

EXPULSION OF THE JESUITS FROM PORTUGAL

PROTEST BY THE PORTUGUESE
PROVINCIAL

(Continued from last issue.)

II.—Wealth.

The belief in Jesuit wealth was so deeply rooted in Portugal as to be entertained not only by our enemies, but even by our best friends.

Supposing this belief to be well-grounded, why should it make us criminals? It would be a strange measure to expel a man from his country merely because he possessed a large sum of money. But our reputed wealth was purely fabulous, without any foundation in fact. Would that the Society had actually in Portugal abundant materials resources, we should have no lack of good works on which to expend them for the good of our country. But we had no such resources. Frequently after my appointment as Superior, I had a hard struggle against grievous difficulties, to find means of supporting my subjects. So many are the misconceptions regarding Jesuit property that with a view of dispelling them I long projected a course of lectures on the subject. I was, however, prevented from doing as I wished by the incognito in which I was placed by Hintze Ribeiro's decree.* God knows what a mortification it was to me to have to assume a disguise imposed by law, but wholly repugnant to my own straightforwardness and natural ideas concerning truth as well as to the heartfelt love and admiration which I entertained for the Society of Jesus.

This matter will require but a few words.

If the Government of the Society is strictly monarchical, its administration is on the contrary extremely decentralised. Each house is separately administered, and nothing can be more imaginary than the bottomless common purse which has inspired so many falsehoods.

As a fact, if in Portugal, thanks to the careful administration of their superiors, the Jesuit houses have been free from debt, they have usually possessed few comforts, and have sometimes endured great hardships. Residences subsisted merely upon stipends for Masses and preaching, or alms spontaneously offered. In the colleges the great expenses required to provide our boys with board and lodging, with the comforts and amusements they enjoyed,† and still more with what was required to keep abreast of modern educational developments, all this I say obliged us to interrupt our building works till the number of pupils should be much increased.

The anti-religious movement of 1901 having alarmed many families, so that the number of scholars decreased, it was found necessary to suspend operations. At a later period, when I was myself made rector of the college, I contrived to make considerable additions, but the troubles stirred up by the revolutionary press checked the work, which has been at a standstill for two years. Such is the truth of our wealth in Portugal.

What am I to say of our Seminary Fund, that, I mean, which is devoted to the education of our own young men in the Society? How many of our opponents have expended their eloquence in vigorous denunciation of our wealth, without reflecting on the circumstances under which our recruits are enrolled and trained! The training in the Society is very slow: one who goes through the entire course is occupied in it for 15 or even 17 years. There are included the ascetical training of the Novitiate, then the literary and philosophical and the theological, and as a rule there is introduced one of practical pedagogy for those who are to teach in the colleges. On the other hand, the great majority of vocations to the Order were from the middle or lower classes, and the subjects had but little to obtain from their parents. It thus resulted that for the heavy expenses necessary for this lengthy training of some two hundred priests and scholastics, about a hundred of whom were engaged in study at home or abroad, the sole resource was the fund established by some of our own

members who had devoted their own fortunes to this very purpose. I can here testify that the vast majority of ours in Portugal never gave ought to the Society, either because they had nothing to give, or because superiors would not permit them, on account of the poverty of their relatives. Hence it resulted that the funds destined for the training and instruction of our young men were wholly inadequate, and opulent benefactors whose generosity might supply the deficit were but rare in our country, where wealthy Catholics are few, and the fixed idea of Jesuit wealth hinders even our best friends from allowing us to benefit even by the large sums spent upon charitable purposes.

What, then, about our methods of acquiring inheritances? Against this slander I protest with all my energy. The fantastic pictures, frequently drawn in lurid colors by our enemies, are mere repetitions of the time-worn fables invented by pamphleteers. Seldom, indeed, have legacies been bequeathed to us in Portugal, and in two cases alone were they at all considerable. Had they been more frequent we should have notably extended our propaganda, religious, educational, literary, and likewise patriotic—both in our own country and its dominions over sea. How often in conversation with my brethren, when speaking of generous bequests made to the *Misericordias*, and especially to that of *O Porto*, have I not remarked on the terrible outcry which would be aroused were any portion of such wealth to be assigned to works of the Society of Jesus.

