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NUNS AND NUNNERIES:

SKETCHES

COMPILED ENTIRELY

FROM

ROMISH AUTHORITIES.



*Seeleys.*

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# NUNS AND NUNNERIES.

## CHAPTER I.

### STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

WHEN an attempt was made during the last Session of Parliament to bring under the notice of the Legislature the state of the Nunneries in this country, the following letter appeared in the public papers. It is from the pen of a Peeress, herself of noble descent, and of a lineage still adhering to the communion of Rome. Both from the character of its writer, and her evident sincerity of purpose, it deserves careful attention.

*To the Editor of the Catholic Standard.*

“ SIR,

“ Unbecoming as it would have been on my part to have made the slightest attempt to stem the torrent of abuse which has been so unjustly showered on all that is dearest and most sacred to us Catholics, I cannot allow the day to arrive on which Mr. Lacy's bill against our

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religious houses will be brought before Parliament, without making at least one effort for the sake of the dear inmates of those abodes of peace and charity, by calling on the more generous members of the House of Commons for protection and justice.

“ To Catholic ladies, who, like myself, have sisters and relatives in convents, it is, indeed, humiliating and most painful, that, in England, hitherto considered the land of liberty, we should be forced to exert our influence to save those loved ones from the grossest insults, the most unmanly attempt now being made to deprive them of a security which even the meanest women slaves have insured to them. Can it be possible that, to the members of the House of Commons, heroic virtue is so hateful, that no insult is too great to offer those who dedicate themselves to its constant practice? Is Divine charity so distasteful to English Protestants, that ladies, by devoting their lives to its various duties, should become objects so contemptible that they are to be deprived, by law, of the liberty granted to the meanest of their sex, even to the most abandoned? Oh! that such a reproach on Englishmen should go forth to the world! Hatred of Catholicity is a poor plea for so cowardly, so wanton an insult to ladies.

“ Our countrymen must remember that these much-abused convents are places in which nearly all the Catholic ladies have received their education; and though some few may have no relatives among the religious, yet the affection these bear their angelic teachers is the tenderness that persons will ever feel towards those whom

from their earliest childhood they have respected and loved for their many virtues, their endearing kindness. Little do Protestants know the feelings of joy and happiness with which a lady returns to visit the convent where she has been educated. These are ever the brightest spots in her life, even be her lot among the happiest of this world.

“ To Catholics who know, by faith, the day will come when these, our spotless sisters, will be fearfully avenged, and that those who now so cruelly insult and calumniate them will have to exclaim, in the language of Scripture, ‘ We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour : Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints : ’ That knowledge urges us the more to raise our warning voices, and to call on those who know them not to beware how they insult them.

“ But if that consideration has no weight, Oh ! let me implore those members who have sisters and daughters to ask themselves, ere they treat with insult our sisters and daughters, what would they feel were we to do the like to them ? Would they consider any language too strong for their just indignation ; and are our feelings one iota less keen, because we look on those dear ones as the loved of God.

“ But not to dwell at greater length on this too painful subject, allow me, who have been entirely educated in a convent, and through life in habits of intimacy with numerous members of religious communities, to ask those who credit their calumniators, how is it, if any one of the

many charges has the slightest foundation, that those who, like me, have the most experience, should ever be the first to place their children in these very convents? What could any one desire more than that their daughters should be instructed by ladies of birth and the highest education, who are actuated not by worldly gain, but solely by the love of God and their neighbour; and here let me incidentally remark, that if Protestants would only reflect on these motives, the prejudice regarding the apparent insignificance of the pension would at once be cleared away.

“The tenderness I feel for my children is, I hope, quite as strong as the warmest-hearted mother can know; yet the sacrifice of parting with a daughter for a time I cheerfully make, rather than deprive her of that which I know will cause her to bless the parents, who deny themselves a present pleasure, to ensure her the lasting advantage of a convent education.

“Should these few remarks lead some of our more generous antagonists to hesitate, ere they inflict cruel injuries on those who have never given them a moment’s pain, I shall be more than rewarded for what it has cost me to address them in so public a manner.

“With many apologies for trespassing so long on your courtesy, I am, your obedient servant,

“TERESA ARUNDELL.

“*Wardour Castle, May 3, 1851.*”

Her ladyship writes strongly on a subject on which she possesses knowledge, and she speaks of scenes and

abodes with which she is personally and familiarly acquainted. No one questions her ladyship's veracity, or doubts that she describes honestly the impression which her residence in the cloister has left upon her mind.

Lady Arundell's letter has been looked upon as an important document by her Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen; thanks have been publicly voted and tendered to her for this able defence of her calumniated religion, and those thanks have been by her publicly acknowledged.

Lady Arundell looks upon Nunneries as model abodes of purity and peace, where females who have bound themselves by a life-long vow, pass their days in calm unruffled devotion, or in works of active piety; and where other maidens, who are destined to tread in the ordinary paths of the world's seductions and temptations, may receive such an education and religious training as will best fit them to resist both.

There is a tract 'published under the superintendance of the Catholic Institute of Great Britain,' to which our attention was directed, by seeing it recently conspicuously exhibited for sale at a Roman Catholic Bookseller's. It is called 'Nuns and Monastic Institutes,' and is No. 26 of a series. It bears no date—but it professes to be 'abridged from a pamphlet published in 1815,' and as the name of 'Daniel O'Connell, Esq., M.P.,' appears on the printed list of the Vice Presidents of the Catholic Institute, which was established in 1838, the date of this tract must be between the years 1838 and 1845. This tract thus describes a Nunnery:—

“ A community of Nuns, is an association of Catholic women, who, having no relish for the pleasures of the world, nor feeling themselves inclined to perform the duties of a married state; and actuated by motives of religion, freely, of their own accord, and after the most mature deliberation, and a long trial, engage themselves by solemn vows, to practise the Evangelical Counsels, under the obedience of one common Superior of their own choice, and according to certain rules and constitutions which they have adopted: some devoting themselves to the education of youth; others to the care of the sick in hospitals; and some few to a life of retirement and prayer.”

We beg particular attention to the next paragraph, the italics of which are in the original.

“ If the liberty of conscience of which we boast, as one of the most valuable consequences of our wise constitution, is not to be confined to books, certainly Catholics have a right of *exercising, without molestation, that mode of religion which they think best.*”

Most assuredly.

“ And if, according to the principles of their religion, it is an acceptable thing before God, to tend to perfection by the practice of the evangelical counsels—surely a small number of their daughters have an incontrovertible right to tend to that perfection.”

We reply, that no Protestant would question such a right.

“ And if they imagine that they will correspond better to their holy vocation, by living in retirement with companions of their own sex, than by remaining amidst the

busy scenes of the world, why should such a liberty be denied them? Is there any law divine or human compelling women to marry? Is there any obligation of conscience to live in the town rather than in the country? Is there more virtue in idling away our time in visits, balls, frequenting the theatre, &c. than in living in the company of pious friends, who have the same inclinations, and make their happiness consist in the discharge of the useful occupations and religious duties which they have voluntarily imposed upon themselves?"

To all this we are prepared to give in answer as hearty a "certainly not," as the Roman Catholic writer could desire to elicit.

And this at once brings us to the practical question. Protestants entertain opinions respecting monastic institutions for either sex, widely different from those of the Lady Arundell, or those of the anonymous yet authoritative\* pamphlet which we have quoted. Strong expressions have been used on this subject, which we do not repeat, as it is far from our wish to give unnecessary offence, but which do nevertheless express the broad idea which Protestants entertain with more or less of intensity and fixedness, of such institutions.

It is surely a matter of some importance to arrive at correct conclusions on this subject. Monachism which

\* Authoritative, because we have the following notice on the title-page:—"Members of Committee *ex officio*.—The Catholic Bishops and Clergy of Great Britain and the Colonies, Catholic Peers and Members of Parliament, the President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and Secretary.



has but recently regained footing in our favoured Islands, is rapidly on the increase. Nunneries and Monasteries are multiplying in every direction. Cardinal Wiseman and other Roman Catholic writers are attempting to introduce into our language the expression "a religious," whereas it should be our boast that the "Queen's English" as we love to call our native tongue, contains no word descriptive of that swarming brood of monks and nuns who are known on the Continent as *Religieux* and *Religiosi*. We are aware that some Protestant writers have fallen into the same bad habit, and we regret it.

The Roman Catholic Directory for the year 1851, supplies us with the following statistics for England alone:—

## RELIGIOUS HOUSES OF MEN.

Archdiocese of Westminster	2	Diocese of Clifton	. . . . 2
Diocese of Southwark	. . . 1	— Plymouth	. . . 1
— York	. . . . . 1	— Nottingham	. . 3
— Salford	. . . . . 1	— Birmingham	. . 6
			—
			Total . 17

## CONVENTS.

Archdiocese of Westminster	9	Diocese of Clifton	. . . . 5
Diocese of Southwark	. . . 9	— Plymouth	. . . 5
— Hexham	. . . . 2	— Nottingham	. . 4
— York	. . . . . 2	— Birmingham	. . 13
— Liverpool	. . . . 1	— Northampton	. 1
— Salford	. . . . . 1		—
— Shrewsbury	. . 1		Total . 53

We have no idea of the number of inmates in each house. We think we are surely underrating them when

we assign thirty\* as the number of veiled sisters in each. This would give us a total, without reckoning the Nunneries of Scotland and Ireland, of which we have no data to refer to, of 1500 and upwards of our fellow country-women debarred, as we think, from the enjoyment of a liberty which we have ever been accustomed to look upon as their birthright.

But here we are met by Roman Catholics with questions such as we have already cited from the Tract of the Catholic Institute. They tell us that there is no violation of personal liberty—nay, that any interference on the part of the Legislature would be in itself a violation of personal and religious liberty. If females, say they, moved by a divine impulse, choose to renounce the world, its pomps, and its vanities,—to forsake its seductive engagements, and to devote themselves in seclusion to a life of piety and religious contemplation, shall they be hindered or interfered with in obeying their heavenly calling? It is your false Protestant prejudices against the holy state of celibacy, which disable you from understanding the rapture with which a nun enters upon her heavenly espousals, and abides cheerfully and willingly in her calling.

We reply, that this is the very point at issue between us. We would place restraint upon the conscience of none of any sex or age. If men or women of mature age, think that holiness and perfection are best attained in a

\* We have taken this number, because the writer of the tract before quoted, assumes it as a probable number. Nuns and Monastic Institutes, p. 25.

life of celibacy, enforced even by a vow,—we may think them mistaken, but God forbid that we should wish to coerce them. If, moreover they think it necessary to seclude themselves from their families and friends—to practise austerities—or to make themselves conspicuous by peculiarity of attire—we may question their good sense and their judgment, we may pity them and try to dissuade them from their purpose, we may think their views of religion far as the poles asunder from that gospel which our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles have left on record for us in the pages of inspiration—but here our efforts must end—if the victim perseveres, her will must be her law.

We repeat that on the point of entering a Convent—“HER WILL MUST BE HER LAW.” We would not only concede, but demand this liberty for every woman, but we do not limit our demands here. We also demand that that woman’s will be her law, should she wish to quit the cloister. As to the binding nature of this vow we know nothing of it. It has been well said by Paley, that some vows it were greater sin to keep than to break. We demand then for the nun, liberty of egress, as well as of ingress. The Council of Trent calls upon the magistrate to see that the cloister is guarded—we make the same demand. If any one attempts forcibly to drag a nun out of her cloister we demand that she be protected in her determination to remain there, and if any one attempts to keep her within its precincts *against her will*, we demand her freedom.

We require that a woman of six-and-twenty or six-and-

thirty be not restrained in forced celibacy, whether by bolts or bars, or by the more potent bonds of religious terror and fear of shame, because at the age of sixteen she uttered a vow and promised a celibacy, of the very nature of which she perhaps knew nothing. And we are not imagining a case : we are prepared to shew that Roman Catholic teachers, and Roman Catholic saints, consider it quite a usual feature in a nunnery, that some of its inmates are there against their will ; addresses are made to them accordingly, and they are quietly told, that as they cannot get out, they had better make the best of it. Again, we are prepared to shew, that the nun is bound to be in a state of abject submission to her Superior's will ; that flogging, under the soft name of discipline, is practised in Nunneries—not self-chastisement, but inflicted by others as a punishment ; and we shall shew also, that a dungeon and solitary confinement are also enjoined and recommended ; as to whether they are practised in England—we know nothing.

We have carefully read the long tract of the Catholic Institute already quoted. It consists of forty-six large octavo pages, and we have shown how eloquently the writer appeals to our English love of liberty, and demands that women shall not be interfered with in their desire to take the veil ; and again, further on, in answer to the objection that a nun shut up in her convent, becomes useless to society, he says ; “ Have they not, as their other fellow-citizens, the liberty, as it has been already proved, of disposing of themselves, and of choosing the situation the best suited to their mental and bodily abilities, and consequently the best calculated to make them happy ? ” but

we have looked in vain for the least attempt at an answer to the plain, simple, Protestant question :—“ If the seclusion of all your nuns is voluntary, *why do you lock them up?* ” And we repeat our assertion, that those, whose seclusion is not voluntary, ought, by the laws of England, by the laws of justice, and by the law of God, to be set free.

He does indeed attempt to vindicate the restraint ; and as, we repeat, that this is an authoritative pamphlet, we shall give him the full benefit of his argument, and lay it before our readers in full.

“ Under our free government, are we not ourselves living in perpetual restraint ? Is not our liberty curtailed and limited by many prohibitions and laws ? *Are not our soldiers bound by an irrevocable engagement as soon as they are enlisted ; by which single act,—almost always done from want, or in a frolic, or in a state of intoxication,*—are they not subject to a discipline a thousand times more severe than that of the most rigid religious orders ? Are they not, in truth, merely passive instruments in the hands of their commanding officers ? Are not their diet, their sleep, their dress, even their motions, under continual restrictions ? Willing, or unwilling, are they not doomed to go wherever they are sent, even to the extremities of the world, and to the most unwholesome climates, to fight the battles of their country, with scarcely a distant hope of seeing their friends again in their native land ? Is not marriage among us subject to restrictive laws ? When contracted as the law directs, is it not indissoluble ? And is not the unfortunate young person who has been sacrificed to the avarice and ambition of her

unnatural parents, or who has been the melancholy victim of her own blindness, condemned to pass her days beneath the yoke which she can never more shake off? To bring the question nearer home,—by the sole fact of our being born in England, are we not deprived of what appears to be an essential part of liberty; the liberty of disposing ourselves as we think best, and of choosing the climate, and the form of government, which we judge to be the most conducive to our happiness? From the single fact, in which we never concurred in the beginning, nor which we ever subsequently approved of, have we not contracted with our native country an engagement so irrevocable, that it can never be dissolved by any act of our own?"

We leave these unanswerable arguments before our readers. Had we compared a Nun's profession to a drunken man's taking the shilling from a crafty recruiting sergeant, we should have been accused of injustice—but as the Catholic Institute of Great Britain makes the comparison, we are quite willing to abide by it.

We repeat then, that nuns are not free agents, else why did the council of Trent hold it necessary to enact, "that Nunneries should be kept carefully closed, and egress be absolutely forbidden to the nuns, under any pretence whatsoever, without episcopal license, under pain of excommunication;" magistrates being enjoined under the same penalty to aid the bishops, if necessary, by employing force, and the latter being urged to this duty by the fear of the judgment of God and the eternal curse? Why is it that in every land where the church of Rome wields also

the secular power, the heaviest penalties that man can inflict, solitary confinement and death itself would be the fate of any woman, who, having once uttered the binding words—having once been clothed with the secluding veil, should dare to lay it aside and to abandon her profession ?

We are for the moment dropping altogether the question of—Whether she would be right or wrong in so doing—we are merely asking, Is a nun a free agent in Rome ? or in any part of Italy ? or in the Austrian dominions ? or in Bavaria ? or in any other land where monastic institutions exist, upheld by the sword of the magistrate ?

We speak not of France at present ; there the professed liberty enacted by the constitution, and the tyrannical power actually possessed by the priesthood, are so at variance, and all matters are in so evident a state of transition, that it is impossible to know how a nun, resolving to leave her convent, would be treated by the authorities.

But even in France—nay, even in England itself—it would be no easy matter for a nun to escape, whatever her wish or her determination might be. We can see enough in the exterior building, in bolts and bars, and iron gratings, to know that even here the inmates are not free agents. We know that the Superiors of the convents can, and do refuse, access to the nearest relatives, when it may suit their ends to do so : and in Italy, the exercise of physical restraint over the nuns is not for a moment attempted to be disguised ; and with the Canon of the 25th Session of the Council of Trent, chap. v., before us,

bold indeed must be the Romanist who would dare to deny the fact.\*

A nun, then, is avowedly kept under physical restraint : but we shall be told, this is part of a discipline to which the nun has voluntarily submitted herself. The world was before her : she saw the vanity of its pleasures, and voluntarily chose the path of holy virginity. She knew before-hand the irrevocable character of the vow she was to take. She had passed enough of her days within a convent as a novice and a postulant, before she made her profession : she counted the cost, and she took the vow. Her religious superiors then owe it to her, as they value her soul, to enforce by all means in their power, the wholesome discipline to which she has made herself a willing subject, and to restrain every wayward yearning after the world which has been abandoned, and pleasures which are forbidden, even though it be necessary to resort to the severest personal restraint.

Events have recently occupied public attention which abundantly answer sophistries such as this. We have recently read letters from a young and noble lady, declaring her wish to be a nun, who within a very brief

\* Thus St. Alphonsus Liguori in his admonitions to the various members of Nunneries, from the Abbess down to the Lay Sisters, has the following significant admonition to the Portress : " Be careful to lock the inner as well as the outer doors, at the hours prescribed."—*The true spouse of Jesus Christ, or the Nun sanctified by the virtues of her state*: by St. Alphonsus M. Liguori—Translated from the Italian by a Catholic Clergyman. 8vo. Dublin. 1848.



space of time accepted the hand of a noble suitor. But we will not dwell on a particular case.

The age at which novices may make their profession, differs in different countries; but the rule laid down by the Council of Trent (Session xxv. ch. xv.) only requires that the party, whether male or female, should be of the age of sixteen! At this tender age then—ere yet she knows any thing of the force of those strong affections which a wise and beneficent God has implanted in her nature, a girl is not only allowed, but allured and induced to vow,—she knows not what! She has indeed dwelt in a convent—she has been there as a novice—but can this give her any idea of what a convent life becomes when once the indelible vow has been taken? Is it Protestant prejudice alone that supposes the possible case of avaricious persons endeavouring to entice into their power young women, who may be possessed of wealth? Is greed of gain altogether unknown to Roman ecclesiastics? Again let the Council of Trent give us an answer, and legislation against an evil is very satisfactory evidence of its existence. It was there enacted in the 25th Session, ch. xvii., that no females should take the veil without previous examination by the Bishop,—a poor safeguard, yet indicating a likely and an existing abuse.

And also, that if any monk or nun pretended that they had taken the vows, under the influence of force or fear, or before the age appointed by law, they should not be heard except within five years of their profession (ch. xvi.) And even in the event of a novice, after her period of probation, being disgusted with the conventual life—per-

haps from having sagacity enough to see through the disguise which has been thrown over it—yet even then, although no physical constraint is used to force her to take the vow, there is an all-powerful moral constraint at work—that of shame. In a purely Roman Catholic country, a woman who should, after the expiration of her novitiate, express a disinclination for the monastic life, and desire to return to the world, would have the finger of scorn pointed at her on every side. Her nearest relatives would shrink from her as dishonoured, and no man would take her for his wife.

England is not yet sufficiently Roman Catholic for this state of things to exist openly and avowedly! But is not the same influence at work? Will not the same causes produce similar results? And to whom could she communicate her desire to quit her novitiate? all interviews with friends depend on the will of the Superior, and all epistolary correspondence must pass through her hands.

But other influences also must be noticed, which tend to render a simple inexperienced girl an easy victim to designing persons. At an age when the heart is especially open to those impressions which may be called romantic or sentimental, and when the very physical development of the system is bringing into play passions and feelings hitherto unknown, she is beset with continual commendations of the heavenly state of a nun: she is told of the innumerable dangers and difficulties which surround those who live in this world, and of the ease with which she can serve God in a cloister. The duties of a wife—the cares of a mother—are denounced as dangerous

and interfering with the soul's health—nay, even the physical dangers attending parturition, are dwelt upon. St. Alphonsus Liguori is very eloquent on such matters. "The children," he says, "if small, are a perpetual annoyance, either by their cries or screaming, or by the endless variety of their wants." . . . "Oh! how unhappy and miserable," he again adds, "is the life of the generality of married persons!" Thus do men "who have no children"—debarred by a cruel, an unscriptural, and an unrighteous law, from the enjoyment of God's mercies—from obedience to His commands, endeavour to seduce girls with minds and wills as yet unformed, into the meshes of the cloister. But we shall have more to say of this hereafter.

The intended victim is perhaps taken to see the theatrical display of a nun's profession, and this we cannot better describe than in the words of an eye-witness of such a scene in Rome. In England we believe the ceremony is made even more interesting and fascinating.

"It is only a few days since I saw a young lady of noble family, the Contessa M——, within these very walls, take those vows which must therefore be considered irrevocable. She was young and handsome, and it was said that she entered the cloister by her own choice, uninfluenced by her parents. Still, it was a sufficiently melancholy sight, and I could not help thinking how often in the long tedium of the living death to which she had doomed herself, she might look back to this moment with vain repentance; not the less bitter, because she could only blame herself; nor when I saw the crowds that filled

the church—the pathway and altar strewed with flowers—the public applause—the gaze of strangers—the chorus of nuns—the blessings of cardinals—the flattery of priests, and the tears of friends—could I help asking myself—*If the secret vanity of being the heroine of such a scene might not have had its influence in her determination?* ”

“ By particular favour we had been furnished with billets for the best seats, and, after waiting about half an hour, two footmen in rich liveries made way for the young countess, who entered the crowded church in full dress, her dark hair blazing with diamonds. Supported by her mother she advanced to the altar. The ceremony you must often have heard described, and I need not fatigue you with a minute repetition of its details. The officiating priest was the Cardinal Vicario, a fine-looking old man; the discourse from the pulpit was pronounced by a Dominican monk, who addressed her as the affianced spouse of Christ,—a saint on earth, one who had renounced the vanities of the world for a foretaste of the joys of heaven. There was much of eulogium, and little of admonition,—much rhapsody, and little sober reason or religion in it; very much that was calculated to inflame the inexperienced imagination, but little that could direct the erring judgment.

“ The sermon ended, the lovely victim herself, kneeling before the altar at the feet of the Cardinal, solemnly abjured that world whose pleasures and affections she seemed so well calculated to enjoy, and pronounced those irrevocable vows which severed her from them for ever.

“ As her voice, in soft recitative, chaunted these fatal

words, I believe there was scarcely an eye in the whole of that vast church unmoistened by tears.

“The diamonds that sparkled in her dark hair were taken off, and her long and beautiful tresses fell luxuriantly down her shoulders.

“The grate that was to entomb her was opened. The Abbess and her black train of nuns appeared. Their choral voices chaunted a strain of welcome. It said, or seemed to say—

‘Sister spirit, come away!’

She renounced her name and title, adopted a new appellation, received the solemn benediction of the Cardinal, and the last embraces of her weeping friends, and passed into that bourne from whence she was never to return.

“A pannel behind the high altar now opened, and she appeared at the grate again. Here she was despoiled of her ornaments and her splendid attire, her beautiful hair was mercilessly severed from her head by the fatal shears of the sisters, and they hastened to invest her with the sober robes of the nun—the white coif and the novice veil.

“Throughout the whole ceremony she showed great calmness and firmness; and it was not till all was over that her eyes were moistened with tears of natural emotion. She afterwards appeared at the little postern-gate of the convent, to receive the sympathy, and praise, and congratulations of all her friends and acquaintances, nay, even of strangers, all of whom are expected to pay their compliments to the new spouse of heaven.”

This description is indeed from a Protestant pen, but we

have selected it only for its graphic character. We found no argument, and draw no conclusion from it.

'Tis over ; and her lovely cheek is now  
On her hard pillow—there, alas, to be  
Nightly, through many and many a dreary hour,  
Wan, often wet with tears, and (ere at length  
Her place was empty, and another comes)  
In anguish, in the ghastliness of death ;  
Her's never more to leave those mournful walls,  
Even on her bier.

'Tis over ; and the rite,  
With all its pomp and harmony, is now  
Floating before her. She arose at home,  
*To be the show, the idol of the day ;*  
Her vesture gorgeous and her starry head—  
No rocket, bursting in the midnight sky,  
So dazzling. When to-morrow she awakes,  
She will awake as though she still were there,  
Still in her father's house ; and lo, a cell  
Narrow and dark, nought through the gloom discerned,  
Nought save the crucifix, the rosary,  
And the grey habit lying by to shroud  
Her beauty and her grace.

ROGERS.

## CHAPTER II.

### NATURE OF THE CEREMONY.

WE concluded our last chapter with a description by a Protestant eye-witness of the ceremony, so fascinating and captivating to the mere imagination, of the profession of a nun ; and we cited this description, and we referred to this scene, to show how likely it was that the head of a young girl might be turned, and how readily the desire might be excited by mere vanity, to become herself in this manner the observed of all observers. But we have more to say on this subject.

A Protestant could only see the outward pomp and show. Let Roman Catholic authority tell us the import of it. Let us know the meaning of the words which in "soft recitative" fell so plaintively on the ears of our Protestant witness. What we are about to quote refers indeed to the final taking of the black veil ; the foregoing description is that of taking the white or first veil, but the ceremony is similar in its character.

The susceptible frame of woman, at the tender age of 15 to 25 years, is especially open to another set of impressions. Her natural affections, acted upon by strong excitement, may easily be led to a state of feeling which it is not quite possible to define, or to describe in words.

Our meaning, however, will readily be understood, by a careful perusal of the following extracts from the Form of Consecration of Nuns ; and now we quote the highest Roman Catholic authority—the *Pontificale Romanum*.\*

(Pars Prima. De Benedictione et Consecratione Virginum.) A general rubric precedes the office, in which it is said :

“ In the evening of the day before the benediction, or even in the morning before, the Pontiff vests himself for mass, the virgins are presented to him in a convenient place ; when he diligently enquires of each one individually about her age and purposed vow, namely, whether she has completed her five-and-twentieth year ; † whether she have the desire and the purpose of keeping her virginity ; and moreover, of each one apart by herself, concerning her life and conscience, and *her carnal integrity*. (Insuper seorsum cum qualibet de vitâ et conscientiâ et *carnis integritate*.)”

We have already alluded to the fact that the novice was to be examined—so orders the Council of Trent—by the Bishop, before she could take the vows ; and here we see something of the nature of that examination.

The rubric goes on to describe how vestments, and veils, rings, and necklaces or crowns, which are to be blessed and delivered to the virgin at the proper time, are first placed on the Epistle side of the altar ; matrons are appointed as bridemaids (paranymphæ) and a pavilion is

\* Brussels Edition, 1735.

† The age varies in different countries.



erected in the church, wherein the nuns are to assemble and to clothe themselves in their hallowed vestments.

The point to which we especially desire to call attention is the *nuptial* character of this ceremony, and we desire to compare it afterwards with certain legends and stories, which from early years are impressed upon young female minds, and which they read in the Breviary and the Lives of the Saints.

After Mass and a special Collect, this antiphon is chanted by the Archpresbyter :

“ Ye wise virgins, make ready your lamps ; behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him.”

The virgins, hearing his voice, light their wax tapers, and advancing two and two, are presented on their knees, before the Pontiff by the Archpresbyter, who says,

“ Most reverend father, the Holy Catholic Mother Church demands that you vouchsafe to hallow and consecrate these present virgins, and *espouse them* to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High God.”

The mitred Pontiff having said to the Archpriest, “ Dost thou know them to be worthy ! ” and having received a satisfactory answer, says to those standing around,

“ The Lord God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ helping, we elect these virgins now before us, to bless them and consecrate and espouse them to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High God.”

Then the Pontiff calls the virgins in chant, saying : “ VENITE.” They answer in chant, saying, “ Et nunc sequimur.” And rising, they advance one by one as far as the entrance of the choir, but however kneel outside.

A second time the Pontiff calls them, but with louder voice, "VENITE."

They answer, "Et nunc sequimur in toto corde ;" and rising, they proceed to the centre of the choir, and there kneel.

Then the Pontiff, the third time, in a louder tone still :

"VENITE filiæ, audite me. Come, my daughters, hear me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

Rising, they answer, chanting :

"Et nunc sequimur, &c. And now we follow with the whole heart, we fear thee, we seek to see thy face, O Lord, confound us not, but do unto us according to thy loving-kindness, and according to the multitude of thy mercy."

And so chanting, they come nearer, and ascend into the presbytery, where they all kneel before the Pontiff, and lowly bend their heads, almost even to the ground ; then, each one successively raising her head a little, chants :

"Raise thou me up, O Lord, according to thy word, that iniquity have no dominion over me."

This having been said by each, they all rise, and are arranged by the Matron in a circle round the Pontiff, who interrogates them *publicly* concerning their proposed vow of virginity, saying :

Will you persevere in your purpose of holy virginity ?

*Answer.* We will.

Then each one, kneeling before the Pontiff successively, and putting both her hands joined between both his hands, he says :

C

Dost thou promise ever to keep thy virginity ?

*Answer.* I promise.

*The Pontiff.* Thanks be to God.

Each kisses his hand, and rises, and returns to her place, kneels. This being done, he says to all :

Will ye be hallowed and consecrated and espoused to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High God ?

They all answer. " We will."

The Litany and the Veni Creator then follow. After which the virgins withdraw to their pavilion, and the Pontiff puts off his mitre, and in various long collects with crossings, hallows, and sprinkles the vestments of the virgins, which are then carried to the pavilion ; where the virgins having stripped themselves of their daily garments, put on the blessed ones.

The Pontiff then hallows the veils of the virgins. Then he sprinkles the same, and, still standing, he next hallows the rings—the marriage rings— saying :

" Creator Lord, send thy bene+diction upon these rings ; that those who shall wear the same, being fortified with celestial virtue, may maintain *entire* faith and *unbroken* fidelity ; and as the spouses of Jesus Christ, may guard the vow of their virginity, and persevere in perpetual chastity, (cœlesti virtute munitæ, fidem integram, fidelitatemque sinceram teneant, sicut sponsæ Christi virginitatis propositum custodiant ; et in castitate perpetua perseverent. Per Christum, &c.)"

Then he hallows the *torques*, or necklaces, &c. These hallowings and sanctifications completed, the virgins, arrayed in the blessed vestments, the veils excepted, re-

turn, two and two, to the Pontiff, chanting the Responsory.

“ The kingdom of this world, and all secular adorning, I have despised for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“ R. Whom I have seen, whom I have loved, in whom I have believed, in whom I have delighted.

“ My heart hath uttered a good word. I speak of my works to the king.” \*

Then the virgins are arranged by their *bride-maids* before the altar, on their knees, in the presence of the Pontiff, their faces bent to the ground.

The Pontiff rises, having put off his mitre, and, facing the virgins, with his hands stretched out before his breast, repeats several prayers. We select some passages.

“ Look down, O Lord, on these thy handmaids, who placing in thy hand the vow of their continence, make an offering of their devotion unto thee, from whom they themselves have received the desire to make this vow. For how otherwise could their mind, compassed with mortal flesh, get the victory over the law of nature, the freedom of license, the force of custom, and the stimulants of youthful age? (*legem naturæ, libertatem licentiæ, vim consuetudinis, et stimulos ætatis,*) unless thou, O God, didst mercifully kindle in them of thy free pleasure, the love of virginity; didst graciously nourish the longing for it in their hearts; didst minister unto them fortitude?”

The following passage, which cannot appear in literal English, is well deserving marked attention in this polluting service.

\* This is the Romish authorised mistranslation of Psalm xlv.

“ . . . De largitatis tuæ fonte defluxit ut cum honorem nuptiarum nulla interdicta minuissent ac super sanctum conjugium nuptialis benedictio permaneret) existerent tamen sublimiores animæ *quæ in viri ac muliebris copula fastidirent connubium*,\* concupiscerent sacramentum, nec imitarentur quod nuptiis agitur, sed diligerent quod nuptiis prænotatur.

“ . . . . From the fountain of thy bountifulness has flowed this gift. That while thy blessing still remained on Holy Matrimony there should exist souls so sublime as to loathe . . . (see the Latin), and earnestly to desire the sacrament of marriage, and yet not imitate what is done in the married state, but love what is denoted thereby. Again,

“ Blessed virginity confesses Him who is her Author, and, rivalling the integrity of angels, has devoted herself to the *bridal-chamber and the bed* of Him (*illius thalamo, illius cubiculo*) who is the Spouse of perpetual virginity, like as he is the Son of perpetual virginity.”

The Preface ended, the Pontiff sits, having put on his mitre. The virgins rise, and the first pair are presented by their *bridemaids* to the Pontiff, before whom they kneel lowly, and having again vowed to persevere in their purpose, the Pontiff puts the veil over the head of each successively, saying,

“ Accipe velamen sacrum, &c. Receive thou the sacred veil, whereby thou mayest be known to have contemned the world, and truly and humbly, with the whole en-

\* This is said of a girl of sixteen.

deavour of thy heart, to have subjected thyself *as a wife to Jesus Christ for ever*; who defend thee from all evil, and bring thee to life eternal. *Amen.*”

The two being veiled, and continuing on their knees, sing,  
 “*Posuit signum in faciem meam, ut nullum præter eum amatorem admittam.*—He hath set his seal upon my forehead, that I should *admit no lover but him.*”

And so on, two by two, till all are veiled; after which he calls them, chanting,

“*Desponsari, dilecta, veni, &c.*—Come, my beloved, to be *wedded*; the winter is past, the turtle is singing, and the flourishing vines give smell.”

Here the virgins are again presented to the Pontiff, two and two, as before, by the bridemaids; then taking the ring in his right hand, and the virgin’s right hand in his left, and putting the ring on the ring-finger of her right hand, he espouses the same to Jesus Christ, (*desponsat illas J. C.*), saying to each severally,

“I espouse thee to Jesus Christ, the Son of the Supreme Father, who keep thee *undefiled* (*illæsam*). Therefore receive the ring of faith, the seal of the Holy Ghost: so that thou be called the spouse of God, and if thou serve him faithfully, be crowned everlastingly. In nomine Pa + tris et Fi + lii et Spiritus + Sancti. *Amen.*”

This done, the two still kneeling, sing,

“*Ipsi sum desponsata cui Angeli serviunt, cujus pulchritudinem sol et luna mirantur.*

“I am espoused to Him whom angels serve, and at whose beauty the sun and moon do marvel.”

And so on of all the rest, two and two, in order. All

being now wedded, kneeling on their knees, they all at the same time lift up their right hands on high, and show them, singing,

“ Annulo suo subarrhavit me Dominus meus Jesus Christus, et tanquam sponsam decoravit me coronâ.

“ With his own ring hath wedded me my Lord Jesus Christ, and hath adorned me with a crown as his spouse.”

Then the Pontiff rising, his mitre on, and standing with his face towards them, says,

“ God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, who hath vouchsafed to choose you to an *espousalship* like that of the blessed Mary (ad beatæ Mariæ matris Domini nostri J. C. *consortium*), mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, hal + low you ; that in the presence of God and his angels, you may preserve, untouched and undefiled, the virginity you have professed, and hold on your purpose, love chastity, and keep patience ; that you may merit to receive the crown of virginity. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Next follows the ceremony of crowning,\* which anciently, in the Western as it still is in the Eastern Churches, was as essential a part of the marriage ceremony as the putting on the ring.

After this, the virgins rising, chant together the antiphon,

\* Among the Greeks *to be crowned*, *στεφανωθηναι*, is at the present day the common expression for being married. Both bride and bridegroom are crowned with a gilt circlet—these crowns are bound together and suspended over the nuptial couch, and there remain.

“ Ecce quod concupivi, jam video ; quod speravi, jam teneo ; illi sum juncta in cœlis quem in terris posita, totâ devotione dilexi.

“ Lo, what I longed for, I now enjoy ; what I have hoped for, I now hold ; I am joined in heaven to Him whom I have loved, while on earth, with my whole devotion.”

Then the Pontiff, joining his hands before his breast, pronounces over the virgins standing, but lowly bending their heads, two successive benedictions.

From these a few extracts will suffice.

“ O God, &c., prepare them under the governance of wisdom, for all the work of virtue and glory, that overcoming the enticements of the flesh, and rejecting forbidden concubinage, they may inherit the indissoluble *copula* of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. These, O Lord, we beseech Thee supply with arms not carnal, but mighty, through the power of the Spirit : that Thou fortifying their feelings and members, sin be not able to lord it in their bodies and souls.”

Again ;

“ Let the shower also of Thy heavenly grace extinguish in them *all hurtful heat* (omnem nocivum calorem) and kindle up in them the light of abiding chastity ; let not the modest face be exposed to scandals, nor negligence afford to the incautious occasion of falling.”

Again ;

“ God . . . . make you strong when frail, strengthen you when weak, relieve and govern your minds with piety, direct your ways, &c. &c. that when about to enter the bedchamber of your spouse (intraturæ sponsi thalamum)



. . . . he may discover in you nothing noisome, nothing filthy, nothing hidden, nothing corrupt, nothing disgraceful . . . . that when the tremendous day of the repayment of the just, and retribution of the bad, shall come, avenging fire may find in you nothing to burn, but divine goodness what to crown ; *as being those whom a religious life has already cleansed* in this world ; so that when about to ascend to the tribunal of the eternal king, and the palaces on high, you may merit to have protection with those who follow the lamb, and sing the new song without ceasing ; there to receive the reward after labour, and remain for ever in the region of the living. And himself bless you from heaven, who, &c. Amen.”

The benedictions ended, the Pontiff sits down, and publicly pronounces anathema on any who may draw away from the divine service, those who are under the banner of chastity ; and on any one who may purloin their goods, or hinder them from possessing their goods in quiet.

*The Curse.*—“ By the authority of Almighty God, and his holy apostles Peter and Paul, we solemnly forbid under pain of anathema, that any one draw away these present virgins, or holy nuns, from the divine service, to which they have devoted themselves under the banner of chastity ; or that any one purloin their goods, or hinder their possessing them unmolested : but if any one shall dare to attempt such a thing, let him be accursed at home and abroad ; accursed in the city, and in the field ; accursed in waking and sleeping ; accursed in eating and drinking ; accursed in walking and sitting ; cursed be his flesh, and his bones, and from the sole of his foot to the crown of

his head, let him have no soundness. Come upon him the malediction, which by Moses in the law, the Lord hath laid on the sons of iniquity. Be his name blotted out from the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. His portion and inheritance be with Cain the fratricide, with Dathan and Abiram, with Ananias and Sapphira, with Simon the sorcerer, and with Judas the traitor; and with those who have said to God, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Let him perish in the day of judgment, and let everlasting fire devour him, with the devil and his angels,—unless he make restitution and come to amendment. *Fiat, Fiat.* So be it, So be it.”

Next comes the mass and the offertory. That is, a lighted candle presented to the Pontiff by each nun. And next, the nuns are ordained to the faculty of beginning the sacred hours. The Pontiff

“ sits down, having put on his mitre, and *delivers to them the Breviary, which they touch with both hands*, while he says;

“ Receive ye this book, that ye may begin the Canonical hours, and read the office in the church. In the name of the Fa + ther and of the + Son, and of the Holy + Ghost. Amen.”

Last of all, [after other ceremonies], the virgins return to the gate of the Monastery, where they kneel before the Pontiff, who presents them to the Abbess, who also kneels while he says;

“ Take care how thou keepest these virgins, who are consecrated to God; and that thou again present them to

him *immaculate* ; as thou shalt render account for them before the tribunal of their husband, the judge that is to come." \*

\* Pontificale Romanum. Pars Prima De Benedictione et Consecratione Virginum. Brussels, 1735.—Foye's Romish Rites, Offices and Legends. Lond. 1839.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CHARACTER OF THE BREVIARY.

WE have now with some slight abridgment passed through the service of the final consecration of a nun. The reader's attention is especially called, as already stated, to the mystical character of this ceremony, and to the allusions, supposed of course to be taken in a spiritual or allegorical sense, to the actual nuptial union. We also call marked attention to the fact of the *Breviary* having been placed in the hands of the nun at her ordination to the office of beginning the Canonical hours.

It will be our duty now, to lay before the reader some extracts from this Roman Breviary.

The Breviary or Canonical hours, is the daily service-book of the church of Rome, consisting of the offices of matins, prime, third, sixth, nones, vespers, and complines; that is of seven hours, to accord with the saying of David, Ps. cxix. "Seven times a-day do I praise thee."

David however praised the Lord: we shall see who is praised in the lessons of the Breviary. It is said, that before the council of Trent much objectionable matter had found its way into the Breviary, and its depurgation was then decreed.

Pius V. ordered a number of learned and able men to re-compile the Breviary, and sanctioned it by a Bull in February 1566, ordering all former Breviaries to be laid aside, whether made by bishops, orders of monks, or monasteries. Clement VIII., in 1602, again revised it, and finally, Urban VIII., in 1631, had the language of the whole work and the metres revised. This last revision is at present the Breviary of the Romish Church in general use.\* The value which the Church of Rome sets upon the Breviary, may be estimated by the manner in which she commands it to be read. This obligation was at first universal; but although this has been limited, it is still obligatory on all who enjoy any ecclesiastical revenue—on all persons of both sexes who have professed in any of the regular orders—on all subdeacons, deacons and priests, to repeat, either in public or in private, the whole service of the day out of the Breviary; and this they are bound to do under pain of being guilty of mortal sin, and of refunding revenues in proportion to their delinquencies in discharging this duty: and as it is to this office of opening the canonical hours, that the nun has been especially ordained, we may well suppose that this duty is rigidly attended to.

It is not our intention to cite from the lessons of the Breviary its legends, which are merely absurd, but rather such portions of it as will illustrate the nature of that

\* *Breviarium Romanum ex decreto Sacro-Sancti Concilii Tridentini restitutum Pii. V. Pont. Max. jussu editum et Clementis VIII. primum nunc denuo Urbani P. P. VIII. auctoritate recognitum.* Fol. Ant. 1697.

species of excitement which we must call "amorous," which it seems to be earnestly attempted to arouse in the minds of young and susceptible females.

Passing over the history of Catherine of Sienna—her many visions of Christ and of the Virgin Mary—and the detailed narrative of her being literally and *actually married to Christ* in due form, the Virgin Mary being bride-maid, we will give at greater length the Legend of St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi. Service for May 27.\* The following is from the Act of Canonization :†

"*Session IV.*—St. Mary Magdalene, born of the illustrious house of the Pazzi at Florence, abhorred nearly from the cradle all kinds of vanity. She learned to pray before she could speak. . . . At the age of ten she vowed perpetual virginity, and often told her parents (who would have her marry against her will) that she would undergo death, rather than draw back from her vow. At length, with their acquiescence, she took the habit of the order of Carmelites, in the monastery of St. Mary of the Angels, at Florence, where she showed herself a pattern of all the virtues; and she so hung upon the nod of her superiors, that she would not do even the things *commanded by God, in her ecstasies, until she had their consent.* So chaste was she, that she did not overcome, but was entirely ignorant of all, even the least stain of impurity."

Passing over her self-torture—her five years living on bread and water—her scourges and iron girdle—her crown

\* In England however, her festival is on the 3rd of June.

† Translated by the Rev. M. W. Foye.

of thorns, and watchings—her naked feet in the snow, and the droppings of a burning candle let fall upon her body—we proceed to

“*Session IV.*—She burned with so great a heat of divine love, that she would at times exclaim, ‘O amor! te amplius ferre non possum! O love! I can bear thee no longer!’ and she used to be forced to cool her bosom with a copious sprinkling of water. Her ecstasies were most frequent, in the which she sometimes fathomed mysteries of the most Holy Trinity beyond human conception, and experienced the most bitter pains which Christ in his passion endured. By Christ she was *wedded with a ring* (a Christo annulo subarrhata) and crowned with a crown of thorns; whilst by the blessed Virgin she was covered with a most white veil, and by St. Augustine she had twice written upon her heart, ‘The word was made flesh.’ Being rapt out of her senses whilst embroidering, she used, though the windows were closed up and her eyes veiled, yet to proceed with her work, and finish it most accurately. Being in one ecstasy day and night, from the Vigil of Pentecost to the feast of the most Holy Trinity, *she received every day the Holy Ghost in different shapes*, and fortified by these graces, she entered upon a five years’ war with the princes of darkness. . . . She was canonized by Clement IX. in 1669.”

We will now look at the Legend of *St. Rose of Lima*, whose festival is observed on August 30.

“The first flower of sanctity from South America was the virgin Rose, born of Christian parents at Lima, who

even from the cradle shone with the presages of future holiness: for the face of the infant being wondrously transfigured into the image of a rose, gave occasion to her being called by this name; to the which afterwards the virgin Mother of God added the surname, ordering her to be thenceforth called the Rose of St. Mary. At the age of *five she made a vow of perpetual virginity*. When she grew older, that she might not be compelled to marry by her parents, she cut off, unknown to them, with her own hands, her most exquisite head of hair. . . . Having assumed the habit of the third order of St. Dominick, she doubled her former austerities of life. To her oblong (?) and very sharp hair chemise (oblongo asperimoque cilicio) she fastened every where little needles. Under her vest she wore, day and night, a crown armed in the inside with thick-set piercing points. Treading in the arduous footsteps of St. Catherine of Sienna, she girded her loins with an iron chain, going thrice round her body."

We will pass over the notices of her bed of knotty lumps of wood, with broken pieces of pottery to fill up the interstices—her cell in the garden, her scourgings, her hunger, and her watchings.

" . . . Having wondrously familiar intercourse, by continual apparitions with her guardian angel, with St. Catherine of Sienna, and the Virgin Mother of God, she merited to hear these words from Christ—*Rosa cordis mei tu mihi sponsa esto*—Rose of my heart, be thou my spouse. At last being carried to the Paradise of this her Spouse, and glittering with very many miracles, both



before and since her departure, Pope Clement X. enrolled her with solemnity in the catalogue of Holy Virgins."

The following are extracts from the Bull of her canonization.

"When she was an infant she never used to cry, but used to bear without a murmur all the pains to which she was subjected by her surgeons.

". . . She used to give herself the stomach-ache by drinking sheep's gall, which she kept by her for this purpose, in imitating Christ upon the cross.

". . . At this time she was favoured with the following revelation: There appeared to her in her sleep an extraordinary person, beautiful above all the sons of men, habited like a first-rate sculptor on a festival-day, and he seemed to *court her as a lover*. Before Rose would *consent to his proposal*, she set him a task, namely, to carve a piece of marble; and she bade him return again shortly, when the sculpture should be finished. At the return of her spouse, the virgin blushed when she perceived the task she had assigned him was accomplished in a manner beyond his strength; and he opened to her his workshop, where were a number of elect virgins, working like men at carving and polishing marble. She discovered that they were his espoused, by the style and beauty of their nuptial dresses; they were moistening the stones, and preparing them for cutting by their tears, which dripped upon them. Rose perceived that she was to be dressed like one of them, and prepared to be advanced to a like espousal. . . . The mystery was disclosed to her thus:

On Palm Sunday, when Rose was absorbed in meditation, in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary, *her lover* thus addressed her : ‘ Rose of my heart, *be my love.*’ The virgin trembled at the sweet voice of her Divine Spouse, and at the instant she heard the voice of the Mother of God, *wishing her joy*, and saying, ‘ *Rose, it is no mean honour which this my Son proposes to you.*’ After this revelation, Rose began to torture herself more than ever ; she flogged herself every night till the blood flowed in streams ; and she cut her feet with sharp stones, or burnt them by walking on hot cinders, and she filled her bed with broken shells. By this means she reduced her time for sleep to two hours.

“ . . . She had frequent visions of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary. . . . She was seen to hold familiar intercourse with Jesus Christ.

“ . . . When her Spouse did not appear to her at the accustomed hour, she used to admit an angel (who was always *visibly* present with her as her guardian) to her confidence, as his footboy or valet!!! (ut pararium aut veredarium.)

“ . . . There was a scarcity of bread in her father’s home. Rose commended the case to God in prayer, and then opening the bread-pan, found it full of loaves, which an apparition told her did not come from the family kneading-trough. Another time, when there was a want of honey, Rose found a cup full of new-made honey, to the great astonishment of all the family ; and the more so, because this honey, sent from heaven by a miracle, lasted the whole family for daily use for eight whole months.

Again ; Rose's father was in great difficulty, because his creditor had sued him for a debt of fifty pounds. Rose prayed, and a stranger appeared, bringing her the money wrapped up in a cloth. These are the assistances which her divine Spouse promised to the parents of Rose, that he would give her as a dowry, *when he wooed her* in the character of a heavenly sculptor."

The Bull ends with a decree of canonization ; it is dated 12 April, 1671, and is signed by Clement and thirty-five Cardinals.\*

*St. Teresa Virgin. Oct. 15.*

She was born in Spain, in 1515, and gave the usual nursery evidences of future saintship, as was the custom of the canonized.

" . . . After the death of her mother, she entreated the most blessed Virgin that she would show herself to be a mother to her ; and she was crowned with the attainment of this godly prayer, for she always enjoyed the protection of the Mother of God, just as if she were a daughter indeed. . . . In perpetual tears, she used to weep over the darkness of infidels and heretics ; and to appease the wrath of the Divine vengeance, she used to dedicate to God, for their salvation, the voluntary torturings of her own body. But with so great a burning of divine love was her heart inflamed, that, as she justly deserved, she saw an angel transpiercing her heart and soul with a fiery dart, and heard Christ say to her, giving her

\* Bullarium magnum. Fol. Lux. 1727. The translation is by the Rev. H. Townsend Powell.

his right hand, ‘*Thou shalt be henceforth zealous for mine honour as my wife indeed!*’ (Deinceps ut vera sponsa meum zelabis honorem.)

“ . . . She excelled in the gift of prophecy ; and the Lord so liberally enriched her with the Divine graces, that many a time did she cry out, entreating that a limit might be put to the Divine favour towards her, and that the remembrance of her faults might not be blotted out with so quick a forgetfulness. Accordingly, it was rather by the consuming fire of Divine love, than by the violence of disease, that . . . at Alba she rendered back her *most pure* soul to God in the shape of a dove, aged 67, A. D. 1582. While dying, Jesus Christ *was seen* to be present with her, amid troops of angels ; and a withered tree that was near her cell instantly shot forth into bloom. Her body, which remains undecayed to this day, being surrounded with an odoriferous fluid, is worshipped with pious veneration.”

She was canonized by Pope Gregory XV. A. D. 1614.\*

We shall conclude this part of our subject with an account of the marriage of St. Veronica ; and in laying this legend before our readers, we have an advantage which, in quoting the Breviary, we did not possess. Our translations hitherto have been by Protestant pens ; but this narrative we possess in the very words of Cardinal Wiseman.

St. Veronica lived from 1660 to 1727, and was only canonized in 1839, by the late Pope Gregory XVI. This therefore is no old legend. No Roman Catholic therefore

\* Acta Sanctorum Octobris. Brussels, 1845.

can say, as did Mr. Butler, in his Book of the Roman Catholic Church, "May I not ask if it be either just and generous to harass the present Catholics with the weaknesses of the ancient writers of their communion, and to attempt to render their religion and themselves odious, by their unmeaning and offensive repetitions?"

The names of Cardinal Wiseman and the late Pope, the date of canonization, 1839, and of publication, 1846,\* entirely acquit us of the want of justice and generosity here alluded to by Mr. Butler.

We pass over, as foreign to our immediate purpose, the accounts of her literal compassivity with her Spouse, the story of her being a perfect copy of the Divine passion; and we proceed to that which more immediately concerns our subject—her literal marriage to Christ, according to the forms of earthly marriage.

On this subject Cardinal Wiseman says;

"This spiritual union, with certain devout souls, God has been pleased to make manifest to them, by more sensible signs, *accompanied by formalities like those used in ordinary marriages.* Of such we read in the life of the ecstatic St. Catharine of Sienna. To this exalted dignity God was pleased to exalt Veronica, as he revealed to her during the crowning of thorns, of which we have already spoken. But he prepared her for it by several visions, of

\* Lives of St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Francis de Girolamo, St. John Joseph of the cross, St. Pacificus of San Severino, and St. Veronica Giuliani, whose canonization took place on Trinity Sunday, May 26, 1839, edited by N. Wiseman, D. D. Bishop of Melipotamus. London: C. Dolman, New Bond Street. 1846.

which we will allow herself to speak. She says ; “ While I was one morning at mass, suddenly an *application* came upon me. During the course of it I felt certain touches in my heart, which excited me to a strong desire of uniting myself wholly to God. On a sudden, it seems to me, that God took me out of my senses, and, by communication, gave me to know, *ab intra*, that he wished to be espoused to me. This news made my heart to leap anew, and I felt it burning within me.” She adds, “ that in inviting her to his marriage, Jesus frequently appeared in the form of a beautiful infant ; and in the feast of the Circumcision, 1694, intimated to her, that her preparation for it was to be by all kind of sufferings. . . . . On the 27th of that month,” she adds, “ our Lord comforted her, by shewing her with what delight he looked upon a beautiful jewel, fixed in the wound of his sacred side, and telling her that *it had been formed of all the sufferings she had undergone for his sake*. She offered herself anew to be crucified with him, and he seemed to stoop down and embrace her soul, giving it a kiss of love.” . . . . Two days previous, our blessed Lady was pleased to prepare her for her espousals. This was by an intellectual vision, as she calls such in her writings, wherein she beheld the great queen of angels upon a magnificent throne, accompanied by St. Catherine of Sienna, and St. Rose of Lima. To their prayer that she would consent to the espousals of her servant, with her divine son, our Lady sweetly replied, that they should be brought about. Veronica saw in her hands a beautiful ring, intended, she was told, for her. . . . .

