



*Petrus Franciscanus, auctoritate pa-
pali anno Capuccinarum Ordinem
auspicatus est in Marca Anconitana
sub Regula S. Francisci confirmatum
a Clemente VII. anno 1526.*

Mich. van Lechem fecit a. 1648.

FRA MATTEO DA BASCIO

THE CAPUCHINS

VOLUME ONE



*Picenus Franciscanus, auctioris pau-
peritatis amore Capuccinorum Ordinem
auspicatus est in Marca Anconitana,
sub Regula S. Francisci confirmatum
à Clemente VII. anno 1546.*

Mich. van Leeloni fecit et gravavit

FRA MATTEO DA BASCIO

THE CAPUCHINS



VOLUME ONE



FATHER CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C.

THE CAPUCHINS

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE
HISTORY OF THE COUNTER-
REFORMATION

VOLUME ONE

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PATRI REVERENDISSIMO
FR. MELCHIORI A BENISA
FRATRVM MINORVM CAPPVCINORVM ORDINIS
MINISTRO GENERALI
HVNC LIBRVM
EX VOLVNTATE IPSIVS COMPOSITVM
PIA VENERATIONE
DEDICO



PREFACE

THIS book can pretend to be nothing more than a first introduction to a neglected chapter in the history of the Catholic Reformation, commonly misnamed the Counter-Reformation. The word "Counter-Reformation" suggests that the internal reform of the Catholic Church was a counterblast to the Protestant Reformation. To some extent it was ; but not radically nor essentially. The internal reform of the Catholic Church began independently of the menace of Protestantism and undoubtedly would have developed and transformed the Catholic peoples even though Luther and Calvin had upheld the Papacy and Catholic Tradition instead of raising a revolution against both ; though as undoubtedly the Catholic reform movement would have progressed on more normal and, shall we say, more immediately progressive lines. One interesting point about the Capuchin Reform of the Franciscan Order is that it illustrates and indicates to those who have eyes to see, in one department of thought and conduct, something of what the normal development of the Catholic reform movement might have been if the menace of the Protestant revolt had not turned the Catholic world into an armed defensive camp. The Protestant revolt indeed affected the development of the Capuchin congregation, as it affected the whole world ; but essentially the life and thought of the Capuchins is derived not from the necessity of defending the Catholic Faith against heresy, but from the original Catholic reform movement itself in its revolt against the secularism and conventionalism which overwhelmed the declining medieval system. The early history of the Capuchins is a microcosm of the world-conflict within the Catholic Church in the first half of the sixteenth century, when the spiritual element was in revolt against the secularist element. Later in the intellectual development amongst the Capuchins we gain an insight into the strong Catholic humanist movement with which the earlier reform movement within the Church was

so intimately allied. An adequate definitive history of the Capuchin Reform will necessarily concern itself much with these wider problems in the history of the Catholic Reformation. But the definitive history of the Capuchins has yet to be written ; nor can it be written until the large mass of documentary evidence pigeon-holed in the archives and libraries of Europe has been adequately studied ; nor until the Capuchin writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been given adequate attention.

I will not attempt to discuss the reason why modern historians have failed to deal in any way adequately with the part played by the Capuchins in the religious life of the Reformation period. They just have not studied it, despite the constant witness of contemporary writers to the powerful influence of the Capuchins in shaping the course of the Catholic Reformation.

If this book but draws the attention of scholars more competent than myself, to a fruitful field of research, it will have achieved its purpose—at least so far as the general public is concerned.

I cannot conclude this foreword without acknowledging my indebtedness to the late Père Edouard d'Alençon, in whom all future students of Capuchin history will gratefully acknowledge an inspiring leader. And to others, too, whose names appear in the course of this book and without whose labours it could not have been written, I tender a grateful acknowledgment.

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CONTENTS

VOLUME ONE

PART I

ORIGIN AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAPUCHIN REFORM

| <i>Chapter</i> | | <i>Page</i> |
|----------------|--|-------------|
| I | THE CALL OF FRA MATTEO | 17 |
| II | FIRST DAYS OF THE REFORM | 51 |
| III | A STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM | 85 |
| IV | THE APOSTASY OF FRA BERNARDINO OCHINO .. | 121 |
| V | RECOVERY AND GROWTH | 148 |

PART II

THE CAPUCHINS SPREAD ABROAD

| | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|-----|
| VI | FRA FELICE | 173 |
| VII | THE CAPUCHINS CROSS THE ALPS | 196 |
| VIII | AN ADVENTURE INTO POLITICS | 219 |

VOLUME TWO

| | | |
|------|--|-----|
| IX | THE CAPUCHINS EVANGELISE FRANCE AND SAVOY .. | 253 |
| X | THE CAPUCHINS ENTER GERMANY | 284 |
| XI | MORE MISSIONARY PROVINCES | 322 |
| XII | FRA CRISTOFORO AND OTHERS | 348 |
| XIII | THE FOREIGN MISSIONS | 370 |
| XIV | THE CAPUCHINS MAKE LITERATURE | 397 |
| | EPILOGUE | 429 |

APPENDIX I

| | | |
|--|---|-----|
| | Of the Sources of early Capuchin History .. | 431 |
|--|---|-----|

| APPENDIX II—ILLUSTRATIVE DOCUMENTS | | <i>Page</i> |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| 1. | Letter of Vittoria Colonna to Paul III .. | 441 |
| 2. | The Capuchins and the Spiritualist Tradition | 447 |
| 3. | Extract from a Sermon of Fra Girolamo da Narni on the text " <i>Homo quidam fecit cœnam</i> "? | 454 |
| 4. | Extracts from the Sermons of Fra Mattia da Salo's <i>Delli dolori di Gesu Christi</i> | 460 |
| 5. | Extracts from P. Yves de Paris: <i>La Théologie Naturelle</i> | 463 |
| INDEX | | 471 |

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME I

| | | | | | <i>Facing page</i> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|----|----|----|--------------------|
| FRA MATTEO DE BASCIO | <i>Frontispiece</i> | | | | |
| S. MARIA DELL'ACQUARELLA, ALBACINA | .. | .. | .. | .. | 56 |
| THE FRIARY OF CAMERINO | .. | .. | .. | .. | 56 |
| VITTORIA COLONNA | .. | .. | .. | .. | 92 |
| LE PÈRE ANGE DE JOYEUSE | .. | .. | .. | .. | 226 |

VOLUME II

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| SAN LORENZO DA BRINDISI | <i>Frontispiece</i> | | | | |
| FRA GIACINTO DA CASALE | .. | .. | .. | .. | 298 |
| LE PÈRE YVES DE PARIS | .. | .. | .. | .. | 414 |

PART I

**ORIGIN AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE
CAPUCHIN REFORM**

CHAPTER I

THE CALL OF FRA MATTEO

(i)

It was in the first days of the new year, 1525,¹ that Fra Matteo da Bascio of the order of the Franciscan Observants set out from the friary of Montefalcone, near Fermo in the Marches of Ancona, with the purpose of seeking an audience of the Holy Father, Clement VII, in the city of Rome. Matteo was young, not more than thirty years of age.² He had the robustness of the healthy peasant whose forebears had been innured to hard labour in the fields, and that natural refinement of character sometimes found amongst those who have tilled the soil they live upon, a spiritual quality gained in intimate communion with Nature's mysteries. But Matteo from his earliest years had looked forward to the day when he might enter into the service of God in some religious order and even become a priest. For that reason he had been anxious to learn such book-knowledge as would be necessary to gain him admission amongst the candidates for the priestly office. It was not much time he could find for books, for his father insisted that he must do his share of work in the fields, yet at length before he reached his full manhood he had learned enough to gain him admittance as a cleric-novice amongst the Franciscans. In time he took his vows and then went through the course of study demanded of the aspirant to the priesthood. He was never any great hand at book-learning, but he loved the Sacred Scriptures; and whilst others of his fellow students discussed them he silently delved into them for the sake of the spiritual lore his soul thirsted for. They were to him his

¹ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, *Cronica* I, p. 122; so also Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Narratione dell' origine dell' congregazione de' Frati Capuccini*, cart. 49. Boverius following later writers gives the date as 1524.

² Mario (cart. 47) says: "nacque circa l'anno 1495."

book of meditation, from which he fed his mind and heart in his yearning to know more of God and God's ways with man. A somewhat lone and dumb figure he cut in the school-room ; yet all the while he was becoming more and more aware of a vivid life in which he perceived the face of God. When his course of study was finished and he was ordained priest, his soul, hitherto mute save in the inner life of the spirit, now found a new expression in his preaching. If he could not speak in the schoolroom his words flowed simply but passionately as he stood in the presence of men whose souls he was eager to bring to the knowledge and love of God which he himself had gained. Especially was he drawn to the country folk and the hard-working poor whom he understood so well : and they on their part appreciated the rugged simplicity of Matteo. But Matteo was no mere preacher of the Word ; he was at the same time a doer, ever ready to give service to his fellow men in deeds of mercy, even as he gave service to God in deeds of worship. Very soon he gained reputation as the friend and servant of any who were in need of spiritual or temporal comfort. He had a large heart and understanding sympathy for all human needs, this shy and silent young friar ; as was shown in heroic measure when the plague came upon and devastated the city of Camerino in the year 1523. No sooner did news of the outbreak come to the friar in his friary at Montefalcone than he set out for Camerino and there gave unstinted service to the plague-stricken people. Through the long months Matteo remained staunchly at his elected post, administering the sacraments and assisting the dying with words of comfort ; nursing those who had none to nurse them and questing for food and bodily comforts for those in need ; so that the stricken people had come to see in him an angel sent by heaven for their comfort in their distress. Then when the need was over he had quietly quitted the city, shunning the praise of the citizens as they would shun the plague : for by now all in the city were loud in his praise, from the Duke and Duchess to the lowliest beggar.

Yet all was not well with Matteo ; in his heart there was a growing discontent. Plainly the case was this. For some years now Matteo had been living as well as he might the life of a Franciscan friar ; but it had begun to dawn on him

that the life of a Franciscan friar in these days was not as it had been in the beginning when St. Francis and his early disciples lived by the rule of most high poverty, walking by faith rather than by human prudence : and in his heart Matteo felt himself in some sort a disloyal follower of the Rule he had vowed to observe. Not that he had ever wilfully transgressed its precepts ; but that in the circumstances in which he found himself, his life did not respond to the pure ideal of life on which St. Francis had based his Rule and in accordance with which he had intended the Rule to be observed. When he had entered the Order he had unquestionably taken for granted that the actual life was a true interpretation of the mind of its Seraphic Founder. But as time went on Matteo had learned many things. He had learned, for instance, that the life as now lived was not altogether such as it had been lived in the first days of the Observant Reform and still less as it was traditionally held to have been lived in the days of St. Francis. There still lingered amongst the brethren in the Marches of Ancona a very vivid tradition of the early Franciscan days which for long had been handed down by those " Spiritual " brethren (as they were styled) who were the forerunners of the Observants. Fra Matteo in his silent way drank in the tales of former days and compared his life with that of the brethren whose glories still cast a halo around the Franciscan name. Their lives gave vigour and splendour to the written Rule. Yet the more he learned the more he grew uneasy.

His superiors, recognising his simple fervour, were tolerant and appreciative as his discontent showed itself in endeavours to achieve a greater personal conformity with the ideal life. Some of them and in particular the Minister Provincial, Giovanni da Fano, were themselves apprehensive of the growing spirit of relaxation and were working towards a renewal of the former austerity. But there were limits to their accommodation. They could not forgo the authorised relaxation upon which the actual system, in part at least, rested. Clearly the friaries of to-day with their larger communities needed a more secure provision for their maintenance than did the primitive small communities ; and if a greater ease and comfort were tolerated, Matteo was reminded that such mitigations as were allowed were a wise

provision for the weaker brethren : heroic austerity is for the few ; a reasonable moderation for the many. All which line of argument perplexed but did not convince the simple mind of Matteo with its persistent vision of the life that had been in the days when the friar lived by faith and not by the prudence of the world.

Then came a day when the perplexities of his mind were brought to a clear judgment. The brethren of Montefalcone had attended a funeral at some distance from the friary. They were returning home, Matteo following in the rear, when they came across a beggar lying by the wayside, starved with the cold and almost naked. The friars pressing on ahead, anxious for their mid-day meal, passed by the beggar unheeding ; but Matteo coming up, stopped, knelt by the beggar with comforting words, and taking off his cloak, wrapped the beggar in it. Then only when he had attended to the starved beggar, did Matteo follow after the brethren. Arrived at the friary, the comfort of the mid-day meal smote the heart of Matteo as he thought of the beggar. Here was he, a professed follower of most high poverty, with a house to shelter him and a good meal to sustain him and warm clothing to protect him against the cold, whilst outside the friary were others ill-clad and starving and without a roof to shelter them. Could he rightly call himself the poorest of the poor as St. Francis, according to the legend, had himself wished to be and as he said his friars ought to be ? Was most high poverty observed in the friary or outside it ? Surely, it seemed to him, the starved beggar by the wayside had the greater right to call himself a follower of the poverty St. Francis loved. In his distress Matteo betook himself to prayer, praying for light and guidance in the trouble in which he found himself. He was thus praying when within his spirit he heard a voice which thrice bade him " observe the Rule to the letter." It was the answer to his prayer : he was no longer perplexed ; for him at least the way was clear ; his duty was to observe the Rule he had vowed as St. Francis wished it to be observed " to the letter" and without gloss, that is without moderating interpretations.³

³ *Chronica Fr. Joannis Romæi de Terra Nova*, in *Anal. Ord. Cap.* vol. xxiii. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo loc. cit. ; Mario da Mercato-Seraceno : *Epistola ad P. Honorium*, in *Anal. Ord. Cap.* vol. xxiii, p. 273 seq.

About this time Matteo was one day talking with an old friar about the Rule and how it was observed in the days of St. Francis, when the old friar told him that even the habit he wore was not as the habit worn by the Saint and his first followers. The primitive habit, he was told, was of coarser texture than that now in use : moreover, it was shaped differently, the hood being four-cornered, not round, and sewn to the gown.⁴ Matteo was now in that state of mind which pleads for some outward witness of an inward loyalty. He therefore sought out a coarse gown and made himself a hood of the shape described and sewed it to the gown : and this he put on in place of the habit he had hitherto worn, in spite of the criticism and protests of the other members of the community. He had no wish to offend them, but he must be loyal to the voice which had called to him. Quickly he perceived that he must choose between the community and the duty which his conscience and the voice had made so clear. He had no intention of cutting himself adrift from the obedience he owed his superiors : yet in his present quandary he knew he could hope neither for approval nor assistance from his immediate superiors nor from the brethren at large. If he must act, he must act on his own responsibility : yet what of obedience without which no blessing of God would be with him ? Then it was that it came to him that he must seek the highest superior of all, the Pope himself, to whose judgment he would submit himself. In his simple faith he felt that the Pope would listen to him, for was not the Pope the father of all, Christ's Vicar on earth ? Thus thinking no wrong but urged by a true obedience to God and His Vicar, Matteo one night when the brethren had retired to rest quietly left the friary, knowing that if he were seen and questioned he would be forcibly detained. He was well on his way to Rome before his absence was discovered.⁵

⁴ Unknown to Matteo, a reformed congregation of Observants in Spain, known as the "Discalced Observants," and also as "Capuciati," had already adopted the same form of habit. cf. Wadding, *anno* 1496, XV. St. Peter of Alcantara at a later period was a member of this congregation. The Leonine Bull of Union in 1517 ordered them to conform to the form of habit in use amongst the Observants generally, but as late as the seventeenth century some of the French Recollects still wore what would now be called the Capuchin habit.

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⁵ "*Si parti senza far molto ad alcuno,*" says Mario ; and Bernardino da Colpetrazzo : "*Con gran silenzio del convento di Montefalcone si parti.*"

So here we have Matteo hurrying forward to beg the Pope's sanction and blessing for his desired freedom to live as St. Francis and his first followers lived. Yet at this moment Matteo according to the letter of the law is in the canonical or uncanonical position of a fugitive from the obedience he owes his superiors : technically, at least, an apostate. But a starving man may take his neighbour's bread against his neighbour's will without being guilty of theft, and when a soul is being strangled the laws which hinder that soul from obtaining spiritual freedom no longer hold. Matteo, though no casuist, goes forward guiltless in his own conscience ; for the rest he has a firm belief that the Pope will set all things right. And after all he was not the first friar who, unable to accept with a quiet conscience the relaxation of the Rule he had vowed, had broken away from the common life ; and not a few who had thus broken away had been blessed and protected by the Popes.

(ii)

To understand Matteo it must be borne in mind that he came of that race of visionary realists who live by an ideal and whose souls starve when the freedom to pursue the ideal with an active service is taken from them. Of such had been that long line of friars who from the time of St. Francis had stood out against the relaxation of the most high poverty worshipped by the Saint and his first companions, and against the tendency to substitute a strictly legal interpretation for the soaring aspiration after the ideal which had been the impelling force of the early Franciscan days. And whilst Matteo is pursuing his path to Rome let us glance back at his spiritual lineage.

Even in the days of St. Francis a sharp division of opinion had shown itself amongst his followers. To neither party—for very soon the Order had been divided into two opposing parties—was the letter of the Rule the final law. To the one party—that which in time came to be known as “the party of the Community”—the mere letter was an impossible law save as it was accommodated to the changing external circumstances of an Order which had outgrown the primitive

conditions of its birth and which found itself called upon, both by the ambitions of many of its members and by the demands of the world at large, to extend its activities beyond the sphere originally contemplated. And in this accommodation the new external activities were oftentimes more thought of than the ideal of life in which the Order had been founded. The ideal was sacrificed to the exigencies of external activities and new circumstances ; and a legal interpretation was sought which regulated the accommodation and at times permitted what were frankly relaxations. The opposing party—who became known as the “Spirituals”—had too their interpretation of the letter of the Rule ; but their interpretation was based on the practice of St. Francis himself and those who claimed to know his mind, the companions who had lived in close intimacy with him and had stood with him in his bitter contention with those who had sought even in his own lifetime to mitigate the Rule of Poverty. With the “Spirituals” the Rule as lived by St. Francis must stand unchanged amidst changing circumstances. As opposed to “the Community” which held that the Rule was a legal document to be interpreted by the legists, the “Spirituals” held that the Rule was a God-given charter of freedom to observe the Gospel in its every commandment and counsel, and that any legal interpretation which destroyed the freedom and simplicity of the Rule as St. Francis intended it to be observed, was a betrayal of a trust and a departure from the true Franciscan life. Throughout the long controversy which divided the party of relaxation as it was sometimes called, and the party of the pure observance, this was the main dividing line. There was indeed a third body between the two great contending forces : men who though belonging to one camp or the other, had wider sympathies. Thus amongst the friars of “the Community” were not a few who whilst accepting the “milder” interpretations and the modifications of the primitive simplicity, yet endeavoured to restrict the more manifest relaxations of the Rule and to live at least in the spirit of the primitive fraternity so far as their personal life was concerned. And amongst the “Spirituals” too there were those who admitted that in the changing circumstances of the Order there must be a certain adaptability to new needs, provided that the essential poverty and

simplicity of the Rule were maintained as the foundation of the fabric. These were the moderates of both sides. They could hardly be said to form a party : they were as a leaven preventing for a long time the utter disunion of the Order. The great disaster for the Franciscan fraternity was the emergence of Brother Elias as the master-organiser of the fraternity at the time when the yet fluid society of the brethren needed a wise manipulation to set it in the way of an organised development which would be at once true to the original ideals and capable of assimilating new conditions and ideas without loss of the original spirit. Elias was heart and soul of "the Community" (to anticipate the use of the party name later in vogue) ; but he was of "the Community" in some of its least Franciscan traits. As an organiser he had great abilities : he fell short of genius. A genius would have developed the fraternity in accordance with its own peculiar ideals and fundamental spirit. Elias sought to develop the Order in emulation of that most perfect of medieval organisations—the Order of St. Dominic. He would build up a Franciscan counterpart of the rival Order ; for to Elias the Dominicans were a rival Order. That was his great mistake and the cause of his great failure. He did go far towards building up a rival organisation to that of the Dominicans, but at the cost of much that was most significant and inspiring in the original Franciscan life. Elias fell before the uprising of the brethren ; but his work was not to be easily undone. After all he was but one amongst many ; and even amongst those who rose up against him, many did so mainly because of his harsh imperiousness, which made his government a burden to those under him. And neither of his immediate successors was gifted with the statesmanship and imaginative foresight which even yet might have secured the Order against the divisions which were to come. They too were lured by the Dominican organisation. As we look back upon the history of the Order we can see that a rigid uniformity was the last thing to conserve unity in an Order so governed by idealism as the Franciscan fraternity. As with the Benedictine family so with the Franciscan, the first and essential aim is to *be* rather than to *do*. In that both the Benedictine and the Franciscan differ from those Orders which are

founded primarily, as was the Dominican, for an external apostolate. The Franciscan fraternity, it is true, included an active service for others in its vocation ; but this active service flowed from its ideal of the Gospel-life on which its life was to be formed : its fundamental purpose was to revive primarily amongst its own members a perfect Christ-life as portrayed in the Gospel. In such a life there must be not only a wide liberty of the spirit but also the means to express that liberty in the various manifestations it must take amongst a large multitude of men. Such an Order would need an organisation which whilst securing an essential worship of the common ideal would yet leave room for corporate as well as individual varying expressions of the common life. A federation of communities all inspired by the same fundamental purpose and ideal and united in a supreme common loyalty, yet free within the common bond to express and develop their own conceptions of the governing ideal, such it would seem should have been the basis of the Franciscan organisation. At a later period in its history some attempt at such a system was made, but only half-heartedly and without the entire consent of the predominant partners : the Dominican tradition (as we may call it) was too strongly entrenched to allow of such a complete and radical reorganisation as alone would have made the more decentralised system successful. Moreover, at the period when the trial was made, party feeling was already too strong to secure that mutual and general good will without which a decentralised system becomes a failure.

