if we should go on with the canonisation of Bellarmine."

These considerations set aside the project for that time; but it was renewed by the Jesuits under the reigns of Clement XI. and Benedict XIV. Those Popes would gladly have added him to the number of the guardians of their Church, but it was impossible; and the very best that could be said of him was that sentence of Cardinal Albrizio: "*A good Cardinal, but no saint.*"

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