During Lent she practised the most cruel mortifications and austerities. On holy Saturday our Lord appeared to her; and shewing her the nuptial ring, invited her to his marriage on the following day. . . .

As she approached the altar, she heard the angels singing in sweetest melody, *Veni Sponsa Christi*; then being rapt out of her senses, she beheld two magnificent thrones, that on the right hand, of gold, decorated with the most splendid jewels, whereupon was seated our blessed Lord, with his wounds shining brighter than the sun; the other formed of alabaster, of purest whiteness, and brilliant with gems, and thereon was seated our blessed Lady, in a white mantle of surpassing richness, who besought her Son to hasten his marriage. Innumerable were the multitudes of the heavenly court, in the midst whereof were the holy virgins St. Catherine and St. Rose; the former of whom intimated to Veronica what she was to do in that most august solemnity. They conducted her slowly to the thrones; and at the foot thereof, put upon her, over her religious habit, various robes, each surpassing the other in splendour. As she approached the throne of Christ, whose garments, she knows not, she says, how to describe, she beheld in each of his wounds a beautiful gem; but from that in his side, which was open, rays more bright than the sun, darted on every side. In it she seemed to perceive the nuptial ring. When he raised up his hand to bless her, he entoned the words *Veni Sponsa Christi*; and our lady, with the whole court taking them up, continued, *accipe coronam, quam tibi Dominus preparavit æternum*. St. Catherine then took off her rich

ing only her religious habit, *to show*, the saint intimates, *its value in the eyes of God, being allowed to appear in that glorious assembly*. After remaining in this dress for a short time, our Lord made a sign to his blessed Mother, to clothe her with the nuptial garment. It was a magnificent mantle, covered with gems, and appeared of different colours. Our Lady gave it to St. Catherine, who put it upon Veronica, and placed her between the two thrones. Then, feeling herself more than ever *pierced with love*, she saw our Lord take the ring out of his side, and give it to his mother. "This ring," she writes, "shone with splendour. It appeared to me to be made of gold, but all wrought in enamel, which formed in the stone a name of the good Jesus. . . . . From time to time *I gave looks of love* towards my Lord, and seemed to address him, urging him to the espousals." The heavenly queen commanded her to stretch out her hand to St. Catherine, which Jesus took, "and at that moment," she writes, "I felt myself united more closely than ever with him. Together with Mary ever-blessed, he placed the ring upon my finger, and then blessed it." In that instant heaven again resounded with the songs of the angelic choir, after which her divine spouse gave her new rules. . . . . *He told her he would be ENTIRELY hers.*"

Thus ended this mystic ceremony of her espousals . . . . She adds, "that nearly at every communion the same was renewed. . . . and that the ring remained . . . . . Sister *Mary Spacciani* . . . . . distinctly with her own eyes.



(!!) . . . . In the *Processes* \* two other rings are mentioned *as having* been given to her at the espousals, and the renewal of them. . . . . Likewise another which was enriched with three gems.”

Mark all this—Sister Spacciani saw the ring! and Cardinal Wiseman fully believes it. Like St. Francis, St. Catherine, and others, she received the honour of the *stigmata*, or wounds in her hands, and feet, and side, as Cardinal Wiseman relates it.

“ Her loving spouse rewarded her constancy and love, by the wound which he made in her heart, in the year 1696.” “ I seemed to see,” she writes, “ in the hand of the holy infant, a rod of gold, at the point of which was, as it were, a flame of fire, and at the foot a small piece of iron, like a little lance : and he placed this rod against his own heart, and the point of the lance in my heart ; and it seemed that I felt my heart pierced through and through. In an instant I saw nothing in his hand ; but full of grace and beauty he invited me to love him, and by way of communication, he made me to understand that he had bound me to himself by a closer tie.” . . . Through modesty she abstained from looking at the wound, but she put a linen cloth upon it, which was immediately *covered with blood*. Her confessor ordered her to examine it, and she found it open, and observed that it was large enough to admit the blade of a good-sized knife—*as is attested in the Processes*. (!!!) On Good Friday she received the rich pledges of love which were vouchsafed to the seraphic St. Francis, St.

• The formal official acts upon which the Bull of Canonization was made out.

Catherine, and other saints : for our Lord after having previously foretold these graces, and after displaying his mercies in other ways, to her, was pleased to imprint on her hands and feet the *stigmata* or wounds of his most sacred passion. These wounds were afterwards renewed upon several other occasions. . . . They were the wounds which her blessed spouse had made.

Those in her hands and feet, as *Florida Ceoli and other sisters attest*, (!!!) were on the upper side, round, and about the size of a farthing, but less on the under side, deep and red when open, and covered with a thin cicatrix or crust when closed. The wound in the left side above the left breast, was between four and five fingers in length, and about one finger broad in the middle, growing thinner towards the two extremities, exactly like the wound of a lance! ! . . . . .

## CHAPTER IV.

### PENANCE AND CONFESSION.

WE have examined some portion of the service or ceremonial by which a nun is "consecrated." We have turned over the leaves of her Breviary, and have even seen the latest teaching which "His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster" would put into the hands of young Englishwomen who are called to the "religious life."

Our object in so doing, before we proceed to draw aside the veil, and to give some little insight into what has before now taken place in convents, is that the facts we shall have to submit to our readers may not appear as the mere accidents of human depravity. It is our object to show that they are the natural results of a most unnatural system. But we should not do justice to our subject did we leave out of sight another mighty engine at work; an influence that begins with childhood and assumes its most dangerous, most blighting sway, just at the very age when the young girl—the young lady—is to be induced to take the step which cannot be recalled;—an influence at work, while yet she is mixing in the gaities and frivolities of the world, and which fastens itself deeper and

deeper upon the victim when once the Veil has marked her down as a slave for ever.

We must say a few words on the "Confessional." We will briefly, but on authority, state the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on this subject.

We will quote a standard catechism entitled "An Abridgment of Christian Doctrine, with Proofs of Scripture for Points Controverted." Dublin, 1838. The preface is signed H. T., (Dr. Henry Turberville, D.D. of the English College of Douay,) and the little book was republished by the Rev. J. Doyle, D. D., and prescribed by him for use in the united dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin.

## PENANCE EXPOUNDED.

Q. What is the fourth sacrament?—*A.* Penance.

Q. What warrant have you for doing acts of penance?

Q. First, *Apoc.* ii. 4; "Thou hast left thy first charity; be mindful from whence thou art fallen, and *do penance.*" Secondly, *Matt.* iv. 17: "And Jesus began to preach and to say, Do ye penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Q. What is the matter of the sacrament?—*A.* The contrition as expressed, and confession of the penitent.

Q. What is the form of it?—*A.* I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The catechiser goes on to say, that the effects of penance

are, that it reconciles us to God, and either restores or increaseth grace. It proceeds :

**Q.** What is confession?—**A.** It is a full, sincere, and humble declaration of our sins to a priest, to obtain absolution.

**Q.** Is there any special good or comfort to man from confession?—**A.** Very great, because as to a mind laden with secret griefs, the best of her comforts is to disclose her case to some faithful friend ; so to a soul laden with secret sins, one of the greatest comforts, and best remedies possible, is to have selected persons, ordained for that end by Christ himself—men of singular piety and learning, and *not questionable by any law*, of what they hear in confession ; to whom one may confess his sins with an assurance both of comfort, correction and direction, for the amendment of his faults.

**Q.** What are the necessary conditions of a good confession?—**A.** That it be short, diligent, humble, sorrowful, sincere and entire.

After explaining some of these conditions :

**Q.** How entire?—**A.** By confessing, not only in what things we have sinned mortally, but also how often, as near as we are able to remember.

**Q.** What if a man do knowingly leave out any mortal sin in his confession for *fear of shame*?—**A.** He makes his whole confession void, and commits a great sacrilege, by *lying to the Holy Ghost*, and abusing the sacrament.

Q. How prove you that?—A. By the example of Ananias and his wife Sapphira, &c.

This popular exposition is strictly and carefully grounded on the highest authority of the Church of Rome—the Council of Trent—to which we will refer.

“ *Sessio XIV. Cap. v. de Confessione.*—From the institution of the sacrament of penance, already explained, the Universal Church has always understood, that the entire confession of sins was also instituted by the Lord, and is of divine right necessary to all who have fallen after baptism; because that our Lord Jesus Christ, when about to ascend from earth to heaven, left priests His own vicars as presidents and judges (*sacerdotes sui ipsius vicarios reliquit, tanquam præsidet et iudices*) before whom all the mortal crimes into which the faithful of Christ may have fallen, should be brought, to the end that, according to the power of the keys, they may pronounce the sentence of remission or retention of sins. For it is certain that priests could not have exercised this judgment, the cause being unknown; neither indeed could they have observed equity in enjoining punishments, if they should have declared their sins in general only, and not rather specifically and singly. Hence it is gathered, that all the deadly sins of which after a diligent examination of themselves, they have consciousness, must needs be enumerated by penitents in confession, even though those sins be most hidden, and committed only against the two last precepts of the decalogue; which sometimes wound the soul more grievously, and are more dangerous than those which are committed outwardly.

For venial sins, by which we are not excluded from the grace of God, and into which we more frequently fall, although they be rightly and profitably, and without any presumption declared in confession, as the custom of pious persons shows, yet may be passed over without guilt and be expiated by many other remedies. But whereas all mortal sins, even those of thought, render men children of wrath, and enemies of God, it is necessary to seek also for the pardon of them all from God, with an open and modest confession; wherefore while the faithful of Christ are anxious to confess all the sins which occur to the memory, they without doubt lay them all open before the mercy of God to be forgiven. But they who act otherwise, and knowingly keep back certain sins, set nothing before the divine bounty to be remitted through the priest. . . . It is certain that in the church nothing else is required of penitents, but that after each has examined himself diligently, and *examined all the folds and recesses of his conscience*, he confess those sins by which he shall remember that he has in a deadly manner offended his Lord and his God: whilst the other sins, which do not occur to him after diligent considering, are understood to be included as a whole in that same confession; for which sins we confidently say with the prophet: '*Ab occultis meis, munda me, Domine.* From my secret sins, cleanse me, O Lord.' " . . .

" *Cap. VI. De ministro hujus Sacramenti, et Absolutione.*—But as respects the minister of this sacrament, the holy Synod declares all these doctrines to be false, and utterly alien from the truth of the Gospel, which pern

ciously extend the ministry of the keys to any other men soever, besides bishops and priests. . . . It also teaches that *even priests who are held in deadly sins, through the virtue of the Holy Ghost bestowed in ordination*, exercise the function of remitting sins, as the ministers of Christ ; and that they *think erroneously who contend that this power exists not in bad priests*. But although the absolution of the priests is the dispensation of another's bounty, yet it is not a bare ministry only, whether of announcing the Gospel, or of declaring that sins are remitted, but it is *after the manner of a Judicial act*, which by sentence is *pronounced by the priest as by a judge*. And therefore the penitent ought not so to flatter himself concerning his own personal faith, as to think that even though there be no contrition on his part, or no intention on the part of the priest acting seriously and absolving truly, he is nevertheless truly and in the eyes of God absolved on account of his faith alone. For neither would faith without penance bestow any remission of sins : nor would he be otherwise than most negligent of his own salvation who should know that a priest but absolved him in jest, and should not sedulously seek for another who would act in earnest."

The portions of the above to which we desire especial attention, we have marked in italics.

It will be observed that the penitent is to examine all the folds of his (or her) conscience,\* and in order that

\* Modesty must not interfere. De La Hogue *De Pœn*, says : " Pudorem illum prorsus humanum quantuscumque sit, a Pœnitente superandum esse, et nolenti denegandum esse absolutionem." —P. 168. Coyne's Dublin Ed. 1825.



no fold should be left unexamined, the church of Rome places in the hands of all her members—boys and girls just reaching years of puberty—certain questions or heads for self-examination. They may be found in any Roman Catholic Manual of devotion—such for instance as “Chaloner’s Garden of the Soul.” We cannot think of polluting our pages by transcribing the directions which a Roman Catholic Bishop wrote, and which Roman Catholic Bishops now place in the hands of Roman Catholic young English ladies as a manual of devotion.

They will be found under the heads for self-examination, upon the sixth, (that is the seventh) commandment. The “Garden of the Soul,” it must be remembered, is written by a bishop, is universally recommended, and is described by Mr. Butler “as the most popular prayer-book of the English Catholics.”

We have also before us “A Manual for Confession and Communion for those who frequent the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, King William Street, Strand.” And from it we shall learn the kind of authority with which the confessor is represented as being invested.

*Directions to be observed in making the Confession.—*

1. “Having prepared yourself for confession, go to your Confessor with great humility and modesty, and imagine to yourself that you are about to present yourself before Jesus Christ Himself, who sees the depths of your heart, and will one day judge you. If you are obliged to wait, keep yourself all the time in devout silence and recollection, and renew your act of sorrow for your sins. Fancy yourself a criminal bound with chains, who has

been tried and convicted, and is called before the judge, whom he has insulted and offended.

2. "When at the feet of your Confessor, kneel down with the greatest reverence and humility, imagining that you are at the feet of Jesus crucified, who desires to hear from your own lips a sincere confession of all your sins, and is ready to pardon you for them, if you really repent of them, and to wash you in His own most precious blood by the means of His minister and the sacramental absolution. Then make the sign of the cross, and say the Confiteor with true compunction."

The Confessor in the present case is no less a person than Mr. Frederick W. Faber, formerly a clergyman, and fellow of University College, Oxford.

But lest the self-examination should not have been sufficiently searching, the priest is charged to question closely and searchingly in all these points. On this subject we must refer to Bailey or Dens, or such writers on moral, or rather immoral Theology, and there we find that the priest—a young man perhaps in the flower of age, gifted with warm affections, and fitted for that holy state of matrimony, from which an unnatural and a debasing policy debars him—the priest is bound to be acquainted, and that minutely, with a tissue of obscenity and filthiness, and to question his penitent—perhaps a young nun—on these very matters; to ask her whether she has committed crimes from which nature recoils, and of the existence of which she ought to be ignorant—and to add; "How often?"

The Rev. John Gother, a Roman Catholic, in his advice on confession says ;—\*

4th. “That in all mortal sins he (the penitent) discover the number, that is, how often he has fallen into each sort of sin. . . there being a great difference betwixt committing a sin twice or thrice, and twenty or thirty times !

5th. “That he explain such circumstances as change the species or nature of the sin, or at least considerably aggravate it ; and therefore, because there is a great difference betwixt robbing a church and another place ; betwixt cheating or stealing five shillings, and five hundred pounds ; betwixt a married person and single, in sins of impurity, &c. &c.”

He also gives minute directions for examination on the sixth (i. e. seventh) commandment.

Hear the words of an experienced minister of Christ on this subject :—“ We Protestants know from the word of God, which we are permitted and required to read, that ‘ it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret ; ’ and therefore, although the best of us is ready to acknowledge, both before God and before man, that we have much of iniquity to confess and to deplore before God, yet we cannot say that our religion either authorizes our sins, or gives occasion to our sins. It is different with Popery. Popery does both, and more especially with the confessional must it be so.” †

\* Gother’s Spiritual Works, 16 Vols. 12mo. no date. Vol. x. chap. iii. on Confession.

† England Warned and Counsell’d. By the Rev. R. W. Dibdin.

Nor are they ignorant of the danger of what they are doing.

Thus, in a book published at Lyons in 1844. "Devoirs des Prêtres, &c. Par un Ancien Professeur de Théologie, we read Vol. i. 373. Quand un Confesseur est obligé d'interroger sur le sixieme commandement de Dieu, (that is the seventh,) il doit être fort circonspect. Cette matière est un bourbier qu'on ne doit remuer que dans la nécessité : il est dangereux de faire des questions à ceux qui ignorent les péchés de luxure ; on peut leur donner l'envie de les commettre ; et même, si l'on n'est pas prudent en interrogeant ceux qui en sont coupables, on peut les renvoyer plus instruits à malfaire qu'ils ne l'étaient. La prudence demande donc que, ayant égard à l'âge, au sexe et à la condition des personnes, on n'aille précisément que jusqu' où la nécessité l'exige, se contentant de savoir les circonstances absolument nécessaires pour connaître l'espèce du péché ; il y a du danger à passer ces bornes, non seulement pour les pénitents, mais quelquefois même pour les confesseurs, *surtout quand ils sont jeunes.*

"Sanctissimé," dit Saint Liguori, "se gerat confessarius in interrogationibus de materiâ turpi, *præsertim cum puellis puerisque*, ne isti *addiscant quod ignorant et se ipse* in hâc materiâ tentationes patiatur, &c."

Hear again the graphic summing up of these evils from the pen of another clergyman.

"The books which are placed in the hands of professed penitents, with a view of preparing their minds for examination and cross-examination, the sifting, searching, scrutiny through which they are about to pass, are often of such

a nature as to *inflammé the imagination and thoughts, and to defile every spring of purity in the soul.* Such, too, is the effect of the questions asked. The purity of the kneeling penitent is put upon the rack, every succeeding question is a fresh turning of the deadly screw, until an amount of evil has been communicated, and a depth of iniquity has been stirred, and an extent of injury has been done to the moral sensibilities, such as no mind can well conceive. And can we imagine a position more perilous both to the confessor and to the confessed than this? What must be the extent of her forgetfulness of all self-respect, who for hours can prostrate herself at the feet of a young confessor, and unveil a heart, with whose hidden feelings, emotions and sins, God only should have been acquainted! What an affecting spectacle! The reaction of the confessional on his own mind, must be fatal to right and proper feeling. What must be the empoisoning effect of the feelings, facts, and circumstances minutely detailed and perpetually poured into his ear? To look at sin on the surface of society is awful, to feel its workings in our own hearts, still more so; but to listen continually to the fearful details of sin, which are constantly brought to this tribunal, must be fatally dangerous to the purest and most fortified mind. The practice of auricular confession would entail a thousand evils and dangers upon the parties concerned, even apart from the unnatural condition to which the priest has been reduced! But what must we think of auricular confession, when he into whose ear it is poured, lives under the irritation of a vow of celibacy. The irritated being (within whose bosom dis-

turbed passions are rankling) is called daily to listen to tales of licentiousness from his own sex ; and—ininitely worse—to the reluctant or shameless disclosures of the other. Let the female penitent be of what class she may—simple-hearted or lax—the repetition of her dishonor, while it must seal the moral mischief of the offence upon herself, (even if the hearer were a woman,) enhances it beyond measure, when the instincts of nature are violated by *making the recital to a man*. But shall we imagine the effect upon the feelings of him who receives the confessions ? Each sinner makes but one confession in a given time ; but each priest in the same space listens to a hundred ! What then after a while must that receptacle become, into which the continual droppings of all the sins of a parish are falling, and through which the copious abomination filters ? ” \*

Can we add to the fearful character of this picture ? Yes, a darker hue yet is thrown over it when we imagine the penitent herself to be writhing under the irritation of a similar vow of celibacy, for which by nature she was utterly unfitted, and which has been wrung from her by importunate cruelty, or filched from her by craft and deceit.

Let the recently canonized St. Alphonsus Liguori, Cardinal Wiseman's model saint, describe the penitent we are imagining.

In his “ True spouse of Christ,” † he heads a section

\* Rev. Oct. Winslow.

† The True Spouse of Jesus Christ ; or, the Nun Sanctified by the virtues of her state. Translated from the Italian by a Catholic Clergyman. 8vo. Dublin : Duffy. 1848.

as follows: "*What ought a person to do, who finds that she has become a nun against her inclination.*" p. 549.

". . . . 3. But perhaps you will tell me you can never have peace, because you find that you have entered religion [to enter religion is the impudent cant phrase for entering the monastic state] to please your parents, and against your own will. I answer thus: If at the time of your profession you had not a vocation, I would not have advised you to make the vows of a religious; but *I would have advised you to suspend your resolution of going back to the world*, and casting yourself into the many dangers of perdition which are found in the world. I now see you placed in the house of God, and made (either voluntarily or unwillingly) the spouse of Jesus Christ. For my part, I cannot pity you more than I could pity a person who had been transported (even against his will) from a place infected with pestilence, and surrounded by enemies, to a healthful country, [compassionate St. Alphonsus!] to be placed there for life, secure against every foe.

"I add: grant that what you state is true; now that you are professed in a convent, and that it is IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO LEAVE IT, tell me what do you wish to do? If you have entered religion [i. e. become a nun] against your inclination, you must now remain with cheerfulness. If you abandon yourself to melancholy, you must lead a life of misery, and will expose yourself to great danger of suffering a *hell here*, and another hereafter. YOU MUST THEN MAKE A VIRTUE OF NECESSITY. And if the

devil has brought you into religion [i. e. a nunnery] for your destruction, let it be your care to avail yourself of your holy state for your salvation, and to become a saint. Give yourself to God from the heart, and I assure you that by so doing, you shall become more content than all the princesses and queens of this world. Being asked his opinion regarding a person who had *become a nun against her will*, St. Francis de Salis answered: ‘It is true that *this child, if she had not been obliged by her parents, would not have left the world; but this is of little importance, provided she knows that the FORCE employed by her parents is more useful to her than the permission to follow her own will.* For now she can say: If I had not lost such liberty, I should have lost true liberty.’ The saint (!) meant to say, that had she not *been compelled by her parents to become a nun*, her liberty, which would have induced her to remain in the world, would have robbed her of the true liberty of the children of God, which consists in freedom from the chains and dangers of this world.” p. 551.

We dare not trust ourselves to apply any epithet to this man, this canonized Jesuit, whose portrait may be seen in the shop-windows, with a nimbus, or glory, stuck on the top of it; but put together the various features in this sketch; of the tremendous power wielded by the priest. To conceal aught from him from *fear of shame*, is mortal sin—lying to the Holy Ghost; and to him is committed the power—the absolute power, of remitting sin; what he looses on earth is loosed in heaven; every fold of conscience must be opened up to him; manuals of self-



examination have already been placed in the penitent's hands, which pre-suppose her guilty of things from which modesty recoils; she has been taught to say to herself, Have I done so and so, and so and so?—How often? And then the same loathsome questions are put to her, from the lips of a man—himself drilled in the same school of obscenity.

It may be that her questioner is young, amiable, and pleasing: it may be that he is one not yet inured and hardened in vice; writhing perhaps under the fatal vow that has made him a solitary homeless man; affections may be kindled in his heart which in another man would be holy and lawful,\*—in him they are sin; yet he must question his penitent, and search and probe her.

And she who has been forced into a life against which her heart recoils, who meets with no sympathy, is allowed no association of heart even with her fellow-prisoners, but

\* A French Roman Catholic thus writes. Speaking of the books that young priests must study, he adds: "On a cité les livres imprimés, mais on n'a pas cité les cahiers par lesquels se complète l'éducation des séminaires dans les deux dernières années; ces cahiers contiennent *ce que les plus intrépides n'ont jamais osé publier*. Je ne puis reproduire ici ce que m'ont révélé sur cette éducation insensée ceux qui en ont souffert, et qui y ont presque péri. Personne ne se représentera l'état d'un pauvre jeune homme, très-croyant encore, très-sincère, se débattant entre les terreurs et les tentations dont on l'entoure à plaisir, entre deux inconnus, dont un seul le rendrait fou, *la femme ! l'enfer !* . . . et cependant contraint sans cesse de regarder l'abîme, aveuglé, sur ces livres immondes, de temperament, de sang, de jeunesse, &c."—Michelet, *Du Pretre, de la femme, &c.* p. 246.

is ground down to a life of mechanical obedience, obliged for the least deviation from the stern rule, to kneel for hours, to kiss the ground before her superior's feet, to lick a cross upon the floor, or to eat her food like a cat from a dish placed on the ground without using her hands,—to her, the confessional becomes soon the only place where her heart can vent itself; the confessor her only friend.

Dangerous friendships! but a young man, such as we have described, is not often selected as the spiritual director of a convent. The bishop often reserves this office for himself, or confers it upon a man of his choice. This man may be a vicious man, one who has ceased to struggle with his restraining vow, but has given himself up to sensual indulgence. There have been such persons amongst the Romish clergy, even amongst Bishops and Cardinals, and Popes. There have been such characters in days gone by, and in less remote times; and what has occurred may yet occur again. Such a man has only to single out his victims, and to hunt them down.\*

We again quote Michélet: " Il n'est guère besoin d'art pour prendre ces pauvres femmes isolées, enfermées, dépendantes, près des quelles rien du dehors ne balance l'impression qu'une personne, la même personne vient leur donner tous les jours. Le moins habile doit fasciner sans peine une nature amoindrie et pliéè à la plus servile, à la plus tremblante obéissance. Ah il y a peu de courage et de mérite à dominer ainsi ce qui d'avance est brisé. . . . Imaginez dans une solitude où rien autre ne pénètre, l'unique chose vivante, la personne qui seule a droit d'y entrer, qui remplace toutes les influences dont nous venons de parler, qui est à elle seule la société, le journal, le Roman, et le sermon

In short, with such elements of evil at work, and where the sweet sounds of saving truth—that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin—are never heard; who shall say what particular form of evil will develop itself most prominently!

We must give yet further proof that the confessional is dangerous both to priest and penitent, and that the Church of Rome knows well the danger; and, in the teaching of her writers, on what they call Moral Theology, really seems to place every possible snare in the way of the confessor.

Thus Dens, the text-book at Maynooth College, has a clause headed, "On just causes for permitting motions of sensuality." And here we read:

"Just causes of this sort are the hearing of confessions; the reading of cases of conscience drawn up for a confessor; necessary or useful attendance on an invalid.

"The effect of a just cause is such, that any thing from which motions arise, may be not only lawfully begun, but also lawfully continued: and so the confessor receiving those motions from the hearing of confessions, *ought not on that account to abstain from hearing them*, but has a just cause for persevering, providing however that they always displease him, and there arise not therefrom the proximate danger of consent." \*

une personne dont la venue rompt seule la mortelle durée d'une vie inocupée. *Avant* qu'il ne vienne, *après* qu'il est venu, c'est, dans cet ennui profond, toute la division des heures. Nous disions une personne,—il faut dire: un homme." Pp. 278, 279.

\* "Hujusmodi justæ causæ sunt auditio confessionum, lectio

We have also in the same writer, a chapter—On the Proximate Cause of Sin. It is defined to be that which is naturally calculated to lead into mortal sin, or which brings a moral or probable danger of mortal sin. He then mentions several cases, such as frequenting a tavern where drunkenness and other sins arise, or conversing with a young woman; if, out of every ten times, he is wont to fall twice or thrice into carnal sin. And then comes this astounding admission:

“Idem resolvit P. Du Jardin, p. 51, de administratione quotidianâ alicujus officii licet honesti, v. g. Medici, Confessarii, Causidici, Mercatoris, si inde quis bis terve per mensem deliberate cadere soleat, et p. 53 concludit Confessarium obligari ad deserendum illud ministerium.”  
—*Dens*, tom. vi. p. 175.

So that it seems to be deliberately taught that it is only when the confessor falls so many as two or three times a month, that he is to consider himself in danger of mortal sin. Once a month is plainly allowed.

We have before us two original documents, which do not often reach Protestant hands. Every confessor, be he secular or regular, must have a licence from the Bishop

casuum conscientiæ pro Confessario, servitium necessarium vel utile præstitum infirmo. etc.

“Justa causa facere potest ut opus aliquod, ex quo motus oriuntur, non tantum licite inchoetur sed etiam licite continuetur: et ita Confessarius ex auditione confessionis eos percipiens, non ideo ab auditione abstinere debet, sed justam habet perseverandi rationem, modo tamen ipsi motus illi semper displiceant, nec inde oriatur proximum periculum consensûs.”—*Dens*, tom. i. pp., 299, 300. Coyne’s Dublin Edition. 1832.

before he can hear confession in a diocese. We have now before us two of these licenses, both granted in the kingdom of Naples, in the years 1836 and 1838, and signed by two Bishops. They are called "Pagelle di Confessione," and the confessor must carry them constantly with him. They form a little pamphlet of eight octavo pages, the last four pages being taken up with those cases which the confessor may not absolve, but must refer to the Bishop's jurisdiction; and here we find, both in the body of the licence and the table of reserved cases, express allusions to the danger of the confessor.

The two *Pagelle* which have come into our possession are different each from the other; every Bishop having his own form. We do not know the form which Cardinal Wiseman gives to his confessors in Westminster, but we think it desirable to give our readers the two specimens, of which we have spoken, in an Appendix.\* And as we have quoted, and shall quote, no book or document which is not of easy access to all readers, who may wish to verify our statements, we shall place these two "Pagelle di Confessione" in the British Museum, where they may be of use to future controversialists.

\* See Appendix A.

## CHAPTER V.

### “ THE NUN SANCTIFIED.”

St. Alphonsus M. Liguori, Bishop of St. Agatha, and founder of the congregation of the most holy Redeemer, was born in 1726 and died in 1787. He was canonized with five others by the late Pope Gregory XVI. in 1839. Now this saint wrote a book, to which we have already alluded, “The true Spouse of Christ, or the Nun Sanctified by the virtues of her State;” \* and as this book is written expressly for Nuns, we cannot do better than devote a chapter or two to its analysis, laying before the reader such portions of it as may be useful in giving a clear insight into the recesses of a Nunnery. With few comments of our own, we shall proceed to make extracts, using our own italics.

“ *Chapter I.*—On the Excellence of Virginitv consecrated to God in the Religious State.

“ Virgins who have the happiness of dedicating themselves to the love of Jesus Christ, by commending to him the ‘ lily ’ of their purity, are, in the first place, as dear to God as his angels. ‘ They shall,’ says the Redeemer, ‘ be like the angels of God in heaven.’ Matt. xxii. 30.

\* 8vo. Dublin, 1848.

Such is the immediate fruit of the virtue of chastity. Hence St. Ambrose says, that 'whoever preserves this virtue is an angel; and whoever violates it is a demon.' . . . Besides, whoever consecrates her virginity to Jesus Christ becomes his spouse. Hence, writing to his disciples, St. Paul did not hesitate to say: 'I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' 2 Cor. xi. 2.

" . . . . The Redeemer, wherever he speaks of virgins calls himself their Spouse; but when he speaks of others, he calls himself Master, Pastor, or Father.

Page 2. " . . . . A young person, desirous of settling in the world will, if she be prudent, in the first place, carefully enquire into the circumstances and dispositions of all who pretend to her affections, and will diligently seek to ascertain who of these is most deserving of her heart, and from whom she may expect the greatest happiness in this life. A Religious on the day of her profession, is espoused to Jesus Christ; for in the ceremony of profession, the Bishop says to the novice about to be professed. 'I espouse thee to Jesus Christ; may he preserve thee inviolate. Receive then as his spouse the ring of faith, that if thou serve him with fidelity, he may give thee an eternal crown.' Let us then ask the Spouse of the Canticles, who is this divine bridegroom." Cant. v. 9. . . .

"Hence blessed Clare of Montefalco, used to say that her virginity was so dear to her, that, rather than lose it, she would be content to suffer the pains of hell during her whole life. Hence, as we learn from St. Ambrose, the

glorious virgin St. Agnes, when offered for husband the son of the Roman Prefect, justly answered, that she had found a better spouse.

[Other examples follow : such as St. Domitilla, St. Susanna, blessed Jane, the infanta of Portugal, who refused Louis XI, king of France, and blessed Agnes, who refused the Emperor Ferdinand II, and Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of the King of Hungary, who rejected the proposal of marriage with Henry the Archduke of Austria.]

P. 4. “ Besides whoever consecrates her virginity to Jesus Christ, is devoted entirely to God, in body as well as in mind. . . . These poor worldlings meet with insurmountable difficulties in the way of virtue. . . . To become a saint in the world, it is necessary for the married woman to adopt the means of sanctification, to frequent the sacraments, to make long and frequent mental prayers, to practice many interior and exterior mortifications, to love contempt, humiliations, and poverty, and, in a word, to make every effort in her power to please God. . . . But how can a married person find the time, the opportunities, and helps necessary for recollection and continual application to the things of God? . . . *The husband must be attended.* If his directions be neglected, or his commands be not immediately executed, he breaks out into complaints and reproaches. *The servants disturb the house,* at one time by their clamour, or their quarrels, at another by their importunate demands. *The children, if small, are a perpetual source of annoyance,* either by their cries and screams, or by the endless variety of their wants; if



grown up, they are an occasion of still greater inquietude, fears, and bitterness, by associating with bad companions, by the dangers to which they are exposed, or the infirmities with which they are afflicted. How in the midst of so many difficulties and embarrassments, is it possible for the married woman to attend to prayer, or to preserve recollection? . . . But would to God that seculars were exposed to no other evils than the obstacles to their devotions, to constant prayer, and the frequent use of the sacraments. *Their greatest misfortune is to be in continual danger of losing the grace of God and their own immortal souls.* . . . At home they must hold constant intercourse with their own families, with their relatives, and with the friends of their husbands. Oh! how great, on such occasions, is the danger of losing God!

“*This is not understood by young persons*, but it is well known to those who are settled in the world, and who are daily exposed to such dangers.

“*O how unhappy and miserable is the life of the generality of married persons!*” \* I have known the circum-

\* This attempt by Liguori to frighten young women from marriage is not original. It is an old staple argument. There is a little book printed in the year 1642. s. l. permissu superiorum. “The English Nunne: being a treatise wherein (byway of dialogue) the author endeauoureth to draw yong and vnmarried Catholike Gentlewomen to imbrace a Votary and religious life, written by N. N.” We read in the Preface, p. 7, how he professes to show “that the accustomed miseries of a married life, and of having issue, ought much rather to sway with women, for their forbearance of marriage.

“And, first, whereas lyfe is the dearest thing to man or woman; yet we find, that besides the certaine great paines of child-

stances, the feelings, and dispositions of numberless married persons, from the highest to the lowest class of society; and how few of them were content! The bad treatment of husbands, the disaffection of children, the wants of the family, the control of relatives, *the pains of childbirth, which are always accompanied with danger of death*, the scruples and anxiety of conscience regarding the flight of occasions,\* and the education of children, plunge your seculars into endless troubles and agitation, and fill their souls with continual *regret for not having been called to a happier and more holy state*. God grant that in the midst of such troubles and agitations, many of them may *not lose their immortal souls*, and that, along

birth, lyfe itselfe in young married women, is for the most part, euery one or two years, greatly endangered to be lost: witness heereof is the daily experience of women dying in childbed.

“What true desire then can a woman have to vndertake that course of life, wherein lyeth so great a perill of loosing that (I meane her lyfe) which is most deare vnto her; and that her body thereby shall, before its prefixed tyme by God, become meate for wormes? . . . But to proceed, Admit that a woman in bringing forth her children, should be freed from all danger of death; yet to how many other insupportable afflictions doth she become thrall, and lye open? For we observe (and this not seldom) that the husband becomes vnkind, withdrawing his love and affection, &c. . . . O how many wyves there are in England who find by ouer late and too dearely bought experience all this to be true, which I here affirm, of the frequent dangers, griefes, and afflictions of mynd commonly accompanying marriage? From all which languors of spirit that woman delivereth herselfe, who for-bearing marriage, doth determine to leade a religious lyfe.”

\* This is a literal reprint; the meaning is not apparent.

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with passing through *a hell in this life*, they may not be condemned to an eternity of torments in the next. *Such is the unhappy condition of many of those who have engaged in the married state. . . .*

P. 7. "The state then of virgins consecrated to Jesus Christ, and who are entirely devoted to his divine love, is of all states, the most happy and sublime. They are free from the dangers to which married persons are necessarily exposed. Their affections are not fixed on their families, nor on men of the world, nor on goods of the earth, nor on the dress and vanities of women. . . . They are unshackled by worldly ties, by subjection to friends or to relatives, and are far removed from the noise and tumult of the world. . . .

P. 10. "St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi \* used to say that 'chastity flourishes only among thorns.' To fulfil the obligations of the religious state, in the midst of amusements, worldly attachments, and conversation with seculars, in the midst of sensual gratifications, of indulgence of the palate, of the eyes, and of the ears, is utterly impossible. Religious purity can be preserved only among the thorns of mortification. 'A virgin,' says St. Basil, 'should be immaculate in all things, in the tongue, the ears, the eyes, the touch, and, above all, in the mind.' (St. Bas de Vera Virg.) To be faithful to her Spouse, a virgin must be immaculate in her tongue by the delicacy of her language, *and by abstinence as much as possible from conversations with men*; she must be immaculate in the ears, by shunning, like death itself, all worldly discourses;

\* See ante page 37.

immaculate in her eyes by the modesty of her looks, *always restrained so as never to fix them on the face of a man ; immaculate in the touch*, always observing the greatest *caution towards herself and others* ; but above all, immaculate in her soul, rejecting every unchaste thought, as soon as it is presented to the mind, by invoking the assistance of Jesus and Mary. . . .

. . . To preserve her soul and body free from stain she must also chastise her flesh, by fasting, abstinence, by *disciplines*,\* and other penitential works. . . .

. . . “Jesus,” says Jerome, in his epistle to Eustochia “is a jealous spouse ; he is *unwilling that your face be seen by others*.” The Saviour then is greatly displeased with the conduct of those who seek to appear before seculars, and delight in their conversation. Virgins, distinguished for sanctity, always seek retirement ; and whenever it is necessary to go into the company of men, they endeavour to deform their persons, so as to excite feelings of aversion, rather than sentiments of affection. . . .

12. . . . “If you desire to possess the purity which becomes the spouse of Jesus, you must cut off all dangerous occasions, you must cherish a holy ignorance of all that is opposed to chastity, and abstain *from reading whatever has the slightest tendency to sully the soul*.† If at the *grate*, ‡ language unbecoming your state be ever.

\* *Discipline* is the saintly name of a scourge.

† Yet the poor girl is to read “The Garden of the Soul,” See page 56.

‡ The grated window through which this *voluntary* recluse alone can speak to a relative, and that but rarely.

uttered, you should instantly withdraw, or change the subject of conversation, otherwise *you shall have much to suffer* from the temptations by which you will be assailed. If fire does not always burn, it never fails to scorch. [St. Paul says, it is better to marry than to burn, not so St. Alphonsus.] A look, *an endearing expression, a trifling gift*, often enkindles a spark which soon becomes an *internal, a consuming fire*. . . :

13. . . . “It is particularly difficult for those who are in the vigour of youth, to practice immaculate purity, while they converse with young men on worldly subjects, jesting with them, and smiling at expressions which ought to cover them with shame. Fly, fly from all such occasions. *Explain to the Confessor*, not only your temptations, but also the occasions of them, and ask his advice about the best means of removing them.”

*Chapter II.*—Is on the Advantages of the Religious State. St. Bernard is quoted.

P. 19. “Is not that a holy state in which a man lives more purely, falls more rarely, rises more speedily, walks more cautiously, is bedewed more frequently, rests more securely, dies more confidently, *is purged more quickly*, and rewarded more abundantly.” And on each of these heads St. Alphonsus enlarges.

“*Vivit purius.*” A Religious lives more purely. . . . Seculars pray, communicate, hear mass, read, *take the discipline*, [i. e. whip themselves] and recite the divine office when they please. But a religious performs these duties at the time prescribed *by obedience*—that is by the

holy will of God. For in her rule, and IN THE COMMANDS *of her superior, she hears his voice.*

P. 23. . . . "Irroratur frequentius"—a religious is bedewed more frequently. O God, with what internal illuminations, spiritual delight, and expressions of love, does Jesus refresh his spouses at prayer, communion, in presence of the holy sacrament, and in the cell before the crucifix! Christians in the world are like plants in a barren land on which but little of the dew of heaven falls, and from that little, the soil, for want of proper cultivation seldom derives fertility. Poor seculars! They desire to devote more time to prayer, to receive the holy Eucharist, and to hear the word of God \* more frequently . . . but religious are like the tree planted in a fruitful soil, which is continually and abundantly watered with the dews of heaven.

. . . . "Quiescit securius,"—a religious rests more securely. . . . P. 26. It is true, that even in the cloister, there are some . . . who do not live as religious ought to live. To be a good religious, and to be content, are one and the same thing. . . . I have been accustomed to say, that a religious in her convent, enjoys a foretaste of paradise, OR SUFFERS AN ANTICIPATION OF HELL. To endure the pains of hell is to be separated from God; TO BE FORCED, AGAINST THE INCLINATIONS OF NATURE, to do the will of others. !!! to be *distrusted, despised, reprov'd,* and CHASTISED, *by those with whom we live*; TO BE SHUT UP IN A PLACE OF CONFINEMENT, from which it is IM-

\* Do not suppose this means the Bible. See post. Page 105.

POSSIBLE TO ESCAPE ; in a word, it is to be in CONTINUAL TORTURE WITHOUT A MOMENT'S PEACE. !!!”

Remember, reader, this is no Protestant's description, neither is it the eloquent but liberal Michelet. It is St. Alphonsus Liguori—Cardinal Wiseman's model saint—and the book is just published in an English translation.

P. 28. . . . “ Why wear the habit of a religious, if in heart and soul you be a secular, and live according to the maxims of the world ? ”

Why wear it ? mocking St. Alphonsus ! Why wear it ? because she cannot take it off—you have just told her.  
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESCAPE.

On the ninth head. “ Remuneratur copiosius,”—a religious is more abundantly rewarded. . . .

P. 32. . . . “ The dignity of martyrdom is sublime ; but the religious state appears to possess something still more excellent. The martyr suffers, that he may not lose his soul ; the religious, to render herself more acceptable to God.

. . . “ I hold, as certain, that the greater number of the seraphic thrones, vacated by the unhappy associates of Lucifer, will be filled by religious !!! Out of the sixty, who, during the last century were enrolled in the catalogue of saints, or honoured with the appellation of *blessed*, all with the exception of five or six belonging to the religious orders.

“ *Chapter III.*—A Religious should belong entirely to God.

. . . . “ In his virginal spouses, the Redeemer bears more patiently with every imperfection, than with a

divided heart. . . . ‘Receive,’ said the Bishop at consecration, ‘the veil, that you may admit no lover but him. . . . The Church commands religious at their profession, to change their name\* that they may forget the world. . . . Whenever any earthly object steals into her heart, and claims a share in that love which had been entirely consecrated to her Divine Spouse,† she should exclaim, ‘Begone! pernicious affection—you seek to poison my heart: depart therefore, for another lover, more noble, more faithful, and more acceptable than you, has loved me before I could love him, and has taken possession of my whole soul: you are a vile and miserable creature; but my spouse is the Lord, the King of heaven and earth. I am espoused to Him whom angels serve.’ (See p. 24.)

. . . . P. 39. “Who can behold virgins of noble birth† and *splendid fortunes*,§ despising the pomp and pleasures of the world, which they might have enjoyed, and shutting themselves up in a convent, to live in poverty and abjection; who, I say, can behold these holy virgins without exclaiming—‘this is the generation of them that seek the Lord?’”

*Chapters V. and VI.* are—“On the Danger to which

\* One nun does not know the name of another,—it is Sister Mary Joseph, or Sister Mary Magdalene.

† Again we call attention to this mode of representing Divine Love as similar in kind to, and a substitute for, carnal love; the girl is here taught to love the Lord Jesus Christ, as she would love a human suitor. The Christian who loves God and his dear Son, loves all the more on that account, husband or wife, father or mother.

‡ Earl’s daughters perhaps.

§ £85,000?



an Imperfect Religious, who is but little afraid of her Imperfection, exposes her Salvation."

. . . . P. 75. "The religious, whose faults spring from attachment to any passion, is exposed in a particular manner to the danger of being lost. Oh, God! \* *how many religious are there*, who because they do not disengage their hearts *from certain earthly attachments*, never become saints, and endanger their eternal salvation. . . .

. . . . P. 85. "A religious, then, should endeavour to discover the causes of her defects; she ought to examine if they arise from familiarity with any person within or without the monastery—from remaining in such a place—from keeping up a correspondence by letters or by presents, or from similar causes."

"*Chapter VII.*—On Interior Mortification or Abnegation of Self-love."

. . . . P. 92. "If you receive a letter, restrain your curiosity, and abstain from opening it for some time. If you desire to read the termination of an interesting narrative, lay aside the book, and defer the reading of it to another time. When you feel inclined to mirth, to pull a flower, or to look at any object, suppress these inclinations for the love of Jesus Christ, and deprive yourself, for his sake, of the pleasure of indulging them. Father Leonard of Port Maurice relates that a servant of God performed *eight acts of mortification in eating an egg*, and that it was afterwards revealed to her, that as the reward of her self-denial, eight degrees of grace, and as many degrees of glory, were bestowed upon her. . . .

\* See Note, p. 113.

.... P. 99. " Nothing is more injurious to religious than to be guided by the dictates of their own will and inclinations. . . . ' Whoever,' says St. Bernard, ' constitutes himself his own master, becomes the disciple of a fool.'

.... P. 113. " The principal and most efficacious means of practising the obedience due to superiors, and of rendering it meritorious before God, is to consider that in obeying them we obey God himself, and that by despising their commands we despise the authority of our Divine Master, who has said of superiors, ' He that heareth you, heareth me.' Luke x. 16. . . . When then a religious receives a precept from her prelate, superior or confessor, she should immediately execute it, not only to please men, but principally to please God, whose will is made known to her by their command. In obeying their directions, she is more certain of doing the will of God, *than if an angel came down from heaven to manifest his will to her.*

.... P. 114. " St. John Climacus (gradu iv.) relates, that in a certain monastery, the superior, to set an example to the community, commanded in their presence *an old man of eighty years to stand in the refectory for two hours without interruption.* The aged monk being asked how he had been able to bear this mortification, replied : ' I imagined that I stood before Jesus Christ, and that he imposed on me that humiliation ; and this thought made me obey without difficulty or repugnance.' . . . .  
.... It may be added, that there is more certainty of doing the will of God by obedience to superiors, than by obedience to Jesus Christ, should he appear in person and

give his commands. Because, should Jesus Christ appear to a religious, *she would not be certain whether it was he that spoke, or an evil spirit*, who, under the appearance of the Redeemer, wished to deceive her.

. . . . P. 122. "In a word, the only way by which a religious can become a saint, and be saved, is TO OBSERVE her rule; FOR HER, THERE IS NO OTHER WAY THAT LEADS TO SALVATION!!"

Awful! Jesus says, "I am the way: no man cometh to the Father but by me."

. . . . P. 143. "The fourth and last degree of perfect obedience is to obey with simplicity. . . . St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi says that 'perfect obedience requires a soul without a will, and a will without an intellect.'

. . . . 145. "To regard as good whatever superiors command, is *the blind obedience so much praised* by the *saints*, and is the duty of every religious.

. . . 147. "To try the obedience of their SUBJECTS, superiors sometimes impose commands that are inexpedient and even absurd. St. Francis commanded his disciples *to plant cabbages with their roots uppermost*. He obliged brother Matthew to continue turning round till he fell to the ground.

*Chapter VIII.* treats of the external mortification of the senses.

. . . 149. "Our Lord once said to St. Francis of Assisium, 'If you desire my love, use bitters as sweets, and sweets as bitters.'

. . . P. 151. "If we read the lives of the saints, and see the works of penance which they performed, we shall

be ashamed of the delicacy and of the reserve with which we chastise the flesh. In the lives of the ancient Fathers we read of a large community of nuns who never tasted fruit or wine. Some of them took food only once every day; others never eat a meal, except after two or three days of rigorous abstinence: all were clothed, and even slept, in haircloth. I do not require such austerities from religious in the present day: but is it too much for them to *take the discipline* several times in the week?—to wear a chain round some part of the body till the hour of dinner?—not to approach the fire in winter on some day in each week, and during novenas of devotion?—to abstain from fruit and sweetmeats?—and in honour of the Mother of God, to fast every Saturday on bread and water, or, at least, to be content with one dish.

. . . “If you cannot (from ill health) chasten your body by positive rigour, abstain, at least, from some lawful pleasures. St. Francis Borgia, *when amusing himself in hawk-hunting, used to cast down his eyes when he saw the hawk about to spring upon its prey.*\* St. Louis Gonzaga always turned away his eyes from the objects of curiosity exhibited at the festivities at which he might be present. Why cannot you practise similar mortifications?

. . . P. 156. “*To animate your fervour in the prac-*

\* We feel it necessary to assure our readers that this passage is transcribed literally from this book, page 151. A saint amusing himself with hawk-hunting, and then by way of mortification, depriving himself of the sweet pleasure of seeing one animal destroy another!! Would St. Francis have denied himself the gratification of witnessing the last agony of a Protestant at the stake? That would be very meritorious surely.

*tice of mortification*, I shall here place before your eyes, in his own words, what St. John Climacus saw in a monastery called the Prison of Penitents: 'I saw,' says the saint, (in Scala Par. Grad.) 'some of them standing the whole night in the open air, to overcome sleep: I saw others with their eyes fixed on heaven, and with tears, begging mercy from God. Others stood with their hands bound behind their shoulders, and their heads bowed down, as if they were unworthy to raise their eyes to heaven. Others remained on ashes, with their heads between their knees, and beat the ground with their foreheads. Others deluged the floor with their tears. Others stood in the burning rays of the sun. Others, parched with thirst, were content with taking a few drops of water to prevent death. Others took a mouthful of bread, and then threw it out, saying, that 'he who has been guilty of beastly actions, is unworthy of the food of men.' Some had their cheeks furrowed by continual streams of tears, and others their eyes wasted away. Others struck their breasts with such violence, that they began to spit blood. And I saw all with faces so pallid and emaciated, that they appeared to be so many corpses.

The next section is "On the Sanctification of the eyes, and on Modesty in general."

... "159. A deliberate glance at a person of a different sex, often enkindles an infernal spark, which consumes the soul. 'Through the eyes,' says St. Bernard, 'the deadly arrows of love enter.' Ser. 13. The first dart which wounds and frequently robs chaste souls of life, finds admission through the eyes... St. Bernard,

after being a novice for a year, could not tell whether his cell was vaulted. In consequence of never raising his eyes from the ground, he never knew that there were but three windows in the church of the monastery, in which he spent his noviciate. . . . The saints were particularly cautious not to look at persons of a different sex. St. Hugh, bishop, when compelled to speak with women, never looked at them in the face. St. Clare would never fix her eyes on the face of a man. She was greatly afflicted because, when raising her eyes at the elevation to see the consecrated host, she once involuntarily saw the countenance of the priest. St. Lewis Gonzaga never looked his own mother in the face. It is related of St. Arsenius that a noble lady went to visit him in the desert, to beg of him to recommend her to God. When the saint perceived that his visitor was a woman, he turned away from her. She then said to him, 'Arsenius, since you will neither see nor hear me, at least remember me in your prayers.' 'No,' replied the saint, 'but I will beg of God to make me forget you, and never more to think of you.'

"From these examples may be seen the folly and temerity of some religious, who, though they have not the sanctity of a St. Clare, still gaze around from the terrace, in the parlour, and in the church, upon every object that presents itself, even on persons of a different sex. And notwithstanding their unguarded looks, they expect to be free from temptations and from the danger of sin. For having once looked deliberately at a woman who was gathering ears of corn, the Abbot Pastor was tormented

*for forty years by temptations against chastity.* St. Gregory states that the temptation, to conquer which St. Benedict rolled himself in thorns, arose from one incautious glance at a female. St. Jerome, though living in a cave at Bethlehem, in continual prayer and macerations of the flesh, was terribly molested by the remembrance of ladies whom he had long before seen in Rome. Why should not similar molestations be the lot of the religious who wilfully and without reserve fixes her eyes on persons of a different sex? . . . Father Manareo, when taking leave of St. Ignatius, for a distant place, looked stedfastly in his face; for this look he was corrected by the saint. (Lancis Op. 2. n. 304.) From the conduct of St. Ignatius, on this occasion, we learn that it was not becoming in religious to fix their eyes on the countenance of a person even of the same sex, particularly if the person is young. But I do not see how looks at a young person of a different sex can be excused from the guilt of a venial fault, or even from mortal sin, when there is proximate danger of criminal consent.

. . . . 162. " Except in looking at such objects (sacred images, &c.) a religious should in general keep the eyes cast down, and particularly in places where they may fall upon dangerous objects. In conversing with men she should never roll the eyes about to look at them, and much less to look at them a second time.

. . . . " St. Francis of Assisium once said to his companion that he was going out to preach. After walking through the town with his eyes fixed on the ground, he returned to the convent. His companion asked him when

he would preach the sermon. 'We have,' replied the saint, 'by the modesty of our looks, given an excellent instruction to all who saw us.' It is related of St. Lewis Gonzaga, that when he walked through Rome, the students would stand in the streets to observe and admire his great modesty.'

How unlike the real quality is this sham modesty—  
*Come, and see how modest we are!*

. . . . 164. "A religious should be modest in her walk. 'Let your gait,' says St. Basil, 'be neither slow nor vehement.' Ep. ad Greg. Your walk to be modest must be grave; neither too quick nor too slow. A religious must practice modesty in sitting. She must avoid every slothful posture: she must abstain from crossing the feet, and from putting one leg on the other."

We next have a section "On the Mortification of the Appetite."

. . . . 169. "The same saint (Gregory) relates, in another place (Dial. l. c. 4), that a certain nun, seeing in the garden a very fine lettuce, pulled and eat it, in opposition to her rule. She was instantly possessed by a devil, who tormented her grievously.\* Her companions called to her aid the holy Abbot Equitius, at whose arrival the dæmon exclaimed, '*What evil have I done? I sate upon the lettuce: she came and eat it.*' The holy man, by his commands, compelled the evil spirit to depart."

A case is then related (p. 169), of a novice whom

\* Perhaps the lettuce disagreed with her.



the devil seduced "by the savoury smell of a roasted fowl."

We next quote from page 170. By so doing, we are not questioning the evil of "gulosity," as the saint calls it, nor the consequences that may result from intemperance either in eating or drinking; but we do think it strange, that a party of young ladies, who have vowed never to marry, should need such constant advice on the subject of chastity.

. . . . 170. "Besides, he who gratifies the taste, will readily indulge the other senses: for having lost the spirit of recollection, he will easily commit faults, by *indecent words*, and by *unbecoming gestures*. But the greatest evil of intemperance is, that it exposes *chastity* to great danger. 'Repletion of the stomach,' says Jerome, 'is the hot-bed of lust'—excess in eating is *a powerful incentive to incontinence*.