Thus almost at the outstart of Franciscan history a cross purpose was introduced into the Order which was never exorcised. It showed itself in the growing tendency to build large convents and churches in rivalry with the Dominicans; and in the introduction of a more ceremonious ordering of the community life after the manner of Canons-regular, and still more in the growing substitution of external observances for the simpler law of the spirit by which St. Francis and his first friars lived. With all this went a necessary relaxation of that most high poverty in which the freedom of the Franciscan spirit found its inspiration and security. To those of the brethren who cherished the tradition of the primitive Franciscan life especially in the Italian provinces

consecrated by the personal work of St. Francis himself and by that of his immediate disciples, this new development seemed little else than an apostasy from the Franciscan Rule. Elias in his arrogant way dealt hardly with these zealots for the primitive tradition ; but his very persecution only tended to create amongst them a more intense feeling of distrust and opposition towards the new developments. Many of the Italian brethren fled to the fastnesses of the Apennines and sought freedom to live as St. Francis lived, in humble friaries or hermitages far removed from the highways of the world. Here they kept alive a vivid memory of the primitive life of the Order and jealously conserved all records left by those who knew St. Francis and could witness to the life he led and intended the brethren to lead. To them we owe in fact many of the most authentic records of St. Francis and the first Franciscan days. It is not to be wondered at that in their seclusion from the wider life of the world, some of these zealous adherents of the primitive life came in time to have an undiscerning suspicion and a fierce resentment against any innovation, however justified by practical necessity ; or that their zeal for the purity of the Rule degenerated into an almost fanatical opposition to whatever was not explicitly contained in the earliest Franciscan forms. Thus towards the end of the thirteenth century it came about that the Order legally uniform, was in reality far from uniform either in external observance or in sentiment. What was now known as "the party of the Community" was divided between those who recklessly accepted relaxations with little regard to the intention of St. Francis, and others who accepted "milder" interpretations and relaxations with reluctance as in some sort an evil necessity. So too amongst the zealots there were those who stood for the primitive tradition with a reasonableness and charity which in no wise made them less staunch to the tradition ; whilst there were others whom opposition drove into a self-opinionated and loveless fanaticism. Thus the Order became more and more divided in feeling and practice and to many it seemed but a welter of contending opinions. Yet amidst the confusion which ensued there was amongst many on both sides a sincere feeling for the Franciscan life, divorced from party rancour and the unreasonableness of

the fanatics. This feeling showed itself in a growing recognition that within the Franciscan organisation there must be room for a "mitigated" observance and a "stricter" observance: that those who so desired should be free to embrace the more primitive form of life according to the practice of the first days of the Order, whilst others might lawfully accept a milder interpretation of the Rule and yet not cease to be true sons of St. Francis. Such was the conviction of Blessed Giovanni Valle and Blessed Paoluccio di Trinci, who about the middle of the fourteenth century initiated the Reform of the Strict Observance. Giovanni had been trained in the Franciscan life by the "Spiritual" leader, Angelo Clareno, and Paoluccio was Giovanni's disciple. At a moment when the "Spiritual" party, owing to the fanaticism of a large section, seemed about to dissolve,⁶ Giovanni Valle applied to the Minister General Odo for permission to found a hermitage for himself and four companions at Brugliano on the borders of Umbria, which overlooks the Marches of Ancona. Odo, himself of the party of "the Community," willingly acceded to their request, and at Brugliano, as has been said, the glories of Rivo Torto and the Porziuncola were renewed and the Lady Poverty came again into her own. Giovanni's disciples increased, but shortly after his death, in 1351, some of them, under Gentile da Spoleto, sought exemption from the jurisdiction of the Superiors of the Order. A storm of indignation was thereby aroused amongst the friars of "the Community." Gentile's hermits were disbanded and for a time it seemed that Giovanni Valle's reform was at an end. Then it was that Fra Paoluccio had come forward and saved the movement. With the Minister General's permission he re-peopled the hermitage of Brugliano and shortly afterwards, as disciples came to him, he established hermitages in other places where the primitive Franciscan life was observed in all its purity. Under Paoluccio's government the Observant Reform grew rapidly and was favoured and protected by

⁶ Several small communities of Spirituels who looked to Angelo Clareno as their guide continued to maintain an independent existence until 1562, when they were suppressed by Pius V. They had long ceased at the time of their suppression to maintain their original ideals. cf. Letter of Caterina Cibo, Duchess of Camerino, in P. Edouard d'Alençon: *I Primi Conventi dei Capuccini* Appendix; and *De Primordiis*, p. 61. They were known as Clareni.

the Superiors of the Order ; whilst his relations with the friars of the Community generally were marked by a mutual charity ; so much so that in 1388 the Minister General Alfieri appointed Paoluccio his commissary, to govern in his name the hermitages of the Reform in Umbria and the Marches of Ancona, with power to send his friars to any part of Italy, Corsica and Bosnia. It was a statesmanlike solution of the difficulty, requiring it is true a mutual goodwill and liberal charity for its smooth working ; and for a time at least in Italy all went well, and the Observants and Conventuals—as the parties were now to be styled—lived side by side in fraternal amity ; as a mark of which in 1415 the Conventuals voluntarily ceded to the Observants the sacred chapel of the Porziuncola. Meanwhile, however, a reform movement, similar to that which had taken place in Italy, had spread to France. Here the relations between the Conventuals and the Reform were less happy. At the Council of Constance in 1415 the Observants of France, Burgundy and Lorraine were practically separated from the jurisdiction of the Conventuals, being allowed to choose their own Vicars, who owed but a nominal subjection to the Conventual Superiors : and thus began the juridical division of the Order. And now two events happened which tended to strengthen the Reform in Italy : one was the election of Pope Martin V, who greatly favoured the Reform, the other the appearance of San Bernardino of Siena, the most popular preacher of his time in the Italian peninsula. He had joined the Observants in 1402 in the hermitage of Il Colombaio, at that time governed by the Blessed Giovanni da Stroncone, a disciple of the Blessed Paoluccio. Bernardino's magnetic personality and wonderful holiness were undoubtedly the chief factor in the now rapid spread of the Reform. At the time of his death in 1444 the Reform numbered more than four thousand friars in Italy alone ; and beyond the Alps, particularly in France, it was growing daily in strength. In vigour and influence it was now the predominant partner in the Franciscan Order : for as the Observants waxed strong the Conventuals declined ; all the more vigorous vocations went to the Observants and in spite of repeated efforts to bring about a Reform within the Conventual body which might tend to unite the two bodies and

maintain the substantial unity of the Order, the Conventuals, owing to a succession of weak Ministers General, more and more lost ground both in the estimation of the people and in spiritual vigour : most of their energies indeed were wasted in violent denunciations of the successful Observants and in intrigues to circumvent their increasing influence. The final triumph of the Observants came in 1517 when Pope Leo X gave them the headship of the Order—reversing the law by which the Observants owed a nominal subjection to the Conventuals, and now placing the Conventuals under a nominal subjection to the Observants.

Meanwhile, however, the Observants themselves had paid the price of that popularity which swelled their ranks. With the spread of the Reform, the Observants no longer confined themselves to the hermitages or small houses such as had been the nurseries of the movement, and by the end of the fifteenth century they had already begun to rival the Conventuals in the magnitude of their buildings. The large Observant communities at once found themselves in the same difficulties as regards the law of poverty as that which confronted the larger Franciscan houses in the thirteenth century. The simple provision which sufficed for the hermitage of Brugliano was inadequate for the feeding and clothing of the friars in a commodious city friary. Once again the larger friaries became the centres of a relaxation of that strict poverty such as Paoluccio had striven for : and once again the simple life of the hermitage gave place to the more ceremonious and formal life of the conventual type. Undoubtedly, even in the larger Observant communities, a stricter poverty prevailed than in the Conventual houses, and a more spiritual atmosphere. The influence of the heroic sanctity of San Bernardino and of numerous saints who had cast a halo of holiness around the Observant Reform still worked to leaven the Observant family. Nevertheless, as a body the Observants had already succumbed to the same secular influences which had brought about the original decline from the pure Franciscan ideal. Yet the decline was not allowed to proceed without vigorous protest, and in several of the Observant provinces the growing relaxation was met by a strenuous effort on the part of the minority to revive a stricter observance : especially in Spain where

at the end of the fifteenth century with the approval of the Observant Superiors the brethren who aspired to a more austere life were encouraged to segregate themselves in hermitages or "houses of recollection" under Superiors appointed by the Ministers Provincial. Still for the most part the growing agitation for reform, more particularly in Italy, met with a violent opposition on the part of the Observant community, so that even the Observant Ministers General who were favourable to reform found themselves unable to effect it. Not until a later period, when the Observant Congregation had been shaken to its very foundations by the agitation for reform, was the question of internal reform seriously taken in hand : and by that time the most vital element in the reform movement had been driven to form itself into a congregation distinct from the Observants.

(iii)

Matteo da Bascio, then, was not singular in his desire for a stricter observance of the Rule ; nor was he alone at this very time in his discontent with the changed spirit of the Observants amongst whom he lived, except in one point ; but that was of cardinal importance as events were to show. In men's lives it is often the intangible things which count most in the shaping of their destiny ; and with Matteo da Bascio it was his strong individualism of character and temperament—that individualism which in its unselfishness and simplicity gives charm to the pages of the *Fioretti di San Francesco*, and which more than anything else made the organisation of the Order so difficult a problem when it came to embodying the Franciscan life in a legal constitution. To Matteo da Bascio his fidelity to the Rule and the spirit in which it was written, was directly a personal duty: he must be faithful to the Rule if he would be true to his own soul, no matter what opinions others held concerning it. When he set out from Montefalcone he had no thought of reforming the Order : he merely wanted to set himself right both in the letter and in the spirit with the Rule he had vowed to observe. He would gladly have done this within the community if he could ; but if he could not, then must

he look to himself apart from the community—though as a good Catholic he would submit himself to the judgment of Christ's Vicar on earth. Unconsciously to himself he was in his action formulating a principle which a few years later was to bring bitter strife into the Franciscan Order—the principle that the Rule is above the Order and that the Order exists only to effect the full observance of the Rule : a dangerous principle doubtless in the hands of any but the pure lovers of the Rule ; yet of its truth no Catholic can doubt, since, as we shall see, Christ's Vicar when appealed to, upheld it. Implicitly all the reformers appealed to it : but Matteo da Bascio in his utter simplicity set it as a naked light upon a candlestick, and in so doing, accomplished more than he set out to accomplish on that fugitive journey to Rome. But all this will be told in its proper place. For the moment we are concerned with Matteo.

Matteo at length reached Rome, though not without adventures on the way. At one place he fell in with a party of his Observant brethren, and with difficulty escaped detention as a fugitive. And a strange figure he must have felt himself amidst the medley of paganism and Christian worship which met him in the great City of Christendom. True, it was the Jubilee year when he arrived there ; and Clement VII had seen to it that the pulpits in the churches should be filled with " preachers of approved life " brought from outside Rome ; and the streets would resound to the chants of the pilgrims as they went their round of the churches to gain the great indulgence. But behind all this was the glittering background of the Rome of the Renaissance, pleasure-loving and gay, at heart godless and utterly selfish ; little reckoning that within a short three years the city would be a heap of ruins and her sinful gaiety changed to horror and mourning. If on his appearance in the streets, Matteo's rude and novel garb drew attention to him, some might perhaps hazard an opinion that he was another of those self-appointed prophets who of late had descended on the city to denounce its wickedness. But the Romans were tolerant : after all, a denouncing prophet was not an unpicturesque figure in the merry-go-round which the Romans called life. But Matteo had not come to denounce or preach, much as his heart yearned that all men should

renounce sin and love God. His apostolate was not here in this splendid city which bewildered him. Swiftly as might be he would return to his own province, whose people he loved and understood. He had braved the journey to Rome in winter and through a land devastated by war, for no other reason than to ease his own conscience and gain the liberty to live according to what he conceived to be the mind and intention of Saint Francis whose follower he had vowed to be.

According to the story told by one who knew him,⁷ Matteo on entering Rome went at once to the church of St. Peter to pray at the tomb of the Apostles : and there on the steps leading into the church Providence met him and took him as it were by the hand. For as he was mounting the steps a man accosted him and asked his purpose in coming to Rome. Learning that Matteo wished to see the Pope, the man bade him go to the Vatican on the following morning and enter in and he would undoubtedly meet His Holiness. Matteo followed the injunction and came face to face with the Pope in one of the Vatican corridors. At first the Pope was annoyed as Matteo unceremoniously cast himself at the Pontiff's feet and begged an audience ; but the simple earnestness of the friar constrained Pope Clement to listen patiently. " Holy Father," Matteo pleaded, " you know that in these times the Rule of St. Francis is not generally observed, and I desire to observe it to the letter : and I humbly pray you to allow me to wear this habit as worn by our father St. Francis, and to observe the Rule to the letter as he gave it. But our fathers will not wish that I wear this habit in their company. I pray, therefore, that it may please you to permit me to go about the world preaching the commandments of God, and by example and word according to my simplicity, exhorting all men to walk in the way of God and in good works."⁸ " That you may observe the Rule to the letter as you desire," the Pope replied, " We

⁷ Mario da Mercato-Seraceno : *Delle Origini dei Frati Minori Cappuccini Descrizione Seconda*, edit. P. Giuseppe da Fermo (Ancona 1927), p. 9 ; and the same chronicler's *Narratione*, MS. cit. cart. 53.

⁸ Thus Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, I, p. 131, and Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, cart. 54. Later writers add that Matteo requested permission to live an eremitical life, which, however, seems unlikely in view of Matteo's later story.

grant you all you ask of Us ; only in token of obedience you must every year at the time of the Chapter present yourself to your Minister Provincial." Matteo was about to retire when the Pope added that if he came again the following day a written document would be given him to attest the verbal concession. Thereupon Matteo returned to the church of St. Peter to await the morrow in prayer. At nightfall he ensconced himself in a pulpit and there slept awhile before renewing his vigil.⁹ But in the early morning he went forth intending to go to the Vatican for the promised letter : he was anxious to return to his own land without delay. On the steps of the church, however, he met the friend who had seemed to him God's Providence. "Do not be solicitous about the letter," said the friend. "The Pope's word is sufficient for your conscience. For the rest leave the matter in the hands of God." Matteo accepted the advice and without calling at the Vatican straightway left Rome on his homeward journey. Perhaps at the moment he recalled how St. Francis had bidden his friars seek no letters of protection from the Roman Court, but cast themselves wholly on the care of God.

By Matteo, and the chronicler to whom he related the event, the happy granting of his petition was attributed to the merciful intervention of God's Providence : and rightly so. But Divine Providence commonly works through human agency : and in this case it is not improbable that Caterina Cibo, Duchess of Camerino and niece of His Holiness, had something to do with the Pope's readiness to grant the petition. Not improbably the friend who met Matteo at St. Peter's was her messenger. For the Duchess Caterina was at this time in Rome ; and that she had not forgotten Matteo's services to the sick of Camerino becomes evident later on.¹⁰

Matteo on his return took the road which goes by Assisi, for he wished once again to renew his vows at the tomb of

⁹ Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Narratione*, cart. 54 ; *Descrizione*, loc. cit. p. 9 *seq.*

¹⁰ According to B. Feliciangeli (*Notizie e documenti sulla vita di Caterina Cibo-Varani (Camerino, 1891)*), the duchess went to Rome in October, 1524, and was there till the spring of the following year. Her letter to Giovanni da Fano (cf. *infra*, p. 8) suggests that she knew of the Pope's concession from personal knowledge—cf. P. Giuseppe da Monte Rotondo : *Gl' Inizi dell Ordine Cappuccino* (Roma, 1910), p. 13 *nota*.

the Saint he would follow so loyally. At Foligno, where he broke his journey before reaching Assisi, to his great joy he was shown an ancient medallion of St. Francis represented in a habit similar to that he himself now wore. When he had refreshed his spirit at the sacred places hallowed by the Seraphic Father, he sped across the hills, happy in the freedom which the Pope had given him.

(iv)

On reaching the neighbourhood of Montefeltro in the duchy of Urbino, Matteo at once took up his work as an evangelist. Throughout the whole of Lent he was thus engaged. Clad in his coarse habit, barefooted and bearing in his hand the crucifix, he went from place to place : but he kept to the mountainous country away from the neighbourhood of the friaries of his Order, for he feared lest he should be taken and forced to return to the community.¹¹

Like other wandering preachers at the time when he came to a town or village, he announced his approach with a loud cry : " To hell, to hell ! ye usurers ; to hell ye adulterers ; to hell ye blasphemers," was his usual cry.¹² A lonely ragged figure was Matteo like the prophet crying in the wilderness: yet loved by the people for his ever-ready sympathy and unselfish devotion in time of need.

So the Lenten season passed. At the end of April the Provincial Chapter of the friars was to be held at Jesi¹³ and thither he must go to present himself to the Minister Provincial, as the Pope had commanded.

Matteo was under no illusion that he would be received with cordiality. As he had told the Pope : " Our fathers will not wish that I wear this habit in their company." Yet in his simplicity he was perhaps not prepared for the recep-

¹¹ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo I, p. 139.

¹² Mario da Mercato-Seraceno : *Epist. ad P. Honorium*, loc. cit. p. 278. See also the attestations of Giovanni Antonio Cosso and Daniele Rosa in P. Gerardo da Villafranca : *P. Matteo da Bascio e P. Paolo da Chioggia* (Chioggia, 1913), p. 93.

¹³ The Capuchin chroniclers give the place of this Chapter as Matelica. The Provincial Chapter was held at Matelica in 1526 : in 1525 it took place at Jesi. cf. Alessio d'Arquata : *Cronica della riformata provincia dei Minori della Marca* (Cingoli, 1893), p. 14.

tion he actually received. He was to learn that a man may have a good conscience and still be adjudged a criminal with every appearance of sound law. For Matteo, be it remembered, had no letter of authentication to show his superiors in regard to the concession made to him by the Pope. He had fled from his friary and gone to Rome without leave ; he had returned and wandered about at his own will : and all he could put forward in his defence was his own word that he had the Pope's verbal approval for the life he had embraced. The Minister Provincial was hardly to blame if in such a case he proved sceptical. But Matteo's case was further prejudiced by the fact that he was not the only friar who, without asking leave, had left the community and gone a-wandering. Such fugitives were unfortunately not uncommon. There was for instance just about this time in the territory of Venice a Fra Angelico of whom we shall hear more further on, who in defiance of authority, became a wandering preacher, and set up to be the founder of a new sect.¹⁴ Others there were who, tired of community life, just wandered off at their will. The wandering friar had in fact become a nuisance not only to the Order to which he belonged, but to the people at large.¹⁵ Giovanni da Fano, the Minister Provincial, was therefore in no frame of mind to deal patiently with Matteo : and he was disposed still less to deal patiently with him just because of his plea that he sought to observe more strictly the Rule of the Order. Not that Giovanni was himself a lax religious : as we have already said he was one of those who bewailed the prevalent laxity ; as Minister Provincial he had set himself to enforce a more austere observance of poverty and the regular discipline. But Giovanni had two fast principles : the one, that the law as accepted by the Order—by which he understood the Rule as interpreted by Papal decretals and modifying dispensations—should be rigorously observed, no private or uncanonical relaxations being allowed ; the second that

¹⁴ cf. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo I, p. 320 *seq.*, where mention is also made of a Fra Raffaele, a Venetian, who adopted the Capuchin habit (as it was afterwards called) and gathered around him a band of disciples ; and similarly some hermits near Spoleto. Some of these afterwards joined the Capuchins.

¹⁵A few years later, in 1532, Gian Pietro Caraffa complained bitterly of these wandering friars in his memorial to Clement VII. cf. Pastor, *Hist. of the Popes*, vol. X, p. 442.

any attempt at reform or a stricter observance should be made within the common life of the community and under the guidance of the superiors so that the effective unity of the Order should be maintained. He did not believe in liberties which allowed individuals or communities to separate from the common observance: rather he would work that the common observance itself should be made stricter. Any individual or sectional movement he regarded as treachery to the Order at large. Such movements, he held, encouraged laxity on the part of the main body by creating a distinction between a common observance and a stricter observance. He resented the assumption that the perfect fulfilment of the Franciscan life was not obtainable in the actual constitution of the Order; and this resentment arose not from a vulgar conceit but from his very zeal for the honour of the Observant name, the zeal which made him so austere a religious and so rigid an upholder of discipline in the community. Add to this a certain aristocratic temperament—for Giovanni was at once of noble birth and of a mind well-trained in Canon Law¹⁶—and you will perceive at once the sharp contrast, mental and temperamental, between Matteo and his Minister Provincial. To Matteo the Franciscan Rule was everything, and he could view it only in his unlettered simple way. To Giovanni da Fano the Rule was dear, but he viewed it in its relation to the organised hierarchy of the Order. On all points he judged Matteo to have violated the law of obedience. Contrary to the decrees of John XXII¹⁷ and Leo X¹⁸ he had taken to himself a form of habit other than that commonly worn by the friars: also without permission from his superiors he had fled to Rome, and on his return had gone about preaching without authority, thereby incurring the guilt of apostasy, for which sin according to the bull of Leo X, the Minister Provincial was empowered to seize his person and imprison him, and inflict upon him other condign penances. It was a case in Giovanni's judgment where the welfare of the community at large demanded

¹⁶ Giovanni was of the noble family of the Pili of Fano. He was elected Minister Provincial of the Marches in 1518 and again in 1524. cf. Giuseppe Castellani: *Frate Giovanni Pili da Fano in Fano e S. Francesco d'Assisi* (Fano, 1926).

¹⁷ *Gloriosam Ecclesiam*, 23 January, 1318.

¹⁸ *Ite et vos*, 20 May, 1517.

the severest penalties in view of the unrest which was already manifest amongst too many of the friars. Accordingly Matteo was condemned to be imprisoned in the friary of Forano, where, it was to be hoped, confinement and fasting and penitential exercises would bring him to a more obedient frame of mind. Matteo meekly bowed to the judgment and allowed himself unprotestingly to be taken to Forano ; and as meekly submitted to the incarceration and the penances inflicted upon him : God in His own time would manifest his innocence of any sinful disobedience ; meanwhile he must bear the cross and strengthen his soul in patience. For nigh upon three months he was kept a prisoner. By that time it began to be talked about in Forano that Matteo was in the friary under compulsion and doing penance as an apostate. News of his situation was brought to the ears of the Lord Rainuzio Ottoni, who had a residence at Matelica and whose wife Donna Emilia was a daughter of Caterina, Duchess of Camerino. Donna Emilia, like all her family, had not forgotten Matteo's services at Camerino during the plague and at once sent news of Matteo's present condition to her mother. Whereupon the Duchess Caterina without any delay indited a letter to Fra Giovanni da Fano, demanding that Matteo be forthwith given into her hands. "I give you three days," wrote that strong-minded lady ; "if he is not delivered to me you will be banished from my State and I will write to His Holiness and let him know of what little account you hold his commands. Know well that His Holiness has given and conceded to him (Fra Matteo) the licence to go about preaching and to wear the habit with the capuce ; and you would hinder the will of God as His Holiness has declared it. But many words are not needed : do as I have said and save me from carrying this matter further."¹⁹ So towards the end of July, Matteo was set free and sent to Camerino to the Duchess Caterina ; and his first words were to appease her anger against the Minister Provincial and the friars who had imprisoned him.²⁰ Caterina would have had him abide awhile in the palace, thinking in motherly fashion that he needed some care

¹⁹ B. Feliciangeli, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

²⁰ Mario da Mercato-Seracceno, *Narratione*, cart. 62.

after the hardships he had undergone. Matteo thanked her for her gracious kindness but begged to be allowed straightway to resume his preaching. And Caterina, promising always to stand his friend in case of need, let him go.

Once again Matteo was free. He went forth a sort of divine vagabond, homeless and of no account in the society of men. Like the first disciples of St. Francis he found shelter where the charity of men opened their doors to him or in some natural retreat or wayside barn. He was a beggar indeed, like the beggar he had befriended that winter's day on his return to the friary of Montefalcone.

One incident that happened a few days after he had left Camerino was a sign of benediction on his new life. He was again in the neighbourhood of Matelica. Not far from the town was a hillside hermitage where dwelt a friar, Fra Francesco da Cartoceto, in company with another recluse Fra Pacifico, a priest of the Third Order of St. Francis. Fra Francesco was an ancient in years : he was one of those who kept alive the earlier tradition of Franciscan simplicity and poverty. Almost blind and nearing his end he was now; but for many years he had prayed for the renewal within the Order of the primitive Franciscan spirit, and hoped that he might see such a renewal before his death. Matteo was bending his steps towards the hermitage, purposing to seek a night's shelter there. It was the first day of August and at sunset would begin the great pardon of the Porziuncola which St. Francis in his love of men's souls had won as a perpetual legacy from Pope Honorius III. Matteo was approaching the hermitage when he was met by Fra Pacifico, who welcomed him with an astonished joy. For it seems that during the previous night Fra Francesco had dreamed that a young man clothed in the primitive habit of the Order was coming towards the hermitage to announce the great joy that the day of renewal was at hand ; and he was alert, awaiting the coming of the stranger. Eagerly therefore Pacifico ushered Matteo to the bedside of the dying friar. For a long time the two friars communed with each other, Francesco listening with delight to Matteo's story and thanking God that he had lived to see this day. Then Pacifico was bidden to shape a habit similar to that worn by Matteo ; and when it was quickly if roughly done, Fran-

cesco bade them clothe him with it. Then having blessed Matteo, the old man folded his hands and died.²¹

After that Matteo continued on his way alone, preaching the Divine word and nursing the sick, for the plague still lingered in places taking its toll of human life.

(v)

Meanwhile Matteo's adventures had become the talk of the friars in the whole Province of Ancona; much to the disturbance of mind of Giovanni da Fano. The excitement bore fruit towards the end of the year when two friars Lodovico da Fossombrone, a priest, and his brother Raffaele, a lay brother, petitioned the Minister Provincial to allow them to retire to a hermitage with others who wished to join them and to observe the Rule as the first Observants observed it.²² Giovanni da Fano peremptorily refused their request. But Lodovico da Fossombrone was not a man to be easily daunted. He came of a family accustomed to arms and he had in him the self-confidence and fearlessness which had made his father, Ser Niccolo, a military leader of repute. Rebuffed by the Minister, Lodovico and his brother took to flight and found a temporary refuge with the Conventual friars at Cingoli.²³ It was not uncommon for the friars of one branch of the Order to pass over to the other, notwithstanding the prohibition of Leo X: and Lodovico hoped that under the jurisdiction of the Conventuals he

²¹ Such is the story as told by Bernardino da Colpetrazzo. So also Mario da Mercato-Seraceno in *Epistola ad P. Honorium* (loc. cit.) and Giovanni da Terra Nuova in his Chronicle, *Anal. ord. Cap.* vol. XXIII, p. 15.