III.—Inveigling Youths to Join the Order.

Never has it been thought blameworthy for anyone to invite others, by word or writing, to join an association which he himself esteems, and whose prosperity he accordingly desires; a religious man has a right to recommend any who possess the requisite qualities to join his order, and serve God therein. I must, however, make an exception in the case of our Society, which will doubtless astonish many.

We have a special rule forbidding us to advise anyone definitely to join the Society, or to do more than further what we believe to be a genuine vocation from God, without any particular determination. Such I know was the conduct of all my brethren, and had they done otherwise they would not only have transgressed their rule, but, moreover, have acted foolishly. In fact, the first question put to a candidate for admission is whether he has been influenced by anyone in this way, it being certain that a youth so attracted would not persevere. In truth, life in the Society demands such self-sacrifice, and obedience so perfect, that nothing but a genuine call from God can ensure fidelity, no human influence will avail for perseverance.

The long training, too, prior to the taking of final vows, affords such a guarantee of human liberty as there is in no other state of life, for during all this period—extending, as I have said, to fifteen or seventeen years—each of us may be released from the Society, as he surely will be if he has not a vocation.

As a matter of fact, our enemies in Portugal provided us with abundant arguments to refute this charge. For some weeks before the Republic was proclaimed, the revolutionary newspapers published various letters of one of our Fathers to a young man who had intended for some time to join the Society. These letters are models of prudence, moderation, and spiritual honor, and whoever without prejudice or heed of the malicious comments in which they were embedded, will but study these harmless epistles, so worthy of a good religious, will find in them a conclusive answer to the slander against us.

IV.—Our Secret Associations.

If there were any such amongst us, would it not be somewhat curious to find that those who prosecute us on this account are amongst the most influential patrons of secret societies. However this may be, there is no accusation more utterly false than this. The institute and rules of the Society are to-day—more than ever—open to all the world in every public library. It is true that since 1901 the Society has assumed a kind of pseudo character in the eyes of the public and the law, but this was imposed upon us by statesmen who, though at the head of a Catholic Government, did not dare to grant to a religious Order approved by the Holy See, that liberty given us even in Protestant countries which have a true notion of freedom.

We had, therefore, to assume the pseudonym of 'Association for Faith and Fatherland' (*Associação Fé e Patria*). I must acknowledge that, threatened as we were with dispersion and banishment, we were but too glad to obtain this simulacrum of liberty, and to avail ourselves of any title under which we might devote ourselves to the utmost for the benefit of religion and of Portugal. But, I repeat, it was unwillingly that we adopted this legal incognito, which, moreover, hoodwinked nobody.

The actual Republican Government took possession of our own official catalogues, in which were recorded all our names and occupations. They may thus see that we never thought there was any reason to make a mystery of our existence or to shrink from letting it be known to the full that we bear a title which we esteem next to that of Christian—namely, of religious of the Society of Jesus.

V.—Political and Anti-Republican Activity.

Opinion expressed in certain articles of the *Mensagem*, whispers of later years concerning our share in the pole-

* The decree alluded to is that of April 18, 1901, by which the Jesuit Order was compelled to have its statutes approved by the Government. Accordingly, they formed the Association "Fé o Patria," which was ruled by a president and a small committee, so that officially the office of Provincial was little concerned.—C. Torrend.

† It is remarkable that while by universal consent Campolide ranked first in respect of board, tuition, and hygiene as well as physical training, and while other colleges charged £5 or £6 per month, Campolide never charged more than £4. In the provinces at Beira, S. Fiel, giving the same education, long exacted only £1 10s—only recently was the monthly fee raised to £2. Among the recreations provided for our boys must not be forgotten the scientific excursions initiated at Campolide two years ago by myself along with Father Luisier, for the benefit of the elder students who were about to finish their school course and proceed to the University, and were thus introduced to all branches of Natural History. The public schools which adopted the same plan later on did but imitate us, and not so thoroughly.—C. Torrend.