. . . . 173, "'My first advice,' says St. Jerome, in one of his epistles to the Virgin Eustochia, 'is that the spouse of Christ fly from wine as from poison; wine and youth are a twofold incentive to pleasure.' Ep. 22. If you desire to preserve the chastity which becomes the spouse of Jesus, avoid wine as poison: wine and youth are a double fire, which kindle *the desire of unlawful pleasures*."

We next have a section "On the Mortification of the senses of hearing, of smell, and of touch."

. . . . "180. With regard to the touch, you must take the greatest care to avoid all, even the smallest, defects. For every fault committed by the indulgence of that sense,

exposes the soul to the danger of eternal death. *I cannot explain myself fully on this subject.\** I shall only say, that to preserve the precious jewel of purity, the religious should observe all possible modesty and caution, not only towards others, but also towards themselves. Even in his last agony, St. Peter of Alcantara would not allow any of his brethren to touch any part of his body. Feeling himself touched by one of them, he exclaimed, 'Withdraw! touch me not; I am still alive, and may still offend God.'

. . . . p. 180. "*Hair-cloths* are of various kinds; some are made of strong or coarse hair, the others are bands or chains of *brass* or *iron wire*. The former may be injurious to persons of a delicate constitution; for, as Father Scaramelli justly remarks, they inflame the flesh and weaken the stomach, by drawing its natural heat to the external surface of the body. The latter may be worn on the arms, legs, or shoulders, without injury to the health; but not on the breast, or round the body. These are the ordinary species of hair-cloths, and may be safely used by all. Far different from them were the hair-cloths worn by the saints. D. Sancia Cariglio, the *celebrated penitent* of Father M. Avila,† wore a shirt of coarse hair, which reached from the neck to the knees. St. Rose of Lima used a

\* It is quite unnecessary. You have given the young lady her manual of devotion; and your works on moral theology, as well as those of Bailey and Dens, have well indoctrinated the confessor as to what he is to inquire into.

† "All their works they do for to be seen of men."—Matt. xxiii. 5.

long hair shirt, interwoven with needles, and carried a broad iron chain round her loins. St. Peter of Alcantara wore on his shoulders a large plate of iron, which was so rough, and covered with sharp projections, that it kept the flesh in a state of continual laceration. *Would it then be too much for you to wear a small band of iron from morning till the hour of dinner?*

181. “ *Disciplines or flagellations*, are a species of mortification strongly recommended by St. Francis de Sales, and universally adopted in religious communities of both sexes. All the modern saints, without a single exception,\* have continually practised this sort of penance. It is related of St. Lewis of Gonzaga, that he often scourged himself unto blood, three times in the day. And at the point of death, not having sufficient strength to use the lash, he besought the provincial to have him disciplined from head to foot. *Surely then it would not be too much for you to take the discipline once in the day*, or at least three or four times in the week?

“ *Vigils or watchings* consist in the retrenchment of sleep. It is related of St. Rose, that, to prevent sleep, and thus be able to spend the night in prayer, she tied her hair to a nail, fastened in the wall. When she was overcome by sleep, the inclination of the head caused pain sufficient to wake her. Of St. Peter of Alcantara, we read, that for forty years he slept but an hour, or at the most, an hour-and-a-half, each night.

182. . . “The saints have not only curtailed the time for sleep, but have also practised various mortifications in

\* St. Alphonsus included.

the manner of taking repose. St. Lewis Gonzaga was accustomed to scatter fragments of wood and of stones over his bed. St. Rose of Lima lay on the trunks of trees, the space between which was filled with broken earthen-ware. The venerable Sister Mary Crucified, of Sicily, used a pillow of thorns. These austerities are extraordinary and are not adapted to all persons. But a religious should not seek a bed of down; if a straw bed be not injurious to her health, why should she require a mattress of hair?—or if a single mattress be sufficient for her, why does she make use of two?

“To bear with patience the excessive heat or cold of the seasons, is a very useful mortification of the sense of touch. St. Peter of Alcantara went bare-footed and bare-headed throughout the winter, and never wore more than a single coat, which was generally torn. You cannot practise such rigours; but would it be too much for you to refrain from approaching the fire during the winter? St. Lewis Gonzaga, even when he lived in Lombardy, where the cold is very intense, never approached the fire. You can at least, on one day of the week, bear with patience, and accept as a penance, from the hands of God, the cold and heat of the seasons. St. Francis Borgia\* on his arriving one night at a college in the country, found the gates locked, and was therefore obliged to remain all night under the snow, which fell heavily. In the morning the religious expressed great regret at what had happened. ‘Be assured,’ replied the Saint, ‘that though I suffered much in the body, I have been greatly consoled in spirit by the reflection, *that God rejoiced at my pains.*’”!!!

\* The hawk-hunting saint. See page 83.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FURTHER COUNSELS FROM LIGUORI.

WE continue our quotations from St. Alphonsus Liguori. This book of his—the Nun Sanctified—deserves all attention. It is written by a recently-canonized saint, therefore it has the full sanction of Rome, and indeed in the Roman Catholic Directory for 1845, p. 167, we find it stated that, preparatory to his canonization, *all the writings* of St. Alphonsus Liguori, whether *printed* or *inedited*, have been more than twenty times rigorously discussed by the sacred congregation of rites, which decreed, that *not one word in them* had been found worthy of censure. Moreover this recently canonized saint is the express favourite of his Eminence, the so-called Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, —Nicholas Wiseman—Saint that is to be. And the book has been newly translated and recently published in a neat volume for the use of English Nuns and Postulants.

*Chapter IX.*—Treats of “Religious Poverty,” and is divided into many sections.

P. 193. . . “The second degree of poverty is, to deprive yourself of whatever is superfluous : for the smallest superfluity will prevent a perfect union of the soul with God. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, went so far as to strip her

little altar of all its ornaments except the crucifix. St. Teresa relates of herself, that, knowing God to be most jealous of religious poverty, she could not recollect herself in prayer, so long as she retained any thing which she thought to be superfluous. If, in your convent, there is not a perfect community of property, endeavour at least to imitate the poverty practised by the most exemplary and exact amongst your companions, as well in dress, as in food, and furniture. But you will perhaps say, that whatever you possess, is retained with the leave of the superior. Permission to keep superfluities, may save you from the punishments inflicted on *proprietors*, but will not secure to you the merit of perfect poverty. Again, you will, perhaps, say, that you have no attachment to what you keep. But whether you have an attachment to it or not, the possession of what is not necessary, will always prevent you from attaining the perfection of poverty. You may imagine that a certain sum of money,\* or a certain portion of property will enable you to relieve the poor, or to assist your companions. But, I repeat, that it is the nun who has nothing to give, and not the religious who has the means of distributing alms, that edifies the church.

194. . . “If dear sister, you desire to please your spouse, you must renounce whatever you know to be superfluous. . .

196. . . “Above all, seek to be poor in money.†

197. . . “If you wish not to offend against poverty,

\* £85,000 for instance.

† If you should be worth £85,000, give that to the Nunnery, or to the Bishop to build a Church with.

you must observe great caution in your whole expenditure.

198. . . "Oh how many faults are committed by religious, in celebrating their feasts. They are not content with a great abundance of lights and of ornaments, or with the expense of music: no, they must also display their vanity by regaling all who are invited to the solemnity."

*Chapter X.*—Treats of Detachment from Persons.

204. . . "If attachment to relatives were not productive of great mischief, Jesus Christ would not have so strenuously exhorted us to estrangement from them. 'If,' he says, 'any man come to me and hate not his father and mother. . . and brethren, and sisters, he cannot be my disciple.' Luke xiv. 26.

. . . "What progress can be expected from the religious who wishes to have her relatives near the convent, who, if she do not see them, is constantly sending letters and messages, to request a visit from them; and who, if they yield not to her entreaties is disturbed, and complains by frequent letters of their absence and neglect? It is impossible for a nun of this description ever to obtain a close union with God. 'Whoever,' says St. Gregory, 'wishes to be truly united to the Father of all, must be separated from relatives.' Mor. Lib. 7. cap. 6.

206. . . "The nun who leaves her relatives in effect and in affection, shall obtain eternal beatitude in heaven, and a hundred-fold on earth; she will leave a few, and shall find many sisters in religion; she will abandon a

father and a mother, and in return shall have God for her Father, and Mary for her mother.”

Before proceeding with our extracts, we may here remark that St. Benedict in his rule, which is looked upon as the model for all monastic rules, recites all the decalogue, except the 5th commandment, and for it he substitutes the words; “Honour all men.” \*

206. . . “Hence convinced that detachment from kindness is highly pleasing to God, the saints have sought to be wholly removed from their relatives.

. . . “For my part,” says St. Teresa, “I cannot conceive what consolation a nun can find in her relatives. By attachment to them she displeases God, and without being able to enjoy their amusements, she shares in all their troubles.”

“How applicable to you, O blessed sister, is this reflection of the saint. When your parents and friends come to the grate, they certainly cannot make you a partaker of their worldly amusements; *for you cannot go beyond the limits of the enclosure.* In their visit then they only recount their misfortunes, their infirmities, and their

\* Calmet says, “Il est remarquable que St. Benoit, après avoir inséré les premiers preceptes du Décalogue, semble avoir exprès omis celui-ci *honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam*, etc. pour mettre á sa place le conseil de St. Pierre *omnes honorare*; comme pour marquer qu’un religieux doit se regarder sur la terre, comme n’ayant plus ni père ni mère, ni parens, et qu’il doit tellement oublier le monde, et tout ce qu’il y a laissé, qu’il ne songe plus qu’á rendre á Dieu seal, le service qu’il lui a voué comprenant ses parens même dans le sacrifice qu’il lui a fait de toutes choses.



wants. Surely such narratives only serve to fill your head and heart with so much inquietude, with so many distractions and defects, that after each visit, you shall be for several days disturbed and distracted in your meditations and communions, by the remembrances of what you have heard. . . Oh what an excess of folly to imagine that you cannot be happy, without frequently seeing your friends. Ah, *if you keep aloof from them*, what torrents of consolation and happiness would your spouse, Jesus, infuse into your soul! St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi used to say, that an abhorrence of the grates should be the principal fruits of the communions of religious. And as an evil spirit once said to the venerable Sister Mary Villani there is certainly no place where the devil does so much injury to religious as in the parlour.\* Hence St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi would not even pass through it; and such was her hatred of it, that she could not bear to hear it mentioned. Whenever she was obliged to go to the parlour, she would begin to weep, and would say to her novices; "My dear children, pray to God for me; for I am called to the grate." When leaving them, she would beg of them soon to call her away from the grate.

"But you will say, 'What am I to do? Am I never to see my friends? When they visit me must I send them away, and refuse to go to the grate?' I do not require so much from you; but if you refused to see them, would you do wrong?—would you do what would be inconvenient, or what is never done by religious?" Several nuns

\* Parlatorium; the Room where the grate is.

here resolved never to see their relatives, and have fulfilled their resolution.

“ In the Life of Father Torres (Lib. 6, cap. i.) it is related of Gerolama Sanfelice, a religious in the convent of St. Alvina, that so great was her attachment to her relations, that her thoughts were continually upon them ; that she desired frequent visits from them, and sent every day to enquire about her father. Her sister, Mary Antonia, who lived in the same convent, was so fervent, that she besought the Lord to make her suffer a great deal in this life. Her prayer was heard, and she was afflicted with an ulcer, which eat away her flesh, and produced the very pangs of death. In her agony she would exclaim, ‘ More suffering, O my Spouse, more suffering.’ When dying, she said to Gerolama that she hoped to attain eternal glory, and that as soon as she should enter into bliss, she would beg of God to transform her tepid sister into a saint. She died : Gerolama changed her life, and adopted and observed *for forty years the resolution never more to see her relations !* ”

Observe, reader ; observe this, all human ties are to be broken ; the fifth commandment set at open defiance, and all this turns a *tepid sister* into a saint !

The narrative proceeds : “ It once happened that two of her nephews came to visit her, but she refused to see them ; and having sent them away, she went to the grate of the church to pray before the blessed Sacrament. The young men entered the church, expecting to see her at a distance ; but she instantly retired behind the curtain, and such was the effort which she made on that occasion *to*

*stifle the feelings of flesh and blood*, that she fainted away. Whoever does not offer violence to herself, shall never become a saint. Sister Gerolama made a rapid progress in divine love; and afterwards lived and died a saint. After death, her body was opened, and a cross of flesh was found on her heart, as a token of the great love which she had borne to Jesus crucified. *Why cannot you imitate her example, and free yourself for ever from the distractions of grates ?* ”

The next injunction we shall quote is, doubtless, a very important one.

. . . P. 209. “ Be careful not to make known to externs the internal concerns of the convent, and particularly what might *tend to the discredit of the Superior* or the sisters.

. . . P. 210. “ Lastly, take care above all things not to implicate yourself in the temporal concerns of your relatives : such as marriages, contracts, expences, or any similar affairs.

. . . P. 213. “ Affections which arise from certain external qualifications, possessed by persons of a different sex, not only deprive the soul of great advantages, but also expose her to very great danger. In the beginning they appear indifferent, but by degrees they become sinful, and finally lead the soul into some mortal transgression. St. Teresa (Vita, cap. 30,) was once shown the place prepared for her in hell, had she not renounced a certain inordinate, though not impure affection for a relative.

“ If, dear reader, you ever feel an attachment of this kind, your only remedy is a resolute and total retreat from the object of your affection. If you seek to with-

draw by degrees, believe me, your efforts will be fruitless; such chains, because they are strong, are burst only with difficulty; without a sudden and violent effort their bondage shall never be dissolved.

. . . P. 215. "With ecclesiastics who visit you, not for the purpose of speaking of God, nor for your spiritual good, but for the pleasure of your society, you should be reserved. I would recommend you to speak with your confessor only in the tribunal of penance. I advise you to abstain as much as possible from all correspondence with him by little presents, or by any similar means.

. . . P. 215. "Even in her intercourse with persons of great sanctity, caution is necessary. 'Nor,' says St. Thomas, 'are they to be less avoided because they are more holy; for the greater their sanctity, the more they excite sentiments of affection.'—Opus 64, de Mod. conf. peric. The venerable Father Sertorio Caputo, of the Society of Jesus, says, that the devil first makes us love a man's virtue, then his person, and at length draws us into the precipice. St. Thomas teaches, that the devil at first kindles an attachment, which only slightly wounds the soul: but what appeared to be pure angelic love, soon degenerates into the human affection of beings clothed with flesh. Looks, and words of tenderness, follow: they are succeeded by a desire of each other's society. Thus, by degrees, a holy attachment will be converted into a natural affection."

What a sad picture does this give us of the state to which this man, and such as he, would fain reduce their unhappy victims!

. . . “ St. Bonaventure gives five marks by which we may ascertain whether a mutual attachment between two friends is pure or otherwise. 1. It is not pure when it leads to long and useless discourses ; and when conversations are very long, they are always useless. 2. When each delights in looking at, and in praising the other. 3. When either excuses the other’s defects. 4. When they manifest certain little jealousies. 5. When either feels unhappy at being separated from the other. The attachment is not pure when personal beauty or gracefulness is a source of pleasure ; when either desires to be esteemed by the other, or when either is unwilling that his friend should receive attention from others. Father Peter Consoline has justly remarked, that we should treat with holy persons of a different sex, as with the souls in purgatory, that is, at a distance, and without looking at them. Some religious have a strong desire of conversing with their spiritual father, because they imagine that his instructions will stimulate their fervour. But what need is there of such conversations, of such long and familiar discourses ? Have they not an abundant supply of spiritual books ? Have they not lectures at table and at prayer ? Have they not the benefit of sermons in the church ? Without any of these, the reading and observance of their rules and constitutions, ought to be sufficient to make them saints ! ”

But even attachment to her fellow-prisoner, is to be repressed.

. . . “ It is necessary to remark, that even among the religious themselves, inordinate attachments may be found.

“Love,” says blessed Angela of Foligno, “includes every evil as well as every good. I do not speak of criminal love, which every one knows should be avoided, but of the love which one friend entertains for another, and which may degenerate into an irregular affection. Frequent conversations, along with the manifestation of mutual regard, produce too close an union of their hearts, render their friendship noxious, and by strengthening their attachment, obscure the light of reason.”

Much follows on humility, and we are told, that “Brother Juniper, of the order of St. Francis, received insults as he would the most costly gems.” p. 255. Yes, he supposed they would gain heaven for him, and so preferred them to the pearl of great price!

Chapters follow on Charity, on Patience, and on Resignation, from which we have nothing to extract.

Chapter 16 is headed, “On Silence, Solitude, and the Presence of God.”

Our readers are sufficiently acquainted with the parts of a convent, to know that the grate, or parlour, is the place where, and where alone, a nun may see and speak to her friends. We have had some denunciations against it. Hear the following.

“ . . . 360. From all that has been said, every religious who wishes to live in union with God, may see with what care she should shun the parlour. As the air which is breathed in the choir, or in the cell, is the most salubrious for religious, so the air of the grates is for them the most pestiferous. And what is the parlour but what St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzis called it—a place of distractions, dis-

quietudes, and of temptations ? The venerable sister Mary Villani one day compelled the devil to tell in what part of the monastery he gained most. The tempter answered : I gain in the choir, in the refectory, and in the dormitory : in these places I partly gain and partly lose. But in the parlour I gain all, for the whole place is mine. Hence the venerable sister Philippa Caverina had reason to call the parlour an infected place, in which the contagion of sin is easily caught. St. Bernardine of Sienna relates that a religious, in consequence of having heard in the parlour an improper word, miserably fell into a grievous sin. . . . St. Teresa appeared, after death, to one of her spiritual children, and said to her : The religious who wishes to be a great friend of God, must be an enemy of the grate.”

Now we call marked attention to the following pious ejaculations from St. Alphonsus Liguori.

“ . . . . 361. WOULD TO GOD THAT IN ALL MONASTERIES THERE WERE GRATES OF PUNCHED IRON, such as we find in some observant convents.”

No troublesome Protestant stepfather could then obtain interviews with their victims, and Protestant Lord Chancellors would have less chance of hearing of their ‘ Postulant ’ wards.

“ . . . . A certain author relates that the superioress of a monastery procured a close grate ; but the devil, through rage, first bent it, and afterwards sent it rolling through the house. The good superioress placed it, crooked as it was, in the parlour, to give the nuns to understand, that as the grate was hateful to hell, so it was pleasing to

God. Oh! what an awful account shall the abbess have to give to God who introduces open grates, or who neglects to make the companions attend. In one of her letters St. Teresa wrote this *great* [Qu. grate?] sentence (p. 1, let. 26): “The *grates*, when shut, are the gates of heaven; and when open, they are the gates of danger” (she did not wish to say to hell.) And she added: *A monastery of nuns, in which there is liberty, serves to conduct them to hell*, rather than to cure their weakness.”

St. Alphonsus must excuse us, if we paraphrase this last sentence as follows, on the high authority of St. Teresa—

A NUNNERY IS EITHER A PRISON OR —

“ . . . . Oh what rapid progress in divine love does the religious make, who resolves never to go to the grate. When you, O blessed sister! go to the parlour, be careful at least to conduct yourself like a religious. In your intercourse with seculars, you should not only guard with great care against *all affectionate expressions*, but should also be very grave and reserved in the parlour. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzis wished her nuns to be as *uncultivated as the wild deer*—these are her very words. And the venerable Sister Hyacinth Marescotti used to say: The courtesy of nuns consists in being discourteous, by cutting short all discourses in the parlour. . . Show all respect to directors, but you should treat with them only through necessity; despatch your business with them in a few words. Should you ever happen to hear in the parlour an indecent word, fly away; or at least cast down your eyes, and change the discourse, or give no answer. In a monastery of the venerable sister Seraphina da Carpi, two



females began to speak about a certain marriage; the attendant at the *turn* \* heard the voice of sister Seraphina (who was dead), saying, ‘*Chase away, chase away these women.*’

A section follows “On Solitude.”

“ . . . . 366. Whosoever loves God, loves solitude. . . . God speaks not at the grates, nor in the *belvidere*, nor in any other place in which religious indulge in useless laughter and idle talk. *Non in commotione Dominus.* The Lord is not in the earthquake.

“ . . . . 367. There is no one more deserving of pity than a nun, who being *unable to go into the world*, brings the world to herself, by spending a great part of the day in vain amusements, in conversing with seculars at the grate, or in diverting herself with the sisters, laughing, talking, censuring others, and by seeking to learn what happens in the neighbourhood.

“ . . . . 371. Hitherto we have spoken of the solitude of the body; we must now say something on the *solitude of the heart.*”

The SOLITUDE OF THE HEART! Sad words.

“The solitude of the heart, which is more necessary than the solitude of the body.”

And now for a little plain speaking, to which we call particular attention.

“ . . . . 373. In a certain convent of St. Francis there was an idle brother, who was always going about the house; now troublesome to one, and again to another. The saint called him *Brother Fly*. Would to God, that

\* A sort of box revolving on its axis, by which goods and parcels are passed into the nunneries.

in monasteries there were not *Sisters Fly*, constantly going about, observing who is at the grate, or at confession; who sends or receives presents, and the like. Such religious would deserve, like flies, to be expelled the house, OR AT LEAST TO BE SHUT UP IN A PRISON !”

We can all of us call to mind some one or more of our friends of either sex, who would answer to this description of Brother Fly or Sister Fly—and troublesome enough they may make themselves; but it remained for a canonized saint of Rome to utter the pious wish that such characters should be *shut up in a prison*. A very effectual course no doubt; and this hint shews that there is good reason to keep a vigilant eye on monastic buildings. The vaults at Edgbaston are now very harmless cellars. We cannot tell what they might have been had they been unnoticed by ignorant Protestants, such as the Mayor of the place.

The writer of these pages can also bear witness that he was in the habit of daily riding past, what is now a large nunnery, with a Cathedral establishment attached to it, while yet the works were in progress; and day after day he noticed—looking over the hoarding—the formation of a series of low arched vaults, upon which the convent was afterwards reared. Of course they may have been wine-cellars—if nuns drink wine—or coal-cellars, or they may have been formed into residences for *Sister Fly*.

*Chapter XVII.*—Is “On Spiritual Reading.”

This chapter consists of ten pages. The first four and a half dwell on the folly of reading profane books and romances, &c., and spiritual reading is recommended—but the Bible is not yet mentioned. At page 392 indeed, we

find the following passage :—“ But before all the apostle prescribed spiritual reading to Timothy, ‘ attend unto reading.’ ” 1 Tim. iv. 13. Spiritual reading.—This is carefully made to mean anything rather than the word of God. Such a passage as 2 Tim. iii. 15., would not be suitable for the poor nuns. “ *From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* ” \*

No, the poor nun understands by “ Spiritual Reading,” the perusal of that lying Breviary which was put into her hands with so much solemnity by the bishop at her consecration. (See page 33.)

At page 396, the fifth page of this chapter, we come to the following passage :—“ How many saints have by reading a spiritual book been induced to forsake the world, and to give themselves to God ? It is known to all, that St. Augustine, when miserably chained by his passions and vices, was, by reading one of the epistles of St. Paul, enlightened with divine light ; went forth from his darkness, and began to lead a life of holiness.”

So far so good—here Augustine’s conversion is distinctly attributed to the reading of one of Paul’s Epistles, but what

\* Cardinal Wiseman in one of his printed sermons has commented on this text, and argues that the following words, “ That the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works,” limit its application to the priests, who alone are the men of God.

follows. "Thus also St. Ignatius \* while a soldier, by reading a *volume of the lives of the saints* which he accidentally took up, in order to get rid of the tediousness of the bed to which he was confined by sickness, was led to commence a life of sanctity, and became the father and founder of the society of Jesus (†)—an order which has done so much for the church."

Observe how St. Paul's Epistle and the lives of the saints are included, as of equal value, under the title of Spiritual Reading—it goes on—"Thus also, by reading a pious book, accidentally, and almost against his will, St. John Colombino left the world, became a saint, and the founder of another religious order. St. Augustine relates, that two courtiers of the emperor Theodosius entered one day into a monastery of solitaries; one of them began to read the life of St. Anthony, which he found in one of the cells; so strong was the impression made upon him, that he resolved to take leave of the world. He then addressed his companion with so much fervour, that both of them remained in the monastery to serve God. We read in the chronicles of the Discalced Carmelites, that a lady in Vienna was prepared to go to a festivity, but because it was given up, she fell into a violent passion. To divert her attention, she began to read a spiritual book which was at hand, and conceived such a contempt for the world, that she abandoned it, and became a Teresian nun. The same happened to the Duchess of Montalto in Sicily. She began also by accident to read

\* Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits.

† Haud cum Jesu itis, qui itis cum Jesuitis.

the works of St. Teresa, and afterwards continued to read them with so much fervour, that she sought and obtained her husband's consent to be a religious, and entered among the Discalced Carmelites."

That no mistake should be made as to what the writer means by "Spiritual Reading," we find the following:—

. . . P. 397. "St. Philip Neri devoted all the vacant hours which he could procure, to the reading of spiritual books, and *particularly the lives of the saints*."

"If you ask me *what book is most useful* for religious, first I tell you, to read the books which you find best calculated to excite your devotion, and to move you most powerfully to unite your soul with God. Of this character are the works of St. Francis de Sales, of St. Teresa, of Father Granada, of Rodriguez, of Sangiure, of Nieremberg, of Pinamonti and other similar books; and particularly the *Admonitions to Religious* by the fathers of St. Maur, and the *Ascetic Directory* of father Scaramelli, a modern work, but full of learning and unction. In general I advise you to lay aside works that are hard to be understood, and to read books of devotion, written in a plain and simple style. Be careful also to read the subjects which you know will contribute most to your perfection. Among the rest, read frequently the lives of the saints, and particularly of those who have been religious;\* such as the life of St. Teresa, of St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzis, of St. Catherine of Sienna, of St. Jane Chantal, of the venerable

\* A Protestant might suppose Liguori to mean that some saints in the Romish Calendar have been irreligious. We have already explained the meaning of the word.

Francis Farnese, of the venerable Sister Seraphina da Capri, of St. Peter of Alcantara, of St. John of the Cross, of St. Francis Borgia, of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, &c. Read frequently the lives of the holy martyrs, particularly of so many holy young virgins who have given their lives for Jesus Christ. You can use the lives of the saints published by father Croisset. Oh how profitable is the reading of the lives of the saints ! ”

Two more pages follow on the way in which books should be read ; but with the two exceptions, the allusions to scripture which I have noted above, this chapter contains no hint whatever that God ever gave us a revelation. Not only is the bread of life kept from these poor deluded girls—but poison is given them instead of it. Instead of the life-giving word, they are directed to read a tissue of blasphemous fables and lies.\*

*Chapter XVIII.*—Is devoted to the important topic of Confession. . . The nun is told, page 403, that “ every one knows, that for a good confession three things are necessary : an examination of conscience, sorrow, and a purpose to avoid sin.” Much stress is laid, under the third head, on the necessity of giving up anything that is supposed to keep the nun from God—be it friendship or acquaintances.

. . . P. 407. “ To St. Ludgard, while she was miserably entangled in a dangerous friendship, Jesus appeared, and shewed her his heart grievously wounded. The saint began to weep over her fault, and took leave of her

\* That this is not too strong an expression will be evident to any one who will take down one or two of the ponderous folios of the *Acta Sanctorum*, in the reading-room of the British Museum.

friend, saying, that she could love no other than Jesus Christ, to whom she had been espoused.

. . . P. 407. "But a nun may perhaps be tempted to conceal a sin in confession. A certain nun may have the misfortune of falling into mortal sin; the devil endeavours to lock her mouth, and to make her ashamed to confess her sin. Oh! God, how many souls shall, on account of this accursed shame, burn, and burn for ever in hell, or rather in the bottom of hell. Some Christians, through human respect, and through fear of losing the esteem of others, easily continue for months and years, to make sacrilegious confession and communions. In the chronicles of the Discalced Carmelites (tom. iii. lib. 10. c. 34.), it is related, that a young girl of great virtue consented to a sin against chastity; she concealed the sin three times in confession, and went to communion; after the third communion, she suddenly fell dead. Because she was considered to be a saint, her body was laid in a particular part of the church of the Jesuits; but after the obsequies were finished, and the church closed, the confessor was conducted by two angels to the place of interment; she came forth, fell on her knees, and threw from her mouth into a chalice prepared for them, the three consecrated hosts which had been sacrilegiously received, and miraculously preserved in her breast. The angels stripped her of the scapular, the miserable girl instantly presented a horrible aspect, and was carried out of sight by two devils.

" . . . . 408. The devil endeavours to fill the mind of sinners with many delusions and vain fears. Such a one

says, My confessor will rebuke me severely if I tell this sin. Why should he rebuke you? Tell me, were you a confessor, would you speak harshly to a poor penitent, who should come to manifest his miseries to you, in the hope of being raised up from his fallen state? How then can you imagine that a confessor," &c.

After several paragraphs on the necessity of confessing—of "dragging from its den the wild beast," (4) St. Alphonsus proceeds seemingly to undo the force of that he has said, and to leave loop-holes for not confessing every thing; and he refers to his own book on Moral Theology. For instance, he says (p. 411), "When it is certain that a mortal sin has been committed, and when there is a doubt whether it has ever been confessed, then, if the doubt be a negative one, that is, if there be no reason to judge that it has been confessed, it is certainly necessary to tell the sin in confession. But when there is reason to believe, or a well-founded presumption that the sin has been once told, then, according to the common opinion of divines, there is no obligation of confessing it.

" . . . 412. The confession of certain natural actions should also cause shame; but you are not therefore obliged to confess them. Thus, for example, you are not obliged to confess certain acts of levity or immodest jests, which occurred in your childhood, without a knowledge of their malice. Nor is your having done these acts in secret, a certain proof of malice; for children do certain natural actions secretly, though these actions are not sins. Hence we are not bound to accuse ourselves in particular of such things, unless when we remember that we committed them



with an impression, or at least with a doubt, that they were grievous sins."

To understand this last passage, the reader must refer to the heads of examination given to penitents in the Manual of Devotion, or to the Directions to Confessors in Dens' and Liguori's Moral Theology.

Copious directions are then given as to the necessity of blindly following the confessor. P. 423. "Obey him, then, *not as man, but as God*, and you shall never err. In the beginning of his conversion, St. Ignatius of Loyola was so violently assailed by scruples, and so encumbered with darkness, that he found no peace. But because he had true faith in the word of God (*he that heareth you heareth me*), he said with great confidence, 'Lord, show me the way in which I ought to walk, and though you should give me a dog for my guide, I will faithfully follow him.'

" . . . P. 424. To nuns who begin to censure the decisions of their confessors, we ought to say what the learned Monsignor Sperelli wrote to a religious, who had accused her confessor of heresy, because he had said that the sins which she confessed were not sins. 'Tell me,' said the learned bishop to her, 'in what university have you studied theology, that you know better than your confessor how to decide on sins? Ah, go to spin, and do not give ear to such follies.'

We next have a long section of 25 pages, "On Communion and reception of the blessed sacrament."

"The other sacraments contain the gifts of God, but the Holy Eucharist *contains God himself*."

Again, at page 453. "But this paradise (that of

visiting the holy sacrament) religious can enjoy in a special manner. It is true that Jesus remains in the holy sacrament for all ; but he remains particularly for nuns—his spouses, who enjoy his society day and night within their own very house. When Jesus was born, the holy Magi left their country and their homes, and spent a long time travelling through Palestine, inquiring for the birth-place of the Redeemer ; ‘ saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews ? ’ Matt. ii. To visit Jesus Christ, seculars must leave their houses, and go to the church, which is closed at night, and in many places is open only in the morning. But a nun need not leave her own dwelling, *in order to enjoy the society of Jesus Christ ; he remains continually in the home in which she dwells.* A nun, then, *can visit him* whenever she pleases, in the morning or evening, by day or by night. She, as a spouse, is permitted to dwell in the palace. How highly honoured does the vassal esteem himself to be, when he is invited to dwell in the palace of the King. You then, O blessed sister, are one of those happy Christians who have the honour of *dwelling on this earth with Jesus Christ*, the King of heaven. You can visit him and remain with him day and night, whenever you please. . . . In other churches Jesus Christ remains for all ; but in your monastery he dwells only for you and your companions. Be careful to profit of his presence. Oh, God ! \* in all mon-

\* It is with pain that we transcribe this frequent taking of God’s name in vain. The *O Dio*, and *Mon Dieu*, so frequent in French and Italian writers, are usually rendered into English by some less offensive exclamation ; but this reverend translator seems to wish to introduce this habit of conversational swearing.

‘ My mother, ask of me what you wish : you know that I cannot reject any of your petitions.’ He then added : ‘ Because you refused me nothing on earth, I will refuse nothing to you in heaven.’

. . . p. 481. “ But what is the principal reason why the prayers of Mary are so powerful before God ? St. Antonine says : ‘ The prayer of the Mother of God *partakes of the nature of a command* ; hence it is impossible that she should not be heard.’ Part 4, Tit. 15, cap. 17, sec. 14. The prayers of Mary being the prayers of a mother, partake, in a certain manner, *of the nature of a command*, and therefore they cannot be rejected.

. . . p. 485. “ The Lord has constituted Mary *the universal advocate of all*. ‘ As,’ says Idiota, ‘ she is the Queen of all, so is she the Advocate of all.’

. . . p. 486. “ Oh ! if all sinners had recourse to Mary, with a determination to amend their lives, who should ever be lost ? They who have not recourse to Mary, are lost. St. Bridget heard our Saviour say to his mother— ‘ You would show mercy, even to the devil, were he to ask it with humility.’ The proud Lucifer will never humble himself so far as to recommend himself to Mary ; *but were he to humble himself to this divine Mother, and ask her aid, she would not cast him off, but would deliver him (the devil) from hell by her intercession ! ! !*

. . . P. 487. “ The holy church wishes that we should call this divine mother, our Hope : *spes nostra salve*. The *impious Luther* said that he could not bear to hear the Church teaching us to call Mary our Hope : ‘ God alone,’ he said, ‘ is our Hope ; and God himself curses

them who place their hopes in any creature.' Yes, God curses those who trust in creatures independently of him, but we hope in Mary as a Mediatrix with God."

Deluded man! Yet he had a Bible, and knew that it was written, "There is one God, and ONE MEDIATOR between God and man, THE MAN Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. ii. 5.

. . . P. 489. "First, say every morning at rising, and every evening, before going to bed, three Aves, in honour of the purity of Mary, adding, 'O Mary, through thy pure and immaculate conception, obtain for me purity of body, and sanctity of soul.' And place yourself under her protection, that she may preserve you from sin during the day, and during the night. Salute her also with an *Ave Maria* as often as the clock strikes, and whenever you leave or return to the cell, or pass by *any of her images*; and endeavour at the beginning of every action, to salute her with an *Ave Maria*; blessed shall be the actions which are commenced and terminated by an *Ave Maria*. When we salute this great Queen, particularly with the Angelical Salutation, which is so pleasing to her, she always obtains for us in return some favour from heaven. Secondly, do not omit to say the Rosary every day, or at least five decades of it. This is a devotion practised generally by all the faithful, even by seculars, and has been favoured by the Sovereign Pontiff with immense indulgences. But observe, that to gain the indulgences of the Rosary, it is necessary to accompany the recital of it with the consideration of the mysteries; it is also necessary that your name be registered in the book of

the Rosary, which is kept by the fathers of the Order of St. Dominick, and that the beads be blessed by them.

. . . P. 490. "Fifthly, do not let a day pass without reading at least a small portion of a book which treats of Mary. There are many books of this kind—'True Devotion towards the Blessed Virgin, by Father Crasset.'"

Several books are enumerated, and then St. Alphonsus adds, "I too have written a work on the Virgin entitled *The Glories of Mary*, of which several editions have been published." The saint is doing his best to get out another.

Afterwards follows a chapter containing "Particular Admonitions for the Abbess, Vicar, or Assistant, Mistress of Novices, Bursar, Sacristan, Attendant at the *Turn*, Infirmarian and Discreets, along with Instructions to the Lay Sisters."

The "Admonition to the Abbess," contains some sensible remarks, written by a man who understood the art of governing. We shall make some extracts, which will help us to give an insight into the interior mechanism of a convent.

. . . P. 518. "Be particularly careful not to permit any particular friendship, *either among the sisters* or with externs. And should you be unable to prevent them, you should have recourse to the Prelate.

. . . Be careful not to allow persons employed in the monastery to bring letters or inconvenient messages to the religious.

. . . P. 522. "In correcting the religious, I entreat you to attend to two things, that you may be secure

against error: the first is, not to have recourse to *chastisement*, [i. e. whipping]; I mean *severe chastisement*, [i. e. they may be whipped a little,] unless when it is absolutely necessary for the amendment of a sister, or for the example of others," and then of course they may be whipped *severely*.

Observe—that if it is absolutely necessary in the eyes of this all-powerful abess, whose word is law, against whom there is no appeal, and whose subjects (for so they are called) could not let their complaint get beyond the lofty walls, even if they wished it;—if absolutely necessary SEVERE CHASTISEMENT is to be had recourse to!

He goes on: "*severe remedies* are applied only in diseases which are otherwise incurable." \*

\* We cannot refrain from translating here the eloquent indignation of Michelet on this subject: "Strange! There are in our country houses that are not France! This street, for instance—this is France, but cross that threshold and you are in a strange country—a country which laughs at all your laws. What then are their laws? That is not known. What we do certainly know—what is not attempted to be disguised—is this: that the barbarous discipline of the middle ages still reigns, and is still practised there. . . . What?—when even in the galleys, when dealing with robbers and murderers, and the most ferocious of men, the law forbids that they should be struck—You—men who talk of grace and charity—of the good holy Virgin, and of the sweet Jesus—you strike women? Women! did I say?—girls—children, whose only fault is perhaps some harmless weakness.

"But how are these chastisements administered? That is a yet graver question. What sort of *composition for suffering may not fear lead to*? At *what price* will authority sell indulgence? . .

"Who regulates the number of blows? Is it you, Lady

St. Alphonsus gives good advice when he says, p. 523,  
“ May God preserve you from ever seeking revenge against

Abness? or else you, Father confessor? What must be the nature of the passionate and capricious dominion of woman over woman, when she is displeased with her. An ugly woman ruling over a lovely one—an old one over a young. One dare not think of it.

“ Sometimes a strange strife arises between the Abbess and the Confessor. He, however hardened he may be, is still a man; the poor girl who tells him everything—who obeys him in all things, will soften him in the long run. Feminine authority soon perceives this—watches and follows it up. He is seldom allowed to see his penitent, very seldom, and yet that seldom is considered too often. The confession is to last so many minutes, some one attends, watch in hand. It would last long indeed but for this precaution. For the poor recluse who meets with nothing but insult and ill usage—it is a moment of liberty to her.

“ We hear of Lady Superiors applying again and again to the Bishops to change their confessors, and who yet cannot find one harsh enough to suit them. There is a wide difference between the harshness of man and the cruelty of woman. What think you is the most like a satanic incarnation on earth? Is it such an Inquisitor or such a Jesuit? No, it is a female Jesuit--a fine lady *converted*—who thinks herself born for governing, and who amidst this troop of trembling women apes the Bonaparte, (tranche du Bonaparte) and who, more absolute than the most absolute of tyrants, torments her unhappy defenceless victims with the rage of her own ill-healed passions.

“ I am no longer opposed to the confessor now—my heart is with him. Priest, monk, Jesuit, I am on your side. I entreat him to interfere if he can. In that hell where law cannot penetrate, he is yet the only person who can speak for the sake of humanity. I know well indeed, that this intervention may give

a sister \* who has opposed or contradicted you, or has spoken disrespectfully of you during the time you are in office: guard (I say) against giving her any pain or humiliation on that account; this would cause very great scandal.

. . . P. 525. "Let us now say a few words on the music and singing of nuns. In itself, singing in the church is good, because it is intended to praise God; but it sometimes happens that in the singing of nuns, vanity and the devil have a greater share than God. Some one may ask—'What evil there is in singing?' I answer, in the first place, that there is a loss of time, and a great loss of time: for music is an art which, if not properly learned, not only does not delight, but gives positive displeasure. In the second place, it is an occasion of a thousand distractions, and sometimes of irreverence. Thirdly, it may sometimes be an occasion of losing God; for it

rise to a most dangerous attachment. The heart of the poor creature is already all given to the man who protects her.

"This priest will be removed—he will be driven away—ruined, if need be. Nothing is easier for an active influential Lady Superior to accomplish. He dares not risk it; he is afraid of the noise—he timidly retires. You will find neither Priests nor Prelates, who are mindful of their power as confessors and spiritual judges, who will refuse absolution to the tyrant over nuns, as Las Casas refused it to tyrants over the Indians."—*Michelet, du Prêtre*, pp. 287—291.

This rough plain-speaking Frenchman contrasts remarkably with the smooth-spoken Jesuit of our text.

\* This caution implies a danger. The Abbess is absolute. See before, page 81.

## G



may sometimes be necessary to take lessons from men, and perhaps young men. In such lessons the devil may gain much."

In the admonitions to the "Mistress of the Novices," we find the following, p. 527. . . "Not to permit the novices to be familiar with the religious, or with the postulants, much less with each other; be careful then, not to allow them to wander about the monastery without a companion. Do not permit them to read profane books, to indulge in vanity of dress,\* or to write useless letters."

The attendant at the *Turn* and the portress are told, p. 530, "Be not idle at the *Turn* or at the door. . . . When you open the door, cast down your eyes, if you wish not to expose yourself to a thousand defects and a thousand temptations,

. . . "You must, however, take care not to bring to them (the nuns) inconvenient messages; nor to call them (*without first speaking to the Superior*) to any person who may wish to speak to them.

. . . "Be careful to lock the inner as well as the outer doors at the hours prescribed."

The book concludes with "Rules of Life for a Religious who desires to become a saint."

Speaking of the refectory, he says, "Would to God that some nuns did not, by their intemperance and want of reserve in the refectory, lose all they had gained in their spiritual exercises."

\* The Novices wear the ordinary dress, they are only trying whether they like it. The Postulants are they who have declared their desire to become Nuns; who are seeking admission.

On Recreation, p. 545. "But what shall we say of recreations which are practised in certain monasteries during the Carnival, when some of the common exercises are allowed to be performed in private, the good order of the community and the rule of silence are not observed, and the nuns spend a part of the day and night in dancing, (!) singing profane songs, (!!) and other worldly amusements." (!!!)

This is not Protestant testimony—this is St. Alphonsus himself. However, he does not approve of it, he only certifies that it is so.

He goes on—"I know not how the Superior can permit such irregularities without grievous scruples of conscience."

. . . P. 546. "But if, during that time, you wish to indulge in amusement, amuse yourself in a manner becoming a religious. If you wish to sing, sing spiritual songs; but take care, never, on any account, to dance. If you are invited *to take part in any little opera (! !)* avoid it *as much as possible*; for it will at least cause a loss of time and great dissipation; and refuse absolutely, unless the *opera* be altogether *sacred*;\* or if it should be necessary to put on a secular dress, refuse, even though you should be upbraided with incivility, with a want of education, or hypocrisy."

Now to this we call particular attention. The "little opera" has doubtless startled you. Yet St. Alphonsus

\* Rossini's *Mosé in Egitto* would perhaps satisfy this saint, or some of Metastasio's dramas written for music, such as *Betulia liberata*, or *Isaaco*, with Cimarosa's splendid music.

tells us that they take place, and all that he can do is to *tell those nuns who desire to become saints*, to avoid them as *much as possible*. What if we tell our readers that comedies are regularly performed in Nunneries. One witness deposes to having seen *La Vedova Scaltra*,—a well-known comedy, by Goldoni,—better acted than on the stage of a theatre “secular dresses” of course being worn; the confessor himself very foremost in the auditory. Of this more hereafter.

## CHAPTER VII.

### MONASTIC DISCIPLINE.

LIGUORI has given us some hints about prisons and discipline. It may be well to learn a little more on this subject.

Jean Mabillon, a French Benedictine of the congregation of St. Maure, one of the most learned men of his order, and whose name has acquired deserved celebrity amongst his own communion, shall be our authority.

In his posthumous works we find an opusculé, entitled, "Reflections on the Prisons of the Monastic Orders," \* from which we will translate an extract.

"It does not appear that St. Benedict ever shut up his penitents in prison: he never names one in his Rule, although in Chapter XXVIII he gives an exact enumeration of all the precautions, and of all the degrees of penance which he desires should be observed before proceeding to drive the incorrigible out of the monastery."

We may here notice, that monastic vows were not originally indelible—"a religious" might leave his order, or be driven out of it.

Mabillon goes on to say, "But this just disposition did

\* *Ouvrages Posthumes de D. Mabillon et de D. Ruinart.* 4to. Paris. 1724. Vol. ii. p. 323.

not long obtain, and the harshness of some Abbots went to such an excess—one can hardly believe it—that they mutilated the members, and sometimes put out the eyes of such of their religious as had fallen into grave faults. Hence the religious of Fulda were obliged to have recourse to Charlemagne, to repress these excesses. Hence arose the prohibitions issued by this great prince in his Capitularies of the year 780, and also by the Council of Frankfort five years afterwards; by which all punishments of this kind, permitted only to secular Tribunals, were condemned, and matters were brought back to the Rule and regular discipline. *Abbatibus qualibet culpa a monachis commissa, such is the regulation of the Council, ne quaquam permittimus cæcare aut membrorum debilitatem ingerere nisi regulari disciplinæ subiaceant.*

“ It was in consequence of this prohibition, that all the Abbots of the Order, being assembled at Aix la Chapelle in 817, gave orders, that in every monastery there should be a separate chamber, *domus semota*, for the guilty, that is to say, a chamber with fire-place, and an anti-chamber for work, *quâ in hieme ignis possit accendi, et atrium juxta sit in quo valeant quod eis injungitur operari.* They also forbid that these poor miserable creatures should be exposed naked, in the presence of the other religious, to be scourged (pour être fustigés) as had hitherto been practised.

“ In the course of time a dreadful kind of prison was invented, where day-light was never seen, and as it was intended for those who were to end their lives in it, it got the name of *Vade in Pace.* It appears that the first who invented this terrible punishment was Mathew, Prior of St.

Martin des champs, at least if we follow the account of Peter the Venerable, who teaches us that this Superior (lib. 2. Mirac. c. g.) a good man, but of outrageous severity towards those who fell into any faults, caused a subterranean cellar to be constructed, in the shape of a sepulchre, to which he condemned for the rest of his days an unhappy man who appeared to him incorrigible. Whatever respect I may have for the memory of this great man, *I do not fear to say, that in this he seems to have passed the limits of humanity*, although it is said that the event justified the harshness, and that this poor unfortunate returned to a better mind."

Mabillon does not say that he was let out.

"It is true," he continues, "that Peter the Venerable adds, that this extreme rigour was only practised once during the life-time of Mathew: but as this kind of example always has unfortunate consequences, it appears that other superiors less charitable than zealous, did not fail to make use of similar treatment towards erring religious; and this harshness, inhuman as it appears, went on, and became so common, that Stephen, Archbishop of Toulouse was obliged to complain through his Vicar General, to king John, *conquestus de horribili rigore, quem monachi exercebant adversus monachos graviter peccantes, eos subjiciendo in carcerem perpetuum, tenebrosum et obscurum, quem VADE IN PACE, vocitant*. What crowned the sufferings of these unhappy beings was, that all human consolation was denied them, which was as unbearable as not being allowed to see the day.

"The King was horrified at this inhumanity, and touched

with compassion for these wretches, he gave orders that the Abbots and other superiors should visit them *twice a month*, and should also give permission *twice a month* to other religious to visit them—that is to say, he ordered that they should be seen *at least once a week*. He caused letters patent to be issued on this subject, and in spite of all the efforts made by the religious (les religieux mandians) to get this ordinance revoked, *as being unjust*, they were forced to obey it exactly. His majesty and his council, with good reason, considered it a barbarous and inhuman thing to deprive these unhappy men of all consolation, overwhelmed as they were with sorrow and affliction. *Barbarum enim est incarceratos, et sic afflictos omni solatio et consortio amicorum privare*. This we learn from the registers of the Parliament of Languedoc, in the year 1350.”

Doubtless it was a great consolation for them to receive the two forced visits in each month from their superiors, whose cruelty had condemned them to this dreadful state!

Mabillon remarks; “Certainly it is strange, that religious, who ought to be models of suavity and compassion, should have to learn from princes and secular magistrates the first lesson of that humanity which they ought to practise towards their brethren.”

We need add no comment to this. Books have been published, describing both in America and in England prisons precisely similar to these, but as these books are written by Roman Catholics who have become Protestants, we do not quote them, although we undoubtedly believe them to be true in the main.

That such prisons existed in England before the suppression of the religious houses, we know. We find that in the reign of Edward the Third, A. D. 1343, a provincial chapter of Abbots was held at Northampton, when it decreed, that in order to check the spread of crime, and to shew by the greatness of the punishment, the enormity of the guilt, there should be a dungeon in which grievous offenders should be punished.

“*Litera Abbatum in capitulo provinciali Angliæ apud Northamptonam præsentium. A.D. MCCCXLIII.*”

“*Cap. VI. De Gravibus Culpis.*”

“*Ne impunita licentia scelerum in perniciem transeat animarum, aut ex facilitate veniæ augeatur malitia delinquendi; sic delinquentium punire desideramus excessus, ut unius pœna multorum sit metus, et enormitas culpæ nota sit ex magnitudine suæ pœnæ. Ejus igitur rei gratia statuimus ut in omni monasterio sit carcer, in quo puniri possint enormiter delinquentes.*” (Ex. Mss. Dunelm. B. iv. 16. Folio 105.) \*

We have heard something of discipline from St. Alphonsus and Mabillon, and the extract just given has also alluded to it. Here follow some minute directions on the subject as practised amongst the nuns of St. Bridget, at Syon Monastery, the present seat of the Duke of Northumberland.

From the Rule of St. Saviour and St. Bridget. Arundel MSS. in the British Museum. †

\* Wilkins' Concilia, ii. 721.

† Arundel MSS. No. 146. “Orders and Institutions of the Nuns of Syon.” An imperfect folio volume written on vellum.



“ *Of bodily disciplyne.*—Therfor whan the defaute of any suster is such, that by regular sentence sche deservethe a disciplyne, the suster commaunded to make her redy ther to, schal stonde up in the same place, where as sche knelyd before the abbes, doyng of her mantel, and late it fal down behynde her. And than sche under her cowle shal take the hynder extremytees therof, and ley al honestly in her nekke, drawyng her armes oute of her sleues to the elbowes at ferdest, and baryng the scholdres of her bakke as ferre unto the bare skyn, and so knelyng agene in the seyde place, and also enclynyng, withe alle mekenes schall take her disciplyne; whyche sche or they schal geve whom the abbes byddethe: whiche yet schal be none of them that proclamed her, but another suster or susters. And whylst any disciplyne is in geving for correccion, all the sustres, except the abbes or presidente, and the gever or gevers thereof, schal not beholde her or them that be disciplyned, but caste downe ther hedes and syght towarde the erthe, as yf they scholde beholde it at ther fete, hauyng compassion of her suster or susters. And whylst any is disciplyned, sche shal nothing say, butte ‘*Mea culpa; I wylle amende,*’ which sche shal reherse thykke and many tymes, and none other schal speke at that tyme. Whan the Abbes sayethe, ‘*It suffysethe,*’ she or they that geue the disciplyne shal cese forthwith at the seyde worde. Ther shal not be goven for the disciplyne but *fyve lasches*; but *yf the defaute* be of the more greuous defautes, or *els that sche or they schewe any token of rebellyon*, ffor then the disciplyners shal not cese tyl the Abbes chargeth them to cese. And the lasches in disciplynes owe not to

be to soft or to esy, but moderately scharpe, after the commandment of the Abbes. And whan the discipline is doon, sche schal clothe herself agene, withe the help of her that gave her the disciplyne, &c."

We do not know whether these exact rules are at present in force, but they give us some insight into what this discipline was; and that nuns are now flogged by the Abbess's orders we know from St. Alphonsus. (See ante, p. 119.) We may here remark, that the nuns of Syon, when expelled under Henry VIII, went to the Continent in a body, and, after many wanderings and vicissitudes, they permanently settled at Lisbon, where their House is still called Syon Monastery. On leaving their abode in Middlesex, they carried with them the keys of the house, and they are still preserved in token of their right. The late Duke of Northumberland, when at Lisbon, visited the nuns at the grate, and they told him that they had the keys of Syon House; to which the Duke replied, "Yes, but I have changed the locks."

We find some curious information respecting this nunnery in a pamphlet published by Thomas Robinson, in the year 1623, under the title of "The Anatomie of the English Nunnery at Lisbon in Portvgall, dissected and laid open, by one that was sometime a yonger brother of the Covent."

He says that they had the picture of Father Garnet "the Powder-Traitor" kept there, as of a holy martyr. This monastery he describes as being a joint convent of men and women, apparently however separated, but not so in reality. He says: "There is a grate of iron that looketh into the

nunnes partition or side, and this grate (howsoever it seeme substantiall and firme) may be, and is, with a sleight easily taken out, wherby the sisters have free egress and regress into his chamber when they list, and he to them : for the Abbesse hath her bed not far from this grate, &c."

He gives a list of the inmates of the house as follows :

"*The Friars of the House*—Seth, alias Joseph Foster, confessor ; John Viuian and Nicholas Barrowes, two priests. Peter Consul, a familiar, that is a lay brother, but a drunken one, God knowes.

"*The Nunnes of the House*—Barbara Wiseman, abbess ; Anne Wiseman, prioress ; Elizabeth Hart, chantresse ; Anne Wharton, treasuresse ; Anne, alias Josepha Bingham, portresse ; Lucy Johnson, notaresse ; Dorothy Fowler, keeper of the reliques and church-stuffe ; Bridget Browne and Lucy Browne, daughters of Sir Anth. Browne, Viscount Montacute, and twenty-two others."