Boverius, following Mattia da Salò (*Historia Capuccina* I, p. 70), says that Matteo visited Francesco da Cartoceto first on his way to Rome and again on his return journey. *Annales, anno 1525.*

Francesco da Cartoceto's dream is illustrative of the opinion widely held by the more zealous Observants at this time, that a new Reform was about to be begun. See the story of the lay brother, related by Wadding, *anno 1520, XXVIII.*

²² Bernardino da Colpetrazzo I, p. 155, says of Lodovico: *Da molti frati era sollicitato che volesse intrare nella riforma, e questi erano frati zelanti.*

²³ *Riformaze Cingolane*, p. 172, quoted by P. Edouard d'Alençon in *De Primordiis Ordinis FF. Min. Capuccinorum* (Romae, 1921), p. 21.

might achieve his purpose of founding a hermitage. Thereupon Giovanni da Fano appealed to the Minister General and the Pope, with the result that on March 8, 1526, Clement VII issued a brief stigmatising the two fugitives, and even Matteo da Bascio, as apostates, and empowering him to arrest and imprison them until they made submission.²⁴ Thus armed with the law Giovanni da Fano with a band of friars set out for Cingoli; but news of their coming reached the two fugitives who took to the neighbouring hills. There the search went on for some days. At one time Lodovico and Raffaele were cornered. It was in the shadow of the evening: Giovanni and his band had approached the spot where the two fugitives lay and whence there was no escape. Suddenly the stillness was broken by weird unearthly cries, and Giovanni and his company, shaken with fear, took to flight.²⁵ Lodovico, you perceive, was a man of resource.

History takes up the course of the adventure on the Saturday before Palm Sunday when Lodovico and Raffaele presented themselves at the monastery of the Camaldolese hermits at Massaccio, begging to be granted shelter and protection. According to the account left us by Paolo Giustini, the Visitor of the monastery, who was there at the time, the two friars related how with apostolic permission they had separated from their own community with the intention of leading an eremitical life under the Rule of St. Francis. The Camaldolese were sympathetic; yet wishful to act according to law and with courtesy, they at once communicated with the Observant friars of the Romita near Massaccio. The Observant superior sent back word that he himself was willing that the two fugitives should be affiliated to the Order of the Camaldolese: it would be a good riddance for the Observants, he said in effect, if they were. Whereupon the Visitor of the Camaldolese proposed that Lodovico and Raffaele should be received as members of that Order and so everything would be regularised. A

²⁴ Brief *Cum nuper*, in Archivio Vaticano, Arm. 39, vol. 55, f. 36 t., published by P. Edouard d'Alençon, *De Primordiis*, pp. 21-22.

²⁵ Boverius, anno 1526, lxiv-lxix: The story is confirmed by Mario da Mercato-Seraceno in his *Narratione*, cart. 75. Mario says he heard the story from Giovanni himself, who afterwards laughed at his own fear.

cf. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo I, p. 185.

few days later, however, Giovanni da Fano with some Observants and the "capitano" of Massaccio appeared at the gates of the monastery "*con insolenze ed evaginati gladiis*," demanding the bodies of the fugitives. This the Visitor would not allow: for notwithstanding the gesture of courtesy he had shown the Observants, the Camaldolese had by law the right to admit anyone, even religious of other Orders, to their community. To end an unedifying contention and a possible attempt to use force, the Visitor gave an order quietly to one of his monks to disguise the two friars in the habit of the Camaldolese and hurry them away to the neighbouring monastery of the Order at Pascelupo. But the Observants with the "capitano" of Massaccio, discovering the ruse, pursued the fugitives to Pascelupo and again demanded their bodies; but once more the Camaldolese refused to surrender them and remained masters of the field. By this time Lodovico and Raffaele had formally requested to be aggregated to the hermits of Camaldoli; and their request was considered at a Chapter of the monks; but for the sake of peace with the Observants the Chapter decided not to receive them.²⁶

According to some, Lodovico, thus turned adrift, sought out Fra Matteo, who bade him do as he had done; go to Rome and throw himself on the judgment of the Apostolic See. Matteo, so the story goes, made it clear that the permission granted to himself did not allow him to aggregate companions: it was personal to himself alone. But to facilitate their journey he introduced them to the Duchess of Camerino who promised them her protection and influence.²⁷ Another conjecture is that Lodovico and Raffaele went direct from the Camaldolese to Rome, armed with introductions from Paolo Giustiniani.²⁸ In either case from the jurist's point of

²⁶ cf. *De commoratione Ludovici et Raphaelis a Forosempronis apud Eremitas Camaldulenses*, in *Anal. Ord. Cap.* vol. xxv, pp. 249, *seq.* See the letter of B. Paolo Giustiniani published by Dom Pacido T. Lugano, O.S.B., in *La Congregazione Camaldolese degli Eremiti de Montecorona* (Frascati, 1908), p. 205, *seq.* The assertion said to have been made by Lodovico in this account, that they had left their community with Papal permission, creates a difficulty. Did they presume that the licence given by the Pope to Fra Matteo was general for all wishing to observe the Rule more strictly?

²⁷ Boverius, *anno* 1526. So, too, Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Descrizione*, loc. cit., p. 19.

²⁸ cf. P. Édouard d'Alençon, *De Primordiis*, p. 24.

view it was all very irregular ; but we are dealing with a time when most things, whether for good or for evil, were done irregularly according to the letter of the law.

So Lodovico and Raffaele now went to Rome. It is, however, clear that Lodovico's purpose was not that of Matteo da Bascio. Lodovico was intent not merely on obtaining permission to live his own life in accordance with a stricter observance of the Rule ; already he had in view an eremitical community similar to many which were already springing up within the Observant family ; for Lodovico, as will become clear, was not a man who could live without a following. Scarcely three weeks since the two fugitives had been turned adrift from Pascelupo, Lodovico received a brief from the Grand Penitentiary, Cardinal Pucci, granting to himself, his brother Raffaele and Matteo da Bascio permission to separate from the community and live in a hermitage according to the Rule of St. Francis. They were indeed first to ask the permission of their Provincial Superior ; but should permission be refused they might still avail themselves of the apostolic permission now granted. They were to live under the protection of the Bishop of Camerino, though still remaining formal members of the Observant family, and they were permitted to collect alms for their sustenance and to enjoy all privileges accorded to the Order of Friars Minor ; they must, however, retain the habit of the Order to which they belonged.²⁹ Thus Lodovico and Raffaele gained their freedom, yet, as will be perceived, it was again a favour purely personal to themselves. It gave them no authority to admit associates nor to found a separate congregation. They were in fact still Observants, wearing the Observant habit, but living under special conditions. Possibly at this time Lodovico did not dare ask for more. Moreover, to form a separate congregation Lodovico would have required a more personal approbation from the Pope. The brief he received was merely an official licence from the Grand Penitentiary, issued it is true in the Pope's name but without his personal knowledge. Such briefs were easily obtained at this period,

²⁹ Brief *Ex parte vestra* of May 18 : *Bullarium Cap.* I, p. 1. The inclusion of Matteo's name in the brief seems to indicate that Lodovico and Raffaele had been in communication with Matteo.

provided one had the money to pay for them.³⁰ For the moment Lodovico was content : not so Giovanni da Fano. No sooner did he hear of Lodovico's move than he made personal application to the Pope protesting against the permission granted by the Penitentiary as being subversive of all regular authority and common discipline. If such permissions were allowed to stand, what was to prevent any friar tired of community life and the yoke of obedience from wandering off at will under pretext of a stricter observance? Giovanni's protest was backed by the influence of the Minister General Quiñones. The reply of Clement VII, it would seem, was favourable to Giovanni and the Observant superiors,³¹ and the Pope is said to have dissociated himself from the permission granted by the Grand Penitentiary, and to have expressed disapproval of it as being against the welfare of religion.

In the meanwhile another friar, of like mind to Matteo da Bascio, appears on the scene, Paolo da Chioggia. The story of how he came to be associated with Matteo is not altogether clear. Paolo—so the traditional story runs—had been an Observant friar and had gained repute both as a good religious and a powerful preacher. His mother being left a widow in needy circumstances, Paolo, compelled by filial duty, had become secularised in order to support her. Yet he continued to live an exemplary life in his native city edifying all who came in contact with him by his austerity of life and his love of retirement from the world. One day there appeared in Chioggia a friar already alluded to in this story, Fra Angelico, garbed in a habit which he declared to be of the primitive form as worn by St. Francis, that is with a wide hood sewn to the gown. He was commissioned by the Pope, so he gave out, to revive the primitive Franciscan observance. He was a passionate preacher, and this, together with his austere poverty, won him the hearing of the people and not a few followers, amongst whom was

³⁰ One of the complaints made by the reforming party in the Curia concerned the facility with which religious could obtain personal exemptions from the Penitentiary, to the disturbance and scandal of their fellow religious. It was one of the abuses mentioned in Gian Pietro Caraffa's indictment which he addressed to Clement VII in 1532. cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon, *De Primordiis*, p. 26, note 2.

³¹ So Giovanni da Fano relates in his treatise *Dialogo de la salute*, p. 26.

Paolo. But disillusionment came when it was found that Angelico was but a common fugitive bent on making a sensation and without any authorisation from the Holy See. Nevertheless the soul of Paolo had been touched with a fervent desire to live as St. Francis lived. Wherefore he set out to Rome and obtained permission to wear the habit Angelico had taught him to wear and to observe the Rule in its literal strictness. On his way thither he came to Fabriano and there met Matteo and for the first time heard of Matteo's concession from Clement VII and of the doings of Lodovico and Raffaele. Straightway he asked to be associated with them. By Matteo's advice he then pursued his purpose of seeking the Pope's sanction, and having received it, returned and joined himself to Matteo and with him went to Fossombrone, where they found Lodovico and Raffaele; he thus became the fourth member of the new Reform, if such it might yet be called.³²

But Lodovico and Raffaele were themselves in no secure position. Giovanni da Fano, armed with the Pope's brief and the Pontiff's repudiation of the Penitentiary's licence, was making every effort to get them arrested as apostates. Matteo he held to be safeguarded by the verbal permission accorded by the Pope in 1525; also there was the acknowledged protection of the Duchess Caterina to be considered.

³² As has been said, Paolo's history is not altogether clear. Mario da Mercato-Seraceno in his *Narratione*, cart 78-86, says that when Matteo da Bascio was returning from Rome in 1525 he passed through Perugia. A certain Fra Angelico della Fratta, seeing him, without consulting Matteo, adopted his form of habit and without licence from the Pope began to preach, but fearing persecution, he fled to Venice and made himself a nest, which he called "the hermitage," and began to receive associates. The first to be received was Paolo da Chioggia. (See also Mattia da Salò, *Historia Capuccina*, pp. 95-96). Paolo next formed a community of hermits, but not wishing to go against his conscience by forming a community without authority, he went to Rome to obtain the Pope's permission. What seems certain is that Paolo had already begun to live "after the Capuchin manner" before he knew Matteo da Bascio. On that ground in 1579 an attempt was made by Gioseffo Zarlino da Chioggia in a pamphlet published in Venice, to prove that Paolo was the institutor of the Capuchin Reform.

cf. P. Gerardo da Villafranca, op. cit.

P. Edouard d'Alençon is sceptical of the whole story. In particular he sees no reason why Paolo should go to Rome to receive permission to adopt the new form of life, since he was already secularised and therefore no longer subject to the Observants. To me this reasoning seems weak, especially if the story as it relates to Fra Angelico be true. In such case the Pope's permission—or at least the permission of the Penitentiary—would give greater security.

But for Lodovico he had neither compunction nor tolerance. He now addressed himself to the Duke of Urbino in whose territory Fossombrone was situated, and demanded the arrest of the two friars. But the Duke was not anxious to offend the Duchess of Camerino, with whose family he was considering a matrimonial alliance ; nor was he disposed lightly to accede to any man's demand concerning his own subjects. So the friars went unarrested and finally made their way for greater security to Camerino, where they sought the ready protection of the Duke and Duchess. Failing to take them by force, Giovanni next sought to win back the fugitives (as he not illegally regarded them) by persuasion. To this end he betook himself to Camerino and pleaded with the Duke and Duchess to withdraw their protection. The peace and security of the Observant communities, he declared, was in danger owing to the example set by the two fugitives and Matteo : their defiance of authority had caused unrest amongst many ; moreover, the people, not understanding the justice of the case but led away by an unreasoning sympathy, were aroused against the Observants ; and thus much harm was done to the Order. Therefore, he said, he wished to confer with Matteo and his associates in the hope of bringing them to a better mind. A conference was in fact held in the presence of the Duke and of the Duchess Caterina. Giovanni began badly : he was not yet used to bearing the olive-branch. He upbraided the three friars, Matteo, Lodovico and Raffaele, for deserting the family and bringing disturbance into the communities of the Province ; he denounced them bitterly as fugitives and apostates from the Order. Then remembering his mission he promised, should they return to their obedience, that he would treat them with fatherly kindness, nor bear any ill-will towards them.

At that Matteo replied briefly and simply as was his way. Taking from his sleeve a copy of the Rule he exclaimed : " This is the cause why we have left the community. To observe this Rule we have left the community where we could not observe it." But Lodovico, not content with this answer, set forth in detail the relaxations in the community and dramatically asked : " Things being as they are in the community, can the Minister accuse us of desertion and

apostasy, seeing that both Saint Francis and the Apostolic See have freed us from apostasy?" The conference ended in an outspoken defence of Matteo and his associates by the Duchess Caterina; and to this the Duke assented, bidding Giovanni leave the friars in peace and respect the licence granted them by the Apostolic See. So runs the account given by the annalist.³³ It says nothing of Giovanni's probable retort that Pope Clement had revoked the Grand Penitentiary's concessions: though such retort would doubtless be unconvincing to Caterina the Duchess, who would certainly reply that the Pope's brief to the Observant Superiors had been obtained by false reports as to the character of the three friars whose only sin was that they desired to observe the Rule more strictly. As we have said, it was a time when things moved forward whether for good or ill by irregular methods—a time when influence and favour more frequently than justice wielded the law and so brought the law to confusion, and when men had come to rest the rightfulness of a case more frequently upon what they considered its inherent justice than upon external legality. The divorce of law from justice had thus wreaked its revenge upon the law or at least upon the lawyers. With clearer insight than Giovanni himself yet possessed, his friend Baptista Varani, sister of the Duke of Camerino and abbess of the Poor Clares in the city, had urged him to leave this matter of the three friars in the hands of God. "Refrain from these men and let them alone," she had written to him, quoting the words of Gamaliel, "for if this work be of men it will come to nought, but if it be of God you cannot overthrow it."³⁴ But Giovanni was persuaded that this work was of men and that, moreover, it was his duty to overthrow it: little deeming that he himself would one day be one of its master-builders. But for the time he retired baulked of his aim, and devoted himself to the writing of a treatise in form of a dialogue to warn the

³³ Boverius, *anno* 1527—The long speech which Boverius attributes to Lodovico is curiously similar to the argumentative reply of Bernardino da Reggio, a Calabrian friar, to the Observant agents sent to arrest him, and reported by Mario da Mercato-Seraceno in his *Descrizione*, loc. cit., p. 42, seq.

³⁴ cf. Bolland: *Acta SS.*, mense Maii, VII, p. 511. *Beata Baptista Varani et primordia ord. F.M. Cap.* in *Anal. Ord., Cap.*, vol. xxii, p. 243, seq.

brethren against the evil example of these apostates, and to show them the better way of perfection.³⁵

And now plague and sorrow were to justify yet more the good opinion in which the sorely-tried friars were held in the city of Camerino and its neighbourhood. In the early months of the year 1527 came the plague, adding its terrors to the alarming reports of the emperor's invasion of Italy and of the savage ferocity of his Spanish and German mercenaries. In Camerino strong men blanched with fear, remembering the awful death-roll of 1523, and soon it was recognised that the scourge of 1527 would be no more merciful. And with the plague and the war came famine, for the army of the emperor devastated the land wherever it came.

Matteo and his three associates gave themselves over entirely to the service of the stricken people. They nursed the sick and comforted the dying, and as death took a heavy toll they often assisted in burying the dead. For the starving poor they went abroad in quest of food. Whether by day or by night there was no needed service which called to them in vain. At first they had no proper lodging in the city and often they went without their daily meal, too intent on serving others to think of their own needs. At length the Duchess Caterina, fearing for their physical strength, persuaded them to take a simple lodging she had prepared for them within the castle, where they would be fed and find some rest amid their incessant labours.

Then towards the middle of May came the almost unbelievable news that Rome had fallen before the attack of the emperor's troops and that the Pope was a prisoner in the castle of Sant' Angelo. Soon upon this came further word of the sack of Rome; the city was in ruins, churches had been violated and their treasures, even the sacred vessels, seized by the soldiery; men, women and children were

³⁵ *Dialogo di la salute tra el frate stimolato e el frate rationabile circa la regula de li frati minori e sue dechiARATIONE per stimolati.* The dialogue was published at Ancona by master Bernardino of Vercelli on June 5, 1527. It reveals Giovanni as one zealous for the maintenance of poverty; but he would have it to be a becoming decent poverty. The main point of the argument is: "Can we with a safe conscience follow the community?" to which Fra Rationabile replied: "We can and we must" (*Dialogo*, p. 57). In this reply lay the essential question, as we have already remarked, which was later to be fought out between the reformers and the partisans of the community.

being ruthlessly slaughtered ; the cardinals were in the hands of the soldiers who treated them with every indignity: not even the nuns were spared. As the news filtered through, the whole of Italy reeled with stupefied horror and amazement. It was as though the world were at an end ; plague and famine and war—and now Rome the Eternal plundered and in ruins, the Pope besieged in Sant' Angelo by the imperial rabble, who respected neither God nor man. Camerino shared in the stupefaction. Its immediate effect was the disorganisation of all conception of society : it was a moral as well as a political disruption such as might be when chaos sweeps the land. Whilst the people of Camerino were still reeling under the shock, the abbess Baptista Varani, sister of the Duke, died of the plague. Her beautiful holiness, enveloping as it did one of the most vivacious intellects of the time, had cast a glory over the city. Three months later the Duke himself fell a victim to the relentless scourge—the last of the Varani to hold secure the independence of the city. In such catastrophic gloom did the four friars move ceaselessly amongst the stricken citizens, serving and heartening the sick and weary by their own indomitable spirit of faith and charity.

Yet had they still to bear the cross which was intimately their own. At a Chapter of the Observants held in May a renewed demand was made for the extinction of the subversive friars who were fighting the plague and the gloom in Camerino ; following the Chapter further fulminations were launched against them. But Caterina, the Duchess, though her hands were full with the sorrows of her city, was not therefore the less careful of the friars who were serving her people so well. In co-operation with the Bishop of Camerino she made a counterstroke for which Giovanni da Fano, it would seem, was unprepared ; not improbably it was Lodovico who suggested it. It was a petition to the Provincial Superior of the Conventual Franciscans to take Lodovico and his companions under their protection. Caterina herself wrote to the Master General of the Conventuals and to the Cardinal Protector of the Order, Andrea della Valle, urging this solution of the difficulty. The Conventual General replied that he would willingly accept the four friars in a manner as his own sons (*tanquam proprios*);

they would be free to live the life they aspired to, only they must every year present themselves before the Provincial Minister of the Conventuals in token of their dependence.

Yet this did not content the watchful Duchess. She recognised that the four friars were in an anomalous position. They were in reality a mere company voluntarily associated: they had no proper status as an organised society; separated from the larger community, they yet formed no community of their own and except for the light supervision of the Provincial of the Conventuals, they were under no proper superior. That was the weakness of their position from a juridical point of view. The Duchess Caterina recognised the anomalous position and now was determined to use all her influence so that the position of the friars should be definitely regularised!

Early in June 1528 Clement VII was with his court at Viterbo. He had escaped from the castle of Sant' Angelo in the first days of December and for six months had taken refuge in the poverty-stricken fortress of Orvieto. Lack of the very necessaries of life finally drove him hence: at Viterbo it was hoped things would be more tolerable. Hither a few weeks later came the Duchess Caterina to put the matter of the friars plainly before His Holiness, with the freedom a niece might profitably use. She had brought with her a petition signed by Lodovico and Raffaele, which besought the Pope to grant unto the two supplicants permission to live an eremitical life under the Rule of St. Francis, to wear the beard and the habit with the square hood sewn to the habit and to preach to the people. Further it was requested that the associates should be under the protection of the Conventual Friars Minor but directly governed by a superior of their own having authority similar to that exercised by Ministers Provincial; and that they be empowered to receive clerics and even religious of whatsoever Order, provided they have asked leave of their superiors, even though leave be not granted them, and also laics who might wish by divine inspiration to lead a like solitary and austere life.³⁶

The Pope on receiving the petition at first hesitated: he

³⁶ cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon: *De Primordiis*, p. 44, seq., where the original text of Lodovico's petition is edited from the copy in the Vatican Archives.

would consider the matter and take counsel with the cardinals. Caterina the Duchess was well content to await the result ; she herself would not fail to give advice to these same cardinals. So it came about that on July 3, 1528 Clement issued a brief which a few days later was set forth in the more solemn form of a bull addressed to Lodovico and Raffaele da Fossombrone, conferring a canonical status on the new fraternity and granting all that Lodovico and Raffaele asked for.³⁷

The bull *Religionis Zelus* was the charter of what soon was to be known as the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin.³⁸

The heart of the Duchess Caterina was glad as she set forth to return to Camerino carrying with her the precious document. On her arrival she caused it to be proclaimed by the Court heralds in the public square of the city ; and the Bishop Bongiovanni, rivalling the Duchess' enthusiasm, ordered the bull to be read to the people in all the churches of the diocese. Camerino was proud of its friars and their triumph : it had not forgotten the years of the great plagues.³⁹ But in the friary at Matelica, Fra Giovanni da Fano took anxious thought for the future.

³⁷ *Religionis Zelus*, Bullar. Ord. Cap. I, pp. 3-4. The original copy, it may be noticed, is endorsed : " *Intercedente ducissa Camarin, pro Ludovico et Raffaello fratribus et fratribus ord. conventualium minorum.*" cf. *De Primordiis*, p. 46, seq.

No explicit mention is made in the bull of the faculty to receive religious of other Orders. Yet this omission was made good—though probably unconsciously on the Pope's part—by the final paragraph, allowing to the new congregation all the privileges enjoyed by the Friars Minor and the Camaldolese. One of the privileges of the Camaldolese, was that religious of any Order might be received by them ; and in virtue of this privilege Lodovico would be free to accept even Observant Friars, should they come to him. Still it is clear that at first Lodovico was either unaware of his privilege or did not think it wise to avail himself of it as regards the Observants. The Observants, who next joined him, received permission to do so from the Grand Penitentiary.

³⁸ It should be noticed that it was in virtue of this bull that the friars, other than Matteo, were allowed to adopt the " primitive " form of the Franciscan habit. The brief of May 18, 1526 enjoined on Lodovico and Raffaele to wear the Observant habit.

³⁹ Boverius, anno 1528.

P. Edouard d'Alençon regards with suspicion the story of the Duchess' triumphant return with the bull to Camerino. Yet it is perfectly in keeping with the character of Caterina and inherently not improbable.

CHAPTER II

FIRST DAYS OF THE REFORM

(i)

UNTIL now Matteo and the small company who had gathered to him had no dwelling they could in any sense claim as their own. But as a recognised religious congregation with canonical power to accept novices, it became necessary that they should have some abiding dwelling place set apart for their use. The bull *Religionis Zelus* assumed that they would live in hermitages or small religious houses. The Bishop of Camerino therefore made over to them for their use the small church and presbytery of San Cristoforo, somewhat more than a mile distant from the city beyond the Porta dell' Annunziata. Hardly had they settled there than five Observant friars petitioned to join them. In due time these were admitted, permission having been granted for their transference by the Grand Penitentiary.¹ But before they could be received it was necessary to find a larger dwelling place. Whereupon at the instance of the Duchess Caterina the Hieronymite monks made over to them a practically deserted hermitage three miles from the city, in the wooded district known as Colmenzone.² Within a few days six more novices came, of whom four were Observant friars, and this made a new foundation imperative, since it was a first principle of the Reform that only a few friars should dwell in one place. So before the end of 1528 a second hermitage

¹ cf. Pius a Langonio : *Bullarii Ord. Min. Cap. Regestum*, p. 23. Boverius, *Annales anno 1526*.

² The Hieronymites were a congregation founded in the beginning of the fifteenth century by two Franciscan tertiaries, Carlo da Monte Granello and Galtero da Marso. They afterwards adopted the rule of St. Augustine. cf. Wadding, *Annales, anno 1405*. The monastery had originally been occupied by the Franciscan Clarini before it came to the Hieronymites. cf. *Analecta Ord. Min. Cap. XXIV*, p. 24.

was found at Monte Melone.³ Of this hermitage Fra Lodovico was chosen superior. Early in the following year two more hermitages were occupied, one at Albacina near Fabriano,⁴ which like the first two was in the diocese of Camerino; the other at Fossombrone in the diocese of Montefeltro, which was thus the first step in the wider extension of the Reform. In these days the general government of the nascent congregation was in the hands of Lodovico, to whom in conjunction with Fra Raffaele the Papal bull had granted the faculty of receiving associates; but all looked to Matteo as the father of the Reform, and Lodovico it would seem was no less loyal than the others. But Matteo was not born for administration and government: enough for him was the burden and responsibility of his own soul. In his selfless charity he willingly gave what help and encouragement was in his power to give to the members of the new family which in some way, though not by deliberate intent, he had been instrumental in bringing into being. Yet he shrank from the leadership which the reverence and affection of the others would have forced upon him.

Towards the end of April, 1529, a chapter consisting of twelve members of the Reform was convoked by Lodovico, for the purpose of electing superiors and drawing up a Constitution.⁵ The number of friars, twelve, called to the chapter was significant; since it was with twelve companions that St. Francis had drawn up his original Rule and gone to Rome to seek the Papal approbation of his fraternity.⁶

One must go back in mind to the first days of the Francis-

³ To-day known as Pollenza, between Macerata and Tolentino. Nearby was the castle of La Rancia, a residence of the Dukes of Camerino.

⁴ The hermitage of Albacina attached to the church of Santa Maria in Acquarella had been occupied by hermits in the fourteenth century. In 1441 it became the property of the Chapter of the Lateran basilica. cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon, *De Primordiis*, p. 60, note 6. See *Epistolæ duæ ad P. Matthiam Salodiensem* in *Anal. Ord. Cap. vol. xxii*, p. 139, seq.

⁵ According to Bernardino da Colpetrazzo (I, p. 293), it was the brethren who suggested to Lodovico the holding of a Chapter to elect superiors "according to the custom of the Order."

⁶ Similarly the first layman received into the Reform, Gerolamo dello Scorzolo, was named Bernard, in memory of Bernard da Quintavalle, the first companion of St. Francis. Gerolamo was a man of some wealth and, like the first Franciscan Bernard, distributed his goods to the poor in the public square of Fossombrone on the eve of entering the Order.

can fraternity to find such another Chapter as that which now assembled at the hillside hermitage of Albacina. In no order of decency could the twelve be lodged in the narrow hermitage ; to receive them all it was necessary to build some wattle huts. Of food there was a scarcity, for the friars would not fare better than their hungry neighbours, even when the affection of the people would force gifts upon them. They had neither beds nor tables ; they slept on straw upon the ground. When not engaged in the work of the Chapter the twelve spent their time in prayer, avoiding useless conversation and distraction : and as one reads the Constitution which was the result of their deliberations and the mirror of their sacred ambition, it is the spirit of prayer and the unworldliness of the mountain solitude which confronts one, shaming with the simplicity of a great faith the prudence of the world and of the flesh. The Constitution, too, was written not in clerkly Latin but in the Italian vernacular which the community spoke—a symptom of the simplicity of all their doings.

Thus then were the friars of the new reform to live. They were to recite the Divine Office on a monotone without chant or modulation of voice, and rise at midnight for Matins even on the last three days of Holy Week. No public office was to be added to the Divine Office, that so the brothers might have more time for mental prayer. Only one Mass was ordinarily to be said in each friary at which all the priests should be present ; but on solemn feasts all the priests might celebrate. They were not to accept stipends for Masses, nor to sing High Masses to attract a concourse of people. On no account were they to follow funerals or celebrate dirges ; nor to take part in processions except the liturgical processions of Corpus Christi and Rogation days. Silence was to be strictly observed in the friaries. At table ordinarily only one dish was to be served. The friars were not to quest for meat, cheese or eggs ; but if these foods were voluntarily offered them, they might accept them. No store of food might be laid in beyond what was necessary for three or four days or a week at most ; but they must quest from day to day. Those who were unable to go barefooted might wear sandals. The Superiors were to send out preachers frequently “ that they may not be idle

in the vineyard of the Lord” ; and not only during Lent, but at all times ; but they must not accept any remuneration for their preaching. The preachers in their sermons were to shun subtle arguments and flowers of speech ; they must preach simply in fervour of spirit. They were not to use many books for the preparation of their sermons, one or two books only being allowed them. Classes for the study of literature were not to be established ; but the friars might study the Sacred Scriptures and such devout authors “ as love God and teach us to embrace the cross of Christ.” The friars were not to hear the confessions for seculars save in cases of necessity ; nor to undertake the charge of convents without the consent of the General Chapter. They might not have syndics or procurators (to provide for their temporal wants) : “ No other syndic shall there be for us save only Christ our Lord ; and our procurator and protector shall be the most blessed Virgin Mother of God ; our deputy shall be our father St. Francis ; but all other procurators we altogether reject.” Their houses were to be built outside cities and towns yet not far distant from them ; the proprietorship always being vested in the municipality or the donor, who might turn the friars out at will ; in which case the brethren must without delay go and seek another place. Wherever possible the houses must be constructed of wattles and mud ; but where this is not possible stone may be used ; the cells were to be so poor and small that they might be taken for sepulchres rather than cells. The churches too must be small and poor, though withal decent and clean ; only two or three vestments were allowed and these must not be of velvet, silk or gold cloth. Even the chalices must be of pewter, not of silver or gold.⁷

Such in brief were the Constitutions of Albacina. Almost every clause was directed against an existing abuse. In the churches even of the Franciscans the spirit of the Renaissance with its love of display had cast out simplicity ; the severe chant of the liturgy had given place to melodies more suited to the theatre than to a church. The following of

⁷ cf. *Le Prime Costituzioni dei Frati Minori Cappuccini*, Roma, 1913. The original Italian text is given in Mattia da Salò : *Historia Capuccina*. Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1529, gives a Latin version of this text ; but his version in several instances is incorrect.

funerals, the chanting of dirges, and the private celebrations of Masses had come to be looked upon as sources of income. Mental prayer and the cultivation of interior life had at this time but little place even in religious communities where religion had become almost exclusively a matter of external formalities and popular celebrations. Preaching, too, had degenerated into mere oratory ; and the cultivation of the ancient classics was held of more account than the study of the Fathers of the Church. Theology itself had become a barren dialectical pastime, having long since fallen away from the virile thinking and serious purpose of the creators of the Scholastic School.

So utterly had the life and thought of the time lost the very instinct of religion, that a new beginning—or an abrupt breaking away from the present—seemed to many the only sure road to reform. It was that which led to the widespread revival of the eremitical and contemplative forms of the religious life. Salvation lay in discarding the secularising developments which had overgrown the fair garden of religion like luxuriant weeds, and in a return to the almost forgotten but essential spiritual content of Christian faith and practice. In such light must we view the Constitutions of Albacina. They were a revolt against the worldliness and unreality which reigned in the high places of Christendom and amongst Christians at large. They are thus an incident of no mean character in the emergence of the Catholic Reformation. Not that the friars assembled in that rude hermitage in the Marches of Ancona had any world-wide scheme in their mind's vision : they were but seeking to be true to themselves and to the ideal life which held their desire. But then it is mostly in this wise that the vital streams of life take their rise.⁸

The drawing up of the Constitutions was the main purpose of the Chapter—that and the election of the Superiors of the new congregation. At the election Matteo was chosen

⁸ On two points in their Constitutions the Capuchins seem to have been influenced by the customs of the Camaldolese hermits—the wearing of the beard in its natural form and the chanting of the Divine Office on a monotone.

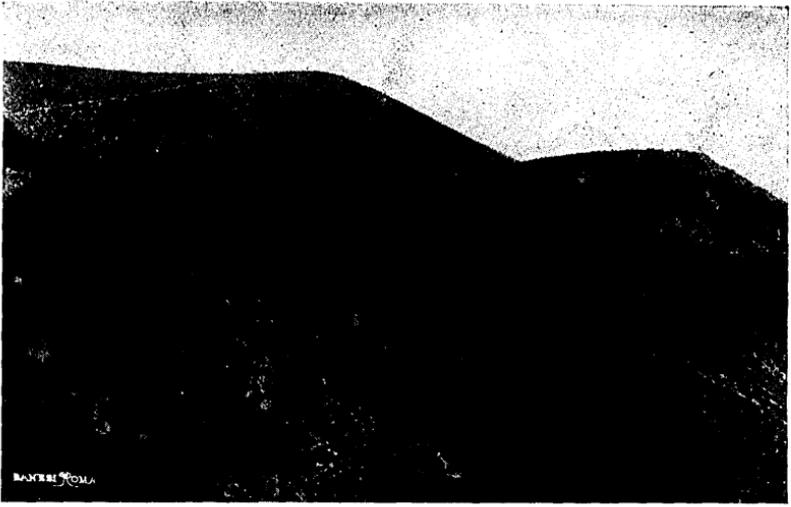
In the later discarded Constitutions of 1638 the motive for the wearing of the beard was declared to be “ the example of Christ the Most Holy, of the Seraphic Father St. Francis and other saints.” No such motive is given in the Constitutions of Albacina. cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon, *De Primordiis*, pp. 50, 51.

Vicar General notwithstanding his tearful pleading that this burden should not be imposed upon him, and with him were associated in the governing council Lodovico da Fossombrone, Angelo da Sant' Angelo in Vado (one of the latest adherents to the reform) and Paolo da Chioggia. So ended the Chapter of Albacina.

The new reform was now definitively established with a written Constitution and canonical superiors. But it still had no distinctive appellation to mark it off from the family of the Observant Franciscans and the family of the Conventuals. The Papal bull *Religionis Zelus* had indeed described them as Friars Minor of the eremitical life—*de vita heremetica*; but that was an appellation common to many Franciscan communities living in hermitages. It was the people who gave them the name by which they were to be known in history. For when the friars first appeared in the streets of Camerino, clothed in their coarse habits and wearing the beard, the children of the city at once connected them with the wandering hermits and so greeted them, exclaiming: "Scapuccini! Scapuccini!"—"Hermits! Hermits!" and before long the people generally came to refer to the friars as "Fрати Scapuccini." After a while even the Roman writers adopted the popular nickname, softening it to *Cappuccini*; though not without an attempt to enforce the appellation of *Capuciatii*, the designation already in use amongst the friars who wore the larger hood. But the popular name prevailed, though purists in Latin still speak of them as *Capulati*. In the English tongue we call them Capuchins.⁹

⁹ Clement VII first uses the title *Capuciatii* in his brief of April 9, 1534 (cf. Bull. Capp. I, p. 11-12). Paul III on Dec. 18, 1534, in the bull *Nuper accepto*, addressed it: *Fratribus ordinis minorum Cappuciatii nuncupatis*. In a brief dated Jan. 12, 1535, the title *Cappuccini* is used for the first time in official documents.

cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon, *De Primordiis*, p. 51, seq. Boverius (*Annales*, anno 1529) relates that the name was first given by the children of Camerino as an affectionate appellation, when they noticed the large hood worn by the friars. But the picture drawn of the children thus affectionately greeting the friars on their appearance in the streets, is contradicted by Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, who says: "*Le donne e i fanciullic come gli vedevano, fuggivano, tanto terrore gli dava quel capuccio, vedendogli con le barbe lunghe et cosi austeri*" (*Chronica II, Dell' Santa Poverta*, p. 1236).



S. MARIA DELL' ACQUARELLA, ALBACINA



THE FRIARY OF CAMERINO, BUILT IN 1531



(ii)

One who knew them has left us a description of the life of the first Capuchins as he himself witnessed it ; and his description proves that the Constitutions of Albacina were no merely pious aspiration, but a simple statement of a life actually lived. Their garments, he tells us, were of the coarsest material ; they went barefooted even in winter, holding a crucifix in their hands. There was water, bread, vegetables and fruit ; seldom did they eat flesh-meat. They observed the fasts rigorously, some of them fasting almost continually. Their dwellings they chose by preference in lonely places, two or three miles from the town, and they were as simple and poor as it was possible to have them ; they were built of wood and loam. A board served for their bed ; the weaker brethren being allowed a mat. The doors of the cells were so low that a man must stoop to enter them ; the windows were narrow and small and without glass. Their churches were small, “ the size of the Sanctuary of our Lady at Loreto ” : they were simple and clean, devoid of all precious ornaments ; even the sacred vestments were simple and poor. Everything preached poverty.¹⁰

Of their domestic life he tells us : it was the custom of “ our first fathers,” following the example of St. Francis, to take to the owner of their places a gift of salad or fruit by way of rent, and to thank the owner for allowing them to occupy the place during the past year, and they would then ask permission to continue there for another year.¹¹ And of their domestic life this same writer informs us : “ When the brethren were on a journey in those first days of the congregation and came to one of our places, the brethren in the place seeing them from afar would cry out once or twice : Praised be our Lord Jesus Christ ! and the brethren on the road would respond in the same manner ; and when they met they would embrace each other with great gladness and even with tears for the joy which filled the hearts of

¹⁰ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, II, p. 1233, *seq.* See also *Relazione del luogo di Commenzone e di Frate Bernardo da Offida in Anal. Ord. Cap.* vol. xxiv, p. 23, *seq.*

¹¹ St. Francis, in order to avoid any appearance of ownership, ordered the brethren every year to take a basket of fish to the Abbot of Monte Sabasio, as rent for the use of the Porziuncola.

these servants of God at the coming of the brethren, and for three days they ceased not to load them with every possible charity. And in those days the brethren talked amongst themselves of nothing but the things of God and of their congregation with a humble and low voice, trusting to God to prosper them and to enkindle in them the fervour for the perfect observance of the Rule and to enable them to suffer willingly every ill for the love of God. And when they must part they accompanied the brethren for a space on their way. Did any brother leave the congregation they were filled with great sorrow and continued for many days to pray for him. When any fell sick, the Father Guardian was the first to attend to his needs, and all the brethren had towards him so much tenderness and charity that no loving mother was more solicitous for her sons than these servants of God were for their sick brethren. Such was the gladness they found in their charity towards each other . . . that their loving companionship with each other was more delightful to them than the good feeding and clothing and show which abound in other Orders. Sometimes when there was but little food in the house they would offer it one to another and say : ' take it, you need more food, you need it more than I ; a little suffices me, but not you.' To which the other would reply : ' I am young and can suffer the more easily.' And often in this holy contention the morsels remained where they were, since each wished that the others should eat them."¹² It is a charming picture, revealing to us perhaps the secret of the endurance with which those first Capuchins braved both the rigour of their own manner of life and the dire persecution in which their Reform was bred.

(iii)

In the meantime whilst those pioneer Capuchins in the Marches of Ancona were pursuing their vocation simply but heroically, thinking not of vast schemes for the reformation of the Franciscan Order and the world at large, but of their

¹² cf. *I primi minori Cappuccini nel primo secolo dell' Ordine in l'Italia Francescana*. (Roma, 1927), anno ii, fasc. i, pp. 26-27, a hitherto unpublished manuscript of the sixteenth century, edited by P. Sisto da Pisa. O.M. Cap. It is mainly a transcript from Colpetrazzo. cf. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, loc. cit.

own personal fidelity to the ideal poverty they loved, events were happening which were eventually to make the Capuchin Reform a world-wide organisation and influence, though as we shall see this goal was to be attained through much suffering and by unlooked-for paths.

It began with the resignation by Matteo da Bascio of the vicar-generalship within ten days of his election by the Chapter of Albacina.¹³ Matteo had spent the days in visiting the four hermitages to encourage the friars in the hard life they had undertaken. But as each day went by, the responsibility of government had weighed upon him and he was restless to take up again the vagabond life of God's evangelist. Simply he told the friars, God willed him to be a wandering preacher; there lay his vocation; he was fitted for none other. So when he came to Fossombrone he handed over the government to Lodovico, the First Definitor, and again betook himself to the road.

Lodovico took over the reins with characteristic energy. Within a few months we find him in Rome armed with letters of introduction from the Duchess Caterina to a number of influential persons. Lodovico was aware that if the Capuchin Reform was to maintain itself against the unconcealed hostility of the Observants, it must be more than a mere local institution confined to the Marches of Ancona. If it was to live at all it must spread far and wide and Rome must be its centre. It is not improbable that some intuitive sense of Lodovico's far-reaching ambition for the new congregation—perhaps even some spoken communication on the subject—contributed to Fra Matteo's hasty resignation of the vicarship. Matteo sought for nothing but the freedom of the Franciscan life; he had neither the will nor the temperament for the founding of an Order.

In his project to introduce the Reform into Rome, Lodovico had the whole-hearted sympathy of the Duchess Caterina. From her point of view it would be well that the friars should come directly under the eyes of the Pope; their unworldly simplicity and their devoted labours for the people would surely gain them the Pontiff's esteem

¹³ *Chronica Johannis* says he resigned after ten days, Mario da Mercato-Seraceno (*Narratione*, cart 98), "after a few days." Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1529, at the end of two months.

and protection. Caterina believed in the Capuchins and their power for good ; and she believed too that they had only to be known to win the respect of all who had the reform of the Church at heart. So when Lodovico set out, he carried with him letters of recommendation from the Duchess to her friends in Rome and to her uncle the Pope.

Lodovico's audience with the Pope was eminently satisfactory, at least to himself, for he was nominated Commissary-General of the Capuchins until such time as it should be expedient to hold a Chapter.¹⁴ This direct nomination by the Pontiff gave Lodovico an authority practically independent of the controlling influence of his fellow definitors : in fact, from this time his rule was autocratic. He was fortunate, too, in finding friends amongst the governors of the hospital of San Giacomo—the great hospital for incurables. Two of the governors of the hospital were brothers of the Duchess of Camerino ; and its almoner, Lorenzo Vanozzi, had already befriended him on his visit to Rome three years previously. The result was that Lodovico was offered the little church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli with its adjoining presbytery which was in the gift of the governors, on condition that the friars should minister to the sick in the hospital. Thus was the first Capuchin settlement in Rome made.¹⁵

To staff the foundation, Lodovico brought friars from Colmenzone and Fossombrone ; and in a very short while their devotion to the sick and their austere simplicity of life won them the goodwill of the Roman people.

Then occurred one of those fortuitous happenings which not infrequently determine the course of human events. The Capuchins had hardly taken possession of the new house when Lodovico received a visit from a Fra Bernardino da Reggio, an Observant friar from Calabria, known to his intimates as "il Giorgio" from his family name.

¹⁴ So says Boverius, following Bernardino da Colpetrazzo. But in the Act of Affiliation granted to the Calabrian Friars (vide *infra*, p. 61) Lodovico is described as *Vicarius-Generalis*.

¹⁵ cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon : *Il primo convento dei Cappuccini in Roma* (Alençon, 1907) : *De Primordiis*, p. 66 ; *Tribulationes Ordinis FF. Min. Capucinatorum* (Romae, 1914), p. 5.

Boverius (*Annales*, 1529) attributes a large share to Vittoria Colonna in the settling of the Capuchins at Santa Maria dei Miracoli, but P. Edouard doubts this. He suggests that Vittoria Colonna's friendship for the Capuchins more probably began the year following at Naples.

Bernardino was a man with a somewhat remarkable history. He had taken his doctorate in theology at Paris but was also a man of letters in the wider sense. He had an unusual knowledge of Greek, which he spoke with fluency, and was much sought for at gatherings where philosophy and literature were debated. Yet on his return to his own religious province in Calabria, he had joined with some few friars in seeking to bring about a reform of the Order. About five years past, so Lodovico now learned, these Calabrian friars had been permitted to make an experiment in reform at the convent of the Santi Apostoli in Rome ;¹⁶ but the experiment had failed and in 1526 they had returned to their own province, where they assumed the title of Recollets and lived an eremitical life under the jurisdiction of the Observant superiors, and with the approval of the Minister General, Quiñones.¹⁷ But things were not going well, owing to the opposition of the general body of the Observants, and Fra Bernardino had come to Rome to seek protection for his brethren. In Rome he heard of Lodovico and the Capuchins and now came seeking information as to their life and prospects. Frequent consultations followed, which ended in a petition from Bernardino asking that he and his brethren might be affiliated to the Capuchin Reform. On August 16, a formal document was drawn up in the presence of a number of witnesses, by which Lodovico admitted the Recollets of Sant' Angelo in Calabria into the Capuchin family. Fra Bernardino thereupon returned with the document of affiliation to Calabria, where he was gladly received by his Recollet brethren ; and some of them straightway adopted the Capuchin habit and proclaimed their adherence to the new Reform. Yet as we shall see events were not to run smoothly and three years were to pass before the affiliation was finally consummated. But the meeting of Lodovico with Fra Bernardino marks a stage in the development of the

¹⁶ The convent of the Dodici Apostoli was the headquarters of the Conventual friars. Did the Calabrian Recollets pass over to the Conventuals in the hope of a greater freedom to carry out their reform, as did the Capuchins in the Marches of Ancona and later the Alcantarines ? If so, on their return to Calabria they rejoined the Observants. Boverius (*Annales, anno 1529, CV*) erroneously states that the *Dodici Apostoli* was at this time under the jurisdiction of the Observants.

¹⁷ See *Litterae P. Ludovici Rheimi*, edited by P. Edouard d'Alençon in *Tribulationes Ord. FF. Min. Cap.*, p. 62.

Reform.¹⁸ Lodovico had now definitely embarked on his policy of establishing the Reform throughout the Italian provinces and even beyond. Nor did he shrink from the consequences of his avowed policy, which soon became evident. He at least had courage, even though as was afterward said, he was more adventurous than prudent. Others besides the Calabrians now sought to be associated with the new Reform. Not only in the Marches of Ancona but in Rome itself numbers of the Observants passed over to the Capuchins, and Lodovico welcomed the new-comers notwithstanding the protests of their superiors. And this was the beginning of new troubles which for many years were to mark with suffering the history of the Reform. Incidentally it brought the Capuchins into conflict with the recently elected Minister General, Paolo Pisotti, of sinister import in Franciscan history.

Indeed, of Paolo Pisotti no good word has been spoken either by the Observants or the Capuchins : or by any who have written of him. In the annals of the Observants his government has been regarded as one of disaster and ignominy.¹⁹ Another Elias, some might say, recalling the reproaches cast at Elias by the persecuted brethren. But Pisotti was utterly without the ability of Elias. Ambitious and intriguing, he had not the one saving trait in Elias' character. Elias, however one may judge his policy, was ambitious for the glory of the Order : Pisotti's story reveals nothing nobler than personal ambition and low intrigue. Before his election as Minister General, whilst he was yet Commissary of the Cismontane Observants, he had manoeuvred affairs in connexion with the Chapter to prevent the election of Antonio de Calcena who had been appointed Vicar when Quiñones was elevated to the cardinalate. His high-handed method in dealing with the Ultramontane branch of the Observants, was already a cause of discontent. No sooner was he elected than he sought to suppress the reform movement within the Observant family, thus reversing the policy of Quiñones who had encouraged it. Pisotti had no tolerance for reform of any sort whether within the

¹⁸ cf. Boverius, *anno* 1529, where the document of affiliation is given—a copy of the document is in the Vatican Archives. cf. Langonio : *Regestum*, p. 23.

¹⁹ cf. Wadding, *Annales*, *anno* 1529, *seq.*

general community or in eremitical seclusion ; and this perhaps more than his Italian partisanship aroused against him an active opposition ; this, and the shameless intrigue by which he sought to put his own partisans into office and thus secure his own power. Not all who arose at last against Pisotti were zealots for reform. Even amongst the Italians were not a few with no sympathy for the reform movement, who regarded his rule as destructive of the community and resented his double-dealing by which he sought merely his own personal ends.²⁰ The manner of his official visitation of the provinces in Southern Italy came as a shock to all but the most lax amongst the friars. His visitation was more like a royal progress, it was said, than the coming of a humble son of St. Francis. He was met at his entrance into the cities by the civic authorities and welcomed with fanfares and the salute of guns : in his train walked ecclesiastical and civic dignitaries. Banquets and ceremonial marked his stay. Within three years, so strong had grown the opposition to his rule that both the Cardinal Protector of the Order and Quiñones, the late Minister General, found it necessary to remonstrate with him, in particular as regarded his persecution of the reformed communities and his repression of any attempt whatever at reform within the Order. Whereupon Pisotti in alarm wrote public letters to the Ministers Provincial ordering that the friars of the reforms under his jurisdiction should not be disturbed ; but at the same time he sent private letters to certain of the Ministers telling them they could use their own discretion as to the publishing of the public letters. In 1533, at the instance of the Ultramontane Ministers, the Pope, Clement VII, demanded his resignation ; but by that time the Observant family had come near the brink of ruin, so deep and widespread was the discontent ; whilst many who in this year 1529 were working against the Capuchins had come to see in them the saviours of the Franciscan Order. Such was the Minister General Pisotti with whom Lodovico had now to contend.