To complete our picture of the interior of a nunnery, we ought to remark that personal cleanliness does not seem to have been held in high esteem : how the case now stands we cannot say.

In the Institutions of the order of St. Gilbert, the Sempringham nuns, it will be seen that they were only allowed to wash their heads seven times in the year, and that no sister might wash her feet without express permission from the superior. The bath is strongly decried, as tending to promote sensual desires. We conclude our chapter with extracts from the Institutes, in proof of our assertion, with some other extracts on matters of domestic detail, which may be instructive.

“ *Ordinis* St. Gilberti. Capitula.\*

“ De calvatione et ablutione monialium et sororum.

“ Ad Pascha et ad festum Sanctæ Mariæ Magdalenæ, et ad festum Omnium Sanctorum, ad minus decalventur sorores. Septies in anno licet sanctimonialibus lavare capita sua; nec ampliùs, nisi permittente Præpositâ, si necessitas fieri postulet. Cum abluuntur capita earum, licet pannis mandati facies suas tergere. Nulli licet pedes ablutere, sine jussu Præpositæ, nisi in luto vel palude nudis pedibus casu laboraverint et pedes defœdaverint. Panni vero manuum et pedum in claustro poni debent.

“ De singulari familiaritate inter moniales et sorores penitùs prohibîtâ.

“ Siqua singularem familiaritatem cum aliquâ habuerit, si clamato non emendaverit, ad commune Capitulum deducatur ibi luitura culpam transgressionis, multarum consilio.

“ De discordia vitandâ inter canonicos, fratres, moniales, et sorores.

“ Sanctimoniales et sorores nostras rogamus, in nomine Domini nostri Jhesu Christi, ut quietè se habeant erga fratres suos in Christo; et non quietent nec quærant improbe, quæ sunt vel non sunt quærenda, et cum omni humilitate et mansuetudine quærant quæ necessaria sunt. Et sciant illas esse feliciores, quæ in sustinenda paupertate fuerint fortiores. Omnes illud apostoli audiant et sequantur, videlicet, supportantes invicem, et non contristetur quis adversus alterum.

\* Dugd. Monast. Angl. Lond. 1661. Vol. ii. 783.

“ De prohibitione Balnei.

“ Caveatur ab omnibus nostris balneum, *cum sit libidinis fomentum*, nec ulla balneetur nisi graviore labore gravata, vel medicinæ causâ, vel scabie occupata. Balnea vero sive ablutiones in communi Capitulo domus, remotis viris Priori omnium indicari decernimus. Quod si necessitas compulerit ut balnei fomento cuilibet subveniat, lintheo vel laneo amplo induatur vestitu, ne nuditas vel vilitas humanæ conditionis cæteris appareat. Aliter facientibus in opprobrium deportetur et gravi pœnâ culpa luatur.”

On the subject of the Imprisonment of Nuns we may again refer to the constitutions of the Nuns of Syon, already quoted,\* where we find that for “ most greuous defautes,” one of which is standing “ unobedient and rebelle to her souereyne [i. e. her abbes] two hoole dayes,” the offender may be punished in the following manner. Instead of waiting for the regular hour, the chapter bell may be suddenly rung and the whole convent assembled. “ And by the commaundement of the president sche schal put from her gyrdel and knyues, nedels and pynnes, cowle, mantel, crown and veyle, and remain in her rewle cote. . . . leuyng al togyder at the presidente’s feet. To whom the presydent schal say to her forthewithe in this wyse. ‘ For thys trespace,’ expressyng it, ‘ I enioyne yowe the peyne of prysonement.’ And anone as the sentence is goven the gyilty schal with sufficient garde assygned by the president be led to the pryson, in the whiche sche shal abyde tyl sche be very repentaunte.”

We add no comment.

\* Ar. MS. 149.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CHASTITY BY CONSTRAINT.

IF it were true—which it is not—that the virgin state is one of greater holiness and of greater acceptability before God, surely it could only be a voluntary and a willing sacrifice that God would thus accept. But the idea of a celibacy enforced by bolts and bars being an offering well-pleasing to Him, certainly seems repugnant to common sense. If we were to see men and women living chastely and soberly in an unmarried state, because they believed it to be a religious duty to do so, we should of necessity respect them and their motives. But is the so-called celibacy of the Romish clergy, and the chastity of their nuns, where they have succeeded in maintaining it, of this character? We have but to look over the ponderous folios of the “*Sacrosancta Concilia*,” and we shall see how again and again, year after year, and century after century, Councils were occupied with correcting the disorders of the clergy, and of the monasteries.

For several centuries, viz., since the first rigid enforcement of the laws respecting the celibacy of the clergy, up to the period of the Reformation, (since which period Rome, under the fear of Protestant eyes upon her, has

been more careful not to publish her own shame,) we constantly meet with canons respecting concubinary priests.—*De Focariis*.\*

What else could be expected from an open violation of that great law of God—that “it is not good for man to be alone.” We have seen how Alphonsus Liguori constantly warns his Nuns of the danger they are in of losing their chastity—a warning which it is not found generally necessary to drill into the ears of Protestant young ladies. We noticed at page 82, how he adduced the case of St. Jerome, in the wilderness of Palestine, yet suffering from the recollection of the ladies with whom he had been on terms of friendship in Rome. The passage will be found in Jerome’s letter to Eustochium.†

“Oh! how often,” says he, “have I myself, placed here in the wilderness, and in this vast solitude which,

\* This word *Focaria*, a kitchen-maid, or one who attends to a fire, was the term universally and ecclesiastically applied to the young woman who almost generally formed part of a priest’s establishment. Ducange in his *Glossarium Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis*, renders it *concubina*, and adds: “In statutis MSS. Petri Patriarchæ Jerosol. Ord. Præd. ann. 1327. In primis dolentes referimus quod nonnulli Sacerdotes aut Parochiales ecclesiarum rectores jam duxerint in consuetudinem, imo verius damnablem corruptelam, tenere continue et publice in domo sua vel aliena, *Focarias seu etiam concubinas* non solum extraneas, sed etiam quod dictu quoque nefas est, spirituali quodam incestu, filias suas spirituales et pœnitentiales tali contubernio polluunt et profanant. (Ducange in voce FOCARIA.)

† De Custodia Virginitatis; Hieronymi Opera. Paris, 1534. Tom. i. p. 48.

parched by the sun's burning heat, affords, to monks alone, a dreadful dwelling,—how often have I thought myself in the midst of the pleasures of Rome! Alone, I sate, for I was full of bitterness. My disfigured limbs were rough with sackcloth, and my squalid skin had acquired the foulness of an Ethiop's flesh. Daily did I weep—daily did I moan—and when approaching sleep oppressed me unwilling, my bones scarcely hanging together were bruised upon the naked ground. I speak not of food or drink—a monk, even when sick, uses cold water—and to eat any cooked food, to him were luxury. I, even I, who from fear of hell have condemned myself to such a prison,—I, the companion of scorpions and wild beasts, seemed often to find myself in the midst of choirs of damsels. My cheeks pale with fasting, yet my mind burning with desire in the midst of my chilled body; and to a man already dead in his own flesh, nothing but the flames of lust were bursting forth. And thus destitute of all help, I lay at the feet of Jesus.\* I bathed them with my tears; I wiped them with my hair, and subjected my rebelling flesh to a seven days' fast. I do not blush to confess the

\* Were we reading the words of a more recent votary of the Church of Rome, we should certainly have understood him to mean that he had kissed the wooden or brazen feet of the idol; such abominations indeed, were beginning to appear in Jerome's days, as we learn by the practical protest of Epiphanius at the village of Anablatha, where he tore down a curtain in a church on which a figure of Christ was depicted, (*Fleur. Eccl. History*, xix. 1.) and as we also learn from Augustine, (*De Moribus Eccl.* c. 24) yet we would hope that Jerome was not an idolater; and that he here speaks figuratively.



misery of my wretchedness—all this led me the rather to mourn that I am not what I might be.” \*

\* We think it well to give the original of this striking passage, with some which we have not translated. “ O quoties ego ipse in eremo constitutus et in illa vasta solitudine quæ exusta solis ardoribus, horridum monachis præstat habitaculum, putabam me Romanis interesse delitiis. Sedebam solus, quia amaritudine repletus eram. Horrebant sacco membra deformia et squalida cutis, situm Æthiopicæ carnis obduxerat. Quotidie lachrymæ, quotidie gemitus, et si quando repugnantem somnus imminens oppressisset, nuda humo ossa vix hærentia collidebam. De cibis vero et potu taceo, cum etiam languentes monachi aqua frigida utantur, et coctum aliquid accepisse, luxuria sit. Ille igitur ego, qui ob gehennæ metum tali me carcere ipse damnaveram, scorpionum tantum socius et ferarum, sæpe *choris intereram puellarum*. Pallebant ora jejuniis, et mens *desideriis æstuabat* in frigido corpore, et ante hominem sua jam carne premortua (*or premortuum*) *sola libidinum incendia bulliebant*. Itaque omni auxilio destitutus, ad Jesu jacebam pedes, rigabam lachrymis, crine tergebam, et repugnantem carnem hebdomadarum inedia subjugabam. Non erubesco confiteri infelicitatis meæ miseriam: *quin polius plango me non esse quod fuerim*. Memini me clamantem diem crebro junxisse cum nocte, nec prius a pectoris cessasse verberibus, quam rediret, Domino increpante tranquillitas. Ipsam quoque cellulam meam, quasi cogitationum mearum consciam pertimescebam. Sicubi concava vallium, aspera montium, rupium prærupta cernebam; ibi meæ orationis locus: ibi illud miserrimæ carnis ergastulum; et ut ipse mihi testis est Dominus, post multas lacrymas, post cælo inhærentes oculos, nonnunquam videbar mihi interesse agminibus angelorum; et lætus gaudensque cantabam. Post te in odore unguentorum tuorum curremus. Si autem hoc sustinent illi qui exeso corpore, solis cogitationibus oppugnantur; quid patitur puella, quæ deliciis fruitur? Nempe illud Apostoli; Vivens mortua est.”

This is a very fearful picture, and hard must be the heart of him who can read it without deep feeling of pity and emotion for this poor deluded man. Learned and lofty of spirit, deeply read in the word of God, this mighty intellect failed to see that God is a Spirit, and that they that worship Him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. Contrast his person, as he describes it, with our Lord Jesus' description of a fasting Christian. "But thou when thou fastest, wash thy face and anoint thy head with oil, that thou appear not unto men to fast." Jerome indeed had no one to see his fasting, so he takes care to proclaim it at Rome. Had he never read the words, "It is better to marry than to burn"? How much better would it have been, had he cleansed his person, and returned to Rome to marry Eustochium, instead of writing to her this sad and unscriptural letter.

That the celibacy of monks and nuns is of this constrained character is a fact, which really is beyond all doubt. We have already seen how Alphonsus Liguori treats the case of those who have entered the monastic state against their will. Even were no physical restraint used, we should still say a state of celibacy depending upon the spiritual terrors of a vow once taken, and not to be broken without inevitable damnation, this alone would be sufficient; but Rome, as we well know, is not satisfied with this; bolts and bars are added in England and France, and America, and in countries where the temporal sword can also be wielded by priestly hands, arrest and *punishment* await any who should escape.

But while the clergy and monks and nuns are restrained

from marrying, we are bound to say, on no light grounds, and with no very limited acquaintance with Roman Catholic writers—we are bound to say, that we do not think that the Church of Rome really expects chastity from her celibate sons.

We have seen in Chapter iv. how Dens and Du Jardin seem even to allow a priest to fall, in this respect, once a month; and we have now to refer to a strange Chapter in the works of Thomas Aquinas—the angelic doctor.

In his 186th Question, (*Secunda Secundæ*,) Art. 9, he first lays down as a thesis—

‘That a ‘religious’ violating the three primary articles of his rule—viz. poverty, chastity, and obedience—sins **MORTALLY**. This thesis, however, is not laid down to be maintained, but to be disproved; and St. Thomas proceeds to disprove it by the following very curious process of sophistry.

“The state of a ‘religious’ is a safe state.

“**BUT** a religious is exposed to many temptations to break his rules, and if to break his rules were mortal sin, then the state of a ‘religious’ would be dangerous instead of safe.

“**THEREFORE** it is not mortal sin for a religious to transgress his rules.”

We feel that it is necessary to give clear proof that so astounding an argument is really used by Thomas Aquinas; we therefore give the original in the Appendix.\*

\* See Appendix B.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ANCIENT BRITISH MONASTERIES.

WE now proceed to examine into the fruits of this system. Lady Arundell has told us, that nunneries are abodes of peace and purity. A member of the House of Commons has been brought to task for a certain brief and pithy description which he gave of nunneries. Let us hear what history tells us of them, and in this review, our difficulty will be to select ; the materials are most abundant, but we do not wish to weary our readers with repetitions of stories hardly varying in the least of their details. With regard to our native land, our evidence cannot be brought up to a later period than that of the suppression of monasteries ; we might indeed relate much respecting present times, but we should be obliged to refer to Protestant witnesses, which we desire to avoid. We have not the same difficulty in our investigations in other countries, and we shall be prepared to shew, that even in recent times nunneries in Italy, and France, and Spain, and South America, are just what history tells us they ever have been.

We must first remark, that many of the Saxon monas-

teries, especially those of the Gilbertine Orders, were founded for persons of both sexes. Hilda founded a double monastery at Whitby, in which a sisterhood of nuns, and a fraternity of monks were subject to her authority as Abbess. Dugd. Monast. Vol. 1. p. 405.)

On the subject of double monasteries Dr. Lingard the Roman Catholic historian writes as follows :—

“ This scheme of monastic polity, singular as it may now appear, was once adopted in most Christian countries. Its origin may be ascribed to the severity, with which the founders of religious orders have always prohibited every species of unnecessary intercourse, between their female disciples and persons of the other sex. To prevent it entirely was impracticable. The functions of the sacred ministers had always been the exclusive privilege of the men ; and they alone were able to support the fatigues of husbandry, and conduct the extensive estates, which many convents had received from the piety of their benefactors. But it was conceived that the difficulty might be diminished; if it could not be removed ; and with this view, some monastic legislators, devised the plan of establishing double monasteries. In the vicinity of the edifice, destined to receive the virgins who had dedicated their chastity to God, was erected a building for the residence of a society of monks or canons, whose duty it was to officiate at the altar and superintend the external economy of the community. The mortified and religious life to which they had bound themselves by the most solemn engagements, was supposed to render them superior to temptation : and to remove even the suspicion of evil,

they were strictly forbidden to enter the enclosure of the women, except on particular occasions, with the permission of the superior and in the presence of witnesses. But the Abbess retained the supreme controul over the monks, as well as the nuns ; their Prior depended on her choice and was bound to regulate his conduct by her instructions." (Anglo Saxon Church. Vol. 1. p. 173.)

We have quoted this passage in full, because it is important. We shall now make some extracts from the Venerable Bede, himself an unexceptionable witness, being deeply enamoured with the whole system of monasticism.

We are also able to quote him in an unexceptionable translation, instead of giving one of our own. It is by a certain student of divinity, named Thomas Stapleton ; printed at Antwerp, and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, "Defendour of the Faith," (with three notes of interrogation following this title,) for the express purpose of convincing her of the errors of Protestantism. Thus he says ; "In this history your highness shall see in how many and weighty points the pretended reformers of the church in your grace's dominions have departed from the pattern of that sound and Catholic faith, planted first among Englishmen by holy St. Augustine our apostle, and the virtuous company, described truly and sincerely by *venerable Bede*, so called in all Christendom, for his passing virtues and rare learning."

We merely modernize his spelling. Again in the preface he says ; "To make an end, if all this sufficeth not to defend this history from the cavils of Protestants, because of the miracles here reported, then let them shew

reason why the acts and monuments of Mr. Foxe deserve not the like. Are there not also in that dunghill heaped a number of miserable miracles to set forth the glory of their *stinking martyrs* ?”

Book IV.—The 25th chapter.\* “About this time the monastery of virgins which standeth in the town of Coludon.†. . . was through negligence by a great misfor-

\* Liber iv. Caput xxv. § 335.—“His temporibus monasterium virginum quod Coludi urbem cognominant . . . per culpam incuriæ flammis assumptum est ; quod tamen a malitiâ inhabitantium in eo, et præcipue illorum, qui majores esse videbantur, contigisse, omnes, qui novere, facillime potuerunt advertere. . . . 336.—Erat namque in eodem monasterio vir de genere Scottorum, Adamnanus vocabulo, ducens vitam in continentia et orationibus multum Deo devotam, etc. . . .

338. . . . “Nuper occupatus noctu vigiliis et psalmis vidi adstantem mihi subito quendam incogniti vultus. . . . Siquidem modo totum hoc monasterium ex ordine perlustrans singulorum casas ac lectos inspexi, et neminem ex omnibus præter te, erga sanitatem animæ suæ occupatum reperi ; sed omnes prorsus, *et viri et fœminæ* aut somno torpent inertes, aut *ad peccata vigilant*. Nam et dormunculæ, quæ ad orandum vel legendum factæ erant, nunc in commessationum, potationum, fabulationum, et *ceterarum sunt illecebrarum cubilia* conversæ. Virgines quoque Deo Dicatæ, contempta reverentia suæ professionis, quotiescumque vacant, tendendis subtilioribus indumentis opera dant, quibus aut seipsas ad vicem sponsarum in periculum sui status adornent, aut externorum sibi virosum amicitiam comparent. . . .

. . . . “Qua divulgata visione aliquantum loci accolæ paucis diebus timere et seipsos, *intermissis facinoribus*, castigare acceperunt ; verum post obitum ipsius Abbatissæ redierunt ad *pristinæ sordes*, imo *scleratiore fecerunt*.” . . .

† Coldingham ; destroyed by fire in 679.

tune consumed with fire. Which thing, notwithstanding, happened also for the wickedness of them that dwelled in the same, and especially of the chief and elders thereof, as all men might easily see that knew it. . . .

“In *the same monastery* there was a certain man, a Scotborne named Adaman, leading a very devout life unto God, in chastity, abstinence, and prayer &c.”

This godly man’s history, his voyages to Ireland, &c., are related, and then he narrates to Ebba the Abbess the following vision, warning her of the coming destruction. “Of late, quoth he, being occupied at night time in watching and saying of psalms, I suddenly saw one stand by me of a strange and unknown favour.”

This person proceeds to say to him : “For right now have I walked through all this monastery in order, and looked in every cell and bed, and of them all, saving thee, have I found not one occupied about the saving of his own soul ; but they are all, *both men and women*, either deeply drowned in sleep, or watching unto wickedness and sin. For the little houses that were made to pray or read in, are now turned into chambers of eating, and drinking, and talking, and other enticements of ill. And the virgins vowed unto God, contemning the reverence and regard of their profession, as oft as they have any leisure thereto, do occupy themselves in weaving and making fine clothes, wherewith they may set forth themselves like brides, to the danger and great peril of their estate and profession, or else to get *the love of strangers and men abroad*.”

This vision alarmed the Abbess, and she reformed matters somewhat, and the nuns began to “amend them-

H



selves and leave their naughty life. But after the death of the Abbess they returned to their own naughtiness, *yea, and to worse too.*"

And so the nunnery was burned down.

We quote another narrative, to shew that the male sex had free admission into nunneries ;—still from the same translation.

*Chap. XXIV.* "How the gift of singing was miraculously given to a certain brother in the monastery of this abbess. (Hilda.)"

"In the monastery of this Abbess there was a certain brother, notably endued with the special grace of God, which was wont to make songs and metres fit for religious and godly meditation, insomuch that whatsoever he learned of the holy scriptures by other men's expounding, he turned and made the same anon after with poetical and musical words set together with wonderful sweetness and melodie in his own mother tongue."

Bede then relates, that he received this art of singing, not by man's help, but by the direct grace of God, and that therefore he never would make fond or vain ballads. When a secular man, he never could sing, insomuch that "sometimes at the table when the company was set to be merry, and agreed for the nonse, that each man should sing in order at his course, so when he saw the harp to come near him, rose up at myds of supper, and gat him out of doors home to his own house." On one occasion, however, he had a vision, a man appeared to him and called him *Cædmon, canta mihi aliquid.* Cædmon, sing me a song. But he replied, *Nescio cantare,* I cannot sing. On being

again however charged to sing, he did so, and composed a poem, On the beginning of all things. Next morning he related his dream, and recited his composition—he was forthwith taken to the Abbess, and *taken into the monastery.*” \*

This is the point for which we have quoted the anecdote.

In an epistle addressed by Bede to Ecgbert, who became Bishop of York in 732, we read of many disorders.

“ It belongs to your office,” he says, “ to provide that the devil do not establish his kingdom in places consecrated to God ; that there be not discord instead of peace, strife instead of piety, drunkenness instead of sobriety, fornication and slaughter, instead of charity and chastity.” †

In the year 745, Boniface Archbishop of Mentz, addressed a sharp letter of rebuke to Ethelbald king of the Mercians, in which he says. ‡

“ But in the meanwhile an evil report of your life and piety has reached our ears, which has caused us sorrow, and which we would hope to be untrue. We have been informed by many persons, that you have never taken a lawful wife, according to the laws of the Lord God enjoined from the beginning of the world, and again repeated

\* Caput. xxiv. § 331. “ *In cujus monasterio abbatissæ fuit frater quidam divina gratia specialiter insignis, quia carmina religioni et pietati apta facere solebat,*” etc.

† Tui inquam est officii procurare ne in locis Deo consecratis diabolus sibi regnum usurpet, ne pro pace discordia, pro pietate jurgia, pro sobrietate ebrietas, pro charitate et castitate *fornicationes et homicidia*, sibi sedem vendicent.” (Ven. Bedæ Op. Lond. 1841, Vol. ii. p. 221. ‡ Wilkin’s Concilia, i. 87.

by the apostle Paul, 'that to avoid fornication let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband.' Now, if you had thus abstained from marriage for the sake of chastity and continence, we should have rejoiced, for this is not reprehensible but rather praiseworthy. If however, as many say (which, God forbid!) you have abstained from lawful wedlock, not to preserve your continency, but at the bidding of lust, to indulge in wantonness and adultery, your good name will be confounded before God and man. . . and what most grieves us is, that we hear that this crime has been committed chiefly in monasteries, with nuns and virgins consecrated to God. Now this is a double crime. It were a great crime for a servant to violate the spouse of his master; how much more guilty is he who defiles, in the filth of his lust, the spouse of Christ, creator of heaven and earth!" \*

Further on he says, "And it is to be observed that in that crime there lies another savage wickedness—murder. For when those whores, be they secular or monasterial whores, bring forth sinfully-conceived offspring, they, for the most part, slay them—not filling the Churches of Christ with adopted sons, but glutting the graves with bodies, and hell with miserable souls." †

\* Et adhuc, quod pejus est, qui nobis narrant, adjiciunt : quod hoc scelus ignominie maxime cum sanctimonialibus et sacratis Deo virginibus, per monasteria commissum sit. Nam hoc peccatum duplex esse, non dubium est; et ut verbi gratia dicamus cum vindictæ reus sit puer apud dominum suum, qui uxorem domini sui adulterio violaverit; quanto magis ille, qui sponsam Christi, creatoris cœli et terræ, putredine suæ libidinis commaculaverit.—Ib. p. 88.

† Et notandum ut quod in illo scelere aliud immane flagitium

At a Council held in London in 944, the following canon appears amongst others :

IV. Be nunna hæmebe 7 foplyzre.

Se ðe wif nunnan hæme ; zehalzobne lezeþrtope ne rý he wýpþe, bute he zebete swa ðe manþlaza.\*

“ De Monialium, Stupro et Adulterio.

“ Si quis cum moniali coeat non sit dignus consecrato cæmeterio *nisi compensit* sicuti pro homicidio.”

Here we have the system of money compensation for sin, distinctly stated, a system well known and reduced to a formal statement in the *Taxe Cancellariæ Romanæ*, or formal payment for sin of every kind, which at a later period became so important an element in the constitution of the Romish Church, and which was so fully exposed at the Reformation.

A Council was held during the reign of Ethelbert at Clovesho,—by some, supposed to be Cliff, near Gravesend, in Kent ; † by others Abingdon, in Berkshire, ‡ in the year 747, when it was enacted. §

. . . Can. xx. “ That the Bishops watch with vigilant care that the monasteries in their dioceses be what the word

subterjacet, id est homicidium ; quia dum *illæ meretrices*, sive seculares sive monasteriales, male conceptas soboles in peccatis genuerint, eas sæpe maxima ex parte occidunt ; non implentes, Christi ecclesias filiis adoptivis, sed tumulos corporibus et inferos miseris animabus satiantes.—Ib. p. 89.

\* Ex textu Roffensi et Spelm.—Wilkin’s Concilia, i. 214.

† Fuller’s Church History, Cent. viii. 62, § 21.

‡ “ Abbyndon in Berks, of old written Sheafs-ham, perhaps for Cleopsham.” Ind. nom. loc. Saxon Chronicle.

§ Wilkin’s Concilia, i. 94.

lenotes—honest habitations for those who are silent, quiet, and who labour for God ; and that they become not receptacles for ludicrous arts, that is, of *poets, harpers, musicians, and buffoons*, but of dwelling-places for men who pray and read and praise their God. Also, that no secular men have licence to wander in those places, unfit for them, nor to pass freely through the inner dwellings of the monasteries, *lest they find any thing there worthy of reprehension*, and *lest they should see or hear any thing unbecoming* within the cloisters of the monastery. For this familiarity with laymen has been found sufficiently hurtful and vicious, and especially in monasteries of nuns who walk not over orderly (et maxime in nunnarum minus regulantes conversantium, monasteriis) ; because on this account, causes of divers and nefarious suspicions arise, and are propagated and circulated to the disgrace of our profession. Wherefore let not the dwellings of the nuns become *the dens of shameful talkings, feastings, drunkenness and wantonness*,\* but habitations for chaste and soberly living and psalm-singing women, who give more care to reading books and singing psalms than to weaving and embroidering in various colours, garments of vain glory.

Legislation implies crime ; and so we find again, in the year 967, amongst canons issued by King Edgar, the following :—

XXXII. “ If any mass-priest, or monk, or deacon, or layman, or clerk, shall commit fornication with a nun, he

\* Unde ne sint sanctimonialium domicilia turpium confabulationum, commessationum, ebrietatum luxuriantiumque cubilia.—  
Ib. p. 97.

shall fast, each one as becomes his order, as for murder ; and so long as he lives, he shall abstain from meat ; the nun also to fast for ten years, and, as well as the mass-priest, to mourn over the fact all her life.”\*

From an oration made by the same King Edgar to Dunstan Archbishop of Canterbury, and other Bishops, it would appear that there was pressing urgency for the passing of such a canon.

He says that it is his anxious care to provide for the health, and quiet, and peace of the ministers of the churches, the orders of monks, and choirs of virgins ; that it is his duty to ascertain whether they have lived continently, and conducted themselves wisely towards them that are without ; whether they have been attentive to the divine offices, assiduous in teaching the people, sober in diet, moderate in dress, and discreet in their judgments.

“ With deference to you, reverend Fathers, I speak : If you, with anxious watchfulness, had cared for these things, such horrid and abominable relations would not have been brought to our ears respecting the clergy.†

\* xxxii. Si missalis sacerdos, vel monachus, vel diaconus, vel laicus, vel clericus, cum moniali fornicaverit, jejundet quilibet prout ordini suo convenit, tamquam pro homicidio ; et quoad vixerit a carne abstineat. Monialis autem, decem annos, sicuti et sacerdos missalis ; et semper factum lugeat.—Sacros Concilia Stud. P. Labbei et G. Cossart. Venice, 1728—33. Tom. xi. col. 927.

† Sacros. Conc. ib. col. 933. Pace vestra, loquor, reverendi Patres ; si ista solerti scrutinio curassetis, non tam horrenda et abominanda ad aures nostras de clericis pervenissent.

“ I say nothing of their not wearing their coronal openly, nor a befitting tonsure ; the wantonness of their dress, the insolence of their bearing, the foulness of their language,\* betray the unsound condition of the inner man.”

After describing the neglect of their priestly duties, he continues : “ I will tell you that good men weep, whilst evil men rejoice. I will tell you—grieving that such things can be said—how these men waste themselves in feasting and in drunkenness, in chamberings and wantonness, so that the houses of the priests might be taken for ————†. There may you find dice, and dance, and song, even to the middle of the night dragged on in shouting and in horrors. . . . Is it for this that our fathers have exhausted their treasures ? Is it for this that the royal revenues have been liberally given ? Is it for this that royal munificence has added to the church of Christ fields and possessions, that the priests’ harlots may be gaily adorned, that luxurious banquets may be provided for them, and dogs and birds, and such-like toys ? The soldiers cry out, the common people murmur, the mummings sing and dance,—and you neglect your duty, you spare where you should strike—you dissemble.”

We have nothing to add to the plain speaking of this very Popish King.

\* In veste lascivia, insolentia in gestu, in verbis turpitudine.—Ib.

† In conversationibus, in ebrietatibus, in cubilibus et impudicitiiis et jam domus clericorum putantur prostibula meretricum, concubulum histrionum.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE MONASTERIES IN ENGLAND.

THE Norman conquest only added to the number of religious orders and monastic votaries; and our information respecting their condition is plentiful.

In the year 1489, in the reign of King Henry VII, Pope Innocent VIII. issued a bull for the "Reformation of Monasteries,"—*De Reformatione Monasteriorum*, which we give *in extenso* in the Appendix (C.) In this document, addressed to Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, the Pope says: "By howmuchsoever the Church is prompted to the salvation of the souls of the faithful in Christ by religious persons who devote themselves to an exemplary life and to good works, so much the more evil accrues, if, by swerving from the right way, they fall into incontinency and a lax life, and into illicit pleasures."

He proceeds to say that it is his duty to institute a diligent and curious reformation, lest by over tolerance greater vices and scandals should arise. He has heard, with deep displeasure of soul, that many monasteries of the Cluniacensian, Cistercian, and Premonstratensian, and other orders, originally founded by English kings of pious memory, in the state and province of Canterbury, have



relaxed from their rules ; and that many, laying aside the sweet contemplation of their yoke, not only have grown tepid in their observances, but also, having put away from themselves the fear of God, and given themselves up to a reprobate mind, lead a lascivious and too dissolute life (*vitam lascivam ducunt, et nimium dissolutam*), to the peril of their own souls, the offence of the Divine Majesty, and the scandal of many. It is his duty to reform these scandals, and he adds that he has been urged to the discharge of this duty by his dear son King Henry the Seventh ; and he gives minute directions how the visitation and reformation is to be conducted, in order to get rid of excesses which offend decency ; he directs how offenders are to be dealt with, awarding punishments to them quietly and secretly (*pœnis debitis absque judiciorum strepitu castigandi*), and suspending and depriving parties where necessary ; calling in, when needful, the aid of the secular arm.

Now these statements come from the Pope himself : they are made in the reign of Henry VII. We are redeeming our promise of describing Nuns and Nunneries from Roman Catholic sources ; and, not to rest on the mere word of a Pope, infallible though he be, we will proceed to give some memoranda respecting the state of a few of the Nunneries in England, for two or three centuries before the issue of this bull : we shall find them growing worse and worse, until we come up to the very time when it was written ; and we shall then see how Cardinal Morton acted under the Papal authority, in one case at least, that of the Abbot of St. Albans.

## THE NUNNERY OF AMESBURY, IN WILTSHIRE.

“ In the year 1177, the evil lives of the abbess and nuns drew upon them the royal displeasure. The abbess was more particularly charged with immoral conduct ; inso-much that it was thought proper to dissolve the community. The nuns, about 30 in number, were dispersed in other monasteries, and the house was made a cell to the Abbey of Font-Ebrold or Fonteverault, in Anjou.”\*

## EVESHAM MONASTERY.

A Benedictine house containing monks and nuns. Under its abbot Robert, a monk of Jumieges in Normandy, we find a particular account of its internal condition. “ There were 57 monks, 5 nuns, three persons who are termed

\* Dugdale's Monasticon, ii. p. 333. Eodem etiam tempore . . . rex ad abbatthiam monialium de Ambresbury Exoniensem et Wigorniensem episcopos destinavit ; qui per mandatum Alexandri papæ abbatissam ibidem, quæ postquam religionis habitum susceperat *tres infantes peperisse comprobata fuerat*, propter ipsius infamiam deposuerunt, et ipsam et sanctimoniales omnes ibidem quæ errorem et vitæ suæ turpitudinem relinquere et ordinem Fontis Ebrardi, tenere nolebant, a domo illa disperserunt.—Chron. J. Brompton, Abb. Journalensis. Scrip. x. Rog. Twysden. London : 1652. col. 1119.

We also read in the annals of Roger Hoveden : “ Eodem anno (silicet anno Gratia, 1177) idem Rex (silicet Henricus secundus) expulsis sanctimonialibus de abbacia de ~~Ambresburie~~ propter incontinentiam suam et per alias domus religiosas in arctiori custodia distributis, ipsam abbatiam de ~~Ambresburie~~ dedit abbatissæ et domui de ~~Frunt Curoit~~, in perpetuum possidendam.”—Roger Hoveden, Script. Post Bedam præcipui. Francfort. 1601. p. 560.

*pauperes ad mandatum*, 3 clerks who enjoyed the same privileges as the monks, and 365 servants.”\*

Roger Norreis, a monk of Canterbury, was appointed abbot of Evesham, in 1191. Gervase of Canterbury thus describes him:—

“ From his youth he was proud, lifted up, pompous in words, deceitful in actions, ambitious of preferment, a scorner of religion, fawning to his superiors, overbearing to his inferiors, gaudy in dress, negligent in observances of his order, *fond of women*, a lover of horses, passionate in his conceits, ready for detraction, in all things incorrigible.” †

Yet this gentleman had five nuns under his supreme authority!!

#### SWINE PRIORY.

In the last edition of Dugdale’s *Monasticon*, we read in the list of Prioresses; v. 493.

“ Josiana de Anelagby, or Anglatby, succeeded, who, in 1303, had license, on account of ill health, to absent herself from her monastery: a little scandal, also, appears to have attached to her character.”

\* Dugdale’s *Monasticon*, ii. 4.

† *Erat ab adolescentia monachus sui superbus, elatus, pomposus in verbis, dolosus in factis, cupidus prelationis, aspernator religionis, ad superiores adulator, ad inferiores contemptor, gloriosus in veste, negligens in ordinis observatione, amicus fœminarum, amator equorum, iracundus ad conceptiones, paratus ad detractiones, in omnibus incorrigibilis.*—Chron. Gervas. . . . Col. 1564.

The reference for this fact is Harl. MS. 6970, Reg. Romane Archiep. Ebor. p. 105. We have inspected MS., and read :

“ Josiana de Anglatby, Priorissa de Swyne, habet licentiam absentari a monasterio ob morbum quo laborat et non potest sine scandalo cum sociis conversare.”

As we have freely quoted the documents printed in this magnificent edition of Dugdale,\* without thinking it necessary to verify our quotations in every case, by reference to the original manuscripts, we are glad to have done so in the present instance ; as the reader will perceive that the learned editors soften down, rather than otherwise, the expressions : the assertion of scandal attaching to her disease is most decided and unequivocal in the original.

#### ROMSEY NUNNERY, HAMPSHIRE.

In the register of Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury, are copies of the ordinances made in his time for the regulation of the convent. There is also a strong admonition lest a certain William Schyroch, Prebendary of Romsey, who had been behaving himself ill in that neighbourhood, † should enter the nunnery, and the nuns are strictly forbidden to have any conversation with him, either in their house or elsewhere ; and it appears further that, besides leading a generally dissolute life, he had especially been disturbing these poor nuns at Romsey.

\* 6 Vols. folio. Lond. 1825.

† Per villam de Romoseye et alibi inhoneste devagantem.—  
Dugd. Mon. ii. 507.

and also of "red wyne for the covent on Ester-evyn." So that there seems to have been no lack of good cheer, even in Lent, in the saintly precincts of Barking monastery.

NUNNERY AT NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

(Brande's History of Newcastle, p. 217, et seq.)

"On the 3rd January, a commission was granted by Thomas Hatfield, Bishop of Durham, to Alan de Shutlyng and William de Farnham, to visit this nunnery in order to punish and reform such excesses and crimes, as they should discover the nuns to be guilty of." \*

In 1367, a second commission was granted by the same Bishop, to Hugh de Arnecliffe, to proceed against Amisia de Belford (who is charged with having intruded into this priory) in a cause moved against her concerning intrusion, dilapidation, incontinence, and other crimes. She does not seem to have been convicted of the several crimes laid to her charge; but by an order of the above Bishop, dated at Aucland, this Amisia, who affirmed she was Prioress, was warned to permit two nuns, Emma del Hill and Joan de Farneleye, whom she had expelled from this house, to return to it, and was commanded at the same time to treat them in future with becoming affection. †

\* Randall's MSS. "Commissio ad Visitand. moniales S. Bartho' de Nov Castro.—Reg. Hatfeld. fol. 46.

† . . . redire ad domum suam et ibidem Deo famulari et quod petrectet eas affectione debita, etc.

## ST. HELEN'S NUNNERY, LONDON.

(Dugd. iv. 553.)

“ Reynold Kentwode, dean and chapeter of the Church af Poules, to the religious women, Prioress, and Covent of the Priory of Seynt Eleyns of oure patronage and jurisdictyon immediat, and every nunne of the sayde priory gretyng in .God, with desyre religyous observances and devotyon. For as moche as in oure visitatyon ordinarye in your priorye, boothe in the hedde and in the membris late actually exersyd, we have founden many defautes and excesses, the wiche nedythe notory correcyon and reformation,” . . .

General injunctions about divine service, confession, &c., follow ; then

“ Also we injoyne you prioress, that ye kepe your dortour, (dormitory) and ly thereinne by nythe, aftyr observaunce of youre religione, without that the case be such, that the lawe and the observawnce of your religione suffreth you to do the contrarye.

“ Also we ordeyne and injoyne you prioress and covent, that noo seculare be lokkyd withinne the boundes of the cloystere, ne no seculare persones come with-inne aftyr the belle of complyne, except wymment servauntes and mayde childeryne lerners.

“ Also we ordeyne and injoyne you prioress and covent, that ye, ne noone of yowre sustres, use nor haunte any place with inne the priory, thorghe the wiche evel suspencyone or slaundere myth aryse ; weche places *for certeyne causes that* move us, we wryte not here inne owre present

injunceyone, but wole notifie to yow prioresse : nor have no lokyng nor spectacles owte warde, thortht the wyche ye mythe fall in worldly dilectacyone.

“ Also we ordeyne and injoyne you prioresse and covent, that somme sadde woman and discreet of the seyde religion, honest, well named, be assigned to the shittying of the cloysters dorys, and keypyng of the keys, that non persone have entre ne issue into the place aftyr complyne belle; neither in noo other time be the wiche the place may be disclaunderid in tyme comyng.”

From these peremptory ordinances and injunctions, we may guess something of the nature of the “ many defautes and excesses ” which needed correction.

Further on we have the following :

“ Also we enjoyne you, that alle daunsyng and revelyng be utterly forborne among you, *except Christmasse, and other honest tymys of recreacyone*, among youre selfe in absence of seculars in alle wyse.

“ Also we injoyne you prioresse, that there may be a doore at the Nonnes Quere, that noo straungers may loke on them, nor they on the straungers, wanne thei bene at divyne service.

“ Also we injoyne you prioresse that non women have noo keys of the posterne doore that gothe owte of the cloystere into the churche yard but the prioresse, for there is moche comyng in and owte unlefull tymys.”

The Prioress is charged to read these injunctions four times a year to the nuns, and to obey them, under pain of excommunication.

“ In to which witnessse we sette owre common seele

govyn in owre chapitter house the **xxi** day of the monyth of June, the yere of owre Lord **MCCCCXXXIX** et anno regni regis Henrici Sexti, post conquestum, decimo septimo."

## SOPWELL NUNNERY.

Sopwell Nunnery was a cell belonging to St. Alban's. We shall have something to say about it a little later, but about the year 1348. Michael, Abbot of St. Alban's, issued certain rules and enforced them upon this nunnery, which, had they been enforced amongst our friends at Barking so famous for their white puddings and "cripcis and crumb-cakes," the establishment of men-servants would have been greatly diminished.

(Cott. MS. Nero D. i. fol. 189 a.)

8. Des overours des queux vous aures mester pur voz necessares, cest assavoir taillors et pelleters volons que pur tiels overours soit une lieu ordine pres de lenclistre ou tiels ouverours facent leurs overaignes et que telles ouverours ne soient mes appelez en chambres ne en lieu prive.

10. Auxi avous ordine que desore enavaunt la. . . . priouresse ne donne congie a nulle de vous a demourer hors de la dortour en chambres de nuyt oue hostes que vendront, et que nulles hostes seculeres ne reguleres ne gisent en la dortour oue vous, mes senlement vous qui estes del convent, et checune soule en son lyt, sicome apent a vostre estat. Dagdale iii. 366.



## NUN APPLETON NUNNERY, IN YORKSHIRE.

Injunctiones factæ Priorissæ et Conventui Domus sive Prioratus de Apleton. Anno Domini, 1489.\*

Ex Registro Thomæ Rotheram—Archiepisc. Ebor. fol. 245.

First, and principally we command and injoyne that the divine service, and the rules of your religion bee observed and kept accordingly to your order that yee be professed.

. . . . .

Item that the Priorisse suffer no man to lodge under the dorter nor oon the backside, but if it be such sad persons † by whom your house may be holpyne and secured without slaunder or suspition.‡

Item that the Priorisse and all your sisters lodge nightly in the dorter, saving if yee or your sisters, be seke or diseased to keepe a chamber.

Item that non of your sisters use the alehouse nor the watersyde, where course of strangers dayly resorte.

Item that non of your sisters bring in, receave, or take any *lay man, religious or secular* into the chambre or any secrete place, day or night, nor with thaim in such private places to commine, ete or drinke, *without lycence of your priorisse.*

\* Dugd. Mon. V. p. 654.

† Sad;—i. e. serious, discreet, sober.—Halliwell's Dictionary,

He set hym up and sawe their beside

A *sad* man, in whom is no pride

Right a discrete confessor. . . . MS. Rowl. c. 86.

‡ The monastic motto is *Si non caste, caute.*

Item that ye take noe perhendinauncers \* or sojourners into your place from hensforward, but if they be children or ellis old persons, by which availe by likelihood may grow to your place.

## ST. ALBAN'S.

Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, and legate of the apostolic see under King Henry VII, was the Pre-late to whom Pope Innocent VIII addressed the bull to which we called attention at the commencement of this chapter—and he appears to have lost no time in acting upon his orders.

He immediately addressed a letter to the Abbot of St. Alban's, from which we shall translate some passages.

“ John, by divine permission, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England, Legate of the Apostolic Sêe, Visitor, Inquisitor, Reformer, and Judge, &c., to William, † Abbot of the Monastery of St Alban's, of the order of St. Benedict, &c.”

After reciting the tenour of the brief he has received from the Pope, he roundly charges the said Abbot as being guilty of simony, of having wantonly squandered the property of the Monastery, and of other enormous crimes. He

\* We have failed to find out the meaning of this word.

† William Wallingford. In Tanner's Notitia and Dugdale's Monasticon, he is stated to have died in 1484, and Thomas Ramryge is said to have succeeded him, but not till 1492, the Abbacy being vacant for eight years. This letter, however, the original of which is in the Registry at Lambeth, proves that he was alive in 1490. The date of this letter moreover agrees with the Excerpta of Dr. Ducarel in the British Museum.

tells him, that soon after he came to the government of the Monastery, he and his brother monks soon laid aside all regularity of life and sacred observances. "So that many," he continues, "of thy said fellow-monks and fellow-friars, giving themselves up to a reprobate mind, and putting away from them the fear of God, led, and still do lead a lascivious life, and horrible to relate, too often do not fear to profane the very holy places, even the temples of God, by the *violation of nuns* and other enormities.

"And thus, amongst other grave, enormous and most wicked crimes of which thou stoodest, and dost stand guilty, noted and disgraced, thou didst take a certain woman named Elen Germyn who had but lately basely quitted her husband, and had lived in adulterous embraces with another man, and didst place her in the Nunnery or Priory of Pray,\* under thine own jurisdiction, first as a nun, and afterwards as prioress, although her husband lived, and yet lives; and Sir Thomas Sudbury,† one of thy fellow monks, did publicly, notoriously, and with impunity, visit her *tanquam mæchus ad mæcham* in the house or Priory of Pray aforesaid; and also others of thy fellow monks and fellow friars have continual access with impunity to her and to other women, both there and elsewhere *tanquam ad publica prostibula sive lupanaria*. And also in another Nunnery, that of Sopwell,‡ which thou claimest as being under thy jurisdiction, thou didst remove at thy own will and pleasure the prioresses and superiors thereof, setting

\* Pray Priory—a cell belonging to St. Albans.

† *Dominus* Thomas Sudbury. *Dominus* or *Sir*,—a priest's title.

‡ See ante page 163.

aside good and religious women, and placing in the height of dignity, evil, and sometimes most depraved persons, &c.”

We have quoted enough; he proceeds with other charges against him, such as neglecting the house and cutting down the trees, and ends with an admonition! and it is formally sealed, and issued, and dated 1490.

For the original of the passages quoted, see Appendix D.

The evidence contained in this letter of Archbishop Morton is very valuable. It occurred under a most thoroughly Popish king, and before Reformation in England had been thought of, except by the small company of true and faithful believers, who under the name of Lollards or Wickliffites, sighed and cried against the abominations that were done in the land.

## CHAPTER XI.

### VISITATION OF THE MONASTERIES.

It forms no part of the task we have undertaken, to give a history of the suppression of monasteries under King Henry VIII. We shall not occupy our pages with pointing out the errors that may have been committed in doing that great work, nor in rebutting the charges made against the King and his councillors by Roman Catholic historians of the present day. But we do wish to call attention to the fact, that no monarch ever sat on the throne of England more resolutely determined to suppress heresy and to maintain the faith of the Church of Rome than King Henry VIII. Both he and his councillors were Papists in all that relates to worship, and doctrine, and practice—the one article of the Pope's supremacy alone excepted. It was the enormous vices and the wickedness of the monastic institutions in this country that led to their suppression. We may read their doom in the Bull of Innocent the Eighth, already quoted. The work was commenced by Cardinal Wolsey; it was completed by Lord Cromwell.

In the year 1535, instructions were issued for a general

visitation of monasteries. The commissioners were desired amongst other things to enquire—

“ 20. Item. Whether ye do kepe chastitie, not usyng the company of any suspecte woman within this monastery or withoute ; and whether the maister, or any brother of this house, be suspected upon incontineneye, or defamed for that he is moche conversaunt with women ?

“ 21. Item. Whether women useth and reasorteth moche to this monasterie by backe ways or otherwyse ? and whether they be accustomedly or at any tyme lodged within the precinctes thereof ?

“ 22. Item. Whether the maister or any brother of this house. . . . We shall translate the question into Latin : Interrogat anne solent pueri aut juvenes cum monachis concumbere.” \*

Another injunction was—

“ Also that there be no enteryng into this monastery but one, and that by the great forgate of the same, which diligently shalbe watchyd and kept by some porter specially appoyncyd for that purpose, and shalbe shute and openyd by the same bothe daye and nyght at convenyent and accustomed houres, which porter shall repell all manner women from enteraunce into the said monastery.” †

The reports of these commissioners are not available in a collected form—many of them were doubtless destroyed in the reign of Mary—fragments of them are to be found in various quarters ; but the full history of these investigations has not yet been laid before the public. The do-

\* Cott. MS. Cleopatra. E. iv. fol. 14. Wilkin's Concilia. iii, p. 787.

† lb. fol. 21. Wilkins, p. 788.

cuments which have been published relate chiefly to the monasteries of monks ; it would seem that the Nuns made less resistance, and yielded in many cases without subjecting themselves to a rigid investigation. We are able however to lay before our readers a few letters of this period—chiefly letters from the commissioners to Cromwell ; many of these are without date in the manuscripts. We do not hesitate, however, to adopt the dates assigned to them by Mr. Wright in his “ Three chapters of letters relating to the suppression of monasteries.” \*

Our first letter refers to Syon Monastery, of which we have already spoken.

On the 12th December, 1534, Dr. Layton writes to Cromwell as follows, from Syon Monastery.

(From Cott. MS. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 125.)

“ Hit may please your goodnes to understonde that Bisshope † this day prechede and declarede the Kinges title varawell, and hade a gret audience, the churche full of people. One of the focares in his saide declaration openly callede hym fals knave with other folisshe wordes. Hit was that folisshe felowe with the curled hede, that knelyde in your way whan ye came forthe of the confessors chambre. I cannolesse do but set hym in prison, *ut pena ejus sit metus aliorum*. Yesterday I lernede many enourmouise thynges againste Bisshope in the examination of the lay brederen ; firste that Bisshope persuadyt two of the brederen to have gone ther ways by nyght, and he himself with them, and to thaccompaniment of that they lakede but money to by the secular apparell ; further

\* Printed for the Camden Society. 1843. † A Monk of Syon.

that Bisshope wolde have persuadyt one of his lay brederen, a smyth, to have made a key for the dore, to have in the nyght tyme receyvide in wenches for hym and his felowe, and specially a wiffe of Uxbrige nowe dwellyng not far from the olde lady Darbie, nygh Uxbrige, wiche wiffe his olde customer hath bene many tymes at the graittes commonyng with the saide Bisshope, and muche he was desierouse to have hade her conveyde in to hym. The saide Bisshope also persuadyt a nune,\* to whome he was confessor, *ad libidinem corporum perimplendam*, and thus he persuadyt her in confession, makyng her to beleve that whansoever and as oft as they shulde medle together, if she were immediatly affter confessede by hym, and towke of hym absolution, she shulde be clere forgyvyn of Gode, and hit shulde be none offence unto her before Gode; and she write dyvers and sondrie letters unto hym of suche ther folishenes and unthriftynes, and wolde have hade his brother the smythe to have pullede owte a bare of yron of that window wheras ye examinede the lady Abbas, that he myght have gone in to her by nyght, and that same windowe was ther commonyng place by nyght. He persuadyt the Sexten that he wolde be in his contemplacion in the churche by nyght, and by that meanes was many nyghtes in the churche talkyng with her at the saide graite of the nunnes qwere, and ther was ther metyng place by nyght, besydes ther day communication, as in confession. Hit were to long to declare all thynges of hym that I have herde, wiche I suppos is trewe. This after none I intende to make further serche, bothe of

\* Sion was a double monastery of Monks and Nuns.



some of the brederen and some also of the sisters, for suche lyke matters ; if I fynde any thynges apparant to be trewe, I shall, Gode willyng, thereof certifye your mastershipe to morrowe by vij in the mornyng, and after this day I suppos ther wilbe no other thynges to be knowyn as yett here, for I have alrede examynede all the brederen, and many of them wolde gladly depart hens, and be ryght wery of their habite : such religion and faynede sanctitie Gode save me fro ! If Mr. Bedyll had bene here a frear and of Bisshops counsell, he wolde ryght well have helpede hym to have browght his matter to passe withoute brekyng up of any graite or yett cownterfetyng of keys, suche capacitie Gode hathe sende hym. From Sion this Sunday xij Decembris.

“ By the spedy hande of your assurede poire preste,

“ RICHARD LAYTON.”

The following was written from Syon, a few days after, by Bedyll, an active visitor of the monastery. We shall here see that the nuns felt they could make no resistance, and are pleading for good terms.

(From Cott. MS. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 109.)

“ Right worshipful, after my moost hertie commendations, pleace it you to understand that Maister Leighton and I have had mucche busines with this house sythens your departing hens ; and as for the brethern, they stand stif in thair obstinacy as you left thaim. Copynger and Lache were sent to my Lord of London on Moneday. . . . I handled Whitford after that in the garden, bothe with faire wordes and with foule, and showed him that throughe

his obstinacy he shuld be brought to the greate shame of the world for his irreligious life and for his using of bawdy wordes to diverse ladys at the tymes of thair confession, whereby (I seyed) he myght be the occasion that shrift shalbe layed downe throughe England: but he hath a brasyn forehed, whiche shameth at nothing. . . . We have sequesterd Whitford and Litell from hering of the ladys confessions, and we think it best that the place wher thes frires have been wont to hire uttward confessions of al commers at certen tymes of the yere be walled up, and that use to be foredoen for ever."

Bedyll then dwells on the resistance made by one of the sisters to the King's title; the rest all submitting.

"Albeit I was informed this nyght that one Agnes Smyth, a sturdye dame and a wylful, hath labored diverse of her susters, to stop that we should not have thair convent seal; but we trust we shal have it this mornyng, with the subscription of thabbes for her self and al her susters, whiche is the best fassion that we can bring it to. The persone which she spak with at the grate, covyteth very muche to speke with you, seyng she hath suche thinges whiche she wold utter to no man but to you, and what they be I cannot conject. We purpose this afternone, or els tomorrow mornyng, to awaite on the King's grace, to know his pleasir in every thing, and specially touching the muring up of the houses of utterward confessions. Maister Leighton hath wreten certen compertes unto you, and therfor I forber to spek any thing thereof. The ladys of Sion besecheth you to be good maister unto thaim and to thair house, as thair special trust is in you,

and that they all run not into obloquy and slaunder for the mysbehavior of one person.\* A greate number of the ladys desired me to speke unto you, that Bisshope and Parkere myght be discharged from the house of Sion, and Bisshope and Parker desire the same ; I mervaille that they desire not likewise to be discharged of the person with whom ye talked at the grate, seing Bisshope's caus and that is one. From Sion the xvijth day of December.

“ By yours, as your servant,

“ THOMAS BEDYLL.”

As some of our extracts refer more especially to Abbots and Monks, we must just remind our readers that Abbots and Monks were the persons who had in many places the controul, and in all cases easy access to, the nunneries of their own order ; and it will be no difficult matter to conceive what must have been the state of nunneries subject to spiritual guides such as those of whom we are about to speak.

Dr. Layton thus describes an adventure which took place at King's Langdon in Kent, a Premonstratensian abbey.

Dr. Layton to Cromwell.—(MS. Cotton. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 127.) Oct. 23, 1534.

“ Pleasit your goodnes to understonde, that one Friday xxij Octobris, I rode bake with spede to take an inventarie of Fowlstone,† and from thens I went to Langden. Wheras immediately discendyng from my horse, I sent

\* That is, of Agnes Smyth, in the matter of the King's title.

† Folkstone.

Bartlett, your servant, with alle my servantes, to circoncept the abbay, and surely to kepe alle bake dorres and startyng hoilles,\* etc. I myself went alone to the Abbottes logeyng jonyng upon the felde and wode, evyn lyke a cony clapper full of startyng hoilles ; a goode space knockyng at the Abbottes dore, *nec vox nec sensus apparuit*, saveyng the Abbotes litle doge that, within his dore faste lokked, bayede and barked. I fownde a short polax standyng behynde the dore, and with yt I dasshede the Abbottes dore in peisses, *ictu oculi*, and set one of my men to kepe that dore, and aboute howse I go with that polax in my hande, *ne forte*, for thabbot is a daingerouse desperate knave and a hardy. But for a conclusion, his —, *alias* his gentle womman, bestyrrede hir stumpis towardes hir startyng hoilles, and ther Bartlett wachyng the pursuet, towke the tendre demoisel, and after I hade examynede hir, to Dover, ther to the maire to set hir in sum cage or prison for viii dais, and I browgt holy father Abbot to Canterbury, and here in Christchurche I will leve hym in prison. In this soden doyng *ex tempore* to circumcept the howse, and to serche, your servant John Antonie his men mervelede what felow I was, and so dyde the reste of thabby, for I was unknown ther of al men. At last, I fownde hir apparel in thabbottes cofer. To tell yowe all this commodie, but for thabbot a tragedie, hit were to long. . . . Surely I suppos Gode hym self put hit in my mynde thus sodenly to make a serche at the begynnyng, bycause no chanon apperede in my

\* Starting hoilles ; i. e. private posterns.

syghte; I supposede rather to have fownde a \_\_\_\_\_  
 emongiste them then in thabbottes chambre. . . . Scrib-  
 ullede this Satterday, an writen with the hasty hand of  
 your assurede servant,

“RYCHARD LAYTON,  
 “*Preste.*”

From Lichfield, Layton wrote to Cromwell, in the same  
 year, as follows. (Cotton. MS. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 131.)

“Hit may please your Maistershippe to understande,  
 that in goyng northwardes from London I towke in my  
 way towardes Lichfelde, whereas I appointede to mete  
 with doctor Leig, firste a prorie of Gylbertyns and nunnes  
 inclosede and close; whereas they wolde not in any wise  
 have admittede me as vysiter, I wolde not be so an-  
 swerede, but visitede them, and ther fownde two of the  
 saide nunnes not baron; one of them *impregnavit sup-  
 prior domus*, an other a servyng man. The two pri-  
 oresses wolde not confesse this, nother the parties, nor  
 none of the nunnes, but one old beldame; and whan I  
 objectede agayns the saide prioresses, that if they cowlde  
 not shewe me a cause resonable of that their conseile-  
 ment, I muste nedes and wolde punishe them for ther ma-  
 nifeste perjurie, ther answer was that they were bownde  
 by ther religion never to confesse the secrete fawttes done  
 emongiste them, but onely to ther owne visiture of ther  
 religion,\* and to that they were sworne evere one of them  
 at ther firste admission. Another prorie callede Har-

\* Religion, or Order.

welde,\* wherein was iiij or v nunnes with the priores ; one of them hade two faire chyldren, another one and no mo . . . From Lichefelde, *crastino divi Thomæ*. By the spedy hande of youre assurede preste and servande,

“ RYCHARDE LAYTON.”

In January 1536, Dr. Layton thus writes to Cromwell. (MS. Cotton. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 115.)\*

“ Hit may please your Mastershippe to be advertissede that here in Yorkeshire we fynde gret corruption emongiste persons religieuse, evyn lyke as we dyde in the sowthe, *tam in capite quam in membris*, and wurse, if wurse may be in kyndes of knaverie, as,† . . . , and nunnes to take potations *ad prolem conceptum opprimendum*, with suche other kindes of offences lamentable to here. . . . From Yorke xiiij<sup>o</sup> Januarii, by your assurede poire preste,

“ RICHARDE LAYTON.”

The Abbot of Fountains', as described in the following letter from Drs. Legh and Layton, was a fitting person truly to have charge of nuns. (Ex MS. Cotton. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 114.)

“ Pleasit your Mastershippe to understonde, that thabbot of Fontance hath so gretly dilapidate his howse, wastede ther wooddes, notoriously kepyng vj hoores, diffamede here *a toto populo*, one day denyng thes articles with many mo, the next day folowyng the same confessyng, thus

\* Harewold, or Harwold, a priory of Augustine nuns in Bedfordshire.

† Here we omit a passage with which we will not pollute our our pages, even in the Latin in which Layton writes it.

manifestely incurryng perjurie. . . . From Richemont, xx<sup>o</sup> Januarii, by your assurede poire prestes and faithful servandes,

RYCHARDE LAYTON and THOMAS LEGH.

To the ryght honourable Master Thomas Cromwell,  
Cheffe Secretarie to the Kinges Hyghnes.”

We may just mention that in another letter, Dr. Layton speaking of the Priory of Maiden Bradley in Wiltshire, says, (Ex Mss. Cott. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 249.)

“ . . . and all thes of Maden Bradeley, wheras is an holy father prior, and hath but vj children, and but one dowghter maryede yet of the goodes of the monasterie, trystyng shortly to mary the reste. His sones betale men waityng upon hym, and he thankes Gode a never medelet with marytt women, but all with madens the fairest cowlde be gottyn, and always maredede them ryght well. The Pope, consideryng his fragilitie, gave hym licens to kepe an —, and hath goode wrytyng *sub plumbo* to discharge his conscience and toc hoys Mr. Underhyll to be hys gostely father, and he to gyve hym *plenam remissionem* &c.”

With such reports—and we possess barely a hundredth part of them—the King’s Government, following in the steps pointed out by Pope Innocent VIII, was surely well authorized in prefixing a strong preamble to

“An acte wherby religeous houses of Monkes, Chanons, and Nonnes, whiche may dyspend Manors, Landes, Tenements, and Heredytamentes, &c. &c., be geven to the Kinges Hihghnes, his heires and successours for ever.”

This act—(27 Henry VIII. cap. 28) dissolved the smaller houses ; we touch not the question of whether the property of these religious houses was well disposed of, but we assert that the preamble speaks truth when it says

“ Forasmoche as manifest synne, vicious, carnall and abhomynable lyvyng is dayly used and commytted amonges the lytell and smale abbeys, pryoryes, and other relygyous houses of Monkes, Chanons, and Nonnes, where the congregacion of suche relygyous persones is under the number of xii persons, &c. &c.”

Nor were the larger houses in better condition, as we have seen by Cardinal Morton's letter to the mitred Abbot of St. Albans.

There is a List of offending Monks and Nuns giuen in the Cottonian Manuscripts. (Cleop. iv. E. 147 to 159, Comperta Eccl. Cath. Lichfelde.)



## CHAPTER XII.

### MONASTIC LIFE IN GERMANY.

WE shall now turn our attention to the results of clerical celibacy and Monastic Institutions in other countries, and we commence with Germany. In the Council of Mayence held in the year 888, under Pope Stephen V., we find what we must call the customary canon passed against the dwelling of females with the priests; the horrors of incest however seem to have been added to the usual amount of vicious living.

“X. We decree that it be altogether forbidden to Priests to have women residing in their houses. Even though the sacred canons shall allow some description of females to live in the houses of the clergy, yet, it is much to be grieved for, we have often heard that on account of that concession *very many crimes have been committed*, so that some priests have had children born to them by their own sisters. And therefore this holy synod does decree, that no priest shall allow any female to reside in his own house, so that occasion of evil suspicion, and of wicked conduct, may be altogether removed.” \*

\* Concilium Moguntiacense. X. Ut clericis interdicatur, mulieres in domo suo habere, omnimodis decernimus. Quamvis

Another council was held in the year 1225, during the Pontificate of Honorius III, called the "Concilium Germanicum," under Conrade, Bishop and Cardinal, Legate of the Apostolic See. This council was held also at Mayence, although by some it has been called "Concilium Coloniense."\*

*Chapter I.—De continentia clericorum*—recites, that although the holy fathers have passed many decrees on this subject, still many of the clergy do not gird up their loins with the girdle of continency.†

*Chapter II.—De pœnis concubinariorum clericorum* decrees, that priests who publicly keep concubines shall be expelled from their office.

*Chapter XIII.*—Treats of those who commit incest with nuns, and of how the sacred virgins so polluted are to be dealt with.

"Although heavy penalties both canonical and legal have been instituted against those wicked persons who ensnare the chastity of the sacred virgins—yet some men,

enim sacri canones quasdam personas fœminarum simul cum clericis in una domo habitare permittant ; tamen, quod multum dolendum est, sæpe audivimus, par illam concessionem plurima scelera esse commissa, ita ut quidam sacerdotum cum propriis sororibus concumbentes, filios ex eis generassent. Et idcirco constituit hæc sancta synodus, ut nullus presbyter ullam fœminam secum in domo propria permittat, quatenus occasio malæ suspitionis vel facti iniqui penitus auferatur.—Sacrosancta Concilia Stud. P. Labbei et G. Cossart. Venice. 1728—32. Tom. xi. col. 586.

\* Ibidem. Tom. xiii. col. 1095.

† . . . nonnulli clerici lumbos suos cingulo continentiæ, non præcingunt.

In the year 1408, Pope Gregory VII. addressed the following letter to an Abbot in Friesland.\*

“ It has lately come to our knowledge, that in the country of Friesland there are twelve Benedictine monasteries, in the dioceses of Bremen and Mæstricht, in which not only nuns of the said order reside, but also males of the same profession live, after some fashion, with the nuns. In these monasteries, almost all religion and observance of the said order and fear of God, has been laid aside, and

\* Theod. de Niem. *Nemor Unionis. Labyrinthus Tract. vi. c. 34.*—Nuper ad nostrum pervenit auditum, quod in partibus Frisiæ XXII. Monasteria Ordinis S. Benedicti Bremensis, Monasteriensis et Trajectensis dioceseos consistunt, in quibus olim . . . tantummodo moniales dicti ordinis degebant, sed successu temporis contigit, quod in eisdem etiam mares ejusdem professionis in magno numero qualitercunque cum monialibus . . . degerent, prout degerent ad præsens. . . . In quibus (monasteriis) pene omnis religio et observantia dicti ordinis, ac Dei timor abscessit, libido et corruptio carnis interipsos mares et moniales, necnon alia multa mala, excessus et vitia, quæ pudor est effari, per singula succreverunt. . . . Fornicantur etiam quam plures hujusmodi monialium cum eisdem suis prælatis monachis et conversis et in iisdem monasteriis plures parturiunt filios et filias. . . . Filios autem in monachos, et filias taliter conceptas quandoque in moniales dictorum monasteriorum recipi faciunt et procurant : et quod miserandum est, nonnullæ ex hujusmodi monialibus maternæ pietatis oblitæ, ac mala malis accumulando aliquos fœtus eorum mortificant, et infantes in lucem æditos trucidant. . . . Insuper quasi singulæ moniales hujusmodi singulis monachis et conversis . . . ad instar ancillarum seu uxorum . . . sternunt lectos, lavant etiam eis capita et pannos, . . . nec non decoqnunt ipsis cibaria delicata, ac die noctuque cum ipsis monachis et conversis in commessionibus et ebrietatibus creberrime conservantur. Niem, Basil. 1566.

lust and carnal corruption between the males and the nuns have entered in, with many other evils, excesses, and vices, which shame forbids us to speak of minutely. Many indeed of the nuns commit fornication with the very monks who are placed in authority over them, and with the lay brothers; and in the same monasteries many bring forth sons and daughters; and they cause their sons and daughters so begotten to be received sometimes as monks and nuns in the same monasteries: and what is most grievous, not a few of the nuns of this sort, forgetting maternal piety, and adding evils to evils, *fætus eorum mortificant*, and destroy the children who see the light.

“ Moreover, almost all the nuns wait upon particular monks or lay brothers as though they were their handmaids or their wives, making their beds, washing their heads and their clothes, and cooking for them delicious viands, often passing day and night with the said monks and lay brethren, in feastings and drunkenness.”

In the Council of Constance, in the year 1415, Theobald thus addressed the Council.\*

“ The abodes of the nuns—rather like places of public resort or theatres, are infested by all sorts of vanities, the greatest not excepted, not without grave scandal. And if

\* Hardt. Conc. Const. l. xix. p. 909. *Loca sanctimonialium . . . quasi publica loca, plus quam theatra ad omnes vanitates, etiam a magnis, non sine maximo scandalo frequentantur. Et si qui forte alti status propter verecundiam temporalem intrare non audeant, sua munuscula, fercula, et literas eis mittunt, easque cum maximo scandalo ad se invitant. Quæ autem ex his sequuntur turpe est dicere, sed multo turpius est facere.*

some persons of high station, out of shame, do not dare to enter the dwellings of the Nuns, yet they send to them their gifts and delicate dishes and letters, and with great public scandal invite them to come to them. What follows, it were a shame to speak of, but is a greater shame to commit.”

We shall now introduce to our readers a valuable and important witness in our case against nunneries.

JOHN BUSCH was born in 1400, at Zwoll a town of Overyssel, in Holland. He studied under John Celius, rector of the school of Zwoll, eminent for the learned men it produced. He entered amongst the regular canons at Windesheim, in 1419, and was a cotemporary of Thomas à Kempis. In the years, 1450, 1451, the Cardinal Nicholas de Cusa was sent to Germany as Papal Legate, and especially entrusted with the reformation of convents. He empowered John Busch and Paul, Provost of the Maurice Convent in Halle, to reform all the convents of the Regulars in Magdeburg, Mayentz, Saxony, and Thuringia. Their duties were thus defined :

“ Volumus quod omni diligentia hujusmodi visitatores invigilent ut tria substantialia omnis Religionis, scilicet *paupertas, castitas, et obedientia*, exactissime observentur et uniformitas habitus ac morum in vestro ordine ubique observetur; ita quod nemo Canonicorum regularium ordinis vestri utriusque sexus professus . . . sine Roqueto romano cum manicis deinceps incedere presumat omnibus dispensationibus . . . non obstantibus.” \*

\* Leibnitii, Script. Brunsvicentia illustrantium. Tom. ii. fol. 957. Hanover. 1710.

He afterwards became Prior of Sulta in the diocese of Hildesheim in Saxony.

It is however as the visitor of the convents that we introduce him to the reader. His descriptions are very minute. He brings the whole scene before the eye, and his style is so perspicuous, that we shall add, in an Appendix (E), the originals of such passages as we quote from his work, *De Reformatione Monasteriorum*.\*

Our first extract relates to the Monastery of St. Martin in Ludinkerka,

“ A certain vassal,” he says, “ living near the monastery, reported to the Bishop of Maestricht the evil and most corrupt life led there. None of the monks were chaste, all were proprietors,† and they had nuns residing with them in the monastery, who often were delivered of children. I know an abbot there whose father was said to have been a lay brother—his mother a nun. . . . The Bishop, Frederick of Blankenheym, a prudent and literate man, sent there two deputies, learned men and skilled in law, who visited the inmates of the said monastery, and found them to be almost all lay brethren without rule, and who had made no profession; they had entered the place, and remained there for many years. Being asked how they came to assume the habit of lay brethren, they answered, ‘ When first we came in here, we saw many others wearing a white tunic and a scapular, and yet bearing weapons of war; so we bought some white cloth,

\* Ib. fol. 480.

† Had broken the rule of poverty.

and made for ourselves white tunics, white cowls, and scapulars, and put them on of our own accord.' Being asked whether they had never heard of any rule; they answered, 'Never, but each one of us took to us a Nun or a lay-sister, or some other woman, and lived with her without any marriage union.'"

When this case was reported to the Bishop, he settled the matter by deciding that they were not Monks at all; that they might marry; and so they were sent away.

In the next case Father Busch was himself present, and thus relates his efforts to reform the nunnery of Wennincsen.

"When first we attempted to reform the nunnery of Wennincsen, of the order of Regular Canons, in the diocese of Minden, we found that we had the Bishop of the diocese against us, as well as all the noblemen who lived in the surrounding castles, but we had the Duke William of Brunswic and the authority of the Pope and of the Council of Basil, on our side.

"The Duke William, Ludolphus de Barum his supreme councillor, Butgerus, Prior of Wittenberg, and I, entered the choir of the monastery, where we found the Prioress and all the Nuns assembled.

"The Lord Duke having taken off his hat thus spoke—while we stood near him.

"'Lady Prioress, and you sisters all, it is my desire that you commence a reformation and observe your rule.'"

"The nuns all standing, folded their arms across their breasts and replied with one voice:—'We have all alike determined, and have sworn together, that we will not

reform ourselves, nor observe our rule; we demand that you should not make us perjured.'

"To which the Duke replied, 'I like not your answer, consider it over better.'

"The nuns left the choir but immediately returned, and falling on their knees, their arms folded across their breasts gave the same answer as before;—'We have all sworn that we will have no reformation: we entreat you—do not make us perjured.'

"The Duke again replied;—'Your answer will not serve—again consider the matter.'

"Again they went out, and again they returned, and this time throwing themselves prostrate on their bellies in the choir, their hands folded upon their breasts, gave again the same reply;—'We have all alike sworn we will not observe our rule, therefore we pray you not to make us perjured.'

"Then said the Duke, 'Rise up, I am not worthy of adoration from you.'

"When they arose some of them began to have some contention with the Lord Ludolphus de Barum, the Duke's councillor, but the Duke said, 'What avails it to stand here, and argue with nuns,—let us go out of the choir and deliberate what we must do.'

"As soon as we left the choir, all the nuns threw themselves on the pavement, prostrate on their bellies, with their arms and legs stretched out after the fashion of a cross, and began to utter with loud and united voices, the Antiphon.



“ *Media vita in morte sumus.*” \*

We, hearing their voice thought to ourselves that the best response would be

“ *Revelabunt cœli iniquitatem Iudæ.*”

“ The Duke was affrighted lest the whole country should be ruined ; to whom I said, ‘ If I were Duke of this land I would prefer that chaunt to a hundred florins ; for it is not a curse, but a blessing upon us, and upon your land, and for the nuns themselves, a token of their reformation. But we are few—only we four—and the nuns are many. If they were to attack with their garments and sleeves full of stones, what should we do ? Let others be called to our aid.’

“ The Duke then went alone into the choir, saying ; ‘ You chaunt this against yourselves,’—and called to his servants who were in the choir to come to us. The nuns having finished their Antiphon rose up and followed the servants—thinking that we were going to break open their boxes and desks, and carry off all their property with us.

“ The Duke having assembled them all before us, said, ‘ How is it that you did not fear to chaunt your *Media Vita* against me ? I here swear, with my hands, stretched

\* *Media Vita* : The singing of this Antiphon was a form of malediction. It was forbidden by the Council of Cologne, A.D. 1310. Cap. 21. *Prohibemus item, ne in aliqua ecclesiarum nobis subjectarum imprecationes fiant nec decantetur Media Vita contra aliquas personas, nisi de nostra licentia speciali ; cum nostra intersit talia discutere, quando sint talia facienda.*—See Ducange’s *Glossarium Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis* in voce. *Media Vita.*

out to the Holy Gospels, that you must reform yourselves—or else I will not allow you to remain in my territories. If the bishop of Minden and your priests choose to oppose me in this, either I will cast them out and expel them from my land, or else I will go out myself with my simple staff in my hand.”

“When the Prioress and the convent heard these words, they were terrified and asked the Duke to allow them to send for their friends and relations, that they might take counsel with them what to do; which at our intercession the Duke unwillingly granted.”

Busch then relates how their interview produced no effect, and at last the Duke told the friends and relations to go away, saying, “I do not wish to injure the nuns, but I am determined that they shall be reformed;” upon which their friends followed by armed retainers withdrew precipitately.

The Duke then demanded that the gates of the Monastery should be opened to him. The nuns replied that they had lost the keys. Busch authorized the Duke to break open the gates, carefully noting that the Duke could not have done this on his own authority, and after some laborious efforts they got in and made their way to the choir. There lay the Nuns prostrate on the ground, stretched out in the shape of a cross, and having near them small images of saints, made of wood or stone, about an inch in length, and between every two of the images a lighted taper, in order, as Busch says, “that the saints thus invoked with candles might protect those whom walls and strong defences could not protect from the Duke.”

“As soon as they saw the Duke and us standing before them, they arose and came to us. The Lord Duke taking off his hat, said to them, ‘If yet you will consent to reform yourselves, I am willing to allow you to remain in my land—but if not—then know that the chariots are ready which will carry you away from my territories, never perhaps to return.’

“To this the nuns replied; ‘Take these monks from off our necks, and then we will willingly do all that you require.’

“The Duke replied; ‘All that I say and do, I do it by *their* advice,’ meaning the prior of Wittenberg and myself.

“I then said to a nun who was standing beside me, ‘Sister, do as the Lord Duke desires, we wish to act kindly and with clemency towards you.’ She replied with indignation, ‘You are not my brother—why do you call me sister?—my brother is clad in steel, and you in a linen garment.’

The Duke however remained firm in his purpose, and at last the Nuns declared that they had no *Præpositus*, who would undertake their reformation, otherwise they were ready to submit.

A *Præpositus* was chosen, the Lord Dirico Kornacker, and they immediately began to make arrangements for future improvements in the discipline of the convent, and for abating their luxuries, both of food and raiment;—and the Duke left the convent in the hands of the monks, but in the evening the *Præpositus* presented himself to them, and said to them; “My lady, the prioress, and the nuns,

say, that they will not keep their promise of obedience, but that as they are, and have been, so they are determined to remain." \*

Father Busch instantly sent off messengers to the Duke, who returned next day with 300 armed men, fearing lest the bishop of Minden and the friends of the nuns should attempt to resist by force.

The Duke charged them with their unfaithful conduct in departing from their promise of yesterday ; and after some hesitation they submitted. One point of reformation on which Busch insisted was, that the nuns should swear obedience to their Abbess or Prioress, and not to the *Præpositus*, as was customary throughout Saxony, Thuringia and Misnia. This *Præpositus*, who often did not belong to their order, together with other professed brothers his companions, was in the habit of living with the nuns.† The nuns all came forward, and swore obedience to their abbess—one only excepted, and she said, "*Hoc nunquam faciam*. This will I never do;"—that is, she was resolved not to give up the pleasant companions she had been wont to live with in the nunnery. She had hardly said the words when she fell on the ground in a fainting fit. Busch with his graphic minuteness describes the other nuns throwing cold water in her face, and doing what was equivalent to cutting her stay-lace, and adds,

\* *Domina mea Priorissa et Moniales dicunt, quod ita, ut promiserunt, servare nolunt, sed ut sunt et fuerunt, permanere volunt.* Busch, *De Reform. Monast.* p. 860.

† *Talis enim non solus habitat cum monialibus, sed etiam fratres secum habet sibi professos.* *Ib.* p. 861.

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that they were alarmed, believing this to be a visitation from God upon the delinquent, and henceforth submitted with a better grace.

Busch thought his troubles were now over. On leaving the Convent, however, he was waylaid by two armed men, who stopped him and loudly threatened his life, because he had shut up the nuns at Wennicsen.\* He succeeded, however, in pacifying these men by a stratagem, and escaped, with a caution, that if he did not let the nuns have their own way, there were ten men sworn to kill him.

He next describes the reformation of the Cistercian Nunnery at Mariensee. These nuns were living an irregular, a dissolute, and an incontinent life, and were protected by the Bishop of Minden, who had received money from them, on condition that he would wink at their proceedings.†

The Duke of Brunswick, however, insisted upon a reformation, and obliged the Bishop to enforce it. He accordingly sent one of his Suffragans, an Abbot and two others, who together with the Duke and Father Busch, proceeded to the Convent; but the Bishop's deputies alone went in first, and stated the object of their mission, the Duke and the others remaining outside. They re-

\* *Inclusistis in Wenniczen moniales et amplius non exhibunt.* Ib. p. 862.

† *Moniales ejus irregulariter, dissolute et incontinenter vixerunt, in peculio et proprietate, episcopum Myndensem in hoc habentes defensorem. Accepta etiam ab eis pecunia, dedit eis potestatem in vita pristina et mala permanendi.*—Ib. Cap. iii. p. 862.

ceived in reply a determined negative. One of the Nuns, a young girl, snatched off her veil and nuptial garland, and casting them at the feet of the Suffragan, exclaimed that he had always promised her that she should never be reformed. "Take back," said she, "your veil and garland, I will no longer be a nun."\*

The Bishop's deputies returned to the Duke, and told him, that as they had no warrant for forcibly reforming the nuns, they must now leave all in his hands; and thus left him.

The Duke, with Busch and his party, then advanced to the Monastery with chariots ready to carry off to the frontiers every Nun who refused to submit. After some attempt at resistance, they opened the doors, and on being demanded whether they would submit to the rules of their order, they all assented, one only excepted. The next day they confessed to Father Busch and the Prior of Wittenburgh and were absolved for their past disobedience. All proceeded to the choir, and with a loud but lugubrious voice joined in singing a *Te Deum Laudamus*.†

So far all went on smoothly, until high mass was sung, when Father Busch observed some irregularities in their

\* . . . una earum juvencula, velum et coronam de capite deposita, ante pedes Suffraganei projecit, dicens : Huc usque semper mihi dixistis, quod me reformare non deberem ; modo ad reformandum me vultis compellere. Ecce velum et coronam vestram ; amplius Monialis esse nolo. Ib. p .863 .

† Deinde chorum intrantes *Te Deum Laudamus* alta et lugubri voce nobiscum percantaverunt. Ib.

mode of singing ; the nuns singing with the chaplains at the highest pitch of their voices. He went to the nuns' choir, together with the Prior of Wittemburgh, 'and insinuated' to them the necessity of reforming these matters. The nuns refused to obey, and began chanting against them the Antiphon *Media Vita*. Wildly singing this maledictory chant, they followed the unhappy reformers all over the church and dashed their lighted candles on the ground. One young woman followed them even to the cemetery, and there kneeling on the ground, she thrice bit the earth in token of a sure malediction, while the rest of the nuns thrice repeated the words, "Sancte Deus, sancte fortis, sancte et immortalis," and ended by casting stones and earth after them.

We cannot follow Busch in all his minute descriptions of the resistance he met with in various quarters—the two instances we have cited at length may serve as samples of the whole. We shall however quote a few more of his descriptions of the condition of these nunneries.

Of the Nunnery of Barsinghausen (Cap. 4) which he visited in 1455, he says, that "the nuns here had long

\* . . . pervenimus ad reformationem eis insinuandam, omnino contradixerunt, et quando ab eis recessimus, in choro incipientes antiphonam : *Media vita*, super nos altissimis vocibus decantaverunt, et per ecclesiam cum tali cantu nos prosequentes, etiam candelas de cera ardentis super nos et contra nos in terram projece- runt ; et una juvencula, extra ecclesiam super cemeterium nos secuta, cum cantarent ; *Sancte Deus, Sancte fortis, Sancte et immortalis* etc. Trina vice cantando ; genibus flexis etiam terram, in signum nostræ maledictionis, ter momordit, et lapides ac terram. post nos-projecit.—Ib. p. 863.

lived a most dissolute life, both in the matter of possessions, of incontinency and of disobedience." Their dress too he describes as being most indecent ; so that their shape and limbs were plainly visible through their clothes ; it would require some knowledge of monastic millinery to translate the passage literally.\*

The nuns at Marienwerder† were found exactly to resemble their sisters at Barsinghausen, but they were more tractable, and had rather more resemblance to virgins in their appearance and conversation. One nun alone stood boldly forward and declared her determination not to reform, nor to leave off her old customs, nor to commence a new life.

The nuns of St. George's, at Halle, refused firmly all reformation‡, and as they were exempt from the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Magdeburgh, but were under that of the Abbots of the Cistercian Order, the Archbishop sent Busch, together with Father Godfrey de Tyela, to these Abbots, who were assembled fourteen in number in council, to enquire of them why they did not undertake the reformation of this nunnery. They called at the Monastery of St. Maurice on their way, where they were invited to take refreshment. Father Godfrey took some

\* *Et quamvis graciles erant, strictas albas tunicas et longas subtus habentes de panno; desuper autem vestas nigras lineas quasi transparentes, quas superpellicea vocant, habentes, non cinctas, sed latas cum manicis, quas pro cappis deferunt, sub quibus omnia membra sua videre poterant, quæ palam subtus habebant.* Ib. p. 864.

† Ib.. Cap. v. p. 864.

‡ Ib. Chap. vi. p. 865.



beverage which was offered, but Busch declined, and on the same night Godfrey was taken seriously ill and died. "Some indeed," says Busch, "thought he was poisoned. I know not. God knows." \*

We have had occasion to remark that the nuns in every place, and under all circumstances, will necessarily follow the example of the monks and priests who are placed over them; and Father Busch fully confirms this opinion in his twelfth chapter, which is devoted to this subject. He says that an Abbess and a Nunnery, however good their intentions may be, will necessarily fall into disorder, unless they are upheld by men of sound life and conversation. In all cases where this has not been the case, they have fallen into dissoluteness of life.† Beginning with small matters, he describes them as falling from one fault to another, until they end in all manner of uncleanness and foul living.

The nuns of Derneborg had long lived an incontinent and dissolute life.‡ They were in the habit of going out of their Convent and remaining away for a long time, merely asking the Abbess' permission; and because Busch

\* Unde quidam putabant eum intoxicatum. Ego autem nescio. Deus scit. Ib. p. 865.

† . . . quæ primo per vitæ dissolutionem, Dei timore sublato, ad proprietatem in parvis rebus, dein in majoribus rebus, ac porro in peculium pecuniarum ac vestium declinantes: tandem ad carnis desideria et ad incontinentiam sensuum exteriorum, et sic ad actum nefarium prosilientes, omni immunditiæ et spurcitiæ successive se tradere non verentur. Sic non itur ad astra, sed in profundum inferni. Cap. xii. p. 874.

‡ Capt. xiii.

attempted to reform them, he narrowly escaped assassination, the details of which, he gives with his wonted particularity.

In this Nunnery he met with a strange adventure. In order to reform their luxurious mode of living, and to make them live in common, according to their rules, he says that it was necessary to examine all their pantries and cellars. They brought him to a beer-cellar, the descent to which was by three or four steps, and was covered with a trap door. In other places the nuns were in the habit of leading the way, but here they were seized with a sudden fit of reverence for their Father, and insisted upon his going first. He had hardly descended, when the nuns shut down the trap-door, and, standing upon it, kept poor Father Busch for some time in a state of great anxiety of mind; at length they relented and let him out. He wisely, however, resolved always in future to oblige two or three of the nuns at least to precede him when entering any closed place. One, he says, would not be enough, as the others would probably shut him up with her alone, and then bring foul accusations against him.

The nuns of the monastery of the order of blessed Mary Magdalene *de pœnitentia*, at Frankenberg,\* were very dissolute, incontinent, and secular in their lives, so that an evil fame of them was spread far and wide.

The nuns of the Holy Cross at Erfurt are chiefly blamed for their luxury, and for the number of silver spoons and copper pots and pans in their possession.

\* Busch, Ib. Cap. xix. p. 886.

Of the convent of Dorstad, he says: "Some of the nuns have not well preserved their chastity," in spite of constant flogging which was practised, each one in turn flogging the other.\* The rods they used were heavy, and they did not spare one another; the two youngest nuns being selected as chief operators, because they were strongest: and as the number of blows, and the strength of them, was left entirely in their own hands, they took care to revenge any attempt that was made to correct them in other irregularities.

Busch, further on, gives a melancholy account † of a Nun, a natural daughter of the Duke of Brunswick, who was seduced by the chaplain of a Cistercian nunnery at Mariensee; and devotes two other chapters to similar cases.

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Claude d'Espence, an eminent French Doctor of the Sorbonne, and Rector of the University of Paris, speaks in no measured terms of this infamous Tax. In his Commentary on the Epistle to Titus, chapter i. ver. 7, on the word *ἀισχροκερδία*, he says:—

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Nomina sunt ipso pene timenda sono.

Mirum hoc tempore, hoc schismate, non suppressum tot tamque fœdorum, tamque horrendorum scelerum velut indicem adeo infamem, ut non putem in Germania, Helvetia, et ubicunque a Romana sede defectum est, opus prostare majore hujus scandalo, et adeo tamen non supprimitur ab Ecclesiæ Romanæ favissoribus, ut tantorum ac talium facinorum licentiæ ac impunitates in facultatibus legatorum illinc huc venientum bona ex parte innoventur atque confirmentur, adversus (si Deo placet) quæcumque fatalia restituendi, ac etiam quoscumque Spurios, Manseres, Bastardes, ex quocumque illicito coitu, etc. cum his qui se per adulterium polluerint, ut connubere possint, perjuros, simoniacos, falsarios item, raptos, usurarios, schismaticos, hæreticos, sed ad cor



authority of the Church, we forbid, as the canons of the Church forbid, that any one should take as a consort in illicit wedlock, whether by force or consent, any virgin dedicated to God, or any person wearing the religious habit, or who has professed continency in her widowhood ; for that cannot be a lawful union which falls from the better to the worse, and which, under a feigned name, is marked with incestuous pollution and the foulness of fornication.”

The above extract would show that some nuns at this time were in the habit of marrying and becoming the honest wives of laymen ; and this is the evil the Council would stop. Other canons follow, showing that incontinence also prevailed, and stress is laid on the great crime committed when a priest violates a nun.

A Council was held at St. Germain, called *Concilium Parisiense*, in the year 1129, under Matthew, Bishop of Albano, and Apostolic Legate, when the following sentence was passed respecting the nuns of Argenteuil.

“ In the name of the Most High God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, &c.

“ Whereas it pertains to the power of our dignity to attend with the utmost solicitude, to drive out from religion all that is foul, (*cuncta immunda eliminare*,) so does it become us vigilantly to watch in this our office.

“ Wherefore, when lately in the presence of the most serene Lord, Lewis (VI.) King of the Franks, with our brothers and fellow-bishops, Rainald, Archbishop of Rheims ; Stephen, Bishop of Paris ; Gaufrid, Bishop of

\* Ib. Vol. xii. col. 1393.

Chartres ; Goslen, Bishop of Soissons, and many others, we treated of the reformation of the monasteries in many parts of Gaul, in which there is much tepidity ; and took into consideration the condition of those of Paris, there was a universal sentence of condemnation (*conclamatum est*) against the enormities and infamy of a certain monastery of nuns called that of Argenteuil ; wherein a few nuns have lived for a long time with multiplied infamy, to the disgrace of their order, in every species of filthy and infamous conversation, and have defiled the neighbourhood of the place," &c.\*

In 1148 a Council was held at Rheims,† when a Canon was passed respecting " the nuns and women called Chanonesses, who live irregularly."

The Council of Claremont, in Auvergue, A. D. 1095, passed some stringent Canons on priestly immorality.

A Provincial Council was held at Rouen, in the year 1231, by Maurice the Archbishop and his suffragans.‡

The fourth Canon is as follows :

" C. IV. On account of the scandals which arise from the conduct of the nuns, we decree, concerning the Black Nuns, (*de monialibus nigris*,) that none of them receive in their dwellings any deposits from any person ; and chiefly we decree that they do not allow the boxes of the priests § or others to be deposited with them as though

\* *In quo pauca moniales multiplici infamia, ad ignomniam sui ordinis degentes, multo tempore spurca et infami conversatione omne ejusdam loci affinitatem fœdaverant.*

† *Ib.* Vol. xii. col. 1651.

‡ *Ib.* Vol. xiii. col. 1252.

§ *Maxime arcas clericorum vel aliorum laicorum causa custodiæ apud se minime deponi permittant.*

*[Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]*

attempted to reform them, he narrowly escaped assassination, the details of which, he gives with his wonted particularity.

In this Nunnery he met with a strange adventure. In order to reform their luxurious mode of living, and to make them live in common, according to their rules, he says that it was necessary to examine all their pantries and cellars. They brought him to a beer-cellar, the descent to which was by three or four steps, and was covered with a trap door. In other places the nuns were in the habit of leading the way, but here they were seized with a sudden fit of reverence for their Father, and insisted upon his going first. He had hardly descended, when the nuns shut down the trap-door, and, standing upon it, kept poor Father Busch for some time in a state of great anxiety of mind; at length they relented and let him out. He wisely, however, resolved always in future to oblige two or three of the nuns at least to precede him when entering any closed place. One, he says, would not be enough, as the others would probably shut him up with her alone, and then bring foul accusations against him.

The nuns of the monastery of the order of blessed Mary Magdalene *de pœnitentia*, at Frankenberg,\* were very dissolute, incontinent, and secular in their lives, so that an evil fame of them was spread far and wide.

The nuns of the Holy Cross at Erfurt are chiefly blamed for their luxury, and for the number of silver spoons and copper pots and pans in their possession.

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mode of singing ; the nuns singing with the chaplains at the highest pitch of their voices. He went to the nuns' choir, together with the Prior of Wittemburgh, ' and insinuated ' to them the necessity of reforming these matters. The nuns refused to obey, and began chanting against them the Antiphon *Media Vita*. Wildly singing this maledictory chant, they followed the unhappy reformers all over the church and dashed their lighted candles on the ground. One young woman followed them even to the cemetery, and there kneeling on the ground, she thrice bit the earth in token of a sure malediction, while the rest of the nuns thrice repeated the words, " Sancte Deus, sancte fortis, sancte et immortalis," and ended by casting stones and earth after them.

We cannot follow Busch in all his minute descriptions of the resistance he met with in various quarters—the two instances we have cited at length may serve as samples of the whole. We shall however quote a few more of his descriptions of the condition of these nunneries.

Of the Nunnery of Barsinghausen (Cap. 4) which he visited in 1455, he says, that " the nuns here had long

\* . . . pervenimus ad reformationem eis insinuandam, omnino contradixerunt, et quando ab eis recessimus, in choro incipientes antiphonam : *Media vita*, super nos altissimis vocibus decantaverunt, et per ecclesiam cum tali cantu nos prosequentes, etiam candelas de cera ardentes super nos et contra nos in terram projecerunt ; et una juvencula, extra ecclesiam super cimiterium nos secuta, cum cantarent ; *Sancte Deus, Sancte fortis, Sancte et immortalis* etc. Trina vice cantando ; genibus flexis etiam terram, in signum nostræ maledictionis, ter momordit, et lapides ac terram. post nos-projecit.—Ib. p. 863.

lived a most dissolute life, both in the matter of possessions, of incontinency and of disobedience." Their dress too he describes as being most indecent ; so that their shape and limbs were plainly visible through their clothes ; it would require some knowledge of monastic millinery to translate the passage literally.\*

The nuns at Marienwerder† were found exactly to resemble their sisters at Barsinghausen, but they were more tractable, and had rather more resemblance to virgins in their appearance and conversation. One nun alone stood boldly forward and declared her determination not to reform, nor to leave off her old customs, nor to commence a new life.

The nuns of St. George's, at Halle, refused firmly all reformation‡, and as they were exempt from the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Magdeburgh, but were under that of the Abbots of the Cistercian Order, the Archbishop sent Busch, together with Father Godfrey de Tyela, to these Abbots, who were assembled fourteen in number in council, to enquire of them why they did not undertake the reformation of this nunnery. They called at the Monastery of St. Maurice on their way, where they were invited to take refreshment. Father Godfrey took some

\* Et quamvis graciles erant, strictas albas tunicas et longas subtus habentes de panno; desuper autem vestas nigras lineas quasi transparentes, quas superpellicea vocant, habentes, non cinctas, sed latas cum manicis, quas pro cappis deferunt, sub quibus omnia membra sua videre poterant, quæ palam subtus habebant. *Ib.* p. 864.

† *Ib.* Cap. v. p. 864.

‡ *Ib.* Chap. vi. p. 865.



beverage which was offered, but Busch declined, and on the same night Godfrey was taken seriously ill and died. "Some indeed," says Busch, "thought he was poisoned. I know not. God knows." \*

We have had occasion to remark that the nuns in every place, and under all circumstances, will necessary follow the example of the monks and priests who are placed over them; and Father Busch fully confirms this opinion in his twelfth chapter, which is devoted to this subject. He says that an Abbess and a Nunnery, however good their intentions may be, will necessarily fall into disorder, unless they are upheld by men of sound life and conversation. In all cases where this has not been the case, they have fallen into dissoluteness of life.† Beginning with small matters, he describes them as falling from one fault to another, until they end in all manner of uncleanness and foul living.

The nuns of Derneborg had long lived an incontinent and dissolute life.‡ They were in the habit of going out of their Convent and remaining away for a long time, merely asking the Abbess' permission; and because Busch

\* Unde quidam putabant eum intoxicatum. Ego autem nescio. Deus scit. Ib. p. 865.

† . . . quæ primo per vitæ dissolutionem, Dei timore sublato, ad proprietatem in parvis rebus, dein in majoribus rebus, ac porro in peculium pecuniarum ac vestium declinantes: tandem ad carnis desideria et ad incontinentiam sensuum exteriorum, et sic ad actum nefarium prosilientes, omni immunditiæ et spurcitiæ successive se tradere non verentur. Sic non itur ad astra, sed in profundum inferni. Cap. xii. p. 874.

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for that book openly and publicly printed and sold, now as of old, called *Taxa Camerae seu Cancellariae Apostolicæ*, in which you may learn more wickedness than in all the summaries of all the vices; and licence for sinning is proposed to most men, and absolution to all purchasers. . . . It is a marvel that at this time, in the midst of such schism, this index of filthiness and horrid crimes is not suppressed. For I think that no greater scandal than this could be given in countries such as Germany and Switzerland; and wherever there has been defection from

the Roman See ; and yet it is not suppressed by the favourers of the Roman Church, so that the licenses and impunities for committing so many and so great crimes, are, for the most part, renewed and confirmed in the faculties of the Legates, coming hither from thence, enabling them. . ." And then, in a long catalogue, he enumerates the offenders who may be not only absolved, but rendered capable of " all orders, dignities, and benefices."\* He concludes his remonstrance with these

\* Quæ scandala ex Gravaminibus Germanicis passim collecta, 1, 2, 5, 8, 67, 74, 75, 84, 91, 95. Hæc, inquam, lucra turpia, odio Pontificis Romani ficta sint, si non, quod ait et conqueritur ille velut. ' Prostat et in quæstu pro meretrice sedet,' liber palam ac publice hic impressus et hodieque, ut olim vœnalis, Taxa Cameræ seu Cancellariæ Apostolicæ, inscriptus, in quo plus scelerum discas licet, quam in omnibus omnium vitiorum Summis et Summariis, et plurimis quidem licentia, omnibus autem absolutio empturientibus proposita, parco nominibus, nam quod ait nescio quis,

Nomina sunt ipso pene timenda sono.

Mirum hoc tempore, hoc schismate, non suppressum tot tamque fœdorum, tamque horrendorum scelerum velut indicem adeo infamem, ut non putem in Germania, Helvetia, et ubicunque a Romana sede defectum est, opus prostare majore hujus scandalo, et adeo tamen non supprimitur ab Ecclesiæ Romanæ favissoribus, ut tantorum ac talium facinorum licentiæ ac impunitates in facultibus legatorum illinc huc venientum bona ex parte innoventur atque confirmentur, adversus (si Deo placet) quæcumque fatalia restituendi, ac etiam quoscumque Spurios, Manseres, Bastardes, ex quocumque illicito coitu, etc. cum his qui se per adulterium polluerint, ut connubere possint, perjuros, simoniacos, falsarios item, raptos, usurarios, schismaticos, hæreticos, sed ad cor



authority of the Church, we forbid, as the canons of the Church forbid, that any one should take as a consort in illicit wedlock, whether by force or consent, any virgin dedicated to God, or any person wearing the religious habit, or who has professed continency in her widowhood ; for that cannot be a lawful union which falls from the better to the worse, and which, under a feigned name, is marked with incestuous pollution and the foulness of fornication.”

The above extract would show that some nuns at this time were in the habit of marrying and becoming the honest wives of laymen ; and this is the evil the Council would stop. Other canons follow, showing that incontinence also prevailed, and stress is laid on the great crime committed when a priest violates a nun.

A Council was held at St. Germain, called *Concilium Parisiense*, in the year 1129, under Matthew, Bishop of Albano, and Apostolic Legate, when the following sentence was passed respecting the nuns of Argenteuil.

“ In the name of the Most High God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, &c.

“ Whereas it pertains to the power of our dignity to attend with the utmost solicitude, to drive out from religion all that is foul, (*cuncta immunda eliminare*,) so does it become us vigilantly to watch in this our office.

“ Wherefore, when lately in the presence of the most serene Lord, Lewis (VI.) King of the Franks, with our brothers and fellow-bishops, Rainald, Archbishop of Rheims ; Stephen, Bishop of Paris ; Gaufrid, Bishop of

• Ib. Vol. xii. col. 1393.

Chartres ; Goslen, Bishop of Soissons, and many others, we treated of the reformation of the monasteries in many parts of Gaul, in which there is much tepidity ; and took into consideration the condition of those of Paris, there was a universal sentence of condemnation (*conclamatum est*) against the enormities and infamy of a certain monastery of nuns called that of Argenteuil ; wherein a few nuns have lived for a long time with multiplied infamy, to the disgrace of their order, in every species of filthy and infamous conversation, and have defiled the neighbourhood of the place," &c.\*

In 1148 a Council was held at Rheims,† when a Canon was passed respecting "the nuns and women called Chanoesses, who live irregularly."

The Council of Claremont, in Auvergue, A. D. 1095, passed some stringent Canons on priestly immorality.

A Provincial Council was held at Rouen, in the year 1231, by Maurice the Archbishop and his suffragans.‡

The fourth Canon is as follows :

"C. IV. On account of the scandals which arise from the conduct of the nuns, we decree, concerning the Black Nuns, (*de monialibus nigris*,) that none of them receive in their dwellings any deposits from any person ; and chiefly we decree that they do not allow the boxes of the priests § or others to be deposited with them as though

\* In quo pauca moniales *multiplici infamia, ad ignomiam sui ordinis degentes, multo tempore spurca et infami conversatione omne ejusdem loci affinitatem fœdaverunt.*

† *Ib.* Vol. xii. col. 1651.

‡ *Ib.* Vol. xiii. col. 1252.

§ *Maxime arcas clericorum vel aliorum laicorum causa custodiæ apud se minime deponi permittant.*

for safe keeping. The boys and girls who have customarily been brought up there and instructed, are to be sent away altogether. All are to eat together in the refectory, and to sleep in the dormitory, each one alone. All the chambers of the nuns are to be destroyed, except any which, after the inspection of the Bishop, may be deemed by him necessary to be retained as an infirmary, or for any other cause. The nuns are in no wise to be permitted to go out, nor to sleep out, unless perchance for some special cause, and rarely; and the abbesses are enjoined not to allow the nuns to go out. And if for any just cause the abbess allows any one to go out, let her be enjoined to return without delay, and let a companion be given her, not of her own choosing, but such as may be fitting for her. Let all suspicious and superfluous doors\* be closed up. On this subject let the Bishops apply diligence and care, both personally and by their officers, and let them so restrain the life and conversation of these Nuns, that through their diligence, the evils which at present arise from their living, may be done away."

We need not be surprised at the ill conduct of these unhappy women. At the same Council it was also found necessary to enact that "all concubines of priests who have confessed, or been convicted of this fact, shall publicly have their heads shorn, before all the people, in the church, or on Sunday, or some other solemn day." †

Four years after this, in the same city of Rouen, were

\* Posterns, or (starting hoyles.) See p. 199.

† . . . publice in ecclesia die Dominico, vel alio solemn die, coram populo tondeantur. Ib. col. 1253.

published certain “Præcepta antiquæ Diæcesis Rotomagensis.” \*

The 41st Precept is as follows: “Priests are strictly forbidden to have living with them any offspring which they may have begotten in fornication, *to avoid scandal.* (Propter scandalum.)”

Precept 97† is headed, “On Spiritual Incest,” and decrees that “any woman who shall have been carnally known by her own priest, or any other priest who has heard her confession, or who has baptized her, shall on account of the enormity of the crime—and specially if *scandal should arise from it*—be sent to the Bishop, to be dealt with as he may think fit.

Precept 98. “Any woman who shall commit fornication with *her spiritual father*, shall give up all her property to the poor, and serve God in a monastery so long as she lives.”

A Council was held at Beziers—*Concilium Biterrense*—in 1233 ;‡ when twenty-six Canons were made, five of them were directed against the Albigensian Heretics. The 23rd Canon however, says, that having seen and heard witnesses on the subject, they forbid the practice of many monks who are in the habit of introducing into the monasteries, shameless and improper persons, such as *histriones, juculatores, talorum lusores et etiam publicas meretrices.*

At the Council of Sens, (*Concilium Senonense*.) A. D. 1269, the first Canon is directed, “*Contra clericos qui focarias § tenent ;*” in which it says, “Many priests and

\* Sacro Sanct. Concil. Vol. xiii. col. 1341. † Ib. col. 1356.

‡ Ib. Vol. xiii. col. 1287. § Focaria. See ante p. 136.

clergymen, to the danger of their own souls, the scandal of the many, . . . . and the damage of ecclesiastical dignity, do keep either in their own houses or elsewhere *focarias vel alias mulieres suspectas*, whence the people and the church are scandalized.”

We must now give the well-known remarks of Nicolas de Clamenges, called in Latin Clemangius, or de Clemaniis, respecting the corrupt state of the church in his time; written about the year 1420. We might indeed have filled up many pages with extracts from Councils held in various parts of France, where Canons were past respecting concubinary priests, *Focarias*, and other evils, but we have given proof enough of this kind. Indeed on this subject we might paraphrase the celebrated saying of Vincent of Lyrins: “*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*,”—merely limiting the *semper* to the epoch of forced celibacy amongst the clergy.

Nicholas de Clamenges was born in the middle of the fourteenth century; he acquired great celebrity as a scholar, and was rector of the University of Paris, in 1393, and after many vicissitudes, having been suspected by the King of having aided the Pope in drawing up the Bull of excommunication against him, merely because no one else was supposed equal to writing such good Latin, he became Chaunter and Archdeacon of Baïeux. He died at the College of Navarre, where he had been educated. He was buried in the chapel of the college, under the lamp before the great altar, with this inscription: “*Qui lampas fuit ecclesiæ sub lampade jacet.*”

We are about to quote from his “*De corrupto Ecclesiæ*

status Liber," as we find it in Brown's Appendix ad Fasciculum rerum exp. et fug. Folio. London, 1690.

. . . P. 555. "When yesterday I took up the book of the sacred Scriptures, and began to read the passage that first presented itself to me, the first Epistle of Peter, I fell upon the words of this Apostle. 'It is time that judgment should begin at the house of God,' which words I did not read over at a glance, as I had done the other parts of the Epistle, but having stopped for a while the rapid course of my reading, I compelled my mind,—urged by a feeling of dread which had suddenly arisen—to cleave to these words, and to fasten upon them closely and minutely."

He proceeds to consider what are the causes of the corrupt state of the church;—what the ministers of the church ought to be—and what they actually are; and thence what is to be expected from them.

Speaking of these ministers he says;—"As for these and others, who ought to be adorned with virtues, they are contaminated with the stain of every vice."\*

Again; "If any clergyman amongst them be thrown into prison for theft, for murder, for rape, for *sacrilege*,†

\* . . . pro his, atque aliis quibus adornari deberent virtutibus, omnium colluvione vitiorum contaminati sunt.

† It is necessary to observe that the emphatic meaning of *Sacrilegium*, in this and other places, is violation of Nuns.

Thus in St. Thomas Aquinas, *secunda secundæ*.

Quest. cliv. Art. 1 ¶ 3. "Præt. sicut contingit quod aliquis commiscetur mulieri quæ est alteri viro per matrimonium obligata; ita etiam contingit, quod aliquis commiscetur mulieri, quæ est

or any other enormous crime, and is condemned to darkness, and water diet, he will lie under punishment and mourn as a culprit for what he has done, until out of his own revenues, or of others, they obtain payment of the money demanded of him—but when that is done, he is allowed to go forth free, and as it were, innocent. Every fault, every error, all, even capital crimes, by money are exempted from punishment and blotted out.

. . . “Touching the Monks and the Monasteries, there is abundance of matter to speak of—were it not that it would oppress me to dwell long in the enumeration of so great and so many abominations.”

Alluding to what Monks ought to be, he adds; that they are found to be worse than others, “more head-strong, more avaricious, more mixed up in secular matters; more treacherous, disorderly, dissolute and restless; more frequently in public and unbecoming places.”

“The nuns only remain to be spoken of, in order to fulfil our promise that our narrative should reach from the

*obligata Deo per votum. Sicut ergo adulterium ponitur species luxuriæ, ita etiam sacrilegium species luxuriæ poni debet.*”

Again, *ib.* “Ad tertium dicendum, quod, quia mulier vovens continentiam, quoddam spirituale matrimonium facit cum Deo et *sacrilegium*, quod committitur in violatione talis mulieris est quoddam adulterium spirituale. Et similiter alii modi *sacrilegii* reducuntur ad alias species luxuriæ.”

And in Art. x. of the same chapter, we have the above question argued, and after showing that it is sacrilege to eat up greedily sacred things, he says: “Specialius tamen *sacrilegium* attribuitur luxuriæ, quæ opponitur castitati: ad cuius observantiam aliquæ personæ specialiter consecrantur.”

crown of the head to the sole of the foot, no grade being omitted. Modesty forbids me to say much concerning them which might be said, but instead of speaking of an assemblage of virgins dedicated to God, we should find ourselves dragging on a shameful discourse about brothels, the crafts and wanton tricks of harlots, about lewd and incestuous deeds. For what else, I pray you, are the monasteries of young women at this time than certain—I will not call them sanctuaries of God, but, execrable stews of Venus, and receptacles where lascivious and shameless young men gratify their lust; so that it is the same thing in our days to put a nun's veil on a girl as to expose her to public prostitution."