For the Capuchins personally, Pisotti had nothing but

²⁰ See the hitherto unpublished documents concerning the scandal of his dealings with the Venetian Observants edited by P. Edouard d'Alençon in *Gian Pietro Caraffa, Vescovo di Chieti (Paolo IV) e la Riforma nell' ordine dei Minori dell' Osservanza. Documenti inediti.* (Foligno, 1912.)

contempt. Their uncouth dress and bare, mean dwellings, their inordinate austerity of life, seemed to him hardly human. They offended his taste as well as his principles.

Not at once did he apply to the Pope for their direct suppression. Rumour spread abroad, whether with his connivance or not is not known, that these reformers were not all they professed to be : they were little more than vagabonds restless under the yoke of obedience, unable to bend themselves to the well-ordered life of the community. Under a guise of excessive austerity, it was said, they cloaked a life that would not bear too close a scrutiny. And so singular was the unworldly simplicity of the Capuchins at a time when simplicity was of little account, that not a few listened to the insinuations and grew suspicious. Even in the Papal entourage many felt that the Pope had been duped into lending encouragement to Lodovico and his associates. Such was the trend of feeling when towards the end of the year Pisotti obtained from the Holy See a brief which he undoubtedly purposed to use against the Capuchins, though the brief did not mention them by name. In general terms the brief denounces certain friars of the Observance who, led astray by the seductions of the ancient enemy and tired of the life of penance, have procured exemptions from the obedience due to their ordinary superiors through friends resident at the Roman Court, and, that they might live free from correction, have placed themselves under the protection of the diocesan ordinary or the Master General of the Conventuals. These friars, the brief continues, go wandering about alone and without a companion ; they are not ashamed even to visit inns and other places not becoming to religious persons. Wherefore, to obviate the manifest danger to religion, the brief annuls all and every apostolic rescript, even letters given under the Fisherman's seal, by which exemptions from the ordinary jurisdiction of superiors have been granted or permissions given to found some new sect or manner of life or to erect houses or congregations against the will of the Minister General or his commissaries. Moreover, it is strictly forbidden to introduce into the Order new sects, or to assume any other name or title other than that which Saint Francis himself obtained from the Holy See. The brief, as we have said, did not name the

Capuchins. At first sight it might seem to be directed against those wandering friars—and they were not a few—who for no other purpose than their own pleasure, bought exemptions from community life, chiefly through the Grand Penitentiary. But it was so worded as to include all and every friar who, for any reason however laudable, had obtained exemptions from the ordinary common life : it might be applied to the Riformati, the Discalceati and the Capuchins ; and in fact Pisotti very soon made it clear that he intended so to interpret it. In a letter addressed to certain of the Provincials, he explicitly stated that the reformed communities were now suppressed, and that the friars of these communities must return to the general community.²²

Pisotti next obtained a Papal brief, dated May 15, 1530, directed explicitly against Lodovico, the Vicar-General of the Capuchins, Bernardino da Reggio the leader of the Calabrians and their associates. In this brief, all apostolic concessions granted to the friars named were annulled, and the Minister General was empowered to recall them to the Observant communities from which they had separated, where they must live under the jurisdiction of their ordinary superiors.²³ On the face of it, this brief suppressed and dissolved the Capuchin congregation. Yet the Capuchins were not suppressed. Lodovico, it is said, whilst recognising in the brief a severe check to the Reform, would not acknowledge that the brief annulled the bull *Religionis Zelus* by which the Capuchin Reform was canonically constituted, on the ground that this bull was not expressly mentioned in the new brief. It was perhaps a lawyer's interpretation. Lodovico undoubtedly had friends at court ; and, considering the campaign of misrepresentation and intrigue which was working

²² cf. Wadding, *anno* 1529, xxxiv. That Pisotti designed to use the brief to suppress all reforms is clear from a note in his Register, June 3, 1530 (quoted by Wadding, *anno* 1530, xv) in which Pisotti declares that in virtue of two briefs he has received from the Pope the Riformati are suppressed and that the Pope does not wish there should be any new reforms, whether already started or to be started. The only two briefs Pisotti had received at this time were the brief of Dec. 29, 1529, and another to which we shall refer, dated May 15, 1530.

The only other document referring to these events discovered by Pastor in the Secret Archives of the Vatican is a command issued to the Superiors of the Observants to receive back those friars who had left their communities. It is dated May 27, 1530 (cf. Pastor, vol. x, p. 472).

²³ Bullar, *Ord. Cap. I.* Wadding, *Annales*, *anno* 1530, xvi.

to bring about the dissolution of the Capuchin congregation, who will blame Lodovico if he availed himself of legal advice to save his company? In truth events justified his action. It is evident from the contradictory nature of the briefs issued by Clement VII during the next three years that the Pope, urged on the one side by the partisans of Pisotti and on the other side by the friends of the Capuchins, was a prey to that indecision which marred the work of his pontificate and was the despair of his wisest counsellors. One thing is clear. The brief of May 15 remained ineffective, nor was it taken seriously by any but Pisotti's own party, notwithstanding that on May 27 a second brief was issued confirming the first. So lightly was it taken that the Cardinal Protector of the Franciscan Order allowed the Capuchins to make a new settlement in Rome at Sant' Eufemia, on the Esquiline Hill. Cardinal Vincenzo Caraffa, Archbishop of Naples, received them into his cathedral and made over to them a house; elsewhere too, they were welcomed by ecclesiastical authorities. One striking fact in regard to the brief of May 15 is its misstatement of the actual status at that time enjoyed by the Capuchins. According to the preamble of the brief, the Capuchins are still members of the Observant family *who for a time* have been allowed to live separated from the community: they still have the right to seek hospitality in the Observant houses and there to be treated as the other brethren; and they are at liberty to return to the Observant community whenever they please. The brief ignores the fact that by the bull *Religionis Zelus* the Capuchins were juridically affiliated to the Conventuals. Moreover, in stating that they had been permitted to live in hermitages, it adds the clause "*habitu tamen regulari retinentes*"—by which evidently was meant that they were supposed to wear the ordinary Observant habit. In view of these misstatements, the friends of the Capuchins might well hold that the brief was obtained by a fraudulent perversion of the truth and that the Capuchins were not obliged to accept it as final until the true facts of the case had been again submitted to the Holy See. Nineteen months later the brief of May 15 was again republished with an intimation that the previous letters had been without effect: ²⁴ a strange case if the

²⁴ Wadding, *Annales*, anno 1531, v.

Pope had deliberately determined to suppress the Capuchins. Nor did this republication of the brief bring the Capuchin Reform to an end. The probable truth is that the Pope was himself hardly aware of the full import of the briefs issued in his name. Immersed in political affairs, this contention amongst the Franciscans would seem to him of small moment, an irritating diversion, when brought to his notice. His attitude gave an opportunity for intrigue which Paolo Pisotti would make the most of.

There was another, however, who viewed the situation as regards the Capuchins and the Observants from another and more worthy standpoint than did Paolo Pisotti, and that was Cardinal Quiñones, the late Minister General. As has been said, Quiñones was in favour of the Reform movement within the Observant family. He himself had belonged to the reforming party in Spain, later known as the *Discalceati*, and as Minister General he had encouraged the Calabrian Recollets who were now the butt of Pisotti's anger. But Quiñones was utterly opposed to the Capuchin Reform in so far as it claimed independence of the Observant jurisdiction. He now intervened with a programme of "seven chapters" with which he hoped to bring about a settlement.²⁵ Unfortunately for our story no document remains to inform us authentically what the "seven chapters" were. We can only infer from his known general policy that he favoured the establishment of "houses of recollection" in which the friars would be free to observe the Franciscan Rule more strictly, and that this freedom should be guaranteed by special legal decrees. Given the freedom for a stricter observance, the Capuchins were again to be incorporated into the Observant family and be under the direct jurisdiction of the Minister General. This was in fact the solution for which the Observants later on contended. Meanwhile Pisotti was Minister General, and whatever chance of acceptance Quiñones' programme might have had at this moment was lost by the time a new Minister General appears on the scene. For events now moved quickly under Pisotti's rule to render reunion practically impossible.

²⁵ See the petition of Honorius Cajani, Procurator of the Observants, in *De Primordiis*, p. 104. cf. *infra*, p. 73.

(iv)

And first there were his dealings with the Calabrian Recollets who unconsciously to themselves were now to play no small part in the story of the new Reform, to which they were not as yet actually affiliated. In regard to them, at least, Pisotti's judgment was correct: if the Calabrians united with the Capuchins, who could tell how far the Observant revolt might spread? And on that one point, Quiñones probably agreed with the Minister General. We will now follow the course of the Calabrian revolt.

Fra Bernardino da Reggio, the emissary of the Calabrian Recollets, had, as we have seen, returned to Calabria after his meeting with the Commissary General Lodovico with the intention of bringing about a union between the Recollets and Capuchins. On his way back he had broken his journey at Naples to obtain the necessary licence of the Spanish Viceroy.²⁶ Thus the Capuchin Reform became known in the capital of the Neapolitan kingdom. Perhaps it was through Fra Bernardino, perhaps through her friend Vittoria Colonna who was well acquainted with the Duchess Caterina, that the lady Maria Longa first heard of the Reform. Maria Longa, a lady of Spanish birth, was the widow of a high official in the Neapolitan Chancery. Since her husband's death she had devoted herself to works of charity and had founded a hospital for incurables, where she and some ladies associated with her gave themselves to the service of the sick. Whether it was at her invitation that Lodovico sent friars to make a Capuchin Settlement in Naples in the following year 1530, we know not; but it was she who received the friars on their arrival and entertained them until a house was procured for them with the approval of the Archbishop, Cardinal Vincenzo Caraffa.

Meanwhile Paolo Pisotti had been active to thwart the design of Fra Bernardino and his Recollets and had fulminated against them the decree of excommunication con-

²⁶ See the letter of Cardinal Pompei Colonna, Vice-Chancellor of the Neapolitan Kingdom, allowing the introduction of the Capuchins into Naples, dated September 26, 1529, in *De Primordiis*, pp. 80-81. For a critical examination of the documents relating to the Calabrian friars, cf. *ibid.* p. 67, *seq.*

tained in the Papal briefs to which we have referred, unless they should at once submit themselves to the Observant superiors and return to the common life. Even now a conciliatory attitude on the part of the superiors might have induced the Recollets to remain within the Observant jurisdiction : but Pisotti, unlike Quiñones, was not for conciliation but for repression ; and the Recollets were treated as traitors to their order and made to suffer.

Matters came to a head in the summer of 1532. Paolo Pisotti had been present at the General Chapter held at Messina at the end of April. From Messina he went to preside at the Provincial Chapter held at Scilliano in Calabria on the feast of Pentecost. Of the affair of this Chapter, two apparently contradictory accounts have come down to us. According to one, Fra Bernardino da Reggio and Fra Lodovico da Reggio, the leaders of the Recollets, applied to the Chapter for permission to migrate, the one to the Conventuals, the other to the Capuchins. Pisotti, so the account runs, granted their petition, though it was with an ill grace that he allowed Lodovico da Reggio to join the Capuchins.²⁷ It is difficult to accept this story in view of Pisotti's action on his return to Rome. More illuminative is the account given by one who was a party to the fray. He tells us that at the time of the General Chapter, Bernardino and Lodovico da Reggio went to Messina, as representing the Recollets, to petition for leave to join the Capuchins : not that they had any hope that their petition would be granted, but to comply with the law which required religious to ask their superiors' consent before migrating to another Order. Pisotti received them courteously, listened to what they had to say, but would give no immediate decision. He bade them apply to the Provincial Chapter shortly to be held in their province at which he himself would preside. He did not, however, let them go at that. He kept them in conversation and as an inducement to them to reconsider their petition he held out the promise that they should be promoted to the office of guardian.²⁸ At this point the story reveals Pisotti as the same unscrupulous

²⁷ Wadding, *Annales*, anno 1532.

²⁸ A guardian in the Franciscan Order is the superior of a canonically established friary.

intriguer who played false with the Observants of the Venetian province. It was a bait to win their submission and at the same time to attach them to his own party. The Recollets, however, were not deceived either by his courtesy or his flattery. With Bernardino and Lodovico it was a suggestion to sell their souls for a mess of pottage; and they knew what their refusal would mean.

The Provincial Chapter was held at Pentecost in the friary of Scilliano. The Recollets sent in their petition in writing; but the friars who presented it were so violently upbraided that, fearing for their lives, they turned and fled.

Whereupon Lodovico da Reggio straightway had recourse to the Duke of Nocera, who readily took the Recollets under his protection and promised to assist their cause at the court of Rome. At his invitation the Recollets now gathered together at the Duke's residence at Filogasio. They were thirty in number. On the Tuesday after Trinity Sunday they met in the church of the Dominicans to hold a chapter of their own and Lodovico was elected Vicar Provincial. They appeared in the Chapter wearing the Capuchin hood sewn to their Observant habits, since they "were as yet unable to obtain the coarser cloth"—and thus they passed into the Capuchin Reform.²⁹

The Chapter concluded, Lodovico, the newly-elected Provincial, sent some of his friars to the hermitage of Sant' Elia in Galatri, a secluded spot in the mountains, whilst with the others he made a settlement at Sant' Antonio in the

²⁹ *Chronica Johannis Romaei*, loc. cit., p. 150; Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Narratione*, cart. 200 *seq.* Johannis Romaeus was himself one of the Recollets; from him Mario received his information concerning the Calabrian friars. cf. *De Primordiis*, 95, *seq.*

P. Edouard d'Alençon holds that Wadding's story is reconcilable with that of the Calabrian chronicler. He accepts Wadding's statement that Pisotti granted the petitions of Fra Bernardino and Lodovico. In this case Bernardino's petition to join the Conventuals would be explained by the fact that the Capuchins were nominally subject to the Conventuals. But the learned critic suggests that Pisotti was playing a double game. By granting the petition he would ingratiate himself with the Duke of Nocera, the friend of the Recollets, who had entertained him in princely fashion at Messina; whilst on his return to Rome he could get the concession annulled by the Pope in accordance with recent briefs. Lodovico da Reggio, according to P. Edouard, did not trust Pisotti; hence his recourse to the Duke of Nocera for protection. Wadding speaks of the "upbraidings" which accompanied the concession—and so links up his story with that of Johannes Romaeus. The suggested reconciliation of the two stories is not improbable; it accords with Pisotti's usual method of government.

neighbourhood of Filogasio : and for awhile they dwelt in peace. But early in July their peace was violently broken. On July 3, at the instance of Paolo Pisotti a Papal decree of excommunication was hurled against Bernardino and Lodovico da Reggio and their associates. The local bishops were ordered under pain of suspension *a divinis* to enforce the sentence and if necessary to hand over the recalcitrants to the secular arm ; and the Viceroy of Naples, the Duke of Nocera, "and all other princes and temporal lords" were required to assist in enforcing the sentence.³⁰

A few days later a body of Observants appeared at the ducal palace in Filogasio to promulgate the sentence of excommunication and demand the bodies of the apostates, threatening the Duke with excommunication should he continue to favour and protect them. The Duke, good Catholic as he was, tartly retorted : "By the life of Don Tiberio³¹ I will quickly make him run who shall dare notify me of any such excommunication." As to the excommunicated friars, he demanded why they should be prevented from observing the Rule they had vowed to observe ? He certainly would not judge them guilty till they had been heard in their own defence. Lodovico and Bernardino were consequently sent for.

Bernardino with some companions, amongst them the narrator of the story, had already sought refuge in the palace : Lodovico was found at prayer in a wood. Faced with their accusers, who charged them with leaving the community without cause, Lodovico in the name of his brethren related how the rule of poverty was not observed in the communities ; contrary to the Rule as interpreted by Clement V, the Observants exercised legal rights over the property given for their use ; they were no longer clothed in coarse garments ; they received money, and instead of trusting to the voluntary alms of the faithful received on the quest, they built granaries and cellars for the storing of goods. The delegates of the Observants could not deny the

³⁰ Archiv. Vatican. Arm. XL, vol. 23, Epist. 184, Minute dei Brevi di Clemente VII ; *ibid.* Arm. XXXIX, vol. 12, Brevi di Clemente VII, anno ix, loin II, num. 185—edited in *De Primordiis*, pp. 99-100.

³¹ Don Tiberio was the youngest of the five sons of the Duke. He was destined for the ecclesiastical career.

accusation and left the palace without daring to declare the excommunication. Nevertheless some of the Recollets who had passed over to the Capuchins, fearing the excommunication, returned to the Observant family.³²

But the Duke of Nocera straightway despatched an envoy to the Pope to make known to His Holiness the true state of the case and the reasons which had led the Recollets to pass over to the new Reform.³³ The Duke's intervention, as we shall see, had far-reaching results.

The story now moves to Rome.

Sometime during the summer, Padre Honorio da Cajano, the recently-elected Procurator of the Observants, presented a petition to His Holiness, praying that the Capuchin congregation should be suppressed.³⁴ Honorio, on his election, had come to Rome from Tuscany where as yet the Capuchins were unknown. His information concerning the Reform was therefore gained by hearsay amongst the Capuchins' opponents. That perhaps accounts for the perversions of historical truth in his statement of how the Reform came into existence. His petition is a naïve document—one of several such that from time to time were addressed to the Holy See by well-meaning friars of the Observant family.³⁵ But Honorio was Procurator of the Order and his personal petition would have more weight. He begins by declaring that he had heard the truth concerning these Capuchins from many persons; yet he does not even know when the Reform first began: it was, he says, "nine or ten years past," though, as he regards Lodovico da Fossombrone as the instigator of the movement, it was but six years. These Capuchins receive "our friars" without any authorisation and delude many "simple brethren" by declaring that

³² "Ita qui antea eramus triginta vix quindecim perseveravimus."—*Chron. Johannis Romæi*, loc. cit., p. 152. The incident is typical of the methods which at this period were bringing the authority of the Holy See into disrepute and arousing the temporal princes to resist the injunctions of the Roman Court.

³³ Johannes Romæus says simply the Duke sent "an abbot," or "the abbot"—not improbably the envoy was the Duke's son, Don Francesco. Boverius says the Duke sent Don Tiberio, but Tiberio at this date was a mere boy. cf. *De Primordiis*, p. 102, note 4. See the account in Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Descrizione*, loc. cit., p. 40, seq.

³⁴ The letter is in the Vatican Archives, *Lettere dei Principi*, vol. 7, f. 658—cf. *De Primordiis*, pp. 103-104.

³⁵ See the letter of Fra Cherubino Lusio, in P. Tacchi Venturi: *Studi e Documenti* (Romæ 1901), p. 163.

they have a bull of the tenor of the bull of Eugenius IV.³⁶ The head of these brethren should therefore be punished severely and all these brethren who have passed from the Observants should be considered as excommunicate, since they are without lawful superiors. Wherefore His Holiness should enforce "the seven chapters" ordained by the Cardinal of Santa Croce³⁷ (Quiñones). The petition concludes: "For the rest Your Holiness will hear more tomorrow by word of mouth from the Venerable Protector³⁸ and the most reverend cardinal of Santa Croce." It was perhaps well that the Duke of Nocera had sent his envoy to plead the cause of the Calabrian Capuchins. Moved by petitions on both sides, the Pope appointed a commission of two cardinals, del Monte and delle Valle, to judge between the two parties. Their decision was given formally on 14th August: the Capuchins were forbidden to receive any more Observants, but the Minister General was admonished to cease his persecution of the Observants who had already become Capuchins and to leave the new congregation in peace.³⁹ It was a tame decision which avoided the real point at issue as it presented itself to both the Observants and the Capuchins: namely, the freedom of the Observants who so desired to pass over to a stricter congregation in accordance with the common law of the Church. It really settled nothing as this story will show.

Meanwhile, with the approval of Cardinal del Monte, protector of the city of Montepulciano in Tuscany, a community of Reformed Conventuals had made over their hermitage in that city to the new Reform, and themselves became Capuchins.⁴¹

Paolo Pisotti left Rome about the time the Cardinals'

³⁶ In fact the bull *Religionis Zelus* did reproduce the essential concessions granted to the Observants by Eugenius IV in the bull *Ut Sacra Ordinis* of January 11, 1446. As regards their reception of Observants, the Capuchins were justified by their communication in all the privileges of the Camaldolese hermits.

³⁷ Vide *supra*.

³⁸ Cardinal Andrea delle Valle.

³⁹ Wadding, *Annales*, anno 1532, XXXII; Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1532, LXVIII.

⁴¹ cf. P. Sisto da Pisa: *Storia dei Cappuccini Toscani* (Firenze, 1906), vol. i, pp. 34-35. The hermitage belonged to the commune; hence the recourse to Card. del Monte.

decision was given, to make a visitation of the French provinces. The clouds were already lowering upon him. Earlier in the year, before the General Chapter at Messina, Gian Pietro Caraffa, the Papal visitor to the Franciscans in Venice, had suggested the deposition of Paolo Pisotti ; but Pisotti had seen to it that his party should be in the ascendant and the Chapter confirmed him in his office. But from all parts complaints were reaching Rome of his misrule and of his persecution of the reformed communities ; and in many of the provinces of Italy the more zealous brethren were driven nigh to the point of revolt. The affair of the Observants in Venice is a case in point. It is not a savoury business, but it throws light on events which are to follow.

The beginning of this trouble was in 1527. The Minister General Quiñones, being employed by the Pope in political affairs, had given Pisotti, then Commissary General of the Italian Observants, enlarged powers usually reserved to the Minister General ; such as the power to deprive friars of their vote in the chapters and to quash elections. Pisotti was not scrupulous as to the lawful use of his powers ; nor was he scrupulous in his use of men. The ambition of certain friars in the province of Venice lent itself to his scheme of packing the superiorships in the Order with creatures of his own making, on whose support he might count at the next General Chapter. In 1527 the Provincial Chapter of Venice elected as Provincial Fra Nicola Malpiero ; whereupon a friar unnamed, having first falsified the letter of the Minister General convoking the Chapter, appealed to Pisotti on the ground that the Chapter had been held without the Minister General's sanction. Pisotti straightway deprived the newly elected Provincial and the guardians and convoked a new Chapter, at which Fra Girolamo Recalco was elected Provincial. Thereupon Malpiero and the deprived guardians appealed to the Pope, who ordered an inquiry to be made. Pisotti, however, obtained a revocation of the Papal brief. When, by the manipulation of the Provincial Chapters, Pisotti was elected Minister General in 1529 he issued a definitorial decree depriving Malpiero and the guardians who had appealed against him of all their legal rights, unless it should please the General to relax the penalty. Malpiero was disconsolate ; but he found an unexpected

friend in Fra Raffaele Bordinale, hitherto his opponent. Bordinale, who had taken with him to the General Chapter one thousand ducats for the building of a church, had come to an agreement with Pisotti by which it was agreed that at the next Provincial Chapter Malpiero should be elected Provincial Minister, provided that he agreed to resign the Provincialate at the end of one year in favour of Bordinale or his colleague Fra Antonio, surnamed *il Storto*.