\* The following is the original of the most important of the passages quoted above. Brown's Fasciculus.

"Si quis apud eos clericos, pro furto, pro homicidio pro *raptu*, pro *sacrilegio*, aut alio quovis enormi crimine in carcerem conjectus sit, tenebrisque et aquæ edulio addictus, tamdiu pœnæ subjacebit, et tanquam reus sua commissa luet, donec pro modo sui census, aut suorum, quæsitam a se pecuniam persolverit; ubi vero id egerit, liber et velut innocens abire sinetur. Omnis noxa, omnis error, omnia malefica, etiamsi capitalia, sint, per pecuniam laxantur ac delentur. . . . P. 561.

". . . De monachis autem et monasteriis late patet ad loquendum materia, nisi jam me dudum tæderet in tot tantarumque abominationum enumeratione demorari. . . . P. 564.

". . . Restant nunc solæ *moniales* ut nostram narrationem quemadmodum polliciti sumus a summo capite usque ad extrema vestigia nullo pretermisso gradu deducamus. De hic autem plura dicere (etsi plura quæ dici possent suppetebant) *verecundia prohibet*, ne non de cœtu virginum Deo dicatarum. sed magis *de lupanaribus, de dolis, ac procacia meretricum, de stupris et incēs-*



Of the Nunneries of France in modern times, we know but little. The extracts we have given from a popular French writer, Michelet,\* show us the current opinion as to the tyranny which may be exercised by Lady Abbesses.

The following statements we make merely on the authority of newspapers. We can pledge ourselves no further as to their authenticity.

“ It is stated, in a French newspaper, that on the night of the 18th April, 1842, as a patrol was going along the narrow street which runs by the side of the Convent of Bon Pasteur, in the town of Ouest, they found a girl lying on the pavement, and screaming from the hurt she had received by a fall, in attempting to escape from the convent through one of the upper windows by means of a sheet. On being taken to the hospital it was found that her leg was broken. When she was able to speak, she said that on account of a trifling disagreement with some of the nuns, she was put into solitary confinement, and allowed only bread and water. Driven to despair, she contrived to force away the planks by which the window was blinded, and attempted, in the manner described, to reach the ground.”

*tuosis operibus pudendum sermonem prolixè trahamus. Nam quid obsecro aliud sunt hoc tempore puellarum monasteria, nisi quædam, non dico Dei sanctuaria, sed Veneris execranda prostibula, sed lascivorum et impudicorum juvenum ad libidines implendas receptacula, ut idem hodie sit puellam relare quod et publice ad scortandum exponere ?”*

\* See ante, pages 64, 65, 119.

A further instance of the tyranny practised in nunneries, is seen in a trial which took place at the Court of Assizes of Vienne in France, on the 18th of November, 1843.

“Nine nuns and two novices were charged with ill treating, and forcibly detaining a young woman named Genevieve in the Convent of the Good Shepherd.

“The nuns appeared in court in their convent-dress, an imposing garb, calculated to give them an appearance of sanctity in the eyes of those who would not willingly believe them guilty of the cruelty with which they were charged. Thus attired they appeared to be the meek and gentle followers of Jesus Christ, characterized by lives of extraordinary devotion, and by feelings of universal charity. As a further cloke to their real character, they gave in names, which some of them had blasphemously and most inconsistently assumed: the Mother of the Saviour, the Mother of Mercy, the Mother of Matthew, the Mother of the Holy Spirit, the Mother of the Seraphim, and the Mother of Charity, &c.

“In the course of the trial, a number of respectable witnesses deposed that they had *frequently* heard agonizing cries of distress proceeding from the convent. And six witnesses, including a surgeon, bore testimony to the miserable condition in which they found Genevieve on her release from it. The latter deposed as follows: ‘I attended Genevieve, who represented that she had been ill treated. She had bruises on her chest, and a sore on her side as large as the palm of my hand. She had fever, and complained of pains in her loins, and abdomen.’

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“ She appeared in court supported by two attendants, being unable to stand alone : and made, on her oath, the following statement : ‘ Not being able to bear the regulations of the convent, I often demanded to quit it. I was told that I must remain there a year at least. One day when I was very sick I wished to retire from the class. The Mother of the Saviour would not permit it. The Mother of the Holy Spirit, and the Mother of Charity dragged me by my hair, and the Mother of the Seraphim beat me. Another time when I could not repeat my lesson, I was taken to a dungeon. I had then been three weeks in the convent, and I was told that I should never quit it. On the 25th of July, the Mother of the Saviour came to tell me that I must rise, and dragged off the bed-clothes. The Mother of the Saviour took me by the hair and severely kicked me. I was dragged by the arm from one end of the dormitory to the other. Many threw themselves on me, and I was dragged down to the dungeon. I know not what occurred as I was dragged along to the dungeon, for I fainted. When I recovered I found myself in the dungeon, having on only my shift and a petticoat. It was not till the next day, that I received my shoes. The Mother of the Saviour and the Mother of St. Matthew tied my arms behind my back. The Mother of Mercy then kicked me several times. I continued in the dungeon from Tuesday morning until Thursday. I was afterwards taken to the convent-door, and left on the steps. I was unable to move. A woman who passed by, had pity on me, and took me to the house of Madame Piat, who

procured me admittance to the hospital, where I yet remain.'

"Several witnesses were examined in corroboration of this statement; the truth of which as to the forcible detention and other circumstances, was admitted by the Mother of the Saviour.

"Besides the nuns themselves, the only witness called for the defence, and he could prove nothing, was the doctor in the pay of the nuns, and who should have been placed at the bar with them for infamously refusing to admit the victim of their cruelty to the hospital.

"The Popish jury handed in a verdict of 'NOT GUILTY' in favour of all the accused, with the exception of the Mother of Mercy, who was condemned to three months imprisonment."

We have before us an octavo volume of four hundred pages, entitled "Sœur Marie Benedictine," published at Caen in 1846, written by an eminent French advocate, Mons. Leon Tillard.

Mademoiselle de Monnier, whose name "in religion" was Sœur Marie Joseph, entered a Benedictine convent at Bayeux, at the age of 21, in 1823; and by her superior education and talents she became of great use to the convent. The other sisters were ignorant and illiterate, and the new postulant was at once placed in charge of the school, and under her care it greatly thrived, and the number of pupils rapidly increased. And at length she took the veil. "I thought not then," she says, "that

God had appointed to me such severe and such strange trials." \*

Before alluding to Mademoiselle Le Monnier's sufferings amongst the Benedictines, we may avail ourselves of her evidence respecting the discipline of the Trappists, which order she earnestly desired to join, and did actually attempt to join, but on account of her weak health she was dissuaded from it.

She says : " I will give here some details respecting the penances which I saw practised by the Trappist nuns at the Abbey of Mondaye.

" All the nuns slept in the same clothes which they wore in the choir. They endured all the horrors of the most abject poverty, even to vermin.† . . . The wearing of these clothes caused them to suffer greatly from the rigour of the season—both from heat in summer and cold in winter."

She gives a minute account of their diet—sickening in quality, and scanty in quantity.

" The cells," she says,‡ " contain no other furniture than a bed—two planks on tressels, a pillow stuffed with straw, and a coverlet.

" All the victims, on entering their cells, place themselves on their knees for seven or eight minutes, after which the bell sounds. At that instant they take off their

\* Alors je ne pensais que Dieu me destinât à soutenir, dans la suite, de si rudes, de si étranges épreuves. *Sœur Marie Benedictine*, p. 47.

† Toutes les horreurs de la plus affreuse pauvreté, jusqu'à la vermine. *Ibid.* p. 47.

‡ *Ib.* p. 48.

shoes, and overcome by their fatigue and sufferings, still wearing their clothes, they lie down for a few hours on their wooden bed, and cover themselves with the coverlet, alike in the warmest and the coldest weather. From my own experience, I say, that this penance is not the least of what they endure. I had practised, even while in the world, some of the penances of this order. I had slept on bare planks, but then I had a head of hair, and my room was not very cold, and I had not suffered so much from it. But at Mondaye, after my hair was cut off, I suffered greatly from rheumatic pains in my head. The pain caused my teeth to decay, and I was obliged to have 17 of them drawn.

“At midnight on holidays, and at one o’clock on other days, one of the nuns came to the dormitory, and rang a little bell. Immediately the victims (that is the name by which they are called in the Constitutions) arose, put on their shoes, and went to the choir.”

We cannot follow M. Tillard, in his minute account of Mademoiselle Le Monnier’s case, gathered from the depositions of the witnesses, at the trial before the Courts at Caen. He is not happy in his method, and it is no easy task to follow the thread of his narrative. Several changes took place in the convent ; a new Lady Abbess came ; and poor Sœur Marie became the object of a long-continued persecution, beginning with things so small as hardly to be perceptible, but which, like the dropping water on the stone, wore upon the mind of the wretched victim. She was removed from the school—some nuns having joined the establishment better educated than those

originally there ;—and after some time no one was allowed to speak to her : and this was continued year after year. To give some idea of the petty annoyances to which she was subjected, we may mention that the bolt was removed, without her knowledge, from the inside of her cell-door, and another placed at the outside, which could easily be fastened by any passer-by, and this was often done.

One of the witnesses at the trial, Mademoiselle Chire, says : “ I remarked from my first entering the community, that Mad. Marie used to walk alone, while the other nuns availed themselves of the time of recreation to be together. I asked the cause, and was told that the other nuns did not like her—‘ les autres religieuses ne l’aimaient pas.’ ”\*

At last matters came to a crisis ; the Superior provoked Sister Ste. Marie, drew her into an altercation, and then declaring that she was mad, had her seized by the gardener and others, and locked up in a small cell, in which, while suffering from a severe quinsey, she was kept for several days, with one of the panes of glass, in the small window over her bed, broken.

The physician of the convent was sent for, and without having ever seen the victim, he signed a certificate declaring her to be mad.

In the dead of the night she was roused from her cell, carried off in a carriage to the Bon Sauveur at Bayeux, and there placed amongst the insane, on the strength of this physician’s certificate. The physician, however, of this new asylum, soon found that she was perfectly sane,

\* Ib. p. 145.

and at length dismissed her at her own earnest entreaty. But where was she to go ?

She returned to her old convent, but there they would not receive her. She appealed to priests and bishops—to nuns and abbesses, but every door was closed against her, except the madhouse of the Bon Sauveur. Mons. Tillard generously took up her cause, and endeavoured to obtain justice for her. But all in vain. Worn out, and harassed, and persecuted, poor Sœur Marie at length became duly qualified for the Bon Sauveur. Her mind failed her, and she is now within its walls a harmless lunatic !



## CHAPTER XIV.

### ITALIAN MONASTERIES.

THE evidence to be obtained respecting prevalent abuses in the Church of Rome, from the Canons of Councils and the legislation against corruption, is of great value. We shall not however weary our readers with any extracts of the kind with reference to Italy, whose Nunneries we now intend to notice, because we have evidence of another kind to lay before them, which while of equal positive value as to authenticity, enters more minutely into details. We have descriptions given by cotemporaries, some of whom like Father Busch, attempted to reform the glaring abuses which then, as they ever have done, infested Monastic Institutions.

We shall however commence with a witness of a different kind—a royal princess, and a canonized saint.

This lady, St. Bridget, was the daughter of Birger, prince of the blood royal of Sweden, and was born at the commencement of the fourteenth century. After she had born eight children to her husband—one of whom was canonized as St. Catherine of Sweden,—they agreed to pass the rest of their days, as though they were not married, although they lived together, and made many pilgri-

riages together, and established many Monasteries. She founded a new order of nuns; one peculiarity of which was, that all were to be double Monasteries; the women being charged with all temporal matters, while the men attended to the spiritual concerns. She died at Rome, whither she had gone to visit the shrines of the apostles Peter and Paul, in 1373, and was canonized first by Boniface IX, and afterwards more solemnly at the council of Constance.

St. Bridget asserted that she had revelations, in which Jesus Christ, and the Virgin Mary, conversed freely with her, and with each other in her presence. These revelations were written down by the Monks who were her confessors, and have been repeatedly published. At the council of Constance they were formally approved and recommended to the faithful for perusal, in spite of strong remonstrances from Gerson, the learned chancellor of Paris. These revelations afford abundant matter for the doctrinal controversialist, but we refer to them for a different purpose.

In the fourth book of her Revelations, cap. 33,\* she gives a lively description of the state of Monastic Institutions in Rome, and shews that she used her eyes to good purpose in observing every-day life.

Speaking of the Monks she says; "Some of them openly rejoice when their mistresses, big with child, are seen walking about amongst other women. Nor are they ashamed when their friends accost them with a "So, Sir,

\* *Memoriale effigiatum librorum Prophetiarum seu Visionum B. Brigidæ alias Birgittæ viduæ stirpis regiæ de Regno Suetiæ. Roma. 1556.*

you will soon have a son or a daughter born to you." Such men should rather be called panders of the devil, than ordained priests of the most high God." \*

After describing what Monasteries were intended to be, and what, she says, they once were—she draws a contrast. "The Monks have left the precincts of their Monasteries, and now live in the town. In dress the Monk is hardly to be recognized; the tunic—which once reached the ground—now scarcely covers the knees;—the sleeves which were once sober and honest, are now *arctæ et tolatae*, and a sword hangs where the style and tablets should be seen. Indeed," she says, "there is nothing in the Monk's dress whereby we can recognize him, unless it be by the scapular, which is often concealed. Some do not hesitate to wear a cuirass and other arms under their tunics, so that after dark they may be ready for any thing which they may have a mind for." † In other words, that they might sport like other Italian gallants of the age.

Of the Nunneries, she says; "Some Monasteries were constructed in such a manner by blessed Gregory and other Saints, that women might be so enclosed in them, that they could scarcely be seen all day long. Now, how-

Nunc autem quidam illorum manifeste letantur ex eo quod *meretrices* eorum contumescente ventre cernunt inter alias ambulare. Nec etiam pudet eos si ab amicis eorum dicitur eis, 'Ecce Domine cito natus erit tibi filius vel filia.' Ideo tales justius vocandi sunt lenones diaboli, quam ordinati clerici summi Dei. Rev. B. Brig. iv. 33.

† Aliquos etiam non pudet lorica et alia arma habere sub tunicis, ad hoc ut post crepusculum facere valeant quod eos delectat. Ib.

ever, a very grave abuse is to be found in them, in that the doors are open alike to clergy and to laity, to whomsoever the sisters choose to give admission, even during the very night. And thus these places are more like brothels than holy cloisters." \*

Looking over the pages of the "Dublin Review,"—the leading Roman Catholic organ,—we read the following passage in a review of some work, Puseyite we think, in which St. Bridget had been quoted.

" Catholics will be glad to read the following passage from the revelations of St. Bridget. Our blessed lady says, &c." Dublin Review, 1847. We question whether the Editor will be equally glad to read what we have quoted above.

Ambrosio de' Traversari, often called *Camaldulensis*,† was born at Portico, others say at Forli near Florence; he became a Camaldolese Monk at the age of fourteen;

\* Item quædam monasteria per beatum Gregorium et per alios sanctos ad hoc sunt constructa ut sic in eis mulieres recluderentur, quatenus vix in diebus videri possent. Nunc autem abusivem in se continent nimis gravem, in eo quod portæ indifferenter clericis et laicis, quibus placet sororibus introitum dare, etiam in ipsis noctibus sunt apertæ. Et ideo talia loca similiora sunt lupanaribus quam sanctis claustris. Ib.

† In Roscoe's Life of Lorenzo de Medici, Vol. i. p. 18, *note*, we read: 'Ambrogio was born in 1386, and was a native of Forli, but is usually ranked amongst the eminent men of Florence, where he was educated and where he principally resided. "In Firenze bensì fù educato Ambrogio; in Firnze vesti l'abito monaiale; in Firenze riposono le sue ossa, e perciò in tal qual modo può Fiorentino appellarsi. Zeno dissertazimi, vol i. p. 75.'

acquired a thorough knowledge of Greek, unusual in those days, under Emmanuel Chrysoloras, and was made General of his Order, as we shall soon relate, about the year 1440. He was repeatedly nominated a Cardinal, and served the Popes with great fidelity and zeal in the councils of Basil, Ferrara, and Florence. He was the Pope's almoner, and died at an advanced age in his Monastery in high repute for sanctity. Lilies are said to have grown upon his grave in the midst of winter.\* His life was written by Augustine of Florence, and will be found in an Appendix to his "Historia Camaldulensium." Ambrose translated Diogenes Laertius, and several of the Greek fathers into Latin.

Moreri gives the following character of him.

"Côme de Medicis le considérait beaucoup, et les savans de son temps recherchaient son amitié. L'étude ne le rendit pas farouche, la piété ne le rendit pas sévère et il paraissait toujours d'agréable humeur: Fuit hic vir, quod raro evenit, sine oris tristitia, sanctus, semper utique suavis atque serenus; C' est l' éloge que lui donne Paul Jove."

The work of Ambrosio however, to which we have to refer is his "*Hodæporicon*," † the name which he has

\* *Elogi degli uomini illustri Toscani*, p. cccxlviii.

† We quote from a copy of this scarce book in the British Museum. "Beati Ambrosii Abbatis Generalis Camaldulensis *Hodæporicon* a Nicolao Bartholini Bargensi congregationis matris Dei publice luci affertum ex Bibliotheca Medicea." 4to. Florence It is properly entered in the British Museum Catalogue under *Traversarius*, although Biographical Dictionaries, such as Zedler, Rose, and the Biogr. Universelle, class him as *Ambrose*, and Bayle as *Camaldoli*.

given to an account of his journeys undertaken as General of the Camaldolese order in Tuscany, with a view to the reformation of the Monasteries. In character—in style—and in the nature of his adventures, he reminds us not unfrequently of Father Busch. Minute however as he is in details—especially in mentioning when and where he dined—he does not bring before us so vivid a picture as Busch does of the nuns at Wenninczen ; his facts however are very important.

Ambrosio was, as we have remarked, a good Greek scholar, when such an acquirement was not common, and he shews his learning in an odd way. Throughout the *Hodæporicon*, whenever he has to relate something of an unpleasant character, he uses a Greek word ; so that if any one be in search of passages of this kind, he has only to glance his eye down the ill-printed pages of the *Hodæporicon*, and the Greek type will hardly fail to arrest his eye.

He thus opens his book :—

“ In the year of our Lord 1431, Eugene IV. presiding over the Apostolic See, by the command and desire of the said Pontiff it was ordered that a general chapter of the Camaldolensian order be held, at the monastery of St. Maria de Urano, near Bertinoro,\* on the 18th October, that is the day of St. Luke the Evangelist.

“ The most reverend father the Lord Cardinal of St. Peter ad Vincula, protector of the order, was charged with the assembling of this chapter, by whose repeated com-

\* *Prope Britonorum*—*Britonorum*, or *Britonorium*, a city of Italy in the province of Romandiola, near Cesena. *Ferrarius Lex.-Geogr.*

mands we were compelled, against our custom, to infringe our rigid confinement to our monastery, (compulsi sumus, contra morem, monasterii clausuram infringere); and although unwilling and opposed to the measure, to send deputies to the chapter, because we were convened by letters apostolical. The parties sent were, I Ambrosius the superior of the convent, and Sylvester my beloved companion (dulcimus socius) our chamberlain, with whom now thirty years I had lived in the monastery. We departed from the monastery on the 11th day of October, while the assembled friars were engaged at vespers, lest any disturbance should arise from their tears and weeping, and on the same day we arrived at the monastery of St. Salvius; where although the Abbot was absent, we were received by the friars most honourably and with the fullest charity."

We have reason to think, from hints scattered through his work, that our amiable Ambrosius included a good dinner in a reception thus characterized.

After minutely describing his journey, and how he was entertained at each convent, and the difficulties of travelling arising from an inundation, he tells us of his arrival at Bertinoro. The chapter was held; *Definitores* or visitors were elected, nine in number, including Ambrosius and Sylvester. On the same day they proceeded to business, viz. the reformation of the order. The visitations of the monasteries were read, and it was found that, with few exceptions, the order was not in a healthy condition, (et præter pauca monasteria, sanitas in ordine inventa non est.) The discussion lasted four days, and as heavy

charges were brought against the Lord General of the Order (*plurima illi crimina objecirentur*), it was decided that it would be very desirable for him to resign his office. Ambrosius and another Abbot were sent to him, intrusted with the delicate mission of intimating to him thus much. The General was by no means submissive.\* As he would not yield to gentle means, he was placed in honourable custody, and, after a few days, he appeared on his knees before the Cardinal and the chapter, asking with tears for absolution. On the same day, at a secret sitting of the chapter, Ambrose was elected General. “*Infelix ego,*” he says, “*Generalis assumptus sum.*” The Lord Cardinal invested him with the ring, and he took the necessary oaths, while the others also swore obedience to him. We cannot follow Ambrose in his minute relation of his daily journeys—for his book is a diary—but will proceed to select such passages as may best illustrate the state of the Nunneries in Tuscany and Romagna at that time.

If, as we have elsewhere remarked, we occasionally call attention to the irregularities amongst the Abbots and Monks, it is to be remembered that the Nunneries were under their exclusive direction; and where the shepherds were thus relaxed in morals, we might guess, even if we had not positive evidence of the fact, that the poor sheep committed to their charge, and over whom their sway was absolute, would be grievously contaminated.

Ambrose did not enter on his task of visitation with a

\* *Superbus, ac minitans, locum ubi consideramus, irrupit, ipseque pro se respondere maluit.* Hod. p. 1.



desire to discover evil. He tells us, page 2, "We were received by the Nuns of the monastery of St. John, near Prato Vecchio, with much devotion, and all joyfully took the solemn oath of obedience. We required of them that they should have all things in common, and that they should not demand money, under the name of dowry, from young women entering the monastery." \* He then went to another monastery, but immediately returned to the nunnery of St. John, where having performed the solemnities of mass and eaten his dinner, † he had a private conference with the Abbess about Sister Fr— de —, about whom evil reports were current; and having diligently examined into the matter, he found on clear evidence that this sister was innocent, and left the Abbess and Nuns rejoicing at this satisfactory explanation.

From thence he went to the monastery of Poplene; then to St. Margaret's, where he was received by the Prior with great joy. He then arrived at Mucillum, where he was honourably entertained by a relative of one his brother monks, where he passed the night and dined; and in the evening of the following day reached the monastery or nunnery of St. Peter. He there found discord amongst the Nuns, who did not live in common, and having received their oath of obedience, he admonished them on this head.

Some time after this he visited the monastery of St. Salvator at Camaldoli, where a procession bearing the

\* Ne ab ingredientibus Monasterium puellis pecunias dotis nomine peterent. Ib. p. 2.

† Celebratisque missarum solenniis et sumpto prandio. Ib.

cross met him outside of the monastery, and conducted him into the church. Having there performed the solemn rite, the Abbot Sebastian and five monks swore obedience to him, and he addressed them, briefly exhorting them to live well, honestly, and religiously. He admired their beautiful monastery, and praised the industry of the Abbot, inwardly desiring to see "regular obedience," that is obedience to rules, established there. *Post prandium*, after dinner, he sent for two of the monks, Philip and Peter, and admonished them henceforth to observe continency, having good cause for doing so, and ordered them never more to wander alone in the streets of the city, but to bear themselves from that time forward honestly, as became the servants of God.\*

He next visits the monastery of St. Felix, and being received with the usual honours by the Abbot and monks, (he does not mention the dinner,) he enjoined them "not to go out of the monastery alone and without license; and that they should go, when it was necessary, in a becoming manner, wearing their cowls, and should live continently, studiously, day and night, observing the offices of the Church."†

Our General then went to a monastery or nunnery,‡

\* Ut postmodum servarent continentiam; mandansque, ne ultra soli circumirent plateas civitatis; sed honeste, sicut decet servos Dei, se deinceps haberent. Ib. p. 3.

† Ne soli et sine licentia exirent Monasterium, et ut honeste cum cucullis, quando opus esset, irent; et continenter viventes, Ecclesiæ officiis studiosius die noctuque inservirent. Ib.

‡ Monasterium de Baldrone.

where, after the usual ceremonies, he privately questioned the Abbess, especially on the visits there, without apparent cause, of D. B., who is, we learn in the next page, the deprived General. He also became convinced, from the remarks of the Abbess, of the truth of the reports that were current respecting the Abbot I. From thence, having again exhorted them, giving them permission to receive more novices, and—*peracto prandio*—he went to the monastery *De Querceto*. Here, after some mild expostulation, he told them, that on account of the infamous acts of these men, viz. the ex-General and the Abbot I., their monastery must be abolished, as, by the decree of the chapter, they could not be allowed to receive novices; he gave them however hope, that if they amended, and lived more honest lives, this sentence might be revoked.

In the next page we read that a certain Abbot,\* whom he had already severely reprimanded, (seemingly the Abbot I.) came to him, and from his secret deposition, he ascertained that the afore-mentioned nunnery *De Querceto*, was an abode of courtezans, rather than of nuns. Full of wrath, he went thither the next day, taking with him the Abbot of Volterra as a companion. He says,

\* His diebus *Ηγουμενος τις* et ante a me conventus acriter, et admonitus graviter, admixta tamen lenitate nimis, ad me profectus est. Deprehendi ex hominis collatione secreta, *εταριδια* in Monasterio *Δρυμων* commorari, non sanctimonialia (Hod. p. 4.) Here we have the use of Greek words already alluded to. He does not wish to call attention to the fact that an abbot was his informant, so it is, *Ηγουμενος τις*;—*Δρυμων* again to avoid identifying the Monastery *de Querceto*.

“ I called together all the women, and in the presence of the Abbot I addressed them. When I found that openly and with whore-like \* and hardened countenance they denied the truth, I dismissed all but the youngest. But I found that from her also I could not elicit the truth, neither by threats, nor by hope held out of leniency and forgiveness. The abbess was then called in alone, and she, thinking that the younger nun had betrayed them, was obliged to confess her own shame and that of the monastery.† The Abbess and the young nun were then confronted, and afterwards the whole household were assembled, and sharply reprimanded.”

Ambrose further gave a strict order that no man should be allowed to enter the monastery,—neither monk, nor religious, nor layman,—adding, that if any more ill rumours reached his ears, he would have it rased to the ground and burnt.‡

We soon find Ambrose at Arezzo, in the Monastery of St. Mary *in Gradibus*. Here he examined all the nuns secretly, because an evil fame had reached him of them. He says “ that they differed in nothing from the other monasteries, and that they had nothing of regular observ-

\* . . . meretricia et obdurata fronte. Ib. p. 4.

† . . . coacta est confiteri suum et Monasteri dedecus. Ib.

‡ Tum vero, rursum evocatis omnibus, et turpi illarum scena in medium exposita; interdictum illis a nobis est; ne quem ultra masculinum intus admitterent; non monachum, non religiosum, non laicum: addictis minis per quas, diruendum atque incendendum illarum monasterium proteſtaremur, si quis infamis rumor aures postmodum pulsaret nostras. Ib. 5.

ance except the *clausura*, or enclosure, which also they violated by the license with which people were allowed to enter." He admonished them separately and collectively, and under heavy threats charged them that no one should be admitted, and that the cloister should be maintained inviolate.\*

Passing over a visit to Rome, we follow our general to Bologna, and there he visits the nunnery of Santa Christina. He is received with the wonted procession, receives the oath of obedience from the mother and the nuns. His investigations commence, and he returns thanks to God that he finds things better than he expected. He gave them some useful advice, and then on St. Christina's day he consecrated with great joy one of the novices, a young woman of the proper age, and of good disposition; and as no seculars were allowed to be present, he adds that all confessed that a more becoming and more beautiful ceremony had never been celebrated.

After transacting other business, he was about to quit Bologna, when a friend well known to him, informed him that he had altogether failed in getting at the true condition of this monastery of St. Christina, for that, "Omnes enim fermè πῶρας εἶναι;" † but however much grieved at this rumour, he was inclined to disbelieve it, and to trust rather to his own investigations than to his friend's report, and thus he departed for Venice.

He then went to Treviso to make further inquiries respecting the afore-mentioned Nunnery of St. Christina,

\* Ut neminem intro admitterent et ut claustra illibata servarent. Ib. p. 6.

† Ib. p. 26.

and especially with reference to matters which had been repeated to him respecting the Abbot and Prior of the Monastery de Carceribus and others. The Abbot had been charged with receiving fifty pieces of gold for the confirmation of the Abbess; but Ambrose found this to be a calumny, and entirely acquitted him. The charges against the Prior, however, were but too true. He had received in his sleeping-place a nun, who remained with him for several hours, and then escaped, first to Venice, and afterwards to Padua. The conduct of other persons was also investigated, and the Abbess was brought to confess she had had a child.\*

He next visited the male monastery of St. Matthew, where heavy charges were brought against the Abbot and the whole community. On an occasion of some dispute, three brothers had not hesitated to fight with swords and staves.† The Abbot was summoned to Ambrose's presence, treated with the utmost gentleness, in spite of his rebellious demeanour, and after a secret, yet due investigation, where grievous crimes were proved against him, he was reprimanded in the presence of a few witnesses, to avoid public scandal; neither would Ambrose leave any thing in writing, on the vilest and most horrid part of his conduct, for the sake of the honour of the Monastery.‡

\* . . . ejusque confessione simplici, τέκνον ποιῆσαι eam comperimus. Hod. p. 29.

† . . . gladii quoque nudarentur, et armati fustibus Monachis huc illucque discurrerent. Ib. p. 30.

‡ . . . præcepta secretiora tradidimus quæ scriptis ligare, ob illius, et nostrum, ipsiusque Monasterii honorem, nolueramus, πέρη τῆς τῶν νέων συνουσίας et aliis hujusmodi quibusdam. Ib. p. 31.

On another occasion, visiting the Monastery of St. Salvatore, near Verona, he says, "We visited the Prior, who had a son of some talent."\* The Prior assured Ambrose that he had for a long time lived continently; his assurance was believed, and he was dismissed with a caution to avoid all future snares.

Further on he visits Faenza, and proceeds to a Convent in the neighbourhood, the Monastery of the Cell of St. Maglorius. Of this house an evil rumour prevailed, and he saw that he must deal cautiously with the case, for from other convents, that of the Mother of the Lord and others, he heard that this place, St. Maglorius, was a mere brothel.†

He visited the Convent of St. Margaret, outside the city, Borgo di S. Sepolero, and gave advice, and next he visited the Nunnery of St. Catherine. Here an old and depraved Priest, moved by jealousy against the Abbess, in whose affection he had been supplanted by a rival, came to inform against her, and showed letters which he had written to her, *plenas turpitudinis*. These letters contained no proof of consent on the part of the Abbess; Ambrose, however, took them, and charged the Abbess with having received them. She at once confessed it, but denied that she had yielded to his wishes. He threatened to have the Monastery pulled down, and so left her.

\* Visitavimus Priorem ipsius Monasterii et quæ de illo fama vulgaverat, vera esse deprehendimus; namque *viov* habuit, juvenem ingenii non mali. *Ib.* p. 35.

† Obscenus rumor effecerat, ut de instituendo et corrigendo illo cautius cogitaremus; quippe et ex matre Domini et ex plerisque aliis perceperamus, prostibulum illud esse. *Hod.* 48.

We have quoted enough from Ambrose. We have passed over of course as foreign to our purpose, his visit to Rome, his reception by the Pope, and his frequent mention of Lorenzo and Cosmo de' Medici, with both of whom he was on terms of close intimacy.

We pass on—omitting references to the volumes of the *Sacrosancta Concilia*—to the 17th Century; and the next reformer of Nunneries whom we shall cite, is the young Cardinal Archbishop of Milan—St. Charles Borromeo, who took an active part in the Council of Trent, and who doubtless effected great and lasting reforms in his diocese. To him, with two other divines, was entrusted the drawing up the celebrated *Catechismus Tridentinus*.

Immediately after the council of Trent he returned to his diocese, held a Provincial Council, and proceeded to reform abuses. His Biographer, Bishop Godeau \* says; “The regular discipline was very much relaxed in the Convents, both of men and of women, on account of their being much frequented by people of the world, so that they had become places of debauchery and amusement, (des lieux de débauche et de divertissement.) It is no matter of surprise, that the people were like their priests, and that as the house of the Lord had so much pollution (tant d’ordures) the houses of the seculars were also full of corruption.” . . . “He reformed many disorders in the Nunneries, (dans les Monasteres des Religieuses ; ) Indeed

\* Vie de St. Charles Borromée, Cardinal de Sainte Praxède et Archevêque de Milan. Par Monsieur Antoine Godeau ; Evêque de Vence. 8vo. Paris. 1693. Liv. i. chap. x. p. 84.



he did all that could be done by the best Vicar-General in the world. But the diocese was like the Augean stable, of which St. Charles might well be called the Hercules of Bishops.\*

The extraordinary devotion of this young Cardinal, who was only twenty years of age, a nephew of the Pope too, excited great surprise at Milan. He was preaching constantly, and administering the sacraments. We also find that "He had pious exhortations in the chapel of his palace, in the evenings, and also *concerts of music*, to draw together people of quality, and to make piety enter their hearts agreeably, through their ears"!!

At last he attempted to reform the Monasteries, and they needed it. "There were many," says his Biographer, "in the city of Milan, where the greater number of the sisters lived, without enclosure (*clôture*); without obedience, without poverty, and sometimes without chastity. He felt deeply the disorders, and he attempted to correct them, but he had need to learn how to possess his soul in patience. For at first he met with a very strong opposition from the nuns themselves, who feared any reformation; from their relations, who very unhappily took up their defence, and from the regulars (i. e. Monks) who had the direction of the nuns, and who pretended to defend their exemption from Episcopal jurisdiction. The whole city became interested in this affair, and in the public council, they resolved to send an ambassador to Rome to oppose these changes." †

St. Charles allowed the storm to blow over, and then

\* Godeau, p. 85.

† Ib. p. 150.

succeeded in convincing the parents of these disorderly nuns, "*ces filles dereglées*," that in supporting them in their licentious mode of living, they were dishonouring their families, and doing injury to the church by protecting those who loaded her with infamy. After much opposition and by dint of close perseverance, he succeeded in bringing about a better state of things. All egress to the Nunneries was prevented, and the nuns themselves forbidden to go the Parlatory or grate, unless under very stringent regulations. Upon this latter subject the French biographer exclaims. "Would that we could introduce this regulation into France, where the disorder of many of the religious houses proceeds from the liberty they have of conversing with secular persons! The spirit of the world is so subtle a poison, that it creeps through the closest grates, and does dreadful damage even in the most holy communities; and much more is it to be feared in those where virtue does not rest on so solid a foundation."\*

\* *Ib.* p. 152.

## CHAPTER XV.

### SCIPIONE DE' RICCI.

WE have now to bring before our readers a tale of modern times. SCIPIONE DE' RICCI was born at Florence in 1741. He was sent to Rome to be educated by the Jesuits, of whom his uncle was the General, but circumstances led him to form the acquaintance of Canon Botari, who was looked upon as the chief of those who were accused of Jansenism, and the influence he acquired over young Ricci's mind, soon led him to alter the opinion he had hitherto entertained of the piety and sanctity of the Jesuits.

He returned to Tuscany, and after completing his studies at Pisa and Florence, he was ordained priest in 1766. By this time he was a confirmed Jansenist or Augustinian. However, when trouble befel the Jesuits at the suppression of their order by Pope Clement XIV, (Ganganelli) he went to Rome to intercede for his uncle, the General, who was kept a close prisoner in the castle of St. Angelo; but in vain. He returned to Florence; and on the death of Ippoliti, Bishop of the united sees of Pistoja and Prato, Ricci was appointed his successor in 1779.

Leopold, the reigning Grand Duke of Tuscany at this time, was ardent in his desire to reform the many abuses which had crept into the church and its concerns—he had, for instance, used his utmost endeavours to diminish the number of oaths which on the most frivolous occasions were required in the various tribunals;—this and other attempts to rule his own states independently of the Pope, had excited much ill-will against him at the Court of Rome.

Ricci went to Rome to be consecrated, and was well received by the Pope, (Pius VI) who said to him, “ Ah, that Grand Duke of yours will have to give account to God for many things which he has done, prejudicial to the church.”

Ricci replied, that he flattered himself he would have all possible protection from the Grand Duke, in favour of religion, and that he was sure he would never do any thing against the church’s true interests.

The Pope was not convinced, and added gravely, “ You are young, you will see in time that it is so.”

We ought here to state, that we are in possession of very minute details respecting the life of Ricci. All his private papers, letters, and journals, were placed by the Ricci family in the hands of M. De Potter, a Belgian *litterateur*, who published the life of Ricci to which we refer. De Potter also obtained access to other valuable documents in Rome.\*

\* Vie et Memoire de Scipion de Ricci, Eveque de Pistoja et Prato. 4 Vols. 8vo. Paris. 1826.

Ricci returned to his diocese and shall now speak for himself.\*

“As soon as I arrived at Pistoja, my first thought was, to bring back to the right path the Dominican nuns of St. Lucia. The bishop Allemanni, in order to remedy the disorders which existed in the convents of St. Caterina and St. Lucia at Pistoja, was obliged in the year 1794 to take into his own hands their spiritual direction, according to the commands he had received from the Prince, and with the consent of the college of Cardinals,—for the Roman

\* Il primo pensiero che mi diedi, giunto in Pistoja, fù di procurare di ridurre nel buon sentiero le Monache Domenicane di S. Lucia. Sino dacchè il vescovo Allemanni per provvedere a molti disordini che erano nei conventi di S. Caterina e di S. Lucia di Pistoja, fù obbligato, nel 1764, a prenderne la direzione secondo l'espresso comando del principe, e coll'annuenza del Collegio dei Cardinali, giacchè era vacante allora la Romana Sede, fù anche necessario allontanarne i frati Domenicani che ne avevano la cura spirituale. Furono così sensibili a questo colpo le Monache di S. Lucia, che per quanto si affaticasse il vescovo con buone maniere à raddolcire e à mitigare la piaga, con quei remedj che la prudenza e la carità gli suggerivano, pure non gli riuscì. Dopo la di lui morte, il vescovo Ippoliti faticò per ben quattro anni inutilmente. Queste infelici vittime della seduzione fraterna si ostinarono a non riconoscere l'autorità vescovile, e vollero alcune di esse piuttosto restar prive dei sacramenti, che ricevergli da quei sacerdoti secolari o regolari, che il vescovo avea loro assegnato, dopo che il sovrano sotto pena della cattura, avea ordinato ai frati domenicani di non accostarsi al convento di quelle monache. Vi era tra queste una novizia, che non avea voluto mai professare nelle mani del vescovo, perchè non intendeva di promettere obbedienza se non al generale dei domenicani.—*Vie de S. de Ricci*. Vol. i. 58.

see was then vacant ; it was even necessary to *keep away from these convents, the Dominican Friars*, who had spiritual charge of them. The nuns of St. Lucia *felt this blow so severely*, that with all the efforts kindly made by the bishop to soften and alleviate the wound, using such remedies as prudence and charity suggested to him, yet he could not succeed. After his death, Bishop Ippoliti laboured for four years, but all in vain. These unhappy victims of monkish seduction, obstinately persisted in refusing to recognize the bishop's authority, and many of them rather preferred to remain without the sacraments than to receive them from those priests, secular or regular, whom the bishop had assigned to them, after that the Sovereign had forbidden the Dominican Friars, under pain of arrest, to go near the convents of these nuns. Amongst them there was a novice who would not receive the veil from the hands of the bishop, because she was resolved to promise obedience to none but to the General of the Dominicans."

It may be well to give some more detailed account of the real state of the Dominican Institutions in Tuscany, when Ricci became Bishop of Pistoja and Prato. For a century and a half, the relaxation of discipline in the order of St. Dominic, had excited public censure and murmuring. The spiritual direction of the nuns, with which the friars were entrusted, instead of being, as at first intended, for edification, was a source of scandal, (*era sorgente di scandali.*) A petition had been presented as far back as the year 1642, addressed to the then grand Duke, and signed by the Gonfaloniere and other represen-

tatives of the people of Pistoja, asking for a prompt remedy "for the indecent conduct of the Dominican Monks in the convents of St. Caterina and St. Lucia.\* The Grand Duke however—the same under whose government Galileo had been persecuted—took no steps in the matter.

This memorial is thus noticed in the Archives of the city of Pistoja in the year 1642.

—A Petition from the Commune to the grand Duke, that he would remove the Convents of St. Lucia and St. Caterina, from under the spiritual direction of the Dominicans; the motives alleged being, the grave improprieties which took place, and on which, out of respect and decency, they were silent, lest scandals with yet worse consequences should arise.† They also asked that Fathers Pagni and Sorigatti be banished from the city; this last was the Prior of Dominicans.

Another petition dated August 16th, in the same year, was found, addressed to the same grand Duke by the Gonfaloniere of Justice, Michael Angelo Alluminati, the workmen of the Convents of St. Lucia and St. Caterina, the members of the commission for watching over the Convents, and two hundred knights, gentlemen, and citizens of Pistoja, representing the "very grave disorders and

\* . . . l'indecente contegno che si teneva dai frati domericani nei conventi di St. Caterina e St. Lucia. Ib.

† . . . per li gravi inconvenienti seguiti, quali per reverentia e modestia si tacciano, altrimenti ne potrebbero nascere scandali gravissimi con pessime conseguenze. Ib. 264 note.

improprieties caused in the said Convents by the evil government of the Monks of St. Dominic." \*

There was also found a letter from the Gonfaloniere Thomas Amati, to the auditor of the grand Duke, begging him to listen and to give faith to the facts complained of; and adding, that the guilty parties were some of them of the most distinguished blood in the city of Pistoja.

A deliberation of the Council of the commune of Pistoja was also found, to the same effect.

When the grand Duke Leopold commenced his former investigation, in 1774, two nuns of St. Catherine came forward and voluntarily denounced the execrable principles and doctrines of the Dominican Monks, their directors, and asked to be delivered from their hands.

They proved how much the profit which the Monks, and above all, the Provincial, and the Confessor, drew from their Convent, as well as from others under their rule, injured the temporal interests of these houses, and little by little prepared their ruin.

"They also," continues Ricci, "shewed that the spiritual ruin was beyond description, arising from the familiarity which existed between the Monks and the Nuns, and from the facility of ingress to the Convents, which the Monks enjoyed. They ate and drank with those who were their favourites, and the most devoted to them, remaining with them tête à tête in some cell, and even sleeping in the Convent; in a room indeed set apart, but still within the cloisters, and this was done when there was occasion—

† . . . i gravissimi disordini e inconvenienti cagionati in detti momasteri per il mal governo dei frati di S. Domenico. Ib.



or when such a pretext could be made—to visit a sick sister.\*

Two beds were regularly prepared, one for the father-confessor, and the other for a lay-brother.

“ The intimacy of the Dominican monks and their nuns had arrived at such a pitch, that they would talk of their amorous sports (*delle loro tresche amoroze*), as dissolute and profligate young persons of the world might do ; whence arose quarrels, and strifes, and jealousies of the so-called mistresses of the provincial, of the prior, or of the confessor, who chose, either from interest or from liking, the nuns who were to be their favourites.”

“ Many of them deprived themselves of all their money and all their goods, and even of necessaries of life, to enrich their lovers : I assert nothing of which I have not proofs. The provincial, on his part, visiting a convent, chooses his favourite and wife ; and some impudent old man has often been seen, on entering a convent, to place his hat on the head of one of the nuns, calling her, in the presence of all the rest, his wife ; while the provincial’s lay-brother was doing the same thing with one of the lay-sisters. The nuns undertook all the charge of washing all the confessor’s linen ; and his cell was

\* *Fecero pure conoscere che non era esprimibile il danno spirituale, per la dimestichezza con cui i frati trattavano le monache, e per la facilità con cui s’introducevano nel convento, quivi mangiando e bevendo colle loro più confidenti e parziali, tratenendosi a solo a sola in qualche cella, e stando fino a dormire in camera, appartata sì, ma in clausura, all occasione e col pretesto di dovere assistere qualche inferma. Ib. i. 85.*

carefully supplied with every thing he could need by his penitents." \*

Several of the nuns of St. Catherine drew up the following document, which was presented to the Grand Duke Leopold, in 1775. †

“ Declaration respecting the conduct of the Dominican fathers, in the government of us, the Nuns of St. Caterina di Pistoja :

“ Instead of leaving us in our innocence, they try to pervert us by word and action ; they come to the Sacristy frequently, of which almost all of them have the keys, and as there is a large grate there, they commit a thousand improprieties, even to the grossest exposure of their persons, and putting their hands into the bosoms of their mistresses ; and, if they can find any occasion, entering the convent under a feigned pretext, they go and stay alone in the chambers of their favourites. They are almost all of them, provincials and all, of the same stamp ; ‡ and they take advantage of the visitations for these purposes. They allow the most beastly expressions to issue from their mouths, saying that we should consider our own happiness, that we can enjoy ourselves without the trouble of having children ; that when the world ends, all ends ; that . . . . § At the Parlatory they allow all sorts of indecencies. Though we have often cautioned them, they do not interrupt or break off these dangerous intimacies ; and hence it has often happened that men

\* Ib. i. 87.

† Ib. i. 266.

‡ . . . tutti intrisi della stessa pece : i. e. all smeared with the same pitch. § The passage we omit is too horrid to translate.

have entered the convent during the night to sleep with the Nuns, having contrived to get false keys. They take no notice if a Nun neglects the sacraments; they do not trouble themselves about introducing mental prayer, and they preach nothing but peace in this life. The Nuns who live according to their ideas are lauded by them, and gratified even in the most extravagant things; and the others must either betray their own consciences by yielding, or suffer a continual warfare, as we do now.

“ This is the simple truth ; without passion, and in our consciences, we the undersigned do attest it.

“ I Sister Anna Teresa Merlini, Mother Councillor, with my own hand.

“ I Sister Rosa Peraccini, with my own hand.

“ I Sister Flavia Peraccini, do.

“ I Sister Gaetana Poggiali, do.

“ I Sister Candida Gioconda Botta, do.

“ I Sister Maria Clotilda Bambi, do.”\*

The workmen (operaj) of the convent had also been examined by order of the Grand Duke, and they fully confirmed all that had been asserted concerning the bad state of the monastery in its temporal concerns, the troubles which arose from the preference shown by the prior and confessor for this or that nun, and the grave spiritual danger which always exists, since such disgraceful conduct was the constant practice of all who had been called from time to time to fill these offices.

The following is an extract from the memorial signed by three workmen who were examined.

\* See Appendix D.

“ Memorandum concerning the Nuns of St. Catherine of Sienna in the city of Pistoja.\*

“ The prior and the confessor go, whenever they please, into the vestry to confer with their favourites, at times when it is impossible, according to the tenour of the bulls, to say that they are there *ad loquendum bonum*. There they amuse themselves, and eat together ; and particularly on Easter-day, the nuns who went in a body there for recreation, discovered two other monks besides the prior and the confessor, feasting with their selected Nuns.

“ Both the prior and the confessor, when they enter the convent on the occasion of a nun being sick, do not go to them, as the bulls order, *recto tramite*, but wander about wherever they choose ; sometimes they remain alone with a Nun in her cell, and sometimes walk about the garden with them.

“ When they have to assist dying Nuns, they eat and sleep in the monastery, which is a forbidden thing, and they eat with whomsoever they choose, and with the sacristans (*colle sagristane*) also.

“ These irregularities are chargeable not only to the present father confessor or prior, but it is the constant and most vicious practice of all who from time to time have been appointed to fill these offices.”

The Grand Duke, after learning all these details, directed the then Bishop, Allemanni, to take upon himself the entire spiritual charge of all the Dominican nunneries at Pistoja, and forbade the Friars, under pain of

\* *Vie de S. de Ricci*. i. 270.

imprisonment, to approach them. The Bishop resided at Florence, and although non-resident and an octogenarian, he caused a minute account of all that passed to be submitted to him. His kindness and consideration towards the Nuns could not overcome their pride and obstinacy. They steadily refused to recognize the Bishop as their superior, or to place the least confidence in the confessors whom he appointed. They said that were they to act otherwise, they would incur the excommunication threatened by St. Pius V. ; and so firmly was this fear impressed on some of their minds, that one of them at St. Lucia, who was for a long time ill, never asked for the sacraments. "So much obstinacy," says Ricci, "although it may with some have arisen from perverted judgment, yet it is to be feared that in others it arose from guilty passion."\*

There is however no doubt that their perseverance was also due to the way in which they were constantly flattered by the monks, the Nuncio, and the Cardinal Protector himself, that if they continued firm the storm would blow over. †

\* Tanta ostinazione se fù in alcune per error d'intelletto, e bene da temersi che derivasse in altre da rea passione.—Ib. Vol. i. 89.

† In proof of this, a letter exists amongst the Ricci papers from Sister Flavia Peraccini, one of those who deposed against the reigning wickedness, addressed to a relative, the Rector Comparini, dated 12th Aug. 1775, in which she says, "I learnt last night that the Nuns (le fratesse—the *Friaresses*) have received a letter from the Cardinal Protector of the order, I dont know his name, in which he tells them to pray to the Lord to give them endurance, that he would do all in his power for them, but they must not be

At this juncture Pope Clement XIV. died, and Bishop Allemanni obtained from the conclave of Cardinals full powers to undertake the government of these nunneries; they also begged him to send to Rome full particulars of the condition in which he found them.

Bishop Allemanni thus wrote: "The Nuns for the greater part bear witness against the dissoluteness and libertinism of their directors, and against their brutal maxims and sentiments." \*

These depositions we have already noticed.

The Nuns, however, refused in a body to obey the Bishop: their Abbess was dead, and they refused to elect a successor, declaring that the powers granted by the conclave of Cardinals were invalid.

At St. Catherine's the very demon of discord reigned: those who had complained were looked upon as apostates, schismatics, and excommunicated persons. The party opposed to them, although the smallest in number, were the most noisy and daring, and they daily threatened to poison or strangle their opponents.

The following touching memorial was addressed by them to the Vicar of Bishop Alemanni.†

in a hurry, or the matter might be tedious. Meanwhile they and the Friars hope and labour (*sperano e raspano*). Who can say what Friars will not attempt to do. They are terrible men! To dare to set themselves in opposition to the Sovereign! . . . But, thank God, he is no fool, and, in Tuscany, he reigns." *Ib.* 272.

\* *Le monache poi per la piu parte depongono della dissolutezza e libertinaggio dei direttori, e delle loro massime e sentimenti brutali.* *Ib.* p. 91.

† *Ib.* Vol. i. 277.

“ The poor nuns of St. Catherine of Pistoja present their respects to Monsignor the Vicar, and entreat him, for the bowels of Jesus Christ, to remove from the convent five nuns and two lay-sisters who are opposed to the resolutions of his Royal Highness, otherwise some great misfortune will happen. They cease not to ill use and maltreat us with words, and they threaten soon to come to deeds (*non cessano di strappazzarle con le parole e minacciarle di venire a' fatti*). We remain quiet from very fear; but we know not what to do, nor whether we ought to escape from the convent to save our lives. We pray you, for the love of God, to take some steps before night, or else we shall be obliged to escape.

“ I Sister Anna Teresa Merlini, with my own hand.

“ I Sister Rosa Peracini, do.

“ I Sister Maria Clotilde Bambi, do.

“ I Sister Maria Caterina Rossi, do.

“ I Sister Candida Botti, do.

“ I Sister Anna Luisa Saccardi, do.

“ I Sister Gaetana Poggiali, do.

They also addressed a letter to the Bishop Allemanni himself, on the 2nd June, 1775.\*

“ Your Lordship will have already heard of the treatment we received yesterday from Mother Gamucci; who called one of the nuns mad, because a sigh escaped her whilst we were at dinner. After the meal was over, she called us rogues, daring persons, and threatened to kill us.† Sister

\* Ib. 277.

† Dipoi dopo la tavola chiamòci birboni, temerarie e minacciò di volere ammazzarci. Ib. 278.

Biagoli and Sister Campioni are always talking of settling us, by poisoning us. We who know them, and their little fear of God, live in terror day and night. They laugh at the steps your Lordship has taken, and in the garden, speaking very loudly, they said; (Forgive us, and do not think we are disrespectful) they said that you were a rogue, and a blockhead, who came here, giving yourself airs, because you knew your authority would not last long.\* Yesterday morning they read at table a book on the power of princes, saying, that in temporal we are subject to the empire only, and in spiritual things to the Pope directly."

Sister Maria Catherine Rossi wrote a letter saying, that during the hours when silence was ordered they came to the door screaming out, that "these nuns had put themselves into the hands of the devil, by submitting to the priests appointed by the bishop."

The bishop had had recourse to Rome, but he got no help; the intrigue of the friars had succeeded, and all his remonstrances were unheeded—his letters unanswered.

At last he wrote to a personal friend, Cardinal Torrigiani, exhorting him to see the Pope and intercede for him. Torrigiani did so, and in the month of December wrote in reply, that the Pope absolutely refused to approve of the innovations unlawfully introduced into the two convents, and asserted that the complaints were mere calumnies.

\* . . . e dissero nell' orto ben forte (perdoni, nè lo creda poco rispetto) che lei era un birbone, uno sguajato, che veniva fare il bravo perchè sapeva che il comando dovea finirgli presto. . . .  
Ib. p. 279.



Shortly after this reply bishop Allemanni died. Ippoliti, his successor, was a native of Pistoja and related to many of the refractory nuns ; he tried to conquer them by patience and kindness, but he had no more success than his predecessor. He received in January 1777 a letter from the Pope, not only refusing formally all that he had asked, but loading him with reproaches, and reprimanding him sharply for having called up to notice a matter which his holiness thought had been consigned to oblivion with the death of Allemanni. The Pope complained that the attempt to remove the Nunneries from under the direction of the friars was "opposed to the sacred canons, and hurtful to the Church, to religion, and to the reputation of the Monastic orders." All remonstrances were vain, and the rebellious Nuns were ordered to be transferred to the convent of St. Clement at Prato, which was under the direction of the Dominican Friars, and there these unhappy women were received as in triumph, and Ippoliti soon died.