The Chapter was held in 1530 at Pieve de Sacco and Pisotti sent a commissary, Fra Bernardino Ochino da Siena, to preside at the Chapter and secure the election of Malpiero. Further, only those friars were to be elected guardians whose names were on a list supplied by Pisotti. The "God-fearing" brethren in the Chapter protested strongly against this tampering with the freedom of election, but Ochino as strongly insisted that it was the General's will, and eventually Malpiero was elected. But when, at the end of the year, the other parties to the arrangement demanded Malpiero's resignation, he blandly informed them that he was no party to any such scheme. Thereupon Pisotti took matters into his own hands and sent Bernardino Ochino to Venice to convoke a new Chapter. The Chapter was to be held without delay, for Pisotti had received news that, in consequence of complaints sent by Giberti, the Bishop of Verona, and the Senate of Venice concerning the persecution of "the reforming brethren," the Pope was about to appoint a Papal visitor to enquire into the affairs of the Venetian province. In fact, letters had been sent to the Bishop of Verona commanding Gian Pietro Caraffa either personally or by deputy to hold an enquiry before any new Chapter should be held. But the Chapter, to Caraffa's surprise, was already in session at Cittadella when Caraffa received the Papal letters. Unable to attend the Chapter himself, owing to illness, Caraffa sent as his deputy the titular Bishop of Ceos, himself a Franciscan; but by the time he arrived Antonio "*il Storto*" had been elected Provincial, and Raffaele Bordinale, *custos*: Ochino insisting on these elections in spite of protests from many of the friars present. On the conclusion of the Chapter, Ochino interviewed Bishop Giberti at Verona and wrote to Caraffa at Venice, offering explanations. Caraffa at least was not deceived, and it was now that he

expressed the hope that Pisotti should be deposed at the General Congregation of the Order to be held at Messina the following year. In a report he sent to the Pope he did not hide the seriousness of the situation which had arisen.

To the Venetian brethren who were anxious for reform the situation indeed seemed almost hopeless. One of them, Fra Bonaventura, whose uprightness and zeal had won Caraffa's respect, wished to go at once to the Pope and make a personal appeal on behalf of brethren zealous for a stricter observance of the Rule : but Caraffa deemed it wiser to delay ; he knew the Roman Court and the intrigues with which it was beset. But the affair of the Venetian Chapters was to play no small part in the eventual downfall of Paolo Pisotti and the revival of the religious spirit amongst the Observants, and also in the development of the Capuchin Reform. For one thing it was not an isolated instance of Pisotti's rule ; it was typical of what was taking place, though less blatantly, in other provinces of Italy,⁴² but the intervention of Gian Pietro Caraffa and the Bishop of Verona brought it more manifestly into the public eye.

It was under such circumstances that during the following year it became more and more evident to the Observants who were zealous for reform that some instant action must be taken if the Reform movement was not to be quenched and dissipated. Pisotti's confirmation in office at the General Congregation held at Messina, packed as it was with his partisans, only deepened the gloom. And now, too, the reforming party, anxious to maintain the unity of the Observant family, were alarmed at the action taken by the Calabrian reformers in going over to the Capuchins.

A letter, already referred to, written by Caraffa to Fra Bonaventura at the end of the summer of 1532, is illuminating. It is not improbable that Bonaventura was already in active negotiation with the leaders of the Reform movement in other provinces. Like these he was anxious to preserve the unity of the Observants whilst pressing for reform. Caraffa writes bewailing the fact that owing to the number of worthless brethren (*cattivi frati*) the Observant family is not as it should be. Two measures, he says, are needful if the Order is to be saved from ruin ; the Pope must see that the

⁴² Vittoria Colonna.

Order is strictly governed according to its constitutions and not permit infractions of the constitutional government by way of Papal briefs ; and provision must be made for the few friars (*pochi frati*) who wish to observe the Rule they have vowed. Some will say : why not reform the whole Order ? " I reply," wrote Caraffa, " that with such a multitude of wretched subjects (*pessimi subietti*), it is impossible. If it is objected that to separate the good from the bad is to ruin the Order, I certainly do not intend that. But if it is said that the unity of the Order demands uniformity of observance (*unius moris in unum*) it is also written as a trait of true religious : ' there was in them one heart and one soul.' But this is not so with the Observants of to-day. Hence it is necessary that His Holiness should make regulations for the few good brethren that they may be free to walk in the stricter path, as did Pope Eugenius IV and as has been recently done in Spain and Portugal ;⁴³ and that places be assigned to these brethren which shall be to them cities of refuge where they can observe the Rule. But such relief must come from the Holy See, not from the General or the General Chapter ; for it is known that friars wishing to observe the Rule strictly have been dispersed amongst the unreformed and treated as fools, so that it has come to pass that many wishful to live well feel that ' it is vain to serve the Lord ' and become demoralised (*pazzi*) and down-hearted." Fra Bonaventura was at length setting out for Rome when he received this letter from Caraffa, and it was intended that he should use the letter in his appeal to the Pope.

And now we enter on a new stage in the march of events as concerns this history.

Fra Bonaventura was not the only friar who had come to Rome after Pisotti's departure for France, with the purpose of seeking relief from the Holy See. There he found himself, for instance, in comradeship with Fra Francesco da Jesi, a delegate from the Reform party in the province of the Marches, and with Fra Stefano da Molina, a zealous propagator of reform, and his fellow-worker in the same cause, Fra Bernardino d'Asti : brethren of some repute not only for learning and the gift of administration but for their evident

⁴³ A reference to the Discalceati Franciscans.

holiness of life. Stefano and Bernardino had long been identified with the movement to establish "houses of recollection" such as had been founded in Spain at the end of the last century with the approval of the Minister General Francesco Lichetti; they had in 1519 established one such house at Fonte Colombo in the valley of Rieti, where they and their associates lived in strictest poverty according to the mind of St. Francis.⁴⁴ Bernardino d'Asti had more than once been Provincial of the Roman province; he was a sagacious administrator and a born leader, yet withal the humblest and gentlest of men. The Reform movement both in the Roman province and elsewhere had had a chequered career, alternately favoured and discouraged by successive Ministers General: but never before had the times been so critical as under Paolo Pisotti. So in the autumn of 1532 we find a determined group of Reform leaders in Rome, intent on seeking that intervention of the Holy See which Caraffa considered the only remedy if the whole Order was to be saved from ruin. We may take it that Cardinal Quiñones gave them his support at the Papal Court.

On November 2, Fra Bonaventura wrote gleefully to Caraffa that things were going well for the cause of reform. One significant passage in his letter refers to the Capuchins: "Our Lord the Pope will leave but few friars with Lodovico of the Marches on condition that they receive no new houses nor admit any novices. Some of the Capuchins have returned to the Observance. The Procurator is taking steps for the speedy issue of the apostolic bull by which it will be ordained that these Capuchins who have returned to the fold and the older brethren who desire to observe the Rule to the letter shall have four or five places or more assigned them under their own superiors; and a beautiful code of regulations from which much good may come, so that none shall have cause to separate by reason that they are not given the opportunity to live well."⁴⁵

On November 16, the much-desired bull was published.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ cf. Diomede (Card.) Falconio: *I Minori Riformati negli Abruzzi* (Roma, 1913) and Benedetto Spila: *Memorie Storiche della Provincia Riformata Romana* (Roma, 1890) for an account of these early beginnings of the Riformati movement.

⁴⁵ *Gian Pietro Caraffa*, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

⁴⁶ *In Suprema*—Wadding, *Annales*, anno 1532, XXII. Boverius: *Regestum*: *Annal.* I, p. 988.

It decreed that since certain brethren of the Observance desired to observe the Rule purely and simply to the letter and in accordance with the declarations of Nicholas III and Clement V, they are not to be prevented from their laudable purpose ; and to give them the necessary freedom four or five houses shall be set apart in each province ; and these houses shall be as near each other as possible. The houses are to be devoid of all superfluous ornament and only what is necessary and useful shall be retained in them ; and neither the General nor the Provincial Ministers shall put any obstacle in the way of a strict observance such as these friars desire. Moreover, the friars in these houses are to be governed by superiors chosen by themselves, subject only to confirmation by the General or Provincial Ministers, who moreover retain the right to punish delinquents.

In such wise was the charter given for the establishment of the Reform within the Observant family.

Fra Bonaventura left Rome happy ; the day had at last dawned for which he and not a few of the brethren had long prayed. But his happiness was quickly cut short. Soon he learned that Fra Francesco da Jesi and his companion, Fra Illuminato, on their return to the province of the Marches with the bull of reform, had been promptly cast into prison by the brethren of the community. Then came news that the Papal Commissary who was to publish the bull in Venice would not be sent, owing to the opposition of the superiors of that province. Finally, early in June came the direct news that the Pope had suspended the operation of the bull until the next General Chapter to be held in 1535.⁴⁷

For awhile the party of reform were stunned, and gradually many amongst both the leaders and their followers confessed the hopelessness of their position. Doubtless they had counted much on the support of Cardinal Quiñones ; yet even he could not save them in the face of the active opposition of the dominant party within the Order and the lethargy of the body at large. Fra Bonaventura retired with a companion to a small house in the city, given him by the Venetians, and there for many years he lived a hermit's life and served the little church of Santa Maria degli Angeli,

⁴⁷ cf. *Gian Pietro Caraffa*, op. cit., p. 35. *De Primordiis*, p. 114.

under the jurisdiction of the diocesan ordinary. Stefano de Molina went back to his hermitage of Fonte Colombo, patient in his pain. But others now felt they were at the parting of the ways ; nor did the enforced resignation of Paolo Pisotti, towards the end of July, lighten their gloom.⁴⁸ Pisotti's misrule, they felt, had been rendered possible because of the active or passive support he received from the community as a whole ; nor could they any longer hope for the freedom they yearned for, to live as their conscience bade them, so long as they were at the mercy of the unreformed community. They had blamed the Capuchins for separating from the unity of the Order : now they recognised that the Capuchins had taken the only course by which freedom could be gained. Thus it came about that in the early days of 1534 a number of the most active leaders of the Reform party with not a few of their followers went over to the Capuchins.⁴⁹

Amongst these Observants who now migrated to the Capuchins were three of the most active leaders of the Reform movement, Bernardino d'Asti, Francesco da Jesi and that Giovanni da Fano whom we have met with in the earlier pages of this history : men who had been looked to as the strong pillars of the Reform movement. To the Capuchin Reform the migration was momentous in its consequences : it introduced into the small congregation a new element of strength ; for these men were of a tried character and outstanding ability, and reputed amongst the most upright in the Order. Moreover, outside the Order they were held in reverence and esteem as notable preachers and sagacious counsellors. But to the surprise of many, Fra Bernardino Ochino, who had played so sinister a part in the affair of the Venetian Chapters, now too went over to the Capuchins. Some said he went over in chagrin since at the General congregation of the Order at which Paolo Pisotti had been deposed, he had failed to secure election as Commissary General of the Italian Observants.⁵⁰ Others, it would seem, regarded his act in the light of a genuine conversion. He

⁴⁸ Wadding, *Annales*, anno 1533,

⁴⁹ Wadding, *Annales*, anno 1534.

⁵⁰ cf. Ferero e Muller : *Carteggio di Vittoria Colonna* (Turin, 1889), Epist. lxxi, p. 118.

had been Provincial of Siena, and one of the most popular preachers in Italy.

It was, however, the passing over of Giovanni da Fano which touched the hearts of the Capuchins themselves most closely. To them he was another Saul become Paul; and doubtless to many others his migration was the strongest testimony in favour of the young Reform. Giovanni's change of mind was due to no sudden impulse. When he laid down the office of Provincial of the Marches in 1527 he continued active in promoting the Reform movement in his province.⁵² In 1532 he obtained permission to become a wandering preacher and with a band of associates journeyed through Italy preaching the word of God as the spirit impelled him, even as Matteo da Bascio and the wandering Capuchin preachers were doing.⁵³ With deep humility he came at last to Lodovico da Fossombrone, confessing with tears his former harshness and praying to be forgiven and to be admitted into the Capuchin Reform. Ever afterwards a tender humility was apparent in all his intercourse with the brethren.

To the body of the Observants the secession of these men seemed to threaten the collapse of the Observant family; and the Vicar General, Leonardo Pubbicio,⁵⁴ in conjunction with Cardinal Quiñones at once took active measures to save the situation. Their purpose was to bring about the suppression of the Capuchins which had already been decided upon in the negotiations of the previous year. And in truth they came near to achieving their purpose. They had a powerful ally in Honorio Cajano, the Procurator, whom Clement VII had chosen as his confessor. On April 15, 1534 the blow fell in a rescript addressed to Cardinal della Valle ordering him to admonish all Capuchins who had passed from the Observant communities to return to these communities under pain of excommunication and abide under the obedience of the Observant superiors. It meant the practical suppression of the congregation, since

⁵² He is said to have been the first *custos* of the Riformati in the province of the Marches. cf. Alessio d'Arquata: *Cronica della riformata provincia dei Minori della Marca* (Cingoli, 1893), p. 22.

⁵³ Wadding, *Annales*, anno 1532, XXXIV.

⁵⁴ He had been elected on the deposition of Paolo Pisotti.

it would reduce the Capuchin body to the very few members who had not originally been Observants.⁵⁵

Even at the Roman Court there were those who were amazed that such a decree should be published. The Auditor of Papal briefs, Girolamo Ghinucci, when the first draft of the brief was handed to him to be presented to His Holiness, wrote his opinion on the back of the document: "It does not seem becoming that any religious should be forced unwillingly to embrace a less strict observance; yet if His Holiness wishes it, I in no wise approve that it proceed from His Holiness but let it be committed to another, since such a process is unworthy of the Pope himself."⁵⁶ And indeed the reason for the suppression given in the preamble of the brief might have made others beside the Auditor pause: "These friars calling themselves Capuchins," so it runs, "withdraw from the houses of the Observance and dwell in various places where they live a life so exceedingly austere and rigid that it is hardly human, and thus greatly disturb the minds of other members of the Order who in consequence doubt whether they themselves are equally satisfying the obligations of the Rule: thus many are scandalised." One almost suspects that the official who drew up the brief was a cynic, or did he merely lack a sense of humour?

As for Pope Clement, broken in health and overwhelmed with cares—for the world had got beyond his mastery—he probably saw in the business but one more bone of contention and that of lesser moment, which the cardinals had best settle as they might.

The Capuchins were given fifteen days from the notification of the decree to return to the Observants, under pain of excommunication should they disobey.

It was ten days later, on the feast of St. Mark, that in the small friary of Sant' Eufemia on the Esquiline Hill they received official notification of the decree with orders to

⁵⁵ Archiv. Vatican. Minute dei Brevi di Clemente VII, Arm. XL, vol. 47, n. 243; cf. *De Primordiis*, p. 115—the Brief which as originally drafted was a direct order from the Pope was consequently amended to put the onus of the suppression on the Cardinal Protector. See the original form with its emendations in *De Primordiis*, p. 116-117. cf. *Bull. Ord. Cap.* I, p. 11.

⁵⁶ "Vitam admodum austeram et rigidam ac fere non humanam ducunt, in maximam aliorum ipsius Ordinis professorum qui propterea dubitant se Regulæ pariter non satisfacere, perturbationem et grave scandalum plurimum."

abandon Sant' Eufemia and leave the city without delay. They were at dinner when the notification was brought to them. The agent of the Cardinal Protector, to emphasise the promptitude with which they were expected to obey the decree, lighted a candle and bade them depart in the burning of the candle: it was a dramatic gesture.⁵⁷ The friars obeyed literally; rising from table and taking with them only their breviaries, they formed in procession and so left the city, taking the road which led to the basilica of San Lorenzo outside the walls. It was, be it remembered, St. Mark's day, when processional visits were made to the greater churches. Perhaps Lodovico, the Commissary General, thought thus to make a dignified departure and avoid the comments of the people. The canons-regular who served San Lorenzo received them courteously, and learning the reason of their coming, bade them remain as guests for a few days.

Lodovico meanwhile had not been idle. Aware of the danger overhanging the congregation, he had sent word to the friends of the brethren, to the Duchess of Camerino, to Vittoria Colonna, to Camillo Orsini and others; and these came hurrying to Rome to avert the disaster. In the city, no sooner was the cause of the Capuchins' departure known than there was no little popular excitement. The hermit-preacher, Brandano—he who had denounced the iniquities of the Romans previous to the Sack of Rome—paraded the streets, crying aloud: "The harlot and the wicked are made welcome; the men of God are driven forth." Crowds followed him lamenting loudly the departure of the Capuchins: many showed their sympathy by carrying provisions to San Lorenzo for the friars' sustenance; so that, says a chronicler, "the brethren were better fed now than they ever were in the city."⁵⁸ Ascanio Colonna invited some of them to be his guests at Nemi on the shore of the lake of

⁵⁷ The story of the lighted candle is told by Bernardino da Colpetrazzo in his narration of the event. Mario da Mercato-Seraceno says the friars were given a few days in which to make their departure, from which I conclude that the notice to leave Rome was the official notification of the Pope's brief. P. Edouard d'Alençon rejects the story of the candle, as contradicting "the more probable statement of Mario," but it seems to me he has taken the incident too literally. It was a period when dramatic gestures were fashionable. cf. *De Primordiis*, p. 118. Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1534, has a long confused account of the departure from Rome, teeming with improbabilities.

⁵⁸ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, I, p. 374.

Albano.⁵⁹ So high ran the feeling amongst all classes of the people, that a few days later the Pope issued another mitigating brief : the Capuchins, so it was now decreed, were not in future to receive friars from the Observants nor to take new houses without apostolic sanction : but no word was said that those Observants who had already joined the Capuchins should return to their original communities. The congregation was saved.⁶⁰

Clement VII died in the following September and Cardinal Alessandro Farnese ascended the papal throne under the name of Paul III. There followed a series of edicts dealing with the situation as between the Observants and the Capuchins. At the General Chapter of the Observants held at Pentecost the following year, it was decreed that in every province houses should be set apart, according to the brief of Clement VII, for those brethren desirous of a stricter observance. In consequence of this decree the Capuchins were ordered by the Pope not to receive any more Observant friars. But immediately afterwards the ordinance was modified to the effect that unless these "houses of recollection" were established within two months, Observant friars desirous of reform might pass over to the Capuchins⁶¹. And so for awhile the matter was settled ; but, as we shall see, only for awhile. In the meantime, on November 7 of the previous year, Paolo Pisotti, broken with sickness and disappointment, had died at Parma.

⁵⁹ cf. Giuseppe da Monterondo : *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁶⁰ Wadding, *Annales*, anno 1534, LXXV. Wadding dates the brief April 9. This is evidently an error (Wadding's dates are frequently incorrect) ; the preamble is manifestly a reference to the brief of April 15.

⁶¹ cf. Bullar, *Ord. Cap.* I, pp. 12, 13, 14, 15. Wadding, *Annales*, anno 1534-5.

CHAPTER III

A STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

(i)

BEFORE we proceed further it may be well to disentangle the threads of the conflict between the Observants and the Capuchins : for as is frequently the case the ostensible reasons were of far less import to either side than those which were not so easily voiced. Were it true that the conflict so stubbornly sustained by both the parties was merely about the form of a habit and other external matters, as might superficially seem to be the case, the bitterness on the one side and the stubbornness on both sides might be judged hardly of serious interest to any serious reader : a petty squabble unworthy in its warm feeling of men of religion. But behind these easily arguable points lay a question which stretched far beyond those dissensions ; a question on the solution of which lay in truth the fate of Christendom. It was no less than the problem of the supremacy of the spirit in religion as against the worldliness which had invaded the Church and had sapped the vitality and sincerity of the faith men professed. In a wider sphere than that of the Franciscan Order, the problem was exercising the consciences of men in the religious reaction which was everywhere making itself felt both within the bounds of orthodoxy and in the unorthodox revolutions which were already rending Christian society, and would rend it yet more deeply before those responsible for the protection of the Church were fully aroused to their duty. Let us not blame with undue harshness the unfaithful or the blind shepherds of the flock. They themselves were the victims of a disease which had been allowed to grow into a malignant evil through the growing luxury and godless ambitions of a long generation of men ; until the social structure of the Christian world was

flooded with an artificial light which gave false values to the facts of life. Men's thoughts and judgments seldom escape the action of the social atmosphere in which they live ; and in our judgments of individuals and masses of individuals this has to be remembered. An Alexander VI or a Wolsey must be judged in reference to their age as well as in reference to the absolute moral law, if full justice is to be done them. It is easy to speak with scorn of the courtier-prelates who hunted and played and intrigued for their own or their family interests whilst the Church was threatened with almost universal heresy and schism ; yet in truth they deserve some pity. They were largely what kings and statecraft and society made them. The marvel was that when the great crisis came so many revealed an uncorrupted faith and became either reformers themselves or were willing to submit to the reform.

In reviewing the situation in which the Franciscan Order found itself at this period, one needs an unimpassioned outlook if the truth is to be told—an unimpassioned outlook not commonly found in the chroniclers on either side who wrote during the succeeding century. Let it be granted that the Italian Observants had as a body fallen away from the austere simplicity and high spirituality which had been their hall-mark in the days of San Bernardino of Siena ; that they were no longer content with mean dwellings and simple churches : that they lived more softly and with less regard to the severe poverty of their first days ; that they, like other religious orders and indeed the Church at large, had become inordinately externalised to the detriment of the inner spirit. Yet here again, remember the tremendous odds they had been up against during the century or thereabouts which had elapsed since San Bernardino had cast such a lustre of sanctity over the nascent Reform. They had lived through one of the most worldly periods in the history of the Church, when the sanctuary itself had been defiled by a pagan spirit and when the Christian law had been frankly disregarded, and the pleasures of life had taken the place of that Christian asceticism which in some degree must be the mark of the true Christian. Possibly had they remained isolated from the world in the hermitages and secluded spots favoured by the pioneers of the Observant Reform they might

have escaped the contagion; but by the instinct of the apostolic character inherent in the Franciscan life they had been drawn into the busy centres of the world's life and there temptation began. Popularity swelled their numbers and brought abundant alms. Large friaries were built or taken over from the Conventuals to house the large communities; and, abundant though alms might be, the upkeep meant a constantly growing solicitude for temporal needs with an increasing relaxation of the strict law of poverty as instituted by St. Francis.

It is to the credit of the Observants that the Observant spirit such as flamed in the soul of Fra Paoluccio and San Bernardino never died out, notwithstanding the tremendous temptation of the age; and it was this wholesome leaven which caused the disaffection in the Observant body and the restlessness for reform. But a reversion to the stricter observance of the earlier days had been made difficult by the system which had grown up since the days of San Bernardino. It is comparatively easy for an individual to renounce his property and chattels, his ambitions and habits of life; it is not so easy for an organised society. A return to the simple and strict observance of the earlier time would have meant for instance the giving up of spacious friaries and costly churches, it would have meant the renunciation of legacies and of that "coloured proprietorship" by which through the concessions of Popes Martin IV and Martin V the friars became virtual owners of the goods kept for them by the apostolic syndics.¹ These things it was which made any radical reform almost impossible, for the superiors could not see their way to a renunciation which would have disorganised the system as it had come to be.² When in 1523

¹ Many of the Ultramontane Observant provinces, however, had persistently refused to accept the Martinian concessions. Generally speaking, relaxation prevailed more in the Cismontane Provinces, i.e., those of Italy and the East European provinces subject to the Cismontane Vicar-General.

² Thus the Minister General Lichetto, though he himself was in favour of reform, forbade the friars to give up any of the larger convents taken over from the Conventuals. cf. Holzzapfel, *Manuale Historiae*, Ord. FF. Minorum, p. 272. Wadding, *anno* 1520, XXVIII.

Like other of his successors who acknowledged the need for reform, he found himself up against an established tradition which he was not strong enough to override. See the story of the friar who upbraided him for allowing the brethren zealous for stricter observance to be persecuted by the community (Wadding, *ibid.*). Lichetto, however, permitted certain small friaries to be

Quiñones of the reformed Discalceati in Spain was elected Minister General, hope revived amongst the more zealous of the Italian Observants. Quiñones did indeed make ordinances of radical reform in his visitation of the Italian provinces,³ but he was shortly afterwards created cardinal, and the Vicar General of the Italian Observants allowed the ordinances to remain a dead letter. As a beginning of reform certain Ministers General had established separate houses for those who wished to observe the Rule more strictly; but the main body of the Observants were opposed to these privileged communities and did their best to suppress them. So it came about in the end that the Reform movement took refuge in separate congregations governed by their own superiors either in subjection to the suzerain authority of the Minister General or, as in the case of the Capuchins and for a time the Spanish Discalceati, in complete independence of the Observants.

It had indeed been a fateful day for the Observants when they first aspired to unite the whole Franciscan Order under their own jurisdiction; that was the beginning of trouble. It meant in reality that the fervour and strength of purpose, which might have been concentrated on the maintenance and development of the spiritual observance, was in no small measure diverted to the development and organisation of an external polity, and in the effort obedience to the society was largely substituted for obedience to the Rule which the brethren vowed to observe; so that in practice the ordinances and customs and even the legalised relaxations came to have a more immediate authority with the body of the friars than had the Rule itself.⁴ It may be that San Bernardino of Siena intuitively saw this danger when he set

set apart for those desiring a stricter observance, particularly in the Marches of Ancona; but under his successor Paolo da Soncino, these houses were allowed to fall into disuse, lest they should bring about a schism in the Order and prejudice the larger communities. cf. De Gubernatis, *Orbis Seraphicus*, t. II, p. 328 (Lugduni, 1685). Quiñones (Franciscus de Angelis) when Minister General similarly favoured "houses of recollection"; but again his successor sought to suppress them.