They had opposed their bishop and their sovereign, and were thus upheld in their conduct and in all their other wickednesses by his holiness, Pope Pius the Sixth.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### SCIPIONE DE' RICCI.

It is important to observe, that two successive bishops, Allemanni and Ippoliti, convinced of the awful depravity of these Nunneries, attempted, and failed in their attempts, to reform them. It is endeavoured by the Romanists, to cry Ricci down as a wild and visionary reformer; at all events he did but follow in the steps of his predecessors.

Such was the state of things in his diocese when he arrived there in 1779. He had already named the matter to the Pope when at Rome, and the Pope had promised to support him, and even complained of the conduct of the General of the Dominicans. Armed with Pontifical authority, Ricci succeeded in getting some sort of submission from these refractory women; but he calls it only a demi-conversion, and his only hope was by degrees to cure them of their evil doctrines, by keeping away from them their evil instructors. (*di ritirare a poco a poco dalla cattiva dottrina, con tenere loutani i cattivi maestri*).

This was in Pistoja. In Prato, matters were much worse, as the city was altogether under the influence of the Monks—Jesuits and Dominicans; the former had

all education in their hands, while the latter governed the Nunneries.

The first quarrel between the Friars and the Bishop arose on the important subject of appointing confessors and preachers to the Nunneries. The Friars were in the habit of making the appointment, and then as a mere formality informing the Bishop of it. This the Bishop would not submit to; he asserted his own right of confirmation.

The Bishop moreover had forbidden the Friars to visit their spiritual daughters inside of their Nunneries, except in cases of necessity, and then dressed in surplice and stole to administer the sacraments only.\*

This prohibition displeased the Monks greatly;—Ricci says, it touched them to the quick, (*qui feriva sul vivo*) and they waited upon the Vicar General, and demanded permission to enter the Nunneries whenever they thought proper, as was the constant practice in their order.

Up to this time Ricci only suspected, he had no positive proofs, of the evil practices of the Friars in the Nunneries; but events soon set this point quite at rest. The Dominicans had hitherto maintained exclusive possession of the confessionals of the nuns, but when Ricci appointed a new confessor, Father Vincent Majocchi, to the convent of St. Catherine at Prato, it was soon discovered that two of the nuns were in a state of most deplorable perversion of mind. He thus describes them.

“Two Dominican nuns of St. Caterina, in Prato, had been living for many years plunged in the most infamous

\* *In caso di necessità, colla cotta e la stola, soltanto per amministrare i sacramenti.*—*Vie de S. de Ricci*. i. 63.

disorders ; one was named Sister Caterina Irene Bonamici, a noble lady of Prato, aged fifty, the other, Sister Clodesinde Spighi, also of a noble family of the same city, aged thirty-eight.”

Majocchi the new confessor, although a Dominican Friar, was unlike the rest of the brethren ; he went to the Bishop and took his licence from him canonically, and submitted to all the restrictions which were imposed upon him, and against which such an outcry had been raised. When Whitsuntide arrived, Majocchi, more scrupulous than his predecessors, refused to absolve the two Nuns. This at once caused an exposure of the awful depravity of these two women, and led to other important discoveries, which we shall bring together shortly in a succinct form.

Ricci promised Majocchi the Grand Duke's protection from the wrath of the Friars, but he knew them too well, and determined to leave the diocese altogether. The Bishop was then obliged to appeal to the rest of the order, and endeavoured so to deal with them as to ensure their co-operation in this difficult case, so as to avoid unnecessary scandal. “ But,” he adds, “ the obstinacy, the contempt, the impertinence with which the Dominican Monks and especially their Prior, replied to the most courteous attempts I could make to obtain their co-operation with myself in discovering the evil and applying a remedy, are beyond all belief.”\*

\* *La ostinazione, il disprezzo, e la impertinenza con cui i frati domenicani, e specialmente il P. Priore, risposero ai più cortesi modi con cui voleva che cooperassero meco allo scoprimento del male, ed all' applicazione de' rimedj, sono cose da non credersi.*—*Ib. i. 77.*

This obstinacy of the Monks turned out most happily for Ricci's plan. Had they dissembled and pretended to go with him, they would have thwarted all and succeeded in hushing every thing up. But now all reserve was at an end. The Grand Duke took up the matter himself, and we will now select from the various evidence obtained, some extracts.

There are two letters amongst the Ricci archives, written by Sister Flavia Peraccini to Dr. Tommaso Comparini, Rector of the Episcopal Seminary. The day and month are given, but not the year, so that it is doubtful whether they are of 1775, when Allemanni was Bishop, or whether they were written in 1781, when Ricci's zeal was stirred up to abate these fearful disorders.

The first letter is dated June 22.\*

“ In compliance with your request made to me this day, I hasten to give you some information, but I hardly know what to say, for it would require both time and memory to recollect things that have happened during twenty-four years that I have had to do with Friars, and also the things that I have heard. Of those who are gone to another world I will say nothing ; of those who remain, and who have little decency of conduct there are very many, amongst whom there is an ex-provincial called Padre Maestro Belendi, then fathers Donati, Pacini, Buzzacherini, Calvi, Zoratti, Bigliacci, Guidi, Miglietti, Verde, Bianchi, Ducci, Serafini, Bolla, Neri di Lucca, and Quaretti. But what is the use of naming more? Excepting three or four of the many, some now alive, and some dead, whom I

\* *Ib.* Vol. i. 284.

have known, they are all of one calibre, they have all the same maxims and the same deportment. They treat the Nuns with greater freedom than if they were married to them. It is their custom when they have to attend to a sick sister, to sup with the Nuns, sing, dance, and sleep in the convent. They hold it as a maxim, that God has forbidden hatred, but not love; and that the man is made for the woman, and the woman for the man."

She then alludes, as other witnesses do, to an indecent and strangely far-fetched construction put by Monks and Nuns on some words used by St. Paul.

"I say that they corrupt the innocent and the most wary, and that it needs a miracle to have to do with them and not to fall. The priests are the husbands of the nuns, and the lay-brothers of the lay-sisters.\* One of those whom I have already named, was once found with a Nun in his room; he ran away and afterwards they gave him to us as our confessor extraordinary! They commit a villany in one place, and then they are sent to another; and so they get on. How many Bishops are there in the Papal States, who have heard of some disorder, have made enquiries and visitations, and have never been able to remedy the matter, because the Monks used to tell us that all nuns were excommunicated who reveal what passes in the order. 'Poor things!' (as I once said to a provincial, who was an Englishman, I forget his name) 'they think to leave the world to escape dangers, and they meet with greater dangers. Our fathers and mothers gave us a good

\* I sacerdoti sono gli sposi delle monache, e le converse dei conversi.—Ib. 285.

education, and here one learns to say the Ave-Maria backwards.' He did not know what to reply to me. God is my witness that I speak dispassionately. The Friars have never done anything to me of which I can complain, but I say, that a more wicked race than the Friars, there does not exist. Bad as seculars may be, they do not come up to the Friars, and it is impossible to describe their cunning towards the world, and towards their superiors. When they send intelligence of the death of a Nun, they make a long panegyric on her, in a circular letter, to show how well the Nuns are governed; and all the while, poor wretches, God only knows if they are not in hell. How badly are they attended when sick. Then (when any one is sick) it is carnival time.

“ When they gave us the holy water every year, they would even toss the beds in the air. What a row they would make! Once they washed Father Manni's face, and dressed him up like a Nun; in fact, it was one continual scene of amusement, laughing, and conversation. Not a monk passed on his way to the chapter but they found some excuse to show him the convent, and found some invalid who wanted to confess. Continual news about husbands—about some one who had stolen a mistress from another—how such a one had avenged himself in the chapter, and how he would not have forgiven, even in death—and many such like things which I will not weary you with. Nor is this the case in our convent alone. It is the same at St. Lucia, at Prato, at Pisa, and at Perugia; and I have heard things related which would astound you. Everywhere it is the same—the same disorders and the same abuses. A Friar once

said to me, if a nun's veil were placed at one pole, and a monk's cowl at the other, the sympathy between them is so strong that they would soon be united.\* I say, and I repeat, that however much the superiors may suspect, they do not know the smallest part of the evil that goes on between the nuns and the monks."

On the 23rd of June the same sister, Peracini, who had been questioned about Father Buzzaccherini of Lucca, answered in the following letter. These details were asked because this monk had been sent as confessor to the nuns of St. Vincent, at Pistoja, where it had been found that the confessors were in the habit of passing the whole day in the convent up to midnight, with the knowledge of the whole town.

"Of Father Buzzaccherini I say that he behaved like the rest, sitting up late, and allowing all the usual disorders, as there were several Nuns who had love affairs. He had Sister Odaldi, of St. Lucia, constantly sending him presents; and he was in love with the daughter of our factor, of whom all were jealous. . . . He ruined poor Cancellieri, who was sextoness, because he was always asking her for something, and every morning he made her cook for him some nice dish. I do not know anything more about him in particular; but, had he done his duty, he would have forbidden some of the sisters to keep portraits in their cells, and to use paint. . . . The nuns of St. Vincenzo, a few years ago, had so extraordinary a

\* E mi disse un frate che se un velo fosse a un polo, e un cappuccio à un altro, è tanta la simpatia e la forza che si unirebbero assieme.



passion for Father Lupi and Father Borghigiani, of their order, that they were divided into two parties,—the one called *Le Lupe*, and the other *Le Borghigiane*.”

In a postscript to the saame letter she says, “ He who made the greatest noise in St. Lucia, was Donati; I believe he is now at Rome. Father Brandi was also a great favourite; I think he is now Prior at St. Gemignano.”

In further proof of the evils springing out of the directions of nunneries being confided to the monks, there exists also amongst the Ricci papers a letter written by the Advocate Zanobatti to Bishop Ricci, dated Rome, 25th Oct. 1781.

He hopes that they will end by adopting the system of removing the nuns from under the spiritual guidance of the monks, especially in countries where, but a few years ago, it became necessary to raze to the foundations two monasteries of men and women, both of the order of bare-footed Carmelites, which were united, and in which, by means of subterranean passages, the men and women lived in common.

Sister Peracini wrote again on July 6, 1781 : \* “ I am not at all surprised to hear that there are disorders at the Convent of St. Catherine, at Prato; it is under the government of the monks, and that is sufficient. I have often been scandalized by their conduct and by their teaching. Amongst them, there was one who had been two years our confessor, and was afterwards Provincial; he seemed a worthy man: but he wrote to me such horrid letters, that to relieve my conscience I communicated them

\* Ib. i. p. 296.

to a priest. He was amazed and said to me, sighing, ' I have been many years a confessor, but such wickedness I never heard.' I told the Provincial the heavy scruples that had been raised in my mind. He answered, ' I tell you, you are a fool ; only try, and you will thank me ; your scruples will pass away ; ' \* and on the occasion of his visitation he tried to gain his purpose. When they came to visit the sick, they remained for many days, and often with some excuse they remained alone in the chamber of one or other of the Nuns. Every day they would come and talk most licentiously, relating things that had happened at the Holy Office at Perugia, confessions they had heard, &c., and often would they stand in the church in the presence of the Most Holy, at the grate of the choir—so that one could not even do a little good in peace.† When they were forbidden to come here, their admirers remained without communion at Easter, and said that they were right in so doing, in endeavouring to support the order, and in persisting in having the Monks back again. Sister Merlini said that one of the friars had a certain drug, . . . . . and that it was better to do this than to ruin a man's reputation. The same Merlini had heard them say certain gross things concerning the Holy Mass, but what they were I could not well learn. There is that accursed abuse, that as soon as a Nun takes the veil, she chooses her husband, and I

\* Ve l'ho a dire ; siete pure tarulla ; provate e mi ringrazierete, lo scrupolo vi passerà. Ib. 297.

† . . . stavano in chiesa avanti al Santissimo alla grata del coro, che non si poteva fare un poco di bene in pace. Ib.

heard them repeat that verse of a Psalm: *Confirma hoc Deus, quod operatus es in nobis*, and then they would laugh; I afterwards found out to what they alluded. When they went to complain to a certain old monk, that their friends were not faithful to them, he would reply: ‘Men are not faithful to their wives, to whom they are united by a sacrament, and do you think they will be faithful to you, to whom they are united by a sacrilege?’”

With all this information of abominations before him, Ricci felt more and more convinced that something must be done; he thus writes; “On every side I heard fresh tidings of the manner in which the Dominican monks abused their authority over the Nuns, and of the indecent freedom with which they treated them, speaking of the *wife of the Provincial* and the *mistress of the Confessor*, with a barefacedness that would not be practiced amongst altogether worldly people.” The public places and the shops of Prato he describes as being full of stories of the excesses committed between the Monks and the Nuns.

The boarders or pupils who had been educated amongst the Dominican Nuns, reported the impudence with which the Monks took part in the recreation of the Nuns, their private conversations, and even the comedies which they acted. One lady had seen Goldoni’s play, *La Vedova Scaltre*, “The Crafty Widow,” much better acted by the Nuns of St. Clement than they could have done at the theatre. The confessor was the chief person amongst the spectators, and it is impossible to repeat what sometimes took place when the play was over.

On the subject of these theatrical representations, the

Abbé Mengoni remarked, "What we have learned from trustworthy persons, respecting the comedies acted by the Nuns to amuse the Monks, is horrible! On some occasions it was necessary for the more prudent Nuns almost to use force in dragging the Dominican confessor from the theatre, to attend a dying woman, and to administer extreme unction to her."

When the monks had been expelled from the Nunneries, Ricci says, "Romiti yesterday said mass. Many of the monks' Nuns (diverse frataje) attended with tears in their eyes, but they committed no indiscretion. After mass the confessor went to visit those who were sick, and one of them began to make much disturbance, saying she wanted her Dominicans, and that she would never confess to any one else."

Of the Sisters Buonamici and Spighi, whose case first drew the attention of Ricci to the enormity of the existing evils, we can say but little; not however for want of matter. Their examination, their depositions, each question and each answer lie before us, carefully reprinted by De Potter, from the original manuscripts in the Ricci Archives;\* but the case is so revolting, so disgusting, so utterly debasing, that we cannot bring ourselves to transcribe it. Two ladies of noble birth, of excellent talents, and well cultivated minds, were here reduced to the most abject state of mental and physical degradation, and this

\* The original deposition exists amongst the documents of the Ricci family in the hand-writing of the Abbe Lorenzo Palli, Vicar Apostolic at Prato. It is printed at length in De Potter's *Vie de Ricci*, Vol. i. 303.

by their spiritual advisers. Buonamici was endowed with great natural ability, and had composed several pieces of poetry of considerable merit. She had read Voltaire and Rousseau, and had stored her mind with their opinions. But her understanding had been perverted. Imbued with impurities and errors resembling those of the Gnostics, she attempted to make converts to her own ideas amongst the novices and lay sisters. She only made them partially acquainted with her abominable system, making them accomplices to her licentious conduct. Spighi she believed to be more capable of comprehending her whole scheme; but she was of an inferior mind to her teacher, and was not equally able when examined to elude the questions which were intended to lay open their conduct and opinions. Buonamici had so much subtlety, and a sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures, to perplex her examiner, Dr. Longinelli, who confessed afterwards, that at the moment he found it difficult to combat her sophistries.\*

Very affecting are the depositions of the poor young girls, novices and others, as to the manner in which these unhappy wretches perverted them; teaching them the most abominable acts, and telling them that such was the most perfect way of serving God.

Sister Orsola Passi said that on one occasion, when she was a novice of the age of sixteen, after Buonamici had been thus instructing her, she exclaimed to her, for her conscience all the while told her she was doing wrong,

\* *Ib.* Vol. ii. p. 5. 332.

“ I am afraid you are the Devil : I will sprinkle you with holy water.” To which Buonamici replied, “ Sprinkle me—If I be the Devil, I shall disappear.” The poor girl trembling with fear, did sprinkle her, expecting she would vanish ; the woman smiled and said, “ Had I been the Devil, I should have disappeared.”

We again repeat that we cannot give the faintest idea of the state into which these deluded Nuns were fallen. Every text of Scripture was perverted by them, so as to authorize some sensual gratification, and the rites and dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church were made to minister to their obscenities.

Ricci thus wrote to the Pope on the 25th of June, 1781,\* “ There are in that community, (St. Catherine’s)

\* Vol. i. 293. Vol. ii. 6. We give Ricci’s description in his own words : “ La Bonamici dotata di molto talento di cui aveva mostrato dei saggi in qualche poesia nella sua gioventù, per quanto apparve nelle sue risposte, dovea aver letto e Voltaire e Rousseau, ed altrettali autori, delle cui massime si era imbevuta ; e poichè la corruzione del costume per lo piu è quella che conduce a guastare lo intelletto, io non dubito che lo stesso accadesse in questa infelice. Quindi è che ingolfatasi negli errori e nelle laidzze dei Gnostici, seppe col *quietismo* sedurre altre, e formarsi un sistema, di cui non lasciò ben penetrare l’artificio e il rigiro, perchè contenta di avere altre seco unite nelle sfrenate sue voglie, non si curò d’inziarle a tutti i misteri d’iniquità superiori ai loro talenti. La Spighi fù quella che reputò piu delle altre capace di entrare nelle sue massime, ma come dotata di minor talento, non seppe nelle questioni evadere sempre con uguale facilità come la maestra. Questa colle sue sottigliezze e con qualche perizia nelle divine scritture, il cui senso storcava e alterava con molta franchezza, messe piu volte a tortura il Dott. Longinelli, che mi ha confessato di avere dovuto evidentemente conoscere la speciale

two nuns who not only openly profess *Quietism*, but treat as mere human inventions the doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation, the sacraments, and eternal life, and although they laugh at all these things, yet these wretched spiritual guides have always admitted them to the sacraments, and when after two feigned abjurations, they have fallen a third time into these errors, yet they still administer to them the holy body of that Jesus in whom they do not believe. . . . The excesses into which these Nuns went, were such, that it was necessary to treat them as though they were out of their minds, and to confine them in a separate part of the same convent."

In the same letter Bishop Ricci mentions six other Nuns who thought, expressed themselves, and acted just

assistenza del Signore, nel confutar quegli errori, e nel poter dare in molti casi una congrua risposta ai forti obbietti che gli faceva la monaca. Si valeva essa con molta accortezza dei fatti e dei passi della S. Scrittura, in appoggio delle sue massime, e quando sentiva spiegargli nel suo vero senso, contrario a ciò ch'ella pretendeva, ella protestava di non ne riconoscere la divina ispirazione poichè credeva Mosè ed altri uomini autori dei libri che compongono la Sacra Bibbia, nulla più pregevoli che un Plutarco, o altro scrittore profano. Teneva Mosè per un buono legislatore; riguardava G. C. come puro uomo. Iddio, diceva ella, non è altro che natura; questa pertanto noi dobbiamo seguitare in ogni suo istinto. La nostra perfezione è l'unione con Dio, e siccome tutti partecipano della natura, ch'è Dio, perciò diceva che ogni carnale unione tra gli uomini è una unione con Dio: indi, per un eccesso di empietà e di contraddizione nel tempo stesso ai suoi errori, ha proposto ad alcuna e praticato talvolta l'abuso del sacramento. . . . dicendo essere questa la maniera la più perfetta di unirsi a Dio."—Vol. ii. p. 6.

as Buonamici and Spighi did. He further complains of not having been able to seize their books, nor their papers; the Monks having taken care to burn them, or put them out of the way.

Writing to Cardinal Corsini, on the same day, he says :

“ In writing to the Pope, I would not enter into infamous details which would horrify you, (*infami dettagli che le farebbero inorridire.*) Yet what have not these wretched Dominican Monks been guilty of! Provincials, Priors, all alike—instead of remedying the disorders committed by the confessors, have either allowed, or else themselves committed the same iniquities. The stories of the ‘ wife of the Provincial,’ and the ‘ mistress of the Confessor,’ and other follies of the kind, which are witnessed to by the young women boarders in the convents, and by the Nuns themselves, who were formerly under the direction of the Monks, are things revolting to every one.”

We ought to mention, that in the examination of the two Nuns, their one great aim seems to have been to avoid implicating the Dominicans, as being their accomplices; but the revelations of Flavia Peracini clearly establish this link.

There can be no doubt that what is called Quietism, or Spinozism, or Molinism, that is, materialism and licentiousness, were distinctly inculcated upon their *penitents* by these unhappy men.

Ricci writes to Cardinal Corsini on the 3rd of July, 1781 :—“ That which I have learned from the Inquisitor Extraordinary, makes me shudder. These two unhappy



women have not only confirmed all that the pupil-boarders and the Nuns have affirmed, but with indescribable impudence, they have added much more, confessing a most horrible abuse of the sacrament of the eucharist. With the exception however, of a Portuguese ex-jesuit, Bottelli, who was in the habit of conversing with them daily for a whole summer, after they had been infected, I have not succeeded in certainly identifying others as guilty of having taught them these perverse maxims ; and of him, Bottelli, we can only be certain of indecent acts and discourses.’

On the 7th of July, he says to the same Cardinal :—  
“ The conduct of so many provincials, and so many friars, of so many confessors, both in this and in other convents, makes one fear that the evil is in the body itself, (viz. of the monks) and that they systematically teach maxims contrary to the laws of Jesus Christ. . . . How can Bishops with any confidence appoint such men as confessors ! We know that this evil prevails amongst them, and we do not know the individuals tainted with it.”

“ A favourite book of these Nuns was the ‘ Daily Exercise of Father Navarra, of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri.’ \* A picture of Jesus pointing to his heart, from which flames are issuing, the bosom being open—a favourite subject with the devotees of the Sacred Heart—was found in the possession of each of these, and they

\* *Esercizio Quotidiano del P. Navarra, dell’ oratorio di S. Filippo Neri.*

were so much attached to them, that they brought them with them from Prato to Florence.”

These two Nuns were removed to Florence, where every effort was made by kind and gentle means to recover them, but in vain. The Archbishop Martini personally visited them, taking with him a *Bambin Gesù*, or Infant Jesus—one of the worshipped dolls of Rome,—they received him with an expression too indecent to repeat.

They were first confined in a hospital for insane persons, that of St. Bonifazio, by order of the Grand Duke. De Potter says that Buonamici was afterwards removed to a small convent, that of St. Lucia, where she died, almost in the odour of sanctity. Sister Spighi went to the convent of St. Clement. When the French took possession of Florence, they suppressed the convent, when she retired with some of her companions to an old abandoned Franciscan monastery, and when these abodes of innocence were again re-established, she went into the convent of *St. Girolamo delle poverine*, where de Potter saw her in 1824.

We may conclude by stating that all Ricci's efforts were vain; upheld by his enlightened Sovereign, he was thwarted by all around him; and when that Prince was called from the Ducal throne of Tuscany to the Imperial throne of Austria, Ricci was left helpless amongst the enemies he had created. He was forced to abdicate his See, and after enduring much persecution and imprisonment, he ended by abjectly humbling himself before the Pope, and signing a full recantation drawn up for him at Rome.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### MONASTICISM IN SPAIN.

THE annals of Spain present no great variety in the uniform tenor of the history of Monastic Institutions. If we search the records of Councils we find the same legislation, the same evils hinted at, and the same precautions adopted, as in Italy and France. The testimony of one Spanish Bishop must not be omitted: his remarks of course apply to all Nuns, but his knowledge must have been chiefly derived from those of Spain.

In the year 1563 at the Council of Trent we read, Sess. ix. 18 Nov.—

“ Post hæc datur copia Patribus reformationis confectæ de Regularibus et Monialibus cum sex aliis cap. de reformatione generali, quorum primum incipit *Optandum est*.”\*

And on the 23rd of November six decrees on this subject were adopted, the discussion of which occupied four days.

The Rev. Joseph Mendham, in his edition of Paleotti, adds some valuable information on this subject. Paleotti gives none of the discussions, but Mr. Mendham partly

\* Acta Concilii Tridentini a Gabrielle Cardinale Paleotto descripta. Edente Josepho Mendham, M. A. p. 634.

supplies this want from a manuscript which he obtained in the year 1838, containing an account of all that passed in the Council, written by Mendoza, Bishop of Salamanca.\* Mendoza records some strong sentiments of his own, as well as two speeches delivered by him on the occasion. He states, that in the proposed decrees the Monks were treated with less rigour, because they were employed in drawing up their own reformation. The Nuns were dealt with less indulgently, on account of their general dissoluteness, of which the most formidable information reached the Council, so much so that the writer trembled at the thought of the judgments which, on account of such abominations (abominaciones) appeared to have visited the Church. He adds his sore grief, that in consequence of a great part of the scandal of the times being traceable to the licentiousness and profligacy of some bad religious, the reformation ran so much on penalties, so that to Heretics, he adds, it will be a laughing-stock, and to Catholics very little edifying; † he speaks also of the “many sores of the Friars and Nuns which stand in great need of healing.‡

Of the middle ages indeed we have not many details. No reformation opens to us the prison-houses, as in

\* This valuable manuscript is entitled *Lo sucedido en el Concilio de Trento. Desde et año 1561, hasta que se acabò.* (Por D. Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, Obispo de Salamanca).

† . . . para los Hereges serà risa, y para los Catolicos muy poco edificacion.

‡ . . . las muchas llagas de Frailes y Monjas, que tienen hasta necesidad de ser curadas.

England. No Father Busch ever arose in Spain to reform them, as in Germany; no Clemangis to denounce them, as in France; no St. Bridgeti as in Rome, to give us revelations respecting them. We have no Spanish Hodœporicon, nor in modern times have we a reforming Bishop like Ricci, to instruct us by his vain attempts to heal what cannot be healed.

Two witnesses however, we have, and we shall now bring before our readers some portion of their evidence.

The first witness we cite, is no less a person than an ex-secretary of the Inquisition, Don Juan Antonio Llorente.

This eminent Spanish scholar and writer was born in 1756, of noble blood, and with a moderate fortune. His learning and talents soon raised him to high offices in the Church, and he became Commissary and Secretary of the Holy Office. He devoted himself to acquiring a full insight into the details of the system, and he became convinced of its atrocity and wickedness. Under the Inquisitor Don Emmanuel Abad-la-Sierra, he proposed an entire reform of the system, and that the trials should be open and the witnesses avowed. The project was laid before the Prince of the Peace by the Minister of Justice, but intrigues were soon at work; the Inquisitor General was disgraced, and Llorente was soon after arrested, and, after a slight imprisonment, deprived of all his offices. He became a deadly enemy to the Institution of the Holy Office, and from the knowledge he professed, a formidable enemy also.

If in our quotations from Llorente, we allude slightly to the condition of the monks, and priests, and friars of

Spain, our readers will remember that it is to these men that the guardianship of the Nuns was confided, and if they are tainted with impurity, we can hope but little of the frailer creatures committed to their keeping, and over whom they exercise an almost superhuman sway in the confessional.

Llorente tells us that the subject of solicitation in the confessional has been the subject of much ecclesiastical legislation in Spain. The cognizance of the offence was placed in the hands of the Inquisition, as it was considered an indication of heretical pravity and tendencies that a man should so abuse the solemn sacrament of penance.

In 1556, Paul IV addressed a brief to the Inquisition of Grenada, to proceed against those priests who were accused of being *soliciting confessors*,\* and to examine carefully if the doctrine of these priests on the sacrament of penance was orthodox, and to pursue towards them, if necessary, the usual course prescribed against heretics. Every thing was conducted with great secrecy, that the people might not know what was going on, and that heretics might not get hold of the fact; but from the secret information obtained, it was found that the evil was not confined to Grenada. Indeed the denunciations became so numerous that the notaries of the holy office

\* *Confessores solicitantes . . . abusavan de su officio solicitando en el acto mismo de la confession à las mugeres que acadian à ellos à recibir el sacramento de la penitencia.* Llorente xxviii. 1.

great devotion to the confessional, threw them into that class, and solve the problem to Llorente's entire satisfaction.

It is very necessary, in justice, to state, that Llorente immediately proceeds to consider the case of Nuns;—he says that they are constantly and frequently denouncing confessors as guilty of solicitations, but he attributes this to their simplicity and scrupulosity, to their female imagination, which being easily excited, misinterprets the most harmless words of a confessor; and that the delations of Nuns were so frequent and so frivolous, that the Inquisitors paid little attention to them, unless they had abundant proof to offer—not an easy thing to obtain—of positive acts or proposals of a dishonourable character.

Now this does not impress us with a highly exalted idea of the purity and unworldliness of the Spanish Nuns. What! the mind so full of carnal thought, as to be mistaking constantly the words and actions of a clergyman, speaking to her on the interests of her soul, for solicitations of the grossest and foulest kind!

Yet, Llorente adds his strong and decided testimony, that instances of immorality between confessors and Nuns are rare in Spain; he says, they may be reckoned at three in a century; and he gives us what he considers the reason of it. Not that enforced celibacy of men and women is less hurtful there than elsewhere—he has already told us what he thinks of the purity of the priests and friars, and that the weight of the purse decides whether he will resort to the confessional or to ————; the reason he assigns for this absence of delinquency amongst

Amongst the Carmelites, Augustinians, Trinitarians, Dominicans, and Franciscan observants, one in five-hundred.

Amongst the bare-footed Friars (*frailes descalzos*) Augustinians, and Trinitarians, about one in four-hundred.

Amongst the bare-footed Carmelites and Capuchins, one in two-hundred.

Now, a Protestant on reading this statement, would suppose the Secular Clergy were much more moral than the Benedictines—and the Benedictines than the poor barefooted Capuchins; but Llorente, who knew the subject well, draws no such conclusion. He says, that he meditated upon this variation in numbers, and attributes it to various causes.\* The principal cause is the pecuniary facilities possessed by each class to gratify their desires by ordinary means, without having recourse to this detestable abuse of the sacrament of penance! Secondly, the greater liberty enjoyed, for obtaining means of gratification, without using the confessional. And thirdly, the greater or less dedication of each order to these particular duties. Thus the Dominicans and Franciscans, although they enjoy great liberty, yet, from their being more addicted to the confessional than the Seculars or the Benedictines, fall into the third class. The great poverty and strict obedience to rules observed by those in the fifth class, and their

\* *Hecha esta observacion, medité sobre las causas y origen de las diferencias, y formé concepto de ser varias. Una principal, la de facultades pecuniarias para satisfacer las pasiones per medios comunes, sin llegar a los detestables del abuso del sacramento de la penitencia.*



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the Spanish Nuns, is one, the cogency of which we shall all be ready to admit.

He says, that any such acts would be very difficult, on account of the precautions that are taken in the construction of the confessionals of convents ; many witnesses are always present—out of hearing of course—and the penitent is separated from her confessor by a partition with apertures which do not allow even a finger to pass through ; and were they at this time, to lay any secret plans for gratification, the difficulties would be insurmountable. He notices the great care with which the cloisters are guarded by several porters, who are aged Nuns, grave, respectable, and irreproachable ; *the height of the walls*, which surround the convents ; the strong iron bars which protect the windows of the cells of the Nuns ; and the many other precautions which the zeal of the Spanish prelates has caused to be adopted in the defence of the honour of the Nuns.

Honour of the Nuns ! Is that honour ? is that purity ? is that chastity ?—which can only be maintained by such precautions, suited only to a Magdalen Asylum, or a Female Penitentiary !

In Llorente's History. Chap. xi. art 11, we read the following history :—

Doña Agueda de Luna was a native of Cuella in the kingdom of Navarre, of noble parentage. She became a Nun of the order of bare-footed Carmelites in the convent of Lerma about the year 1712, and had a reputation of exalted virtue and even sanctity from her early youth ; but in the year 1713 she became fully initiated into the doc-

trines—the heresy as Llorente calls it—of Molinos. For twenty years her fame did but increase—she was esteemed a saint, and had the gift of performing miracles as was announced by the brother Juan de Longos, prior of Lerma, the Provincial, and other friars of the highest rank, all of whom were interested accomplices in keeping up the notion of Mother Agueda's sanctity.

It was purposed to establish a convent in her own part of the country, and the Prelates named Mother Agueda as the founder and superior.\* Here she continued her evil life, her good fame increasing to such a degree, that every one in the neighbourhood implored her intercession with God in their difficulties.†

Llorente says, that his native town, Rincon del Soto, was not far from Corella, and that it is on record in his family that one of his ancestors applied to her for help for a sick child whose health she promised to restore by one of her mystic stones; but her promises were vain, and the child died.

Amongst the miracles she pretended to perform was the giving birth, by marvellous parturition and with extreme pain, to certain stones marked with a cross on one side and a star on the other, and these talismans were effectual to the cure of every disease. What the real pains of childbirth were, she was well acquainted with, on occasions when she had the assistance and aid of friars, her accomplices, and of perverted Nuns.

She was at length denounced to the Holy Office, and expired in consequence of torture, before her depositions

\* Fundadora y prelada.

† Su proteccion ante Dios.

were put into the form of a sentence. During her torture she confessed her sins, and as she seemed to die repentant, was allowed the sacrament.

Father Juan de la Vega, who was tried on the 30th of October, 1743, had been the spiritual director and accomplice of Mother Agueda since the year 1715. By his trial it appears that he was the father of five children by Mother Agueda, and had corrupted many Nuns, teaching them that what he desired of them was the highest virtue, and pointing to Agueda as a model of a saint. He acquired such a reputation for sanctity, as to be called *el extatico*.

Doña Vicenta de Loga y Lima, was a niece of Mother Agueda, and entered the convent of Corella at the age of nine years, when her aunt came from Lerma to found it. She learned from her aunt, with the assistance of Brother Juan de la Vega, all her arts, doctrines, and corrupt habits.

Llorente concludes the chapter from which the above few extracts have been condensed, in these words.

“Since the Inquisition has mixed itself up with the affairs of Nuns, I wonder that in consideration of the many cases which appear in its books, which *out of regard to decorum* I pass over in silence, it never took steps to prevent Nunneries being subject to the government of monks.”

Llorente—whose firm adherence to Popish doctrine pervades his works,\* while yet denouncing the injustice and wickedness of the Inquisition—relates the case of a Capuchin Friar, at whose examination he himself assisted. He

\* For proof, see xxviii. 2. 1.

was a native of Gayanes in the kingdom of Valencia, and held in Carthagena in America the office of Missionary Apostolic and Provincial.\* In a nunnery of which he was confessor he succeeded in seducing 13 out of 17 Nuns.† He bore the character of a holy and wise man, and his penitents listened to all that he said as to a sacred oracle. To thirteen out of the seventeen he related the following story; viz. that the Lord Jesus Christ had appeared to him in the consecrated wafer, at the time of elevation, and had told him, that almost all the souls of which he had the direction in that monastery were pleasing in His sight, because they had a real love for virtue, and desire to go on to perfection; and especially Sister —— naming the victim before him. That her soul was so perfect, that it had conquered all passion but that of sensuality, which tormented her much, as the enemy the flesh is very strong in her; and that therefore, in reward for her virtue, in order that she might serve with more tranquillity of mind, the priest professed himself charged to tell her that she might satisfy her passion with whoever was nearest to her, but that to avoid all scandal, she must keep it a profound secret from all the world, to tell it to no one, and above all to no other confessor, as she would be committing no sin in doing what she had received so plain a dispensation for.

Such a message as this was delivered to thirteen Nuns, and believed by them, or at all events acted on; and of

\* Llorente, cap xxviii. 2.

† Pervirtio un beaterio donde, siendo diez y siete las beatas, solicitò à trece.

the remaining four, to whom no such dispensation was granted, three were old, and the fourth not favoured with beauty.\*

The youngest of the seduced Nuns, aged 25, was taken dangerously ill, and asked for another confessor, and he, with her permission, communicated to the Holy Office all that had been going on for the last three years. The other Nuns at first denied altogether the accusation, but afterwards confessed its truth, pleading in their behalf the dispensation given them by the confessor. They were sent into separate nunneries in Bogota. The confessor was sent to Spain, and Llorente, as secretary of the Inquisition, conducted his trial. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment, but died at the end of the third year.

The next witness we must introduce with some explanation, if not apology. We have professed to cite none but Roman Catholic authorities, and our readers may be surprised therefore at our bringing forward the Rev. Blanco White. Mr. White's history may be briefly told. He was never a believer in the dogmas of Popery, and in early years became sceptical on the whole subject of revealed religion, and in this state of mind he remained for many years, in the dreadful position of an honest man—for such he undoubtedly was—professing and teaching that which he disbelieved, Dr. Newman describes him as going on “year after year (horrible!) performing the same rites, *holding the Lord in his hands*, dispensing *Him*

\* Tres eran ancianas y la otra muy fea.

to His people, yet thinking it all an empty show, a vain, superstitious, a detestable idolatry, a blasphemous fraud, and cursing the while the necessity which compelled his taking part in it." Mr. White at length escaped from this thralldom; after a short time, his doubts about the truth of revelation were removed, and he joined the Church of England, although he never officiated as a minister. His sceptical reasonings however led him, after some years, to deny the truth he had professed, and he died a Socinian.

After this statement it will be evident that we can only cite him as testimony to facts which he has personally seen and vouches for. Dr. Newman indeed is our authority for thus citing him; for Dr. Newman, while expressing a strong dissent from all Mr. White's *opinions*, gives the following testimony to the correctness of his statements. "I have the fullest confidence in his word, when he witnesses to facts, and facts which he knew." He describes him as a person "who had special means of knowing a Catholic country, and whose honour you may depend upon;" further on,—“a man you can trust.”\*

All difficulty being now removed by Dr. Newman himself, against the reception of Blanco White's Testimony, we shall proceed to make a few extracts, both from his Practical and Internal Evidence against Catholicism, published in 1826, and from his Life, published after his death, in three octavo volumes.

In the first of these works we read—

“The church of Rome, on the contrary, allures boys

\* Lectures on the present position of Catholics in England, by John Henry Newman, D.D. 8vo. Lond. 1851.

and girls of sixteen to bind themselves with perpetual vows: the latter are confined in prisons, because their frailties could not be concealed; the former are let loose upon the people, trusting that a superstitious reverence will close the eyes, or seal up the lips of men, on their misconduct. 'Christian clemency,' says Erasmus, 'has for the most part abolished the servitude of the ancients, leaving but vestiges of it in a few countries. But under the cloak of religion a new kind of slavery has been invented, which now prevails in a multitude of monasteries. Nothing there is lawful but what is commanded: whatever may accrue to the professed, becomes the property of the community: if you stir a foot, you are brought back, as if flying after murdering your father and mother.' The council of Trent enjoins all bishops to enforce the close confinement of nuns, by every means, and even to engage the assistance of the secular arm for that purpose; entreats all princes to protect the inclosure of the convents; and threatens instant excommunication upon all civil magistrates who withhold their aid when the bishops call for it. 'Let no professed nun (say the fathers of the Council of Trent) come out of her monastery under any pretext whatever; not even for a moment.' 'If any of the regulars (men and women under perpetual vows) pretend that fear or force compelled them to enter the cloister, or that the profession took place before the appointed age; let them not be heard, except within five years of their profession. But if they put off the frock, of their own accord, no allegation of such should be heard; but, being compelled to return to the convent, *they must be punished as apostates,*



being, in the mean time, deprived of all the privileges of their order.' Such is the Christian lenity of Rome; such the fences that guard her virgin-plots; such were the laws confirmed at Trent by the wild uproar of a crowd of bishops, of whom but few could have cast the first stone at the adulteress, dismissed to sin no more by the Saviour. 'Accursed, accursed be all heretics!' exclaimed the legates: 'Accursed, accursed!' answer, with one voice, the mitred tyrants. The blood, indeed, boils in one's veins, and the mouth fills with retaliating curses, at the contemplation of that odious scene: yet, I thank God, the feelings of indignation which I cannot wholly suppress, leaves me completely free to obey the divine precept respecting those that 'curse us, and despitefully use us.'\* \* \*

Again we read—

"I cannot think on the wanderings of the friends of my youth without heart-rending pain. One, now no more, whose talents raised him to one of the highest dignities of the church of Spain; was for many years a model of Christian purity. When, by the powerful influence of his mind and the warmth of his devotion, this man had drawn many into the clerical and the religious life (my youngest sister among the latter), he sunk at once into the grossest and most daring profligacy. I heard him boast that the night before the solemn procession of *Corpus Christi*, where he appeared nearly at the head of his chapter, one of *two* children had been born, with his two concubines brought to light within a few days of each other." †

\* Practical and Internal Evidence, p. 129.

† *Ib.* p. 135.

And again—

“ The picture of female convents requires a more delicate pencil: yet I cannot find tints sufficiently dark and gloomy to pourtray the miseries which I have witnessed in their inmates. Crime, indeed, makes its way into these recesses, in spite of the spiked walls and prison grates, which protect the inhabitants. This I know with all the certainty which the self-accusation of the guilty can give. It is, besides, a notorious fact, that the Nunneries in Estremadura and Portugal are frequently infected with vice of the grossest kind. But I will not dwell on this revolting part of the picture. The greater part of the nuns, whom I have known, were beings of a much higher description—females whose purity owed nothing to the strong gates and high walls of the cloister; but who still had a human heart, and felt, in many instances, and during a great portion of their lives, the weight of the vows which had deprived them of their liberty. Some there are, I confess, among the nuns, who, like birds hatched in a cage, never seem to long for freedom: but the happiness boasted of in convents is generally the effect of an honourable pride of purpose, supported by a sense of utter hopelessness. The gates of the holy prison have been for ever closed upon the professed inhabitants; force and shame await them wherever they might fly: the short words of their profession have, like a potent charm, bound them to one spot of earth, and fixed their dwelling upon their grave. The great poet who boasted that ‘slaves cannot live in England,’ forgot that superstition may baffle the most sacred laws of freedom: slaves *do live* in Eng-

land, and, I fear, multiply daily by the same arts which fill the convents abroad. In vain does the law of the land stretch a friendly hand to the repentant victim: the unhappy slave may be dying to break her fetters; yet death would be preferable to the shame and reproach that await her among relatives and friends. It will not avail her to keep the vow which dooms her to live single: she has renounced her will, and made herself a passive mass of clay in the hands of a superior. Perhaps she has promised to practise austerities which cannot be performed out of the convent—never to taste meat, if her life were to depend on the use of substantial food—to wear no linen—to go unhosed and unshod for life;—all these and many other hardships make part of the various rules which Rome has confirmed with her sanction. Bitter harassing remorse seizes the wavering mind of the recluse, and even a yielding thought towards liberty, assumes the character of sacrilege. Nothing short of rebellion against the church that has burnt the mark of slavery into her soul, can liberate an English nun. Where to could she turn her eyes? Her own parents would disown her; her friends would shrink from her as if her breath wafted leprosy: she would be haunted by priests and their zealous emissaries; and, like her sister victims of superstitions in India, be made to die of a broken heart, if she refused to return to the burning pile from which she had fled in frantic fear.

“ Suppose that the case I have described were of the rarest occurrence: suppose that but one nun in ten thousand wished vehemently for that liberty which she had forfeited, by a few words, in one moment: what law of

God (I will ask) has entitled the Roman church thus to expose even one human creature to dark despair in this life, and a darker prospect in the next? Has the Gospel recommended perpetual vows? Could any thing but a clear and positive injunction of Christ or his apostles justify a practice beset with dangers of this magnitude? Is not the mere *possibility* of repenting such vows, a reason why they should be strictly forbidden? And yet they are laid on almost infants of both sexes! Innocent girls of sixteen are lured by the image of heroic virtue, and a pretended call of their Saviour, to promise they know not what, and make engagements for a whole life of which they have seen but the dawn!

“ To what paltry shifts and quibbles will not Roman Catholic writers resort to disguise the cruelty of this practice! Nuns are described as superhuman beings, as angels on earth, without a thought or wish beyond the walls of their convents. The effects of habit, of religious fear, of decorum, which prevented many of the French nuns from casting off the veil, at a period when the revolutionary storm had struck awe into every breast; are construed into a proof of the unvariableness of purpose which follows the religious profession. Are nuns, indeed, so invariably happy? Why, then, are they insulted by their spiritual rulers by keeping them under the very guards and precautions, which magistrates employ to secure external good behaviour among the female inmates of prisons and penitentiaries?—Would the nuns continue, during their lives, under the same privations, were they at liberty to resume the laical state? Why, then, are they bound fast

with awful vows? Why are they not allowed to offer up, day by day, the free-will offering of their souls and bodies?

“The reluctant nuns, you say, are few.—Vain, unfeeling sophistry! First prove that vows are recommended on divine authority, that Christ has authorized the use of force and compulsion to ratify them when they are made; and then you may stop your ears against the complaints of a few sufferers. But can millions of submissive, or even willing recluses, atone for the despair of those few? You reckon, in indefinite numbers, those that in France did not avail themselves of the revolutionary laws. You should rather inquire how many, who, before the revolution, appeared perfectly contented in their cloistral slavery, overcame their religious fear, and flew to the arms of a husband, as soon as they could do it with impunity. *Two hundred and ten nuns* were secularized in Spain during the short-lived reign of the Cortes. Were these helpless beings happy in their former durance? What an appalling number of less fortunate victims might not be made out by averaging, in the same proportion, the millions of females who, since the establishment of convents, have surrendered their liberty into the hands of Rome!” \*

Again, in his life, we read—(Vol. i. 119.)

“One of the events which had the greatest share in my unhappiness, was the determination of my sister to take the veil. Such a determination would have caused me deep regret at all times. But to see an amiable young woman, so nearly related to me, one who could have been

\* *Ib.* p. 138.

my companion for life, if she wished to remain unmarried, hurried by superstition to sacrifice herself;—to perceive the arts which the contemptible bigots and hypocrites employed to close her ears against me, and to be forced by the religious tyranny of the country into acquiescence and silence, galled my very soul. I have never seen the Roman Catholic superstition in a more odious light, than when I closely observed it working on the tender minds of females, for the purpose of making them prisoners for life in a Convent. I am not more convinced of any fact whatever, than of the existence of an odious, gross, animal jealousy which triumphs in the perpetual exclusion of an interesting girl from the world. . . .

“ In my sister’s case there were circumstances of peculiar power to excite my indignation. She had been under Arjona’s spiritual direction. Upon his promotion to a Canonry of Cordoba, she chose for her Confessor a priest of St. Philip Neri, a favourite pupil of Father Vega, and his assistant in the spiritual exercises which I have described. Father —, my sister’s confessor, was not a man of talent; but his manner was mild, and his piety did not appear forbidding. . . .

“ My sister’s health was extremely delicate; that of my mother was in a state which absolutely required her only remaining daughter’s company at home. Yet the poor deluded man, (I have not the heart to call him by harsher names,) whom I have just mentioned, conceived that he was sure of heaven’s approbation and favour by encouraging the enthusiastic feeling which had turned my sister’s eyes towards one of the gloomiest Nunneries in

Seville. It was a Nunnery where the Rule of St. Francis was observed with the greatest rigour, where the Nuns were not allowed a bed, and were obliged to sleep on a few planks raised about a foot from the ground; where the use of linen near the body was forbidden; where the Nuns wore coarse open sandals, through which the bare foot was exposed to cold and wet; where the nearest relations were not allowed to see the face of the recluse, or to have any communication with her, except on certain days, when in the presence of another Nun, and with a thick curtain, close behind the double iron railing which separates the visitors from the inmates of the Convent, the parent, sister, or brother exchanged a few unmeaning sentences with the dear relative whom they had lost for ever. I will not conceal that even at this distance of time, my feelings of indignation choke me when this picture of Father — sitting near my sister, about the time when her resolution of being a Nun was announced, presents itself vividly to my mind. I see the room;—I stand on a well-known spot, where in the presence of my mother I was betrayed into a burst of indignant disapprobation which darkened the Priest's brow into that threatening scowl by which even the most contemptible wretch convinces you that he is thinking of the Inquisition. He bade me hold my tongue, and not lend my services to the great Tempter.

“ I must hasten to the conclusion of this subject, for it harrows up my heart. At the end of the year of probation, during which the Nuns concealed the progress of my

sister's illness, while she herself was encouraged to increase the acceptableness of her sacrifice, by assisting in this deception, the solemn act of her profession for life was determined upon. Arjona, who was then at Seville, was to preach on the day appointed for the awful ceremony. I was to celebrate the high mass! Alas! what a spectacle must we have presented to the all-seeing eye of Heaven! My early, my valuable friend, the most successful instructor of my opening mind, had by that time fallen into habitual and reckless immorality! Whether he had rejected all religion in his heart I knew not; for to the last day of our acquaintance, he was reserved to all his most intimate friends on that subject; but I was well aware of the utter wreck which his morals had made, both in theory and in practice. He wrote the greatest part of the Sermon he was to preach at the approaching ceremony, in a state bordering on intoxication, in order to show that the carousal in which he had been engaged, during a day spent under the glorious sky of Spain, in the country, had not weakened his talent for composition. The ceremony of profession, including the sermon and high mass, lasted three hours, during which the heart of the officiating priest was in a state which only the infinite mercy, as well as infinite knowledge of Him, who can unravel its secrets, and distinguish the effects of anguish from those of wickedness, could endure and forgive. My poor sister grew worse from day to day, but her illness was as lingering as it was distressing. Her religious fears bordered on distraction. To allay these fears I had frequently to endure the torture of attending her at the confessional, where I



administered the wretched consolations which the system to which she was cruelly sacrificed, furnished me with. In that miserable state she lived five or six years. For a long time after my arrival in England, my family kept me in ignorance of her death, by means of equivocating answers to my inquiries."

In this case, which affected him deeply, he speaks of matters within his own knowledge, and we may judge him by Dr. Newman's test. An elder sister had already fallen a victim, and in the Practical Evidence he thus describes the two cases :

" Even a temporary leave to quit the convent for the restoration of decaying health is seldom given, and never applied for but by such nuns as unhappiness drives into a disregard of public opinion. I saw my eldest sister, at the age of two-and-twenty, slowly sink into the grave within the walls of a convent ; whereas, had she not been a slave to that church which has been a curse to me, air, amusement, and exercise might have saved her. I saw her on her deathbed. I obtained that melancholy sight at the risk of bursting my heart, when, in my capacity of priest, and at her own request, I heard her last confession. Ah ! when shall I forget the mortal agony with which, not to disturb the dying moments of that truly angelic being, I suppressed my gushing tears in her presence ; the faltering steps with which I left the convent alone, making the solitary street where it stood, re-echo the sobs I could no longer contain !

" I saw my dear sister no more ; but another was left me, if not equal in talents to the eldest (for I have known

few that could be considered her equals), amiable and good in no inferior degree. To her I looked up as a companion for life. But she had a heart open to every noble impression—and such, among Catholics, are apt to be misled from the path of practical usefulness, into the wilderness of visionary perfection. At the age of twenty she left an infirm mother to the care of servants and strangers, and shut herself up in a convent, where she was not allowed to see even the nearest relations. With a delicate frame, requiring every indulgence to support it in health, she embraced a rule which denied her the comforts of the lowest class of society. A coarse woollen frock fretted her skin; her feet had no covering but that of shoes open at the toes, that they might expose them to the cold of a brick floor; a couch of bare planks was her bed, and an unfurnished cell her dwelling. Disease soon filled her conscience with fears; and I had often to endure the torture of witnessing her agonies at the confessional. I left her, when I quitted Spain, dying much too slowly for her only chance of relief. I wept bitterly for her loss two years after; yet I could not be so cruel as to wish her alive.”\*

In his “Life,” he gives his sentiments on the subject fully.†

“Of all the victims of the Church of Rome, the Nuns deserve the greatest sympathy. The early age of fifteen, at which they are allowed to sacrifice their liberty; the inflexible cruelty with which they are forced to keep their

\* Practical and Internal Evidence, p. 144.

† Vol. i. 67.

vows during life ; the direct tendency of their confinement and mode of living to produce lingering disease, and, not unfrequently derangement, are acts which must excite compassion in the heart of every one whom bigotry and superstition have not hardened. These poor prisoners, in the dull monotony of their lives, in the agitated state of a soul troubled with all the fears of a morbid conscience—perhaps with the remorse of such guilt as can only increase their despair—have no one to whom they may confide, their sorrows but the priest, whom they choose as their Confessor. Yet even this poor consolation is often rather nominal than real. Old priests generally grow indifferent to the anxiety of this kind of *penitents* (such is the correlate name to that of *confessor*), and treat them harshly. Sentimental fools (a class, if not numerous, never extinct) increase the existing malady, and expose themselves and their spiritual charge to very serious dangers. When therefore a sensible woman, thus confined for life, meets with a priest who, being on his guard against even the remotest risk of a hopeless, and in these circumstances dishonourable affection, proves his real interest by listening patiently, and establishes his authority by deciding promptly and confidently, she cannot but look upon him as the last support of her wrecked happiness, or rather as the last help against complete misery. In all cases whatever, a confessor who does not torment the poor prisoners must become their dearest friend, as being the only person to whom they can freely communicate their sorrows. Hence the eagerness with which such Nuns as had not engaged themselves to a confessor ; such as death, absence,

or some other accident has deprived of a spiritual director whom they liked; and lastly, such as deprived of other means of change and novelty, seek for those gratifications in the Confessional, beset every member of the clergy who, enjoying some reputation for learning, does not decline that employment.

“It might be supposed, from the value which the Church of Rome sets on the female part of the religious orders, that public opinion, at least among the truly *believing* Romanists, would regard the Directors of those holy recluses as men entitled to the highest praise for their pains. But this is not the case—Nuns are at once sacred and ludicrous objects in the eyes of the public.”