³ Wadding, *Annales*, anno 1525, XI-XII. cf. Giovanni da Fano: *Dialogo di la Salute*, p. 82.

⁴ This is, in fact, the argument of Giovanni da Fano in his first (unrevised) edition of the *Dialogo di la Salute*—and Giovanni was no worldly religious, but a zealot for reform. He modified this opinion in the revised edition published after he joined the Capuchins.

himself in opposition to San Giovanni da Capestrano and the body of the Observants in their design to bring the Conventuals under the controlling power of the Observants.⁵ The effective union with the Conventuals never came off; but the policy favoured for a time by San Giovanni led to the taking over of sumptuous Conventual friaries as occasion offered and the building of larger houses and churches and to the distracting search for means for their maintenance, and thus to a decline from the ideal of the original Observance as contemplated by Fra Paoluccio and the first Observants. As we have said the external edifice came to be of more concern to the majority of the friars than the spirit which should have dwelt in it.

An apologist writing in the thick of the fray expressed the real cause of division between the Capuchins and the Observants in a neatly worded phrase: *La regola non e facta per la obedientia ma la obedientia per la regola*—the Rule does not exist for the sake of the organised institution, but the institution for the sake of the Rule.⁶ In other words the Capuchins aimed to re-establish the supremacy of the Rule of St. Francis over the organisation, and to bring the organised body itself into a true obedience to the Rule. They therefore refused to acknowledge any legal interpretation or concession as having equal binding force with the Rule, and they disclaimed any interpretation or concession which was to the detriment of the pure observance of the Rule as they conceived St. Francis himself would wish it to be observed. For that reason, as the apologist just quoted observed, they could not remain within the Observant organisation as it then existed. "What gain would it be? No man can give what he has not got; they (the Observants) could not support them in the spirit of the Rule, and should they reunite with the Observants they would themselves lose the spirit."

After all it was the same principle which had driven the Observants themselves to separate from the Conventual

⁵ San Bernardino at the General Chapter of 1443 opposed the election of the Observant Alberto da Sarziano which was supported by San Giovanni and the body of the Observants. cf. Wadding, *anno* 1443. Ferrers Howell: *S. Bernardino of Siena*, p. 79.

San Giovanni eventually confessed that San Bernardino had taken a more spiritual view of the situation than he himself had.

⁶ *Epistola seu Informatio Victoriae Colonna ad Paulum III.* cf. Appendix, Vol. II.

system and which, at a still earlier period, had forced the Spirituals into isolation from the brethren of the Community.

Thus the conflict between the Capuchins and the Observants, which to the superficial observer might seem but a disedifying contention over trifles, was in reality that never-ending conflict between the spirit in pursuit of an ideal and the claim of the established system to set the law for the spirit : a conflict which can only be averted when the established system is itself the manifest guardian of the ideal.

This, the real issue, came more clearly into view as the defence of the Capuchins was taken up by others of more perspicacious intellect and, let it be added, of deeper spiritual feeling than the Commissary General Lodovico. For Lodovico, strenuous fighter as he had been for the new Reform, was himself no true representative of the idealism and convictions for which hundreds of the Observants had left the cloisters in which they had been reared. He had raised the standard of revolt and by his audaciousness and indomitable purpose had made himself the spokesman and leader of the revolting company. Yet of the spiritual force behind him he had but little understanding ; and this was to be the cause of the first tragedy which was to mark the progress of the Capuchin Reform.

(ii)

The beginning of the tragedy came with the conviction which many of the Capuchins now had that Lodovico's leadership was not for the spiritual good of the Reform. His anxiety to swell the number of the brethren, which led him to receive postulants without discrimination as to their motive and quality, and his provocative imprudences were symptoms which caused uneasiness to those who joined the Capuchin family in search of a greater unworldliness and simplicity. He gave the impression that he was merely an Observant in revolt rather than a true Capuchin. Moreover his idea of government was not in accord with the genuine Franciscan tradition.⁷ It was a one-man government. Since his appointment as Commissary General he had ruled

⁷ *Supra.* p. 52

without the advice of definitors ; nor had he convoked a Chapter of the Order as provided in the Rule. Questions of discipline and organisation had arisen in view of the increase and spread of the friars which could not be satisfactorily dealt with except in a Chapter, and it was clear to those who had already had experience in the government of Observant communities that there was danger both to the individual members and the body corporate of the Reform, were the present unorganised condition of the congregation to continue. By this time the Reform numbered about seven hundred friars.⁸ But to the proposal that a General Chapter should be convoked Lodovico turned a deaf ear. The Capuchin family, he declared, owed its existence to him ; he had received his authority from Pope Clement VII and it was for him to determine when a Chapter would be necessary. At present he had no intention of calling a Chapter ; it would be but a needless trouble. Lodovico's attitude only the more convinced the experienced friars that a Chapter was imperatively necessary to save the Reform from dissolution ; yet a feeling of loyalty to one who, whatever his faults, had borne the heat and burden of the day in their common cause, withheld them from a direct appeal to the Pope. It was a difficult situation in which the Capuchins now found themselves. Pressed hard as they were by the Observant superiors, any internal dissension amongst themselves would undoubtedly be taken advantage of by their opponents. In their predicament they had recourse to the Master General of the Conventuals who on November 23 wrote from Paris to Lodovico urgently admonishing him to convoke a Chapter now long overdue.⁹ But by the time this letter arrived in Rome the Chapter was already in being. For not waiting the result of the appeal to the General, Fra Bernardino Ochino came forward and played a decisive part. He appealed to the lady Vittoria Colonna to use her influence with Lodovico. She had stood his good friend in the late trouble : she might persuade him when others had failed. Some there were who said afterwards that

⁸ cf. Vittoria Colonna's letter to the Cardinal Contarini, *infra*.

⁹ cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon : *Tribulationes Ordines FF. Minorum Capuccinorum* (Rome, 1914), p. 8, where the letter of the Conventual General is republished from Niccolo Catalano : *Fiume del Terrestre Paradiso* (Firenze, 1652), p. 6 ; and *Compendio di Storia Minoritica*, by Benoffi (Pesaro, 1829), p. 249.

Bernardino Ochino was moved to this step not altogether from pure devotion to principle, but from an ambition to take Lodovico's place. But that is pure conjecture.¹⁰ Vittoria Colonna was Bernardino's friend as well as Lodovico's : and had known him before his migration to the Capuchins.¹¹

I have said it was Fra Bernardino who played a decisive part ; rather perhaps should it be said that the lady Vittoria Colonna played the decisive part. For, finding that Lodovico was set against the proposed Chapter in spite of all that was urged in its favour, she by a ruse had him taken to the fortress of Marino, as the guest of her brother Ascanio, where he was entertained at Vittoria's suggestion with the greatest courtesy whilst the Duke and his wife sought by persuasion to soften his obstinacy. That too failing, Lodovico was transported to Rocca di Papa, another Colonna stronghold, and there kept a prisoner until he finally gave in and promised to convoke the Chapter. But Vittoria still did not trust him. She therefore went herself to Pope Paul III and urged him for the good of the Capuchin Reform to order the Chapter to be held. The Pope at first smilingly rebuked her for daring to lay hands on a priest and the superior of an Order ; but nevertheless Vittoria got her way and Lodovico received a Papal command to convoke the Chapter without delay.¹²

The Chapter met at Sant' Eufemia in November 1535.¹³ By what method or qualification the electors were chosen is not known ; the only canonically constituted province, that of Calabria, was unrepresented :¹⁴ a fact to be noted later on.

¹⁰ Boverius, anno 1535, XIII.

¹¹ Mario da Mercato-Seraceno : *Narratione*, cart. 205. cf. Edouard d'Alençon, *Tribulationes Ord. FF. Min. Capuccinorum* (Romae, 1914), pp. 7-8.

¹² See the story of the events leading up to this Chapter in Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Narratione*, cart. 204-205. Mario had his information from Vittoria Colonna's sister-in-law, the Duchess of Tagliocozza, who was a party to the ruse by which Lodovico was brought to Marino. According to Mario one reason of Lodovico's obstinacy was his dislike of Bernardino Ochino (cart. 207).

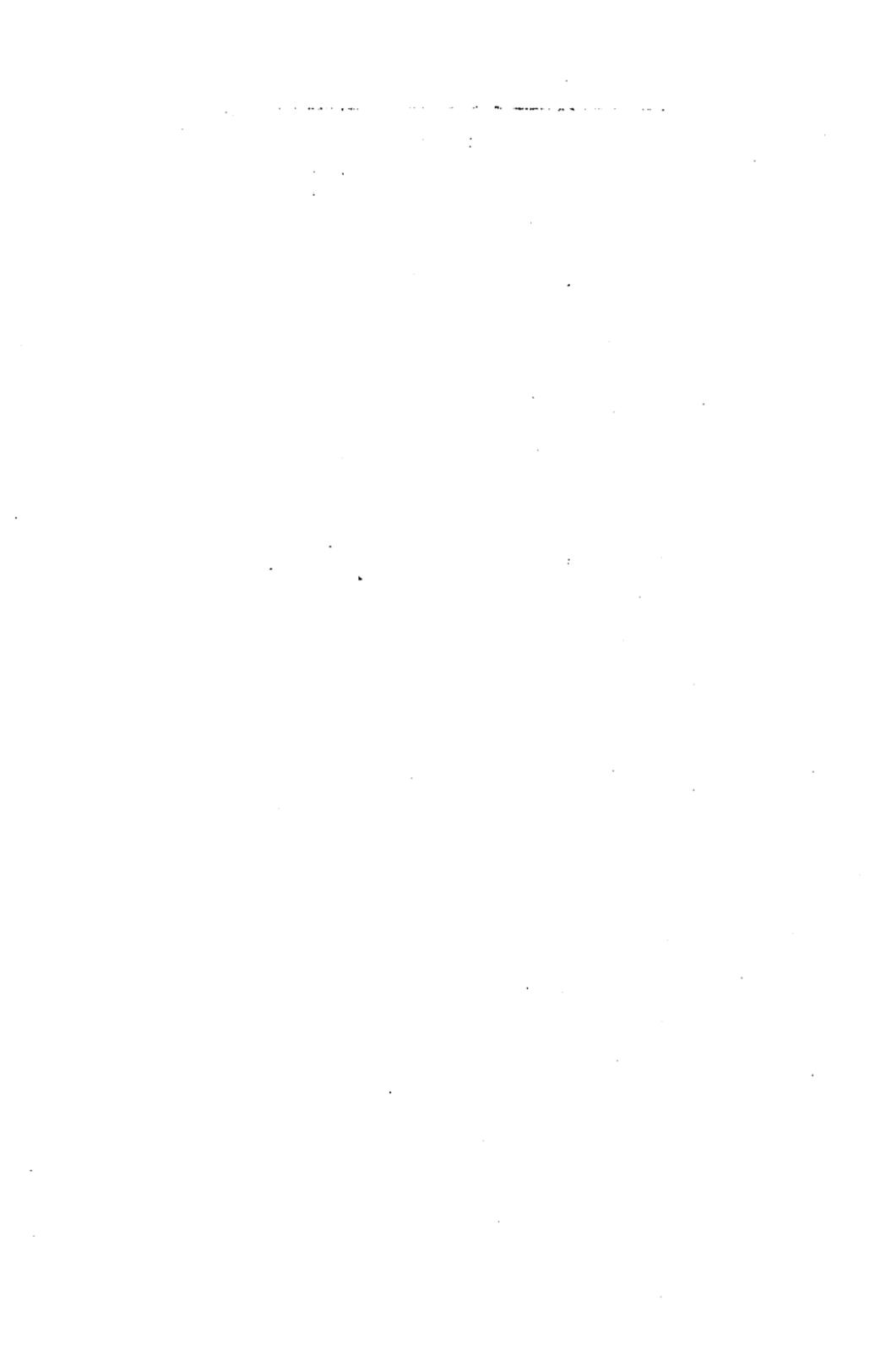
¹³ This is evident from the letter of Paul III. *Cum Sicut*, April 29, 1536 ; some of the early chronicles of the Order erroneously assign it to Pentecost, 1536.

¹⁴ The Vicar Provincial, Bernardino da Reggio, lay sick in the friary of Reggio. He died on December 19. See the letter of Lodovico da Reggio, *infra*.



VITTORIA COLONNA

From a portrait by G. Muziano in Galeria Colonna, Rome



Lodovico at the opening session addressed the Capitular fathers ; he urged them to remain firm in their resolve to observe the Rule literally and strictly and to suffer persecutions with patience and courage. Then, giving an account of his stewardship, he recited how he had laboured and suffered for the cause. It is evident that Lodovico expected to have a voice in the future council of the Order, even if he were not elected its head. To his astonishment the inconceivable happened ; Bernardino d'Asti was elected Vicar General and Lodovico was not given a place even amongst the definitors. The scene which followed struck sorrow into the hearts of all present. Bereft of all sense of dignity, Lodovico refused the customary obeisance to the newly elected Vicar and heaped bitter reproaches upon the capitular fathers for their ingratitude. Again he recited all he had done and suffered, and ended with a menace : "Know you that I am Lodovico da Fossombrone ; I am a Tenaglia. I have made a great stir and I know how to make a yet greater." With that he withdrew and went with some few followers to take up his abode in a house known as San Tomasso, but in what quarter of the city is not known.¹⁵

With a calm deliberateness characteristic of him, Bernardino d'Asti now led the business of the Chapter to the main purpose for which it had been convoked—the establishment of regular government and the reconsideration of the Constitutions of the Order with a view to a firmer discipline. As to the government of the Order it was ordained that in future a Chapter should be held annually and that the Vicar General should hold office for three years, but not longer. The congregation was divided into nine provinces and Vicars Provincial were appointed.¹⁶ The constitutions were revised in view of the new conditions which had arisen.^{16a}

¹⁵ Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Narrations*, cart. 211. Mario states that he was told the story by P. Eusebio d'Ancona, who was present at the Chapter. cf. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, I, p. 456, who states that Ochino refused to be elected Vicar General, alleging that he had a brief from the Pope which freed him from accepting that office.

¹⁶ Eight new Provinces were formally established in addition to the existing Province of Calabria. They were the Provinces of the Marches of Ancona, Naples, Milan, Rome, Venice, Umbria, Sicily and Tuscany. The establishment of these Provinces in 1535 is proved by the presence of their Vicar-Generals at the General Chapter held the following year. See *infra*.

^{16a} See *Infra*.

Two clauses introduced into the constitutions were of fundamental importance. The first was an enactment that the friars "obey and be subject in all humility to the Pope the father of all Christians and to all other Catholic bishops." It meant a renunciation of those inordinate exemptions from episcopal authority enjoyed by religious which had become one of the crying abuses of the time and which later on were drastically dealt with by the Council of Trent. The other clause was significant of the new phase of its history upon which the Capuchin Reform was now entering. It ran thus: "We renounce for ever all privileges and glosses which, relaxing the Rule, turn us aside from its pure observance and estrange us from the loving righteous and holy mind of Christ which spoke in St. Francis; and we accept only as the one living and authentic commentary on the Rule, the declarations of the Sovereign Pontiffs, especially Nicholas III and Clement V of happy memory, and the most holy life, teaching and examples of our Seraphic Father himself." The clause is significant inasmuch as it modifies the original Capuchin formula of faith, "to observe the Rule to the letter without gloss." In truth to observe any Rule to the letter without gloss is a practical impossibility: the attempt to do so would stultify all life. But the first Capuchins themselves had a canon of interpretation which gave inspiration to the letter, and that was the life of St. Francis himself. The new clause retains and explicitly mentions this inspiring canon, but it adds another, "the declarations of the Sovereign Pontiffs, especially Nicholas III and Clement V." It is, however, to be noted that the declarations of those two Pontiffs were generally received amongst Franciscans as expressly intended to safeguard the strict observance of the Rule in face of practical difficulties.¹⁷ They were taken to belong to a category apart from such Papal decrees as allowed and legalised avowed relaxations, such as the decrees of Innocent IV¹⁸ which caused such

¹⁷ The Decretals of Nicholas III *Exiit* (*Bull. Franc. III*, p. 404) and of Clement V, *Exivi* (*ibid.* V, p. 80) forbade the friars to receive money, but allowed proctors or "spiritual friends" to receive and retain money for the friars' use. But the money thus received by the proctors remained the property of the donors until it was expended for the friars, and the friars had meanwhile no claim to it. The proctors were in fact agents of the donors, not of the friars.

¹⁸ Innocent IV had made the friars the practical owners of money collected for them by the proctors, since the proctors were under the control of

consternation amongst the more fervent friars in the thirteenth century and the decrees of Martin IV and Martin V which had long been the cause of divisions in the Observant family.¹⁹ All such decrees or declarations in favour of manifest relaxations were rejected in the clause now added to the Capuchin Constitutions, whilst such declarations as safeguarded or were intended to safeguard a strict observance, were accepted. To some extent indeed the acceptance of the "declarations," embodying as they do certain modifications of the original simple life of the Franciscans, was an acknowledgment that a complete reversion to the simplicity of the primitive fraternity such as Matteo da Bascio had dreamed of, was impracticable: the new clause recognised the necessity of practical developments yet sought to keep as near as might be to the original source whence the Franciscan life sprang; it marks the passing of the pure ideal into the realm of practical politics; a momentous step in the history of any society. Another clause was added, wholly in keeping with the mind of St. Francis. It declared that all food left over from the daily meal of the friars should be distributed to the poor at the friary gate.²⁰

Lodovico, the ex-Commissary General, was as good as his word when he told the Capitular fathers that he knew how

the friars and were, in fact, the legal representatives of the friars. (cf. bull, *Franc.* I, p. 400 and p. 487). At the General Chapter of Genoa and Metz, 1254, this relaxation was rejected by the friars. (cf. Eccleston, *De Adventu FF. Minorum*, col. viii; Denifle und Erhle: *Archiv. für Litteratur und Kirchengeschichte*, VI, p. 34.

¹⁹ In 1283 Martin IV in his bull *Exultantes* (bull., *Franc.* III, p. 501) restored the authorisation granted by Innocent IV, so that once again the friars who accepted the decree became legal owners of the goods held for them by the proctors. Martin V, by the brief *Ad Fatum* (*ibid.* VII, p. 737), allowed the friars to hold lands for the sake of revenue and to administer them as proctors of the Holy See. The friars, zealous for strict observance, refused to accept these decrees. Amongst the Observants the Italians accepted whilst the Ultramontanes rejected them. They were accepted by the Conventuals.

²⁰ Concerning the decisions and ordinances made at this Chapter, see P. Edouard d'Alençon's scholarly criticism and judgment in *Tribulationes*, pp. 10-11. But since this book was written the text of the Constitutions of 1535 has been recovered through the discovery at Locarno of a copy of the printed edition of 1537. *Vide* the brief of Paul III, *Cum sicut* in the original text preserved in the Vatican Archives, Arm. XLI, vol. 2, *Minute dei Brevi di Paolo III*, epist. 280, fol. 263. The published text issued on April 29, 1536, omits the most interesting passages. The original text is published in *Tribulationes*, pp. 12-13. The letters of Vittoria Colonna are of first importance in elucidating the events of this period. Boverius, as usual, has dramatised the story of the Chapter without any attempt at a critical analysis.

“to make a yet greater stir.” For fresh troubles were already brewing and they would be his opportunity. In the previous May the Observants had elected a new Minister General, Vincenzo Lunello,²¹ a man of very different temperament and character from Paolo Pisotti: for Lunello was indifferent to personal honours and shunned the world’s applause; he was of the school of the stricter observance and was not averse to the Reform movement. Like Quiñones he favoured the Riformati; he would be willing to extend a like favour to the Capuchins provided they placed themselves under the Observant jurisdiction. He had indeed been elected to carry through the provisions of the brief of Clement VII ordering the institution of “houses of recollection” for the friars desirous of a stricter observance. In the event, it is true he did little to give effect to the Reform; not from lack of will, but because he was not strong enough to overcome the difficulties in his way.

On his assumption of office his policy towards the Capuchins was one of conciliation, yet it was to be conciliation on the basis of their submission to his authority as Minister General and incorporation into the Observant body. To effect this he was ready to make concessions allowing them to live in communities governed by superiors elected by themselves but subject to the Observant Provincial-Ministers. He would even allow them to retain their own form of habit should they greatly desire it.²²

In the autumn of 1535 he made a visitation of the provinces in the kingdom of Naples, and in the course of his visitation towards the end of October, at Nicotia he met Lodovico da Reggio, the acting-superior of the Calabrian Capuchins.²³ To him he made proposals for reunion with the family of the Observance. He deplored, he said, the evil government of his predecessor Paolo Pisotti, and the persecutions which had driven the Calabrian Recollets out of the

²¹ Lunello was elected at the General Chapter held at Nizza on May 14, 1535.

²² So says Boverius; it is not improbable in view of Lunello’s declaration to Lodovico da Reggio, that he was willing to concede the pious desires of the Calabrian Capuchins even in matters other than those of government and the liberty to observe strictly the Rule. cf. *Litterae P. Ludovici Rhagini ad P. Bernardinam Astensem*, published by P. Edouard d’Alençon in *Tribulationes*, p. 62.

²³ The Vicar Provincial, Bernardino da Reggio, was sick of the illness to which he succumbed on December 19 following.

Observant family "to the ruin of the Order and the scandal of the world." He begged that the Capuchin superiors would heal the schism, urging that according to the Rule all the friars should be under one Minister General. He would be most happy to allow them to observe the Rule in its purity and would set apart houses for them where they should live under their own superiors and even under a Vicar Provincial of their own election. The Minister of the province would have no authority over them except to visit the houses and punish transgressors should there be such. He was ready to meet their pious desires even in regard to further concessions. Lodovico thanked the Minister General for his goodwill, but recalled to his mind the history of former promises and how in spite of the goodwill shown to the Recollets by Cardinal Quiñones when Minister General, they had been driven out of their houses and subjected to all manner of persecution, until in despair they had fled from the "Babylonian confusion" in which "the dogs had become wolves and the shepherds thieves." To which plain-speaking the Minister General listened with sorrowful sympathy. Eventually Lodovico was induced to state the conditions on which subject to the approval of the Vicar General of the Congregation, reunion with the Observants might come about. They were very similar to those which the Minister General himself had proposed, but with these additions: the Capuchins, in accordance with the Rule they had vowed to observe, would obey the General in all things "which are not against their own soul and the Rule," and further that the instrument of reunion should be confirmed by a bull of the Pope inflicting censure on those who violated its provisions, lest the promised liberties should be set at nought as had happened on former occasions.²⁴ The negotiations between the Calabrian Capuchins and the Minister General had proceeded thus far when they became merged in a wider effort on the part of the Observants to bring about the subjection of the Capuchin Congregation. In the meantime Lunello before leaving Naples had persuaded the Emperor

²⁴ cf. *Litterae P. Ludovici Rhagini, ut supra*. This letter was written on January 16, 1536, and gives a detailed account of Lodovico's interview with Lunello. It was discovered in 1912 in the archives of the Postulator General of the Capuchins.

Charles V to write to Paul III urging that the Capuchins should not be allowed to increase in numbers to the detriment of the friars of the Observance, and especially that they should not be allowed to found houses in Spain. It was a diplomatic move on the part of Lunello; for the Reform movement amongst the Observants in Spain was already causing uneasiness to the Observant superiors and the presence of the Capuchins in that country might well have caused many of the Spanish Observants to pass over to the new Reform, perhaps in greater numbers even than in Italy.²⁵ The danger was the greater because of the further procrastination of the Observants themselves to give effect to the Reform edict of Clement VII. The General Chapter held in May had ordained that "the houses of recollection" should be forthwith established in all the provinces; yet time went on and no steps had been taken to carry out the decree; and a further restlessness showed itself among those Observants who were desirous of reform. To prevent a further exodus, further pontifical decrees were necessary.²⁶

Then about the middle of December the Minister General on his return to Rome obtained from the Pope a commission of three cardinals, favourable to the cause of the Observants, to adjudicate upon the matters between themselves and the Capuchins; amongst the three being Cardinal Quiñones. Their first act was to forbid the Capuchins to receive Observants pending the settlement of the controversy.²⁷ It soon became evident that this injunction of the cardinals, together with the letter of the Emperor Charles V, were but steps to prepare the way for the suppression of the Capuchin Reform or its subjection to the Observant General.