“The IDEA of a Nunnery, (as Coleridge in his Platonic language would call it,) is most exalted, pure and poetical—in a sermon, or a work on Divinity. The *real* nunnery is a bye-word for weakness of intellect, fretfulness, childishness. In short, NUN is the superlative of *old woman*. A secret sense of ridicule lurked therefore under the zeal with which I accepted the charge of directing the consciences of a few Nuns, chiefly recommended to me by Arjona\* and my good mother. Some of them were women of superior good sense, and models of that fortitude which, having to contend with evils unknown to all but the sufferer, is never supported by the admiration or sympathies of others. One of these excellent persons seemed so much to depend for mental relief on my assistance, that, for a considerable time after my religious belief

\* His own confessor and friend.

had totally deserted me, I could not prevail on myself to leave her. The continuance of her esteem to me, in spite of a long absence from Seville, during my residence at Madrid; in spite of my declining to resume the charge of directing her, when I returned from that capital, and of my final removal from Spain—deserves this acknowledgment of my respect at this distance of time. My love of truth, however, and the importance of recording facts which bear on the character of Institutions which I deem most pernicious, demand a brief, yet explicit declaration of my acquaintance with minds of quite an opposite stamp, among the inhabitants of the Nunneries. I have, in the course of my life, come in contact with characters of all descriptions; I have seen the human mind at various stages of elevation and debasement; but *souls* more polluted than those of some of the professed vestals of the Church of Rome, never fell within my observation. It is but justice to add, that the undisguised disclosure of this melancholy state made to me by the wretched victims, convinced me that their moral condition would have been much superior, had not the tyranny of their Church been relentless. I say this much, under the fear of alarming delicacy; but as the policy of Rome reckons on those very feelings of delicacy as a security against the publication of facts which would raise a formidable cry of indignation in countries not completely under the Pope's authority, I feel bound to bear witness in this manner to the terrible results to which that Church shows itself utterly indifferent." \*

\* In a note on this passage Mr. White refers his readers to the

In the notes to the "Practical Evidence," Blanco White relates, on his own authority, another case which also deserves notice.

"The eldest daughter of a family, intimately acquainted with mine, was brought up in the convent of St. Agnes at Seville, under the care of her mother's sister, the abbess of that female community. The circumstances of the whole transaction were so public at Seville, and the subsequent judicial proceedings have given them such notoriety, that I do not feel bound to conceal names. *Maria Francisca Barreiro*, the unfortunate subject of this account, grew up, a lively and interesting girl, in the convent; while a younger sister enjoyed the advantages of an education at home. The mother formed an early design of devoting her eldest daughter to religion, in order to give to her less attractive favourite a better chance of getting a husband. The distant and harsh manner with which she constantly treated *Maria Francisca*, attached the unhappy girl to her aunt by the ties of the most ardent affection. The time, however, arrived when it was necessary that she should either leave her, and endure the consequences of her mother's aversion at home, or take the vows, and thus close the gates of the convent upon herself for ever. She preferred the latter course; and came out to pay the last visit to her friends. I met her almost daily, at the house of one of her relations; where her words and manner soon convinced me that she was a victim of her mother's designing and unfeeling disposition. The father was an excellent man, and was in Life of Scipio de Ricci, as the only way of explaining to what he alludes.

awe of the monks ; who, as usual, were extremely anxious to increase the number of their female prisoners. Though I was aware of the danger which a man incurs in Spain, who tries to dissuade a young woman from being a nun, humanity impelled me to speak seriously to the father, entreating him not to expose a beloved child to spend her life in hopeless regret for lost liberty. He was greatly moved by my reasons ; but the impression I made was soon obliterated. The day for Maria Francisca's taking the veil was at length fixed ; and though I had a most pressing invitation to be present at the ceremony, I determined not to see the wretched victim at the altar. On the preceding day, I was called from my stall at the Royal Chapel, to the confessional. A lady, quite covered by her black veil, was kneeling at the grate through which females speak to the confessor. As soon as I took my seat, the well-known voice of Maria Francisca made me start with surprise. Bathed in tears, and scarcely able to speak without betraying her state to the people who knelt near the confessional-box, by the sobs which interrupted her words ; she told me she wished only to unburden her heart to me, before she shut up herself for life. Assistance, she assured me, she would not receive ; but rather than live with her mother, and endure the obloquy to which her swerving from her announced determination would expose her, she ' would risk the salvation of her soul.' All my remonstrances were in vain. I offered to obtain the protection of the archbishop, and thereby to extricate her from the difficulties in which she was involved. She declined my offer, and appeared as resolute as she was

wretched. The next morning she took the veil ; and professed at the end of the following year. Her good aunt died soon after ; and the nuns, who had allured her into the convent by their caresses, when they perceived that she was not able to disguise her misery, and feared that the existence of a reluctant nun might by her means transpire, became her daily tormentors.

“ After an absence of three years from Seville, I found that Maria Francisca had openly declared her aversion to a state, from which nothing but death could save her. She often changed her confessors, expecting comfort from their advice. At last she found a friend in one of the companions of my youth ; a man whose benevolence surpasses even the bright genius with which nature has gifted him : though neither has been able to exempt him from the evils to which Spaniards seem to be fated in proportion to their worth. He became her confessor, and in that capacity spoke to her daily. But what could he do against the inflexible tyranny in whose grasp she languished !

“ About this time the approach of Napoleon’s army threw the town into a general consternation, and the convents were opened to such of the nuns as wished to fly. Maria Francisca, whose parents were absent, put herself under the protection of a young prebendary of the Cathedral, and by his means reached Cadiz, where I saw her, on my way to England. I shall never forget the anguish with which, after a long conversation, wherein she disclosed to me the whole extent of her wretchedness, she exclaimed, *There is no hope for me !* and fell into convulsions.



“ The liberty of Spain from the French invaders was the signal for the fresh confinement of this helpless young woman in her former prison. Here she attempted to put an end to her sufferings, by throwing herself into a deep well ; but was taken out alive. Her mother was now dead, and her friends instituted a suit of *nullity of profession*, before the ecclesiastical court. But the laws of the Council of Trent were positive ; and she was cast in the trial. Her despair, however, exhausted the little strength which her protracted sufferings had left her, and the unhappy Maria Franeisca died soon after, having scarcely reached her twenty-fifth year.” \*

We need make no comment on the above evidence, from the pen of a witness who appears with a certificate of character from the Rev. John Henry Newman, D.D. !

\* Practical and Internal Evidence, p. 285.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### CONCLUSION.

IN the foregoing pages, evidence of the most unquestionable authority has been adduced, as to the character of Nunneries in various ages and various places. We are far, very far, from asserting that all Nunneries have always been, or now are, the abodes of profligacy and irregularity. We neither think it nor mean to assert it. We believe that Protestantism and the free circulation of the Bible in England has so raised the general tone of morality, that any such systematic violation of decorum as we have heard of in former days even in England, and in other countries in much later and even in present times, could not at all be endured. We have no evidence whatever, whereupon to insinuate any direct charges of immorality or impropriety against the existing monastic institutions in England or Ireland, open as they are to all the evils which inevitably follow in the train of constrained celibacy, with the additional dangers of the confessional, and of the indecent books which are put by the priests into the hands of young females—such as “The Garden of the Soul,” and others. And in other lands doubtless there are numberless hon-

Now, if the law holds personal liberty so sacred that even in the case of Lunatics whose detention it sanctions, it guards so watchfully and carefully against abuse—surely *a fortiori* in a case where the legality of the detention is not so recognized—where, if it be enforced by coercive measures against the will of the parties, the persons so enforcing it would be amenable to the laws of the land and liable to severe punishment—surely in such a case the Magistrate has a right to know that the laws are not violated.

Again, the law of the land holds, as one of the most sacred ties, the marriage bond. The woman is merged in her husband ; she ceases to exist in law, and no act of hers in common law is valid ; her receipt for money is but waste paper, and for her debts her husband is as liable as though he had himself contracted them. In all respects the law looks upon the wife as bone of the husband's bone, flesh of his flesh.

Yet even here there are cases where the law interferes to ensure justice. The interests of others may be involved in the acts of the woman, and it may become necessary to ascertain that she is acting of her own free will, and not at the dictation of her husband ; and the law considers that this can only be done by questioning her *apart from her husband*. And, consequently, provision has been made for cases when an officer duly appointed must step between even the sacred rights of a husband, and must question the woman, and see that she executes the deed required apart from her husband.

The practice of the Court of Chancery may be stated as

follows, in cases where the woman's own property is concerned, and this practice has existed from immemorial time.

All a woman's unsettled property becomes at her marriage the absolute property of her husband. Nevertheless, where a married woman is entitled to property over which the Court of Chancery has control, the husband will not be allowed to touch it, except with the consent of his wife, which consent is evidenced, not only by her presenting a petition to the court, requesting an order for payment of the money to her husband, but also by her *verbal* consent given to the judge, who questions her in court, *apart from her husband*, as to whether she properly understands what she is about, and is acting of her own free will.

This ancient practice has been confirmed by modern legislation. Thus in the 3 and 4 Will. IV. cap. LXXIV, entitled, "An Act for the abolition of fines and recoveries, and for the substitution of some simpler modes of assurance," 28th August, 1833, we have the following clauses.

"LXXX. And be it further enacted, that such Judge, Master in Chancery, or Commissioners as aforesaid, before he or they shall receive the acknowledgment by any married woman of any deed by which any disposition, release, surrender, or extinguishment shall be made by her under this act, shall examine her, APART FROM HER HUSBAND, touching her knowledge of such deed, and shall ascertain whether she freely and voluntarily consents to such deed; and unless she freely and voluntarily consent to such deed shall not permit her to acknowledge the same; &c.

ourable exceptions, and in some countries at least the tainted dwellings may be few.

We wish to be very explicit in stating what we do not lay to the charge of Nunneries *generally*, because we have some points in which we have solemn and grave charges to bring against them all—and of a nature to demand the interference of the Legislature.

The Church of Rome stands guilty, and glories in the crime, of binding down young and inexperienced girls by a vow which can never be shaken off, to a life which they may find, when their woman's nature develops itself, they are unfit for.

The Church of Rome professedly and avowedly uses—in addition to the awful spiritual weapons which she holds in her hand—in addition to the power of shame and ignominy which she flings upon the poor girl, who after noviciate would return to the world,—in addition to all these, she uses bolts and bars, and lofty walls, and all the arrangements of a prison.

We demand to know who these prisoners are? We demand that they should have the liberty of telling us whether they are immured by their own free-will, or whether they desire to exercise their privilege of free-born British subjects, whom no fetter, moral or physical, can bind down to slavery.

We deny all desire to interfere with their free choice; but we demand to know what that free choice is.

If a Nun desires to marry, we demand that she should have the protection of the laws of the land, and by these laws her marriage would be as lawful, and as valid, as that of any other Englishwoman.

But in making these demands—which the British public has a right to make on behalf of the helpless and oppressed—we must not overstep any bounds. We must not infringe civil or religious liberty, while seeking to maintain it; and while never shrinking from our name of Protestants—in itself an offence to our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, for it is their errors against which we protest—we must avoid every appearance of wanton offence or slight. We may warn them, we may entreat them, with all earnestness of soul—as men who have ourselves found the preciousness of a free and full pardon in the blood of Christ, freely shed for us. We may warn them of the danger of resting on their own works—we may entreat them to flee from the wrath to come—but we may not—we would not insult them—nor say nor do aught that would unnecessarily pain or wound them.

This respect to the rights of conscience should especially characterize our legislation, and if we are obliged to seek our precedents in the acts passed for the regulation of Lunatic Asylums, it is simply because there is no other Institution in the land that resembles them.

In Lunatic Asylums persons are detained against their own will, and the law allows it for their own good; but careful means are provided to ascertain that no person has been placed there from improper motives, and that none who ought to leave them are detained at all.

The public are necessarily excluded from such establishments—an additional reason, why duly-qualified officers should have the right of admission to see that all be conducted lawfully and fairly.

Now, if the law holds personal liberty so sacred that even in the case of Lunatics whose detention it sanctions, it guards so watchfully and carefully against abuse—surely *a fortiori* in a case where the legality of the detention is not so recognized—where, if it be enforced by coercive measures against the will of the parties, the persons so enforcing it would be amenable to the laws of the land and liable to severe punishment—surely in such a case the Magistrate has a right to know that the laws are not violated.

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The practice of the Court of Chancery may be stated as

all the inmates, giving both their real names and surnames, as well as the conventual name, or name in religion, by which the individual is known in the sisterhood.

3. Certain officers of high respectability should be charged, by the Lord Chancellor, with the duty of visiting all such houses within the district, who should have the right of examining the register, and seeing every individual in the house.

4. These visits should take place at least four times in the year, and without previous notice; and the Nuns should be questioned, *apart from the Abbess*, Lady Superior, or other elder Nuns,—and, above all—from the Priest or Confessor, as to whether she remains within their walls of her own free will.

It should be the duty of these visitors to state to each Nun, that if it is her desire to quit the nunnery she can do so at that moment; and it should be the duty of the visitors further to see that the person so wishing to quit the Nunnery should be placed, either under the care of her natural guardian or friend, or under the protection of some discreet and respectable married female, until an order could be obtained from the Court of Chancery.

Some provisions such as the above are imperatively necessary. The Act of Will. IV. 3rd and 4th, Cap. lxxiv. and the Act of Victoria, cap. C. for the regulation of the care and treatment of lunatics, afford abundant precedents for the character of the legislation required. The details would need careful consideration.

We trust that many sessions will not elapse ere a Bill for the protection of females under religious vows, will become the **LAW OF THE LAND.**



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While the last sheet of this book was going through the press, a pamphlet has made its appearance, from which we must make an extract. Some of the facts are not new to us—they formed the substance of a petition which the author of the said pamphlet presented to the House of Commons during the Session of 1851,—but in that form they were not available, without incurring risk of legal consequences ; as to have reprinted the petition might have involved a question of privilege.

The Rev. Pierce Connelly, M.A., was formerly a clergyman in the Episcopal Church of the United States, and Rector of Trinity, Natches. It appears that more than fifteen years ago he became a Roman Catholic ; the Earl of Shrewsbury stood sponsor for him on entering the church of Rome, and he became his Lordship's domestic chaplain. He has now renounced the communion of Rome, and with propriety addresses to the Earl of Shrewsbury his "Reasons for abjuring allegiance to the See of Rome."

Mr. Connelly says ; " I know this same church of Rome, in its petty schemes of anarchy in families, more hateful and more devilish than when it deals with nations.

" I have seen priests and bishops of the church of Rome, their own convictions disregarded, and all responsibility to God and to society thrown off, in the instinct of hostility to man's natural relationships, (in spite too, in one instance, of the private commands of the Pope himself,) I have seen them band together, for the mere sake of a legacy or a

life interest, to break down laws which are looked upon, even by savages, as the most sacred of all, divine or human.

“ I have known a husband taught to deal double in the sacred matter of religion with his high-born wife, a brother with his own high-born sisters, wives with their husbands, and daughters without number with their trusting parents.

“ I have known, in Derbyshire, a young lady, not eighteen years of age, the daughter of a widowed mother, the mother also a Roman Catholic, seduced into a convent under false pretences, kept there in spite of every effort of her family, with the approbation of the Papal authorities, and only delivered by my own public threat, as a priest, of application to the civil power and consequent fear of scandal.

“ I have seen clerical inviolability made to mean nothing less than licence and impunity, I have read to the pure and simple-minded Cardinal-Prefect of the Propaganda a narrative, written to a pious lay-friend by a respected Roman priest, of such enormities of lust in his fellow-priests around him, that the reading of them took away my breath,—to be answered, ‘ *Caro mio*, I know it, I know it all, and more, and worse than all; but nothing can be done!’

“ I have known a priest (here in England) practice Liguori on his clientele simply as an amateur of wickedness, apparently without conscious malice, just as he would *try* poison upon dogs or cats; an Iago without even an imaginary wrong from any body. I have known this creature get up, and very successfully, a miracle,—(I have

P

proof in his own handwriting,) at the very moment when, as a brother priest satisfied me, he was experimenting in seduction. But nothing could be done!

“ I have known a priest received and honoured at a prince-bishop’s table, when the host knew him to have just seduced a member of his own family. But nothing could be done!

“ I have been mocked by dean and bishop, for denouncing a young priest, in whose bed-room,—and before there had been time for him to dress himself,—in broad day, in England, under a convent-roof, I had myself found a young Nun, apparently as much at home as her confessor was himself.

“ I have been forced to let pass, without even ecclesiastical rebuke, a priest’s attempt upon the chastity of my own wife, the mother of my children, and to find instead only sure means taken to prevent the communication to me of any similar attempt in future!!

“ This is a part of what has come within my own experience. But it is not yet the worst of that sad experience.

“ I have seen priests of mean abilities, of coarse natures, and gross breeding, practice upon pure and highly-gifted women of the upper ranks, married and unmarried, the teaching of their treacherous and impure casuistry, with a success that seemed more than human.

“ I have seen these priests impose their pretendedly divine authority, and sustain it by mock miracles, for ends that were simply devilish.

“ I have had poured into my ears what can never be

uttered, and what ought not to be believed, but was only too plainly true.

“ And I have seen that all that is most deplorable is not an accident, but a result, and an inevitable result, and a *confessedly* inevitable result of the working of the practical system of the church of Rome, with all its stupendous machinery of mischief.

“ And the system is irrevocable and irremediable !! ”

*Letter to the Earl of Shrewsbury, by Pierce Connelly, M. A., formerly Rector of Trinity, Natchez.* 8vo. Hatchards, London. 1852.



## APPENDIX.

A.—Page 68.

*Pagelle di Confessore.*

[The blanks are filled up by manuscript, which we represent by the type called *Script* or *Roude*.]

AGNELLUS JOSEPH D'AURIA,  
SACRÆ THEOLOGIÆ DOCTOR,  
DEI ET APOSTOLICÆ SEDIS GRATIA,  
EPISCOPUS NUCERIÆ PAGANORUM.\*

Dilecto Nobis in Christo R. P. F. \* \* \* \* \*

S. Theologiæ Magistro, Ordinis Prædicatorum  
Salutem et benedictionem a Domino sempiternam Tibi,  
qui super vita, et moribus testimonium habes bonum,  
quemque idoneum examine prævio reperimus, ut in  
Ecclesiis omnibus hujus nostræ Nucerinæ Civitatis,  
et Dioecesis utriusq. sexus Christifidelium (exceptis  
Monialibus, aliisque in earum Clausura, seu in Con-  
servatoriis degentibus) Sacramentales Confessiones ex-

\* *Hodie* Nocera de Pagani or delle paglie.

cipere, et Pœnitentibus absolutionis beneficium impendere possis, et valeas, præterquam a Casibus, et Censuris Sedi Apostolicæ, aut Nobis, aut a Nobis reservatis, injuncta eisdem pro modo culpæ pœnitentia salutari, licentiam facimus, et facultatem ad ~~audiam~~ et interim ad nostrum beneplacitum ducaturam concedimus, et impertimur. Præcipientes Tibi ut Mulierum confessiones, si ægrotent, non auscultes, nisi aperto ostio, ita ut conspici, non autem audiri valeas: Mulieres vero sanas in Ecclesia dumtaxat ex cratibus Sedis Confessionalis, non ante solis ortum, nec post ejus occasum regulariter audias. Ut a rudioribus, de quibus prudenter dubitare possis, an fidei Articulos, an Decalogi, et Ecclesiæ præcepta calleant, an denique Doctrinam Christianam ediscere satagant, diligenter exquiras: illarumque ignaros absolvere non præsumas, juxta Litteras encyclicas a summo Pontifice Benedicto PP. XIV. die 26 Julii 1754 expeditas. Animadvertas tamen oportet, calumniantes innoxios Confessarios, eosque falso per se, vel per alios sollicitationis insimulantes, extra Mortis articulum, absolvi non posse, nisi a Romano Pontifice; neque Confessarium si, quod Deus avertat, peccata inhonesta contra VI. Decalogi præceptum committere non formidaverit, complicem sui Criminis absolvere posse,\* quum ei omnem in hoc casu

\* This caution—this statement, thus occurs in this regular printed faculty which is given to every confessor, old and young; whether untainted, and in one sense innocent, or hardened in sin! We need scarcely add, that the 6th commandment means the 7th.

ademerit facultatem idem immortalis memoriæ Benedictus PP. XIV. in sua Constitutione, quæ incipit—*Sacramentum Pœnitentiæ*, anno 1741 promulgata. Te denique in Domino enixe hortamur, ut qua decet modestia, et Conscientiæ puritate, atque animarum salutis desiderio flagrans ad tantum Sacramentum dispensandum accedas, et quæ pro recta, ac salubri illius administratione per Apostolicas Constitutiones, (præsertim per Bullam fel. rec. Gregorii XV, cujus initium *Universi Dominici gregis*, anno 1622 contra sollicitantes edita, quam Tibi intimamus, juxta declarationes prælaudati Benedicti XIV. in præfata sua Constitutione) vel a Nobis, nostrisque Prædecessoribus sancita fuerunt, attente legas, accurate observes et sedulo exsequaris. Dædum Nuceriæ Paganorum ex Episcopali Palatio die xx Mensis Aprilis Anni 1836. Quoad casus etiam a Nobis in utraque tabella reservatos ad annum pariter facultatem tribuimus.

A. J. Episcopus Nuceriæ Paganorum.

Joseph Marino, Sec.

Reg. fol. 26. No. 170.

*Gratis omnia.*

*Casus sub excommunicationis censura ipso facto incurrenda Nucertino Episcopo reservati.*

I. Omnes utriusque sexus personæ, quæ per se augustissimo altaris Sacramento, aut sacri chrysmatis, aut infirmorum, vel chatecumenorum oleo, aut Sanctorum



reliquiis legitime recognitis ad veneficia, aut divinationes, vel sortilegia scienter abutuntur.

II. Omnes utriusque sexus personæ, quæ dæmoni spondent obsequium, thus et sacrificia offerunt. Item venefici et veneficæ omnes, Negromantes, Divinatores, Sortilegi, Lamiaë, ac Striges ex utroque sexu, qui cum expressa dæmonis invocatione ad captandam dilectionem, vel odium concitandum, sive ad inveniendos thesauros utantur incantationibus, aliisque maleficiis, sive etiam ligaturis, ut a naturali legitimoque matrimonii usu conjuges avertant.

III. Confessarii omnes, etiam Parochi ad inhonesta personam quamcumque sive in actu confessionis, sive ante, sive post immediate sollicitantes, aut quomodolibet cum iisdem impudice tractantes. Respectu Regularium vero censuram suspensionis ab audiendis confessionibus, quam ipso facto incurrunt, nobis tantummodo reservamus.

IV. Patrantes homicidium, aut mutilationem membrorum in Ecclesia, ubi SS. Eucharistiæ Sacramentum adservatur, et etiam in publicis Oratoriis, ac Capellis, dummodo ibidem actu sacrosanctum Missæ sacrificium celebretur.

V. Conficientes cujuscumque generis venena in hominum perniciem, et etiam eadem scienter dantes, apponentes ac propinantes; mortis tamen aut gravis morbi effectum secuto.

*Casus absque censura eidem Ordinario reservati.*

I. Sponsi ac sponsæ post sponsalia inter se se publice, id est coram Parocho et testibus contracta et ante

matrimonium legitime celebratum carnalem inter se copulam habentes.

II. Loquentes sine nostra, vel nostri Vicarij Generalis licentia cum Monialibus in Monasteriis, etiam exemptis, vel cum aliqua, vel aliquibus earum, etiamsi sit Conversa aut Novitia, sive educationis, sive alterius rei causa ibidem commoretur, conjunctis in primo vel secundo consanguinitatis gradu duntaxat exceptis. Declarantes, quod qui facultatem obtinuerit loquendi cum aliqua prædictarum, non possit data opera, et ex professo cum aliis loqui. Item loquentes cum aliqua vel aliquibus in nostræ Dioecesis Conservatoriis degentibus ac commorantibus, si tamen fiat sermo de rebus amatorijs, turpibus et obscœnis.

III. Committentes incestum cum conjunctis in primo vel secundo gradu consanguinitatis, aut affinitatis.

IV. Blasphemantes Deum, vel Beatam Virginem ex perversa consuetudine coram pluribus supra quatuor.

V. Exercentes nefandum sodomiæ peccatum, vel cum brutis coeuntes; ita tamen ut in his luxuriæ casibus tantum masculi comprehendantur.

VI. Non absolvantur concubinarij et concubinæ etiamsi excommunicationis sententia in eos lata non fuerit, nisi facta reali separatione thori et domus per duos menses se continuerint; vel nisi certo vel valde probabiliter constet factos physice vel moraliter impotentes ad reïncidendum; aut paullo post esse inter se matrimonium contrãcturos.

VII. Incendiarij domorum tuguriorum, aut frugum scienter, atque ex prava voluntate.

## N. 2.

NOS. D. GABRIEL MARIA GRAVINA.

*Ordinis S. Benedicti Congregationis Cassinensis, ex Principibus Montisvagi, Ducibus S. Michaelis, Magnantibus Hispaniarum primæ classis, Eques R. O. S. Januarii, Magnus Prior Eques Torquatus Magnæ Crucis R. O. Constantiniani, Eques Magnæ Crucis R. O. Francisci I, Caroli III, et Leopoldi II, Archiepiscopus Melitenensis, Serenissimi Regis Ferdinandi II. in Regno utriusque Siciliæ Capellanus Major, Ordinarius Prælatulus Aulicus, etc, etc.*

Tibi dilecto nobis in Christo Reverend. Pat. Mag.  
 \* \* \* \* \* Ordini. Prædicat. ad audiendas  
 Sacramentales Confessiones prævio examine per nos approbato idoneoque reperto, ut Sacramentum Penitentiae omnibus Christifidelibus utriusque sexus, si trigesimum sextum annum ætatis suæ expleverit, alias pro vizis tantum, rite ministrare valeas, et pœnitentes absolvere a quibusvis peccatis quantumvis gravibus, *exceptis casibus Nobis et a Nobis reservatis*; necnon sacrosanctum Missæ Sacrificium in omnibus Cappellis et Ecclesiis Nostræ jurisdictioni subjectis celebrare, facultatem ad annum in omnibus Ecclesiis nostræ jurisdictionis excepta Palatina Neapolis intereaque arbitrio nostro duraturam, concedimus, et vigore Constitutionis SS. in Christo Patris Benedicti XIV, cujus initium *Convenit* datæ pridie non. Junii 1741, subdelegamus: Teque in Domino hortamur, ut

mundo corde ad Pœnitentiæ Tribunal accedas ; ne Fide-  
 lium confessiones extra Ecclesiam excipias : ne muli-  
 erum ægrotantium confessiones audias nisi aperto ostio,  
 ita ut conspici, non tamen audiri possis ; non ægrotan-  
 tium vero confessiones non excipias extra sedem confes-  
 sionalem, transenna, vel crate sparsis foraminibus pates-  
 cente non interposita, vel extra Ecclesiam ; ut post  
 auditam infirmorum confessiones ad quos fueris accitus,  
 statim notum id facias proprio infirmi Parocho : ne a  
 Casibus vel Censuris reservatis absolvas nisi in foro con-  
 scientiæ, audita sacramentali confessione, et prout tibi  
 specificè concessum fuerit : acceptaque potestate in ani-  
 marum ædificationem, non in destructionem utaris : nam  
 lex Domini est animam pro anima reddere : servesque  
 Edictum a Prædecessore nostro editum de vita, et ho-  
 nestate Clericorum, præsertim in habitu talari semper  
 gestando.

Datum Neapoli ex sedibus nostræ residentiæ die  
 30. Augusti 1838.

G. Archiepis. Meliteneu C. M.  
 Januarius Rozundo Cancel.

Prorogatur ad alium annum, et interim ad  
 alium annum. Datum Neapoli. Die 4. 7bris  
 1839 Pts M. Caruso Req. A. S.

Then follow tables of *Casus Reservati*, differing some-  
 what from those already given.

## B.—Page 140.

*St. Thomas Aquinas. Secunda Secundæ, Quæst. CLXXXVI. art. 9.*

1. (Argument to prove that a Religious violating the three primary articles of his rule—poverty, chastity, and obedience—sins mortally.)

Sed contra est. Quod status religionis est securior quam status sæcularis vitæ. . . . . sed si quælibet transgressio eorum quæ in regula continentur, religiosum obligaret ad peccatum mortale, status religiosus esset periculosissimus propter multitudinem observantiarum. Non ergo quælibet transgressio eorum quæ in regula continentur, est peccatum mortale.

Further on.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod ille qui profitetur regulam, non vovet servare omnia, quæ sunt in regula, sed vovet regularem vitam, quæ essentialitèr consistit in tribus prædictis (scilicet paupertate, continentia et obedientia). Unde et in quibusdam religionibus cautius aliquis profitentur non quidem regulam sed vivere secundum regulam, id est tendere ad hoc, ut aliquis mores suos informet secundum regulam, sicut secundum quoddam exemplar et hoc tollitur per contemptum. In quibusdam autem religionibus adhuc cautius profitentur obedientiam secundum regulam, ita, quod professioni non contrariatur, nisi id, quod est contra præceptum regulæ: trans-

gressio vero, vel omissio aliorum obligat solum ad peccatum veniale; quia sicut dictum est, hujusmodi dispositiones sunt ad principalia vota. Peccatum autem veniale est dispositio ad mortale, ut supra dictum est, inquantum impedit ea, quibus aliquis disponitur ad observanda principalia præcepta legis Christi, quæ sunt præcepta charitatis. In aliqua tamen religione, scilicet ordinis fratrum Prædicatorum,\* transgressio talis, vel omissio ex suo genere *non obligat ad culpam neque mortalem neque venialem, sed solum ad PÆNAM TAXATAM sustinendam*: quia per hunc modum ad talia observanda obligantur, qui tamen possent venialiter, vel mortaliter peccare ex negligentia, *vel libidine*, seu contemptu!!!

. . . . .

Ad tertium dicendum, quod tunc committit aliquis, vel transgreditur ex contemptu, quando voluntas ejus renuit subjici ordinationi legis vel regulæ: et ex hoc procedit ad faciendum contra legem, vel regulam. Quando autem e converso propter aliquam particularem causam (puta concupiscentiam vel iram) inducitur ad aliquid faciendum contra statuta legis, vel regulæ, non peccat ex contemptu, sed ex aliqua alia causa, etiamsi frequenter ex eadem causa, vel alia, simile peccatum iteret. Sicut et Augustinus dicit in libro de natura et gratia, quod *non omnia peccata committuntur ex contemptu superbiæ*. Frequentia tamen peccati dispositione inducit ad contemptum, secundum illud Proverbiúm 18. *Impius, cum in profundum venerit peccatorum, contemnit*.

\* The Dominican Order, who swear by St. Thomas Aquinas.

C.—Page 153.

(*Henry VII.* 5. A. D. 1489.)

*Innocentii VIII., bulla pro reformatione Monasteriorum et locorum exemptorum.\** Ex reg. Morton fol 21., a.

Innocentius Episcopus, servus servorum Dei, venerabili Fratri Archiepiscopo Cantuar, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Quanta in Dei ecclesia ad salutem animarum Christi fidelium personæ religiosæ vita exemplari et honestis operibus afferant incrementa in tutum, tanta eisdem inferunt detrimenta salutis, si a recto tramite deviantes, per incontinentiam et vitam laxiorem ad illicita dilabuntur; quo fit ut diligens et curiosum reformationis ministerium in talibus opportunum esse noscatur, ne per vitiorum atque excessuum tolerantiam, hostis antiqui operante versutia, majores errores et scandala cum inemendabili jactura exinde valeant verisimiliter exoriri. Nuper siquidem ad audientiam nostram, non sine magna animi nostri displicentia et mentis amaritudine, nonnullorum fide dignorum relatione pervenit quod licet retroactis temporibus nonnulla monasteria et alia religiosa loca Cluniacen. Cistercien. et Præmonstraten. ac aliorum ordinum diversorum in regno Angliæ, per claræ memoriæ dicti regni regis, qui pro tempore fuerunt

\* Wilkin's Concilia, iii. 630.

aliosque nobiles et incolas regni prædicti, ex eorum pia ad dictos ordines devotione, de propriis eorum bonis, ut in illis vigeret vera religio et nomen altissimi ad cuius gloriam et honorem instituta fuerant, debite laudaretur, fundata et dotata fuerent, ac post hujuscemodi foundationes in aliquibus eorum a monachis cæterisque religiosis in illis degentibus, observantia fuerit aliquandiu servata; tamen a nonnullis temporibus citra, a dilectis filiis abbatibus ac monachis cæterisque religiosis monasteriorum et locorum ordinum prædictorum, in tuis civitate et dioecesi ac provincia Cantuarien. consistentium, paulatim vivendi modum et normam relaxantibus, ac suavi contemplationis jugo seposito, in eis regularis observantia tepuit, et non modo pristina vivendi norma relicta fuit, sed etiam, quod dolenter referimus, in quibusdam ex eis illorum personæ se in reprobum sensum dantes, Dei timore postposito, vitam lascivam ducunt et nimium dissolutam, in animarum suarum perniciem, divinæ majestatis offensam, religionis opprobrium, malumque exemplum et scandalum plurimorum, unde correctionis et reformationis officio plurimum indigere noscuntur: nos igitur, quibus ex curæ pastoralis officio incumbit prava destruere et honesta plantare, ac totis viribus prospicere, ne per defectum severitatis opportunæ scandala concitentur, ad reformationem Monasteriorum et locorum prædictorum, instante etiam super hoc charissimo in Christo filio nostro Henrico septimo, moderno ejusdem regni rege illustri, paternis et sollicitis studiis intendentes, ac sperantes ea, quæ tibi in hac parte duxerimus committenda, fideliter et prudenter ac secundum Deum et conscientiam, per



te, vel alias idoneas et fideles personas exequeris ; fraternitati tuæ per apostolica scripta committimus et mandamus, quatenus omnes et singulos superiores monasteriorum et locorum prædictorum in tuis civitate et dioecesi et provincia præfatis consistentium, videlicet generales, aut præsidentes, vel patres, abbates, ubicunque consistentes, ut infra certum competentem terminum per te eis præfigendum, monasteria et loca prædicta visitare, seu per alios ditorum ordinum religiosos ad id idoneos et Deum timentes visitari facere, et tam in capitibus, quam in membris, ac spiritualibus ac temporalibus reformare, et ad veram normam et regulam ordinum prædictorum, juxta illorum laudabilia ordinationes et instituta, omni exceptione et dilatione cessantibus, reducere : ubi vero superiores non fuerint, abbates, priores, et alios prælatos monasteriorum et locorum prædictorum, ut infra dictum terminum circa hujuscemodi reformationem cum effectu intendere, seque ipsos reformare, et alia præmissa facere omnino debeant, atque procurent auctoritate nostra moneas eisque mandes ; quod si facere contempserint, quod non credimus ; tu ad omnia et singula monasteria, et loca religiosa prædicta in civitate et dioecesi ac provincia tuis præfatis constituta, personaliter accedens, et solum Deum præ oculis habens, illa et eorum singula tam in capitibus, quam membris, ac spiritualibus et temporalibus totiens quotiens tibi opportunum visum fuerit, eadem auctoritate visites, aut aliis occupatus, per alios idoneos, quos ad id duxeris eligendos, visitari facias, ac omnia et singula, quæ in illis tam in capitibus, quam membris ac spiritualibus et temporalibus eisdem reformationis et

correctionis ministerio indigere reperirentur, prout tibi et a te deputandis secundum Deum, et canonicas sanctiones ac regularia dictorum ordinum instituta expedire videbitur, reformare, corrigere, et emendare dicta auctoritate procures. Nos enim, ut per dictam reformationem tuam seu deputatorum tuorum præfata monasteria et loca, excussis quæ illorum offuscabant decentiam, in melius reformari valeant, ac in eisdem divinus cultus et observantia regularis more pristino valeant, vigeant, et suscipiant incrementum, ac personæ in illis degentes merito religiosæ et Deo serventes dici possint; tibi omnia et singula monasteria et loca prædicta, eorumque præsidentes ac personas, tam exemptas quam non exemptas, per te, vel alios, ut supra, visitandi, illaque tam in capitibus, quam in membris ac spiritualibus et temporalibus reformandi, ac de statu monasteriorum et locorum eorundem vita quoque et moribus abbatum, priorum, prælatorum, necnon monachorum prædictorum studiose inquirendi, illosque, qui ex eis criminosi et desidiosi reperti fuerint, juxta regularia instituta suorum ordinum ac excessuum qualitatem et exigentiam, pœnis debitis absque judiciorum strepitu castigandi, puniendi, corrigendi, et etiam, si opus fuerit, ab eorum monasteriis et abbatialibus dignitatibus, prioratibus, beneficiis, administrationibus, et officiis, si eorum demerita exegerint, suspendendi, privandi, et ab illis realiter et cum effectu amovendi, necnon monasteria et loca prædicta ad observantiam seu vivendi modum justa statuta ordinis, de quibus tibi videbitur, reducendi, eisque dictam normam sive regulam et modum vivendi, dandi et exhibendi, ac alias personas regularem vitam

ducere volentes in monasteria et loca prædicta introducendi; incorrigibiles vero tanquam membra putrida a corpore congregationis, servato debito disciplinæ regularis, rescindendi, et a monasteriis et locis prædictis expellendi, ac omnia et singula, quæ juxta instituta et constitutiones summorum pontificum et decreta sanctorum patrum ad honorem Dei, religionis augmentum, animarum salutem, et exemplum Christi fidelium, ac alias circa felicem gubernationem et regimen monasteriorum, locorum et personarum eorundem necessaria seu quomodolibet opportuna videbuntur, gerendi, statuendi, faciendi, disponendi, et exequendi, ac contradictores quoslibet et rebelles, cujuscunque dignitatis, status, gradus, præeminentia, nobilitatis, vel conditionis fuerint, per excommunicationis suspensionis et interdicti, aliasque formidabiliores, de quibus tibi seu deputatis prædictis videbitur expediens, sententias, censuras, et pœnas cum censurarum et pœnarum prædictarum aggravatione et reaggravatione, quavis appellatione postposita, compescendi, et, si opus fuerit, brachium seculare invocandi, super quibus omnibus tuam et deputatorum prædictorum conscientiam oneramus; plenam, liberam, et omnimodam, auctoritate apostolica, et ex nostra certa scientia, tenore præsentium concedimus facultatem; non obstantibus apostolicis ac bonæ memoriæ Octonis et Octoboni, olim in dicto regno apostolicæ sedis legatorum, necnon provincialibus; etc; etc;

Dat. Romæ apud Sanctum Petrum anno Incarnationis  
Dominicæ MCCCC. LXXXIX pridie nonas Martiis,  
pontificatus nostri anno sexto.

## D.—Page 167.

*Archiepiscopi Cant. monitio Abbati Sancti Albani directa.*  
Ex. reg. Morton, fol. 22. 6.

JOHANNES, permissione divina Cantuariensis archiepiscopus, totius Angliæ primas, et apostolicæ sedis legatus, visitator, inquisitor, reformator, ac judex, &c. &c. Willielmo Abbati Monasterii sancti Albani ad Romanam ecclesiam, ut dicitur, nullo medio pertinentis, ordinis Sancti Benedicti Lincolnensis dioceseos, salutem.

(He then announces the receipt of the Bull of Pope Innocent VIII.)

Et quia fama publica referente, et multorum crebris fide dignorum relationibus ad nostrum pervenit auditum, quod tu Abbas antedictus a diu fuisti, et es de et super simonia, usura, bonorum, rerum, et possessionum dicti Monasterii dilapidatione et consumptione, nonnullisque aliis enormibus criminibus et excessibus intrascriptis notatus, diffamatus, ac in regimine curaque et administratione bonorum spiritualium et temporalium dicti Monasterii adeo remissus, negligens et prodigus. . . . .

\* \* \* \*

. . . non modico tamen tempore, quo tu eidem monasterio præfuiisti, te ac nonnullis ex commonachis et confratribus tuis ibidem, quorum sanguis tuam, ut timetur, ob

\* Wilkin's Concllia, iii. 632.

negligentiam per dstrictum iudicem de manu tua requiretur, religiose vivendi modum et normam relaxantibus, ac seposito suavi contemplationis jugo, regularis observantia, hospitalitas, eleemosynæ, aliaque pietatis officia ab olim inibi exerceri et ministrari solita, decreverunt, et tuis culpa, incuria, negligentia, et facto indies magis atque magis decrescunt et subtrahuntur; per quod etiam pia fundatorum vota defraudantur, pristinaque vivendi norma relicta, non pauci ex dictis commonachis et confratribus tuis, unde non mediocriter dolendum est, se in reprobrum sensum dantes, Dei timore postposito, lascivam vitam duntaxat ducunt, et quod dictu horrendum est, persæpe loca sacra, etiam ipsa Dei templa, monialium stupro, et sanguinis et seminis effusione profanare non verentur; tuque inter alia gravia, enormia et facinorosa crimina, super quibus reus exstitisti, et extas notatus atque diffamatus, quandam mulierem conjugatam nuncupatam Elenam Germyn, quæ dudum a viro suo perperam divvertebat, et alii viro tempore non modico in adulteriis adhæsit amplexibus, in sororem et monialem domus sive prioratus de Pray, tuæ jurisdictionis, ut prætendis, primitus admisisti, ipsamque de post priorissam præfecisti ibidem eo non obstante, quod dictus vir suus tunc vixit, et adhuc vivit; ac dominus Thomas Sudbury, commonachus tuus, ad eam, tanquam mœchus ad mœcham, in domo sive prioratu de Pray prædicto, quasi publice, notorie et impune a diu accessit et accedit, prout nonnulli alii ex tuis confratribus et commonachis ad eam et alias ibidem et alibi, tanquam ad publica prositibula sive lupanaria, accessum continuum impune habu-

erunt et habent : quodque non tantum in ipsa domo de Pray, verum etiam in domo monialium de Sapwell, quam insuper tuæ jurisdictionis esse contendis, priorissas et præsidentes pro tuæ libito voluntatis totiens immutas, dumque bonas et religiosas mulieres in utroque loco deponis ac malas et nonnunquam vitiatas assumis ibidem ad culmen dignitatis ; abjicitur religio, virtus negligitur, et tot expensæ fiunt supervacæ, quod ex præmissis aliisque factis enormibus et damnatis per quosdam confratres tuos, quos in locis hujuscemodi præesse, regere, et sub nomine custodum, cum tales non sint, imo fures, et notorie criminosi, bona eorundem prioratum dispensare, quin verius dissipare, et consumere fecisti et deputasti ; loca illa olim satis religiosa, modo quasi profana et infamia redduntur et reputantur ; tuisque et tuorum factis hujuscemodi adeo depauperantur, quod ad nihilum pene redacta videntur.

Et similiter fecisti in nonnullis aliis monachorum cellis, quas dicis tibi subjici in monasterio etiam ipso gloriosi protomartyris Albani, dudum celebri, bona communia, res et jocalia dilapidasti, ac nemora, sylvas, boscum et subboscum ejusdem, necnon quasi omnes quercus et alias grossas arbores, ad valorem octo millium marcarum et ultra, sine differentia prosterni et vendi fecisti et alienasti, ac confratres et commonachi tui, quorum quidam ad omnia mala mundi, ut dicitur, sunt dediti, dum cultu divino quasi penitus neglecto, ista scorta et meretrices infra Monasterii septa et extra, quasi publice et continue sibi prostituunt, &c.

\* \* \* \*

Acta sunt hæc omnia et singula prout supra scribantur  
et recitantur in quadam alta camera prefati reverendissimi  
in Christo patris et domini, domini Johannis, Dei gratia  
Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi, infra manerium suum de  
Lamehith, Winton. Dioceseos situatum. Anno Dom.  
M.CCCCXC. . . . .

E.—Page 211.

*De Reformatione Monasterii S. Martini in Ludinkerka.\**

Quidam autem vassallus circa monasterium in castro habitans. . . . retulit ad Episcopum Trajectensem de mala et pessima eorum vita, quorum nullus erat continens et omnes proprietarii, habentes secum moniales in monasterio, quæ aliquando imprægnatæ genuerunt. Cognovi ibi Abbatem, cujus pater conversus dictus fuerat, mater vero monialis. . . . Episcopus autem Fridericus de Blankenheyem vir prudens et literatus, misit illic Ambasiatores suos, viros doctos et juris peritos, qui personas dicti monasterii visitantes, invenerunt omnes penè conversos sine regula at professione ibi intrasse et usque tunc in præsens ibidem per multos annos sic permansisse. Quærentes autem quomodo ad habitum conversorum assumendum pervenissent, responderunt; quam primo hic intravimus, plures hic vidimus alba tunica, et scapulari indutos et tamen in armis bellicis expeditos. Comparavimus igitur etiam nobis album pannum, unde tunicas albas, capucia alba, scapularia nobis fieri procuravimus et per nos ipsos eas induimus. Interrogarunt an aliquid audissent de regula? responderunt: numquam, sed

\* M. Johannis Buschii, Liber Reformationis Monasteriorum Quorundam Saxonie ex MSto. M. Leibnitii, Scrip, Brunsvicensiam Illustrantium Tomus Secundus. Hanover, 1710. Fol. 480.



unusquisque nostrum aut monialem aut conversam, aut aliam mulierem sibi assumpsit cum qua sine copulatione matrimonii dormivit.

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De Monasterio in Wennincsen Monialium, quomodo Reformationi primo fortissime restiterunt.\*

Monasterium Monialium in Wennincsen ordinis canonicorum regularium Diœcesis Mindensis, cum primum reformare tentavimus, Episcopum Mindensem et proceres terræ ibidem undique in castris vicinis habitantes contrarios habuimus; sed Ducem Wilhelmum seniorem Brunswicensem nobiscum, et papalem atque Concilii Basiliensis auctoritatem. Dux ergo Wilhelmus, Ludolphus de Barum, supremus ejus consiliarius, Prior tunc de Wittenborg Rutgerus et ego intravimus ad eas in chorum ipsarum convocatis ibidem Priorissa et cunctis Sanctimonialibus. Dominus Dux pileo deposito nobis adstantibus dixit; Domina Priorissa et vos sorores omnes, volo ut reformationem assumatis et regulam vestram observetis.

Quæ manibus ante pectus complicatis stantes, uno ore responderunt: Nos omnes pariter conclusimus et simul juravimus quod nolumus nos reformare nec regulam nostram observare; rogamus, ut non faciatis nos perjuras.

Quibus Dux ait: Malam datis responsionem: delibetis vos melius. Quæ chorum exeuntes, festine redierunt et ad genua procidentes, manibus ante pectus complicatis eundem sermonem responderunt. Nos pa-

\* Ib. folio 859.

riter juravimus, quod reformationem servare nolumus : precamur nolite nos facere perjuras.

Dux iterum respondit : responsio vestra adhuc non valet ; ideo melius deliberetis.

Exeuntes autem, secundo redierunt, et toto corpore super ventres in choro prostatæ, manibus ante pectus complicatis, tertio eundem sermonem responderunt. Quod pariter omnes juravimus quod regulam observare nolumus ; ideo perjuras nos non faciatis, oramus.

Tunc Dux ait : Surgite, non sum dignus, ut me adoretis. Surgentes igitur, quædam earum lites habuerunt cum Domino Ludulpho de Barum, Ducis consiliario. Tunc Duci dixi ; quid prodest, quod hic stamus et cum monialibus litigamus ; exeamus chorum et deliberemus, quid jam agere debeamus.

Exeuntibus igitur nobis de choro circa dormitorium, moniales statim omnes extensis brachiis et pedibus in modum crucis, ad pavementum chori super ventres suos se posuerunt et altissimis vocibus antiphonam : *Media vita in morte sumus*, per totum exclamaverunt. Nos autem hujusmodi voces audientes, putabamus, responsorium fuisse, *revelabant cæli iniquitatem Iudæ*. Unde Dux territus totam suam terram metuebat interire. Cui ego dixi ; Si ego Dux essem hujus patriæ, libentius cantum illum haberem quam centum florenos, quia non est super nos et terram vestram, maledictio sed benedictio et ros cælestis : sed super moniales istas dura increpatio et signum reformationis earum. Sed pauci hic sumus nec nisi nostrum quatuor et multæ moniales. Si cum colis, et manicis suis longis lapidibus impositis,

Q

nos invaderent, quid faceremus? Vocentur ad nos plures in adiutorium. Tunc Dux solus ad chorum earum accessit dicens. Hoc vos super corpora et animas vestras cantatis; et servis suis, qui cum monialibus in choro earum stabant, dixit: Veniatis vos huc ad nos; qui statim ad nos exilierunt. Moniales igitur Antiphona finita sequebantur servos illos usque ut nos, putantes, quod cistas et scrinia earum vellemus violenter aperire, et omnia nobiscum tollere. Congregatis igitur omnibus coram nobis, Dux ait: Cur non timuistis Antiphonam: *Media vita*, super me cantare; juro extentis digitis ad sancta Dei Evangelia, quod vos reformare debetis, alioquin in terra mea vos nolo sustinere. Si Episcopus Mindensis et amici vestri in hoc se mihi volunt opponere, aut eos de mea terra ego volo ejicere et expellere, aut ego inde cum baculo volo exire. Auditentes hæc Priorissa et conventus, territæ rogaverunt Ducem, ut amicos et cognatos suos ad se vocare possent, ut de eorum consilio facerent, quid facere oporteret: quod per nostram intercessionem tandem Dux, licet difficulter, concessit. Amici igitur, parentes et cognati earum, ad certos terminos, per Ducem eis et nobis assignatos, ibidem nobiscum convenerunt; qui, sicut moniales petierant, in simili forma pro eis petierunt; cumque ii duabus aut tribus vicibus, eis pro deliberatione datis, in sua sententia permansissent: Tandem dux de nostro consilio finaliter eis dixit: Vos hinc volo ut recedatis: nolo eis injuriam facere, sed volo omnino, ut se reforment. Statim amici earum et cognati precipiti cursu de Monasterio, juvenibus eorum cum clypeis se

sequentibus, exierunt. Mandavit igitur Dux, ut januam Monasterii nobis aperirent; quæ per nuncium responderunt, claves Monasterii se perdidisse. Tunc Dux de mandato nostro, quod id auctoritate sua non potuit, longo arrepto scamno cum quibusdam rusticis et villanis in ostium ambitus Monasterii tam valide impegit, ut ejus repagula, vectem videlicet ferreum cum ostio, confringeret, et ligneum vectem contrindendo etiam depelleret; quod lapides secum de muro quadratos in modum cussinorum sedilium ab utroque latere, cum aliis lapidibus minoribus secum tolleret. Ita fortiter ostium illud contruserunt, sicut in castris vincendis ipse Dux sæpius egerat et devastandis. Aperta igitur janua ambitus Monasterii, intravimus et in chorum earum ascendimus. Jacebant ibi omnes super ventres suos in morem crucis prostratæ, per circuitum earum ad circulum parvas habentes imagines ligneas aut lapideas Sanctorum ad longitudinem unius cubiti, et inter duas imagines cereum ardentem; ut eas, quas muri et repagula contra duces et nos defendere non poterant, saltem sancti cum luminibus invocati protegere dignarentur. Cumque duces et nos circumcirca se stantes vidissent, surrexerunt omnes, et ad nos venerunt.

Tunc Dominus Dux, capucio sive pileo deposito, dixit coram omnibus: si adhuc vos vultis reformare, tunc volo vos in terra mea sustinere; sin autem non, tunc currus jam sunt parati, qui vos de terra mea evehere debent, forsitan nunquam redituras. Quæ responderunt: Abjiciatis monachos illos de collo nostro, tunc omnia facere volumus libenter quæ jubetis. Dux ad

hæc respondit ; omnia quæ vobis dico et facio, de eorum consilio facio, Priorem de Wittenborch Rutgerum et me designans.

Ego tunc dixi uni moniali mihi adstanti : Soror, faciatis sicut Dominus Dux desiderat ; nos piæ et clementer volumus vobiscum tenere. Quæ cum indignatione respondit : Vos non estis frater meus, quare me sororem vocatis. Frater meus ferro est vestitus, et vos linea veste. Injuriam sibi factam putabat, quod sororem et non claustralem virginem eam nominavi.

Quia tamen Dux in sua perstitit sententia, finaliter responderunt, quod Præpositum non haberent. Si illum haberent, qui reformationem cum eis incipere vellet, tunc omnes paratæ essent eam incipere. In hoc verbo Dominus Dux et nos omnes assensimus.

## F.—Page 250.

*Denunciation of the Dominican Friars by the Nuns of St. Catherine in Pistoja, laid before the Grand Duke Leopold, in 1775.*

Dimostrazione della condotta che tengono i PP di S. Domenico nel governo di noi religiose di S. Caterina di Pistoja.

In vece di lasciarci nella nostra innocenza, ci ammaliano colle parole e colle opere, e vengono con frequenza dalla sagrestia, della quale hanno quasi tutti le chiavi; ed essendoci una grata di sufficiente grandezza ci fanno mille improprietà ponendo perfino . . . . ne' buchi, della medesima. Mettono le mani nel seno delle loco amiche, etc. Se poi gli si porge occasione di entrare con un finto pretesto in convento, vanno in camera ancora a solo delle loco parziali. Sono quasi tutti intrisi della stessa pece, perfino i provinciali, e si servono sino della congiuntura della visita per tali cose. Si lasciano uscire di bocca sentimenti bestiali, dicendo che consideriamo la nostra felicità, che senz' incommodo di far figli ci possiamo soddisfare; che finito il mondo, è finito tutto; che anche S. Paolo c'insegna, che lavorava delle sue mani e però ci ajutiamo. . . . Lasciano correre tutti gl'inconvenienti al parlatorio. Sebbene più volte da noi avvisati, non levano ne troncano le amicizie perico-

lose, e da questo ne è accaduto di essere entrato più volte gente in tempo di notte a deliziarsi e riposare colle monache, avendo quei tali con inganno fatto fare le chiavi. Lasciano correre similmente che taluna stia lontana dai sacramenti, ne si curano d'introdurre l'orazione mentale, ma altro non si predica che la pace del mondo. Quelle che vivono secondo le loro idee, sono da essi esaltate e contentate ancor nelle cose più stravaganti; e le altre, o bisogna che tradiscano la loro coscienza adattandosi, o soffrano una perpetua guerra, come appunto succede adesso. Questa è la pura verità senza passione, e in coscienza ne facciamo l'attestato noi infrascritte.

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