²⁵ At this very time Fray Juan Pasquale, the leader of the Reformed Conventuals in Spain, was in Rome seeking permission to receive Observants into his Reform. His petition was eventually granted by Paul III in 1541. (*Bullar. Min. Discalceatorum* I, p. 153). These Reformed Conventuals were an offshoot of the Discalced Franciscans, or *Fratres de Caputio*. St. Peter of Alcantara was their chief propagator. Before his death in 1562 they were, however, reunited with the Observants. They wore the same form of habit as the Capuchins and were very similar in their mode of life.

²⁶ *Pastoralis Officii*, August 14, 1535 (*Bullar. Cap.* I, p. 14, Wadding, anno 1535, XXV), by which Observants are forbidden to pass over to the Capuchins, but the brief *Dudum postquam*, August 19, 1536 (*Bullar. Cap.* I, p. 15, Wadding, anno 1535, XXXVI) allows Observants to migrate, should the houses of recollection not be established within two months.

²⁷ cf Wadding, anno 1535, XXXVII.

For an intensive campaign to discredit the Capuchins was now set on foot. It was this new offensive which now gave Lodovico, the ex-Commissary General, his opportunity to carry out his threat to stir up a yet greater trouble. He could hope for no assistance from the Conventual General who, as suzerain, had ordered him to convoke the Chapter and who undoubtedly would uphold the new superiors. Lodovico now turned to the Observants and made a bid for their support ; and Cardinal Quiñones, who in 1526 as Minister General had excommunicated him as a fugitive from the Order, now showed himself ready to use him as an instrument against the Capuchins.²⁸

On their part the Capuchins were alert to the danger and in Bernardino d'Asti they had a leader as firm as he was prudent. And behind Bernardino d'Asti stood Vittoria Colonna, that "virile soul in a feminine body" as Paul III once addressed her. It was she who marshalled the forces of the defence whilst Bernardino guided and held in hand the company under his command. Early in January 1536, Bernardino had obtained from the Pope that the commission of cardinals appointed "to settle the differences between the Observants and Capuchins" should be enlarged by the addition of three cardinals favourable to the Capuchin Reform, amongst them the noble Contarini.²⁹ The contest now became general all along the line, Lodovico da Fossombrone for his own ends co-operating with the Observants. On the commission of cardinals he had a strong supporter in Cardinal Quiñones : outside the commission he managed to obtain a favourable hearing from Cardinals di Cupis—"il cardinale di Trani" as he was commonly styled—and Palmerio³⁰ both, however, friendly to the Capuchin Reform. Lodovico it would seem contended that the recent Chapter of the Capuchins was invalid owing to lack of sufficient

²⁸ cf. Vittoria Colonna, in Tacchi Venturi, loc. cit., pp. 174-175.

²⁹ The three cardinals were Contarini, Simonetta and Ghinucci ; their names appear as subscribing to the brief *Regimini Universalis* of January 4, 1537, together with the three cardinals Quiñones, Campeggi and Pucci, who were the original three members of the commission. cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon, *Tribulationes*, pp. 40, 49, seq.

³⁰ Card. Palmerio had just offered the Capuchins the monastery of the Most Holy Trinity at Mileto in Sicily, of which he was abbot *in commendam*. The Capuchins, however, refused it, partly on the ground that it was not in keeping with the poverty of their other houses. cf. *Litterae P. Ludovici Rhegini*, loc. cit., p. 65.

representation of the body of the friars. Possibly, too, he may have urged the irregularity of the proceedings leading up to the Chapter when he had been forcibly detained by the Colonna at Rocca di Papa and made to convoke the Chapter under duress. He certainly succeeded in gaining a sympathetic hearing even from many who were in no way unfriendly to the Capuchin body. In February Vittoria Colonna thought it well to warn the Pope through his secretary Ambrogio Recalcati against Lodovico's intrigues. "When he was doing well," she wrote, "little favour was shown him ; to-day when he is seeking to ruin this congregation he is favourably received with an impious piety and a malign charity."³¹ But Vittoria Colonna went further. With her intimate knowledge of the Papal Court she was aware that the case of the Capuchins was not put forward by the cardinals favourable to the Reform with the same directness and vigour as were the claims of the Observants by Quiñones and those of his party. Quiñones was the Cardinal Protector of the whole Franciscan Order and his words carried weight in virtue of his official capacity, so that even those who disagreed with him, were reluctant publicly to stand up against him ; and Quiñones, himself an Observant, was an active partisan of the Observants. Vittoria Colonna, therefore, now put the case of the Capuchins directly before Paul III in a letter she addressed to him in the beginning of February. It is a lengthy document ; its purport is to give reasons why a subjection of the Capuchin Congregation to the Observant superiors would be destructive of the Reform; incidentally it is an indictment of the Observants for their remissness in reforming themselves. The letter was characteristically outspoken. "It is ten years," she wrote, "since this holy congregation began to live strictly according to the Rule of St. Francis, and though all human means have been made use of to bring about its destruction it has grown in fervour, in numbers and in discipline ; which is clearly a miracle ; and since this cannot be denied, it is asked whether it be not a miracle worked on the Sabbath."³² The whole case of the Observants, she says in effect, is based upon the

³¹ cf. Tacchi Venturi : *op cit.*, p. 174.

³² An allusion to the Gospel of St. John v, 16, "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus because He did these things on the Sabbath." See also chap. ix, 16.

assumption that the Capuchin Reform is a scandal and that to take away this scandal it is needful the Capuchins should make their submission to the Observant General. But to determine this question two things must first be considered—the life and observance of the Capuchins and the need there is for a reform of the Observants themselves. As to the need of this reform no one denies it ; it is denied neither by the General himself nor in Pontifical letters. Until the Observants have reformed themselves it would be perilous for the Capuchins to return to them, since in that case the Capuchins would be in danger of losing their own fervour and the life for which they have endured so much during the past ten years. Their case becomes clearer when it is remembered that the Rule does not exist for the sake of enforcing obedience ; but obedience exists for the sake of the Rule and that one may walk in the way of God and observe the Rule strictly and purely. The Observants say it is impossible to reform thirty thousand friars ; what chance then would the few Capuchins have, were they united with them? But the true reason why the Observants would subject the Capuchins to themselves lies not in their zeal for the observance of the Rule but in their love of power and because they are now less esteemed by the people and receive less abundant alms. Let them reform themselves and then might the Capuchins return to them : but hitherto all reforms which have been begun amongst them have come to nought ; only the Capuchins have made progress in their separation. As to the scandal which is said to arise when an Observant passes over to the Capuchins, with equal reason might it be urged that no one should do any good lest he offend those who do evil ; and that no religious should pass to a stricter Order. Wherefore, let the Observants themselves be prohibited from receiving religious of other Orders ; and let the words of St. Paul and of all the saints be erased which tell us to seek the better way of life. It is in truth the prohibitions preventing those Observants who desire of a stricter observance, from passing to the Capuchins which cause the scandal. When the Observants separated themselves from the Conventuals they had no such scruples ; but now they call for prohibitions and excommunications.³³

³³ The original letter sent to Paul III is yet undiscovered, but a transcript

The letter was written on the eve of Vittoria Colonna's visit to Naples about the middle of February, where she probably met and conversed with the Emperor concerning his letter to the Pope denouncing the Capuchins. She had returned to Rome when the Emperor paid his visit to Paul III at the beginning of April, and was the guest of the Colonna at Marino before he entered Rome. It is easy to believe that it was the knowledge he gained from Vittoria which now caused him to commend the Capuchins to the favourable consideration of the Pontiff. When Paul III reminded him of his letter the Emperor replied: "As to that I was badly informed, therefore I retract it."³⁴ It was probably due to the Emperor's appeal that on April 29, the Pope published a brief confirming the election of Bernardino d'Asti as Vicar General and forbidding anyone to wear the Capuchin habit unless he were living under obedience to Bernardino and his lawful successors.³⁵ It was a reply to Lodovico da Fossombrone's contention that the acts of the Chapter in November were invalid. But the brief in its published form bears the impress of the struggle being carried on behind the scenes. As originally drawn up, it not only confirms the election of the Vicar General but explicitly transfers to him and his successors the concessions granted by Clement VII in the bull *Religionis Zelus*, to Lodovico and Raffaele da Fossombrone. Moreover, it gave apostolic authority to the ordinances made at the Chapter. The omission of these clauses in the published brief was undoubtedly due to the supporters of Lodovico. The publication of the clause explicitly transferring to Bernardino d'Asti the privileges granted by Clement

of it is in the General Archives of the Capuchins. Until the recovery of this transcript by P. Edouard d'Alençon, the letter was attributed to Bernardino d'Asti. Boverius (*anno* 1537, I) gives an inaccurate Latin translation and divides it into two parts, which he treats as separate documents. The first part he describes as a letter sent to Cardinal San Severino in 1536; the second part as sent to Paul III in 1537. Somewhat naïvely he surmises that Paul III was too busy at the time to reply to it! Boverius had before his eyes the text given by P. Paolo da Foligno in his MS. Chronicle (fol. 208-211). Paolo ascribes the document to Bernardino d'Asti. What led Boverius into dividing the document it is impossible to say. The letter has been published from the transcript in the Capuchin Archives by P. Edouard in *Tribulationes*, pp. 27-31; preceded by a critical disquisition which leaves no doubt as to its authorship and the date when it was written. cf. *ibid.*, pp. 24-27.

³⁴ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo. *Chronica* I, p. 496.

³⁵ Brief *Cum sicut* of April 29, 1536, in *Bullar. Cap.* I, p. 16. Boverius, *anno* 1536, XIV.

VII nominally to Lodovico and his brother Raffaele, would have left Lodovico without any colour of justification for his opposition ; whilst the apostolic confirmation of the capitular ordinances was undesired by the Observants for other reasons. One of these ordinances in particular had aroused their ire—that which declared the submission of the Capuchins in accordance with the mind of St. Francis to the authority of the diocesan bishops in the matter of preaching and ministerial work :³⁶ a small matter perhaps to the casual reader, but, as the Observants rightly conjectured, indicative of much. The brief thus left open for further discussion questions which vitally affected the life of the Reform ; as became evident in the appeal Lodovico now made for the convoking of a new Chapter. The grounds of the appeal were that at the late Chapter the body of the Capuchins were inadequately represented and that in their new ordinances the Capuchins were departing from the manner of life approved for them in the bull of Clement VII canonically establishing the congregation. Lodovico consequently demanded that in the new Chapter the body of the friars should be adequately represented by a larger number of representatives and that the congregation should be reconstituted strictly as a congregation of hermits according to the original petition presented to and approved by Pope Clement. It was a masterly move, probably suggested as to its second motive by Cardinal Quiñones,³⁷ who as protector of the Order now appealed to Paul III to order the holding of a new Chapter. The Pope granted the petition, and in view of the seriousness of the issue at stake appointed a cardinal to preside at the Chapter. In the ordinary course the cardinal so nominated would be the protector of the Order ; but the Capuchins could have no confidence in Quiñones who was himself an active partisan in the dispute. The Pope, therefore, delegated Cardinal di Cupis with full authority to convoke the Chapter and preside over its deliberations. Di Cupis' first act was to order Lodovico to leave Rome pending the assembling of the capitular repre-

³⁶ cf. *infra*, p. 109.

³⁷ So well informed a witness as Vittoria Colonna explicitly states that Lodovico had been negotiating with Cardinal Quiñones. See her letter to the Duchess of Urbino in Tacchi Venturi, loc. cit., pp. 174-175.

sentatives ; to which act he was urged by Vittoria Colonna, who considering a new Chapter unnecessary and disapproving of it, was determined as far as she could, to secure that its deliberations should not be jeopardised by the intrigues of the ex-Commissary.³⁸

The new Chapter met on September 22.³⁹ Lodovico was allowed to attend it in order to present his case. To his dismay Bernardino d'Asti and the definitors were re-elected. Nevertheless he put forth his proposals as to the future constitutions of the Capuchin congregation, making it known that upon their acceptance would depend his own future action. Briefly put, his proposals were that the Capuchins should lay aside preaching and the active ministry, and retire into hermitages where they were to devote themselves to contemplation and manual labour ; and further, that they renounce their subjection to the General of the Conventuals and place themselves under the jurisdiction of the Observant Minister General. The Capitular fathers refused even to consider the proposals : they would abide by the canonical state in which they were and keep their freedom to observe the Rule simply and purely according to their own constitutions.⁴⁰ Thereupon Lodovico passionately declared that he would have no more to do with them ; he would leave their company. To this defiance the Chapter, with the approval of the Cardinal, replied by ordering him either return to his obedience to the superiors of the congregation or to put aside the habit of a Capuchin and be expelled the Order. Lodovico would neither obey nor put aside the Capuchin habit and withdrew to carry on his own intrigues and maybe set up a new Reform after his own mind. Three weeks later, as he continued contumacious, the Pope formally confirmed the Capitular sentence.⁴¹

³⁸ cf. *Carteggio di Vitt Colonna*, epist. LXX, p. 106.

³⁹ The date of the Chapter seems established by an interesting document in the Provincial Archives of the Capuchins in Assisi, and recently published in *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, vol. xliii, p. 285, *seq.* The document is a report of the Chapter written by Fra Francesco da Cannobio. According to this report there were eighty-three electors in the Chapter, including Vicar Provincials, Discreets and Guardians.

⁴⁰ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, I, pp. 469-471. It should be noted that Lodovico's proposal was in flat contradiction to the life of the first Capuchins. The Constitutions of 1529 had expressly emphasised the duty of preaching.

⁴¹ Boverius, *anno* 1536, IX-X, gives a dramatic description of Lodovico's ejection from the Chapter by Cardinal di Trani, but cf. brief *Superioribus die-*

For Lodovico da Fossombrone, with his manifest ambition and his readiness to sacrifice every interest so that he might have his own way, one can have little sympathy. A pushful personality, fearless of danger but without the ennobling trait of a selfless ambition, he had succumbed to his vanity. Excommunicated by the Pope, he passed into obscurity. He had no good word to say for the brethren whom he had deserted ; and no one seems to have had a good word to say for him, except the brethren who, whatever his failures, yet continued to pray for him. Some sixteen years passed and the Vicar General of the time sent to him friars to invite him to return. Pitifully, if the report be true, he exclaimed : " During all these years I was never asked to return ! " And for awhile he dwelt with the brethren in their friary at Amelia in the Umbrian hills. But the Cardinal Protector when he heard of it commanded that he should leave, so one story runs, and Lodovico betook himself to a solitary's cell and there ended his days.⁴² But another and later story says he went back to the Camaldolese hermits who had befriended him at the beginning, and in return for his priestly services received shelter and food.⁴³

For Lodovico, as we have said, one can feel but little sympathy, though undoubtedly he craved for it. It is otherwise with Matteo da Bascio who after seven years of self-effacement now re-enters for one flitting moment into this story, only to pass out of the Reform of which unwittingly he was the herald.

The motive of his passing out is nowhere clearly stated. According to the general story he came to Rome at the time of the General Chapter of 1536, and then learned for the first time that no one might lawfully wear the habit worn by the Capuchins unless he were living under the jurisdiction of the Vicar General of the Reform ; whereas he himself was living apart from the community in virtue of the concession granted him by Clement VII. For a long time Matteo de-

bus of October 10, 1536 (Bullar, *Cap.* I, p. 21, Boverius, *ibid.*, XVI), in which Paul III confirms the expulsion of Lodovico from the Order. The Capuchins, however, delayed three months before promulgating the Papal sentence of expulsion and excommunication in the hope that Lodovico would yet relent and submit. cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon, *Tribulations*, pp. 16-17.

⁴² Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, I, p. 472.

⁴³ So says Paolo da Foligno, fol. 133.

bated within himself, being torn by the contending appeals of his love for the habit and of his call to be a wandering evangelist ; until in his great love for the souls of sinners whom he wished to save he decided to sacrifice the habit and his tie with the Capuchin Reform in order to live in the way that God had called him, and so with mutual regret Matteo and the Reform parted company.⁴⁴ The story is unsatisfactory. It does not explain why Matteo returned to the jurisdiction of the Observant superiors, as he undoubtedly did, and yet continued to avail himself of his special privileges. If he could do that under one jurisdiction, he could legally do it under another. Was he won over by Cardinal Quiñones and the Observant General, who, as we know, made every effort to detach the more notable Capuchins from the Reform in the hope that others would follow them ?⁴⁵ Matteo, be it remembered, had been drawn into the Capuchin congregation not of set purpose, but more or less unwittingly in the wake of Lodovico and Raffaele da Fossombrone. He had not proposed to himself to initiate a general reform, but to live his own personal life according to the ideal which had come to him. And it may be doubted whether he ever felt himself an effective member of the new congregation. Whatever the reason, Matteo now decided to put himself once more under obedience to the Minister General and so severed his connection with the new Reform.⁴⁶ He continued to live the life of

⁴⁴ cf. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, II, p. 603 ; Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Descrizione*, loc. cit., p. 18.

⁴⁵ In 1540 Clemente de Moneglia on behalf of the Minister General endeavoured to induce Giacomo da Molfetta (vide *infra*) to return to the Observants.

⁴⁶ The question of Matteo's return to the Observants cannot be solved satisfactorily until new documents come to light. That he did return to the Observants seems certain, notwithstanding a long-cherished tradition of the Capuchins that he did not entirely sever his connection with the new Reform, but continued in some sort a Capuchin free-lance (cf. d'Areemberg, *Flores Seraphici*, I, p. 4 ; Boverius (*anno* 1537) admits that Matteo went back to the Observants ; Bernardino da Colpetrazzo says he separated from the Capuchins but continued to wear the habit as conceded to him by Clement VII, merely shortening the hood (*Chronica*, II, p. 602).

See also the story of the meeting of Matteo and Lodovico da Fossombrone at Foligno, told by Mario da Mercato-Seraceno (*Descrizione*, loc. cit., pp. 26-27). Boverius gives this incident, but incorrectly says the meeting took place in Rome (Boverius, *anno* 1537, XIII). According to the story, Lodovico was upbraiding the Capuchins when Matteo remarked that neither Lodovico nor himself was worthy of such a devout company. That Matteo's connection with the Observants seemed of the slightest to the people at large, is evident

a wandering evangelist until his death in 1552. He died as he had lived, a homeless friar; dying in the house of a compassionate friend. After his death his body was claimed by the Observants and buried by them in their church in Venice. There his tomb became a place of pilgrimage, and there to-day Capuchin and Observant kneel together in homage to one who, loving peace, became a sign of contradiction to his brethren.

Vittoria Colonna was under no delusion that the danger was over because the Chapter had declared against Lodovico. His rebellion had given the Observants an opportunity and a tool to be used for their own purpose. His discomfiture did not affect their determination, nor deflect them from their purpose. The commission of cardinals was still in being, and Quiñones still hoped to achieve the desired end by its means. Feeling ran high in the Observant Camp, and the refusal of the Capuchins even to consider Lodovico's proposals for reunion only stirred their leaders to a greater resolution; and not a few of their followers to a louder campaign of invective. An incident unfortunate for the Capuchins at this moment was gleefully turned to account by the less responsible members of the Observant party.

During the previous Lent, Bernardino Ochino, the first definator, had preached a course of sermons in Naples, and a report had got abroad that his doctrine was dangerously

from the story of his funeral. When the Observants claimed his body after his death, the rector of San Moise in Venice at first refused to give it over to them on the ground that those who had done so little for him in life had no claim on him in death. (Wadding, *Annales, anno 1552*, p. 257). Nor is the question settled by the letter of obedience said to have been given to Matteo by the Minister General, Lunello, dated May 15, 1536, granting Matteo permission to continue to live according to the concession made to him by Clement VII. The letter is published by Flaminio Cornelius in *Ecclesiae Venetae . . . illustratae in decades tributae*, dec. XI, p. 32 (Venice, 1799). P. Edouard d'Alençon accepts the letter as genuine (cf. *Tribulationes*, p. 17, note 6), and concludes that Matteo left the Capuchin Reform before the date of this letter. But against this we have the evidence of Vittoria Colonna in a letter to Cardinal Contarini which, though undated, could not have been written earlier than July 1536 (vide *infra*). In this letter she says explicitly that Matteo is still a member of the Capuchin congregation—"fra Matteo . . . il quale vive hoggi e sta fra questi patri." Vittoria is usually so well informed as to the internal affairs of the Capuchins at this period that it is difficult to believe she would have been unaware of Matteo's defection had it taken place. Consequently until further light is thrown on the subject I cannot regard the authenticity of the letter as definitely established.

sympathetic to the new doctrines imported into Italy from Germany. This was sufficient to brand the whole body of Capuchins as Lutherans: their refusal to submit to the Minister General was now made clear; they were afraid lest under his careful discipline their liberty to spread their errors would be curtailed. So persistent was the slander that Bernardino d'Asti protested to Quiñones as protector of the Order and threatened an appeal to the Holy See. The cardinal deprecated this appeal, and undertook himself to admonish the Observant superiors to silence the slanderers.⁴⁷ Let it be remembered that the Observants were not of one mind in their campaign against the Capuchins; nor may the ribald activity of some be charged against the more responsible opponents of the Capuchin Reform. Such Observants as Cardinal Quiñones and the Minister General Lunello were fighting to save the Observant family from utter disintegration, which they knew must follow should the Reform movement be allowed to drift entirely to the Capuchins. Piteous in its obvious sincerity was the alarm felt by many of the more zealous Observants at this juncture.⁴⁸ They could not yet see that the independence of the Capuchins would eventually aid the internal reform of the Observant family by forcing the Observants to allow a greater freedom and protection for reform if only to prevent further migrations to the Capuchins. Not yet could a Minister General of the Observants regard the Capuchin Reform as one of the signs of God's favour towards the Order of the Friars Minor, as did the Venerable Francesco Gonzaga, fifty years later.⁴⁹ At this period, the main reason which made the Capuchins stand out was their conviction that union with the Observants, instead of helping internal reform, would only result in their own dispersion and the extinction of all reform. They had no faith, in view of past experience, that any promise made them would be carried out. Lunello, the present General, might respect their freedom; his successor, it was not unlikely, would work to

⁴⁷ Boverius. Anno 1536. Vittoria Colonna's letter to Contarini (*ut infra*) lends confirmation to Boverius' statement relative to the campaign of slander.

⁴⁸ See the letter of Fra. Cherubino Lusio da Feltre to Paul III, November 19, 1535, in Tacchi Venturi, loc. cit., pp. 162-163.

⁴⁹ cf. *De Origine Seraphicæ Religionis*, edit. 1589, p. 21. Francesco Gonzaga was Minister General, 1578-1587.

destroy it ; for as yet the general body of the Observants in Italy were still actively opposed to reform.⁵⁰ All this must be borne in mind if we are to understand the stubbornness of the struggle.

Vittoria Colonna was well aware of the situation and the active forces behind it. She was under no illusion as to the determination of Cardinal Quiñones to use every means and persuasion to work his purpose. Nor did she consider that the cardinals who favoured the Capuchins were as active on their behalf as they should be. Consequently she now addressed to Cardinal Contarini and the other cardinals a letter of appeal urging them to more decisive action ; and lest they should be influenced, as she feared, by the charges so persistently made against the Capuchins she took up the defence. Her letter was as cogent in its argument as it was passionate in its appeal. After inviting the cardinals to look and see for themselves how humble and devoted in all good works were the lives of these poor friars, she sums up the charges made against them under six headings ; and answers them one by one. The charges were : (1) that the Capuchins were Lutherans because they preached the liberty of the spirit ; (2) that they had subjected themselves to the local bishops ; (3) that they lacked the approbation of the Holy See ; (4) that they refused obedience to the Minister General ; (5) that they wore a habit different from that worn by the body of the Franciscans ; (6) that they received Observants into their congregation. It was indeed unfortunate for the Capuchins that Fra Bernardino Ochino, the greatest preacher of the day, had aroused the suspicion of Gian Pietro Caraffa and his Theatines. But very few, except amongst the enemies of the Capuchins, at this time gave credence to the charge made against him. Nevertheless, it gave point to the general slander. We shall have to deal with this matter later on in this story. Here we but record Vittoria's reply. If to preach the liberty of the spirit be heresy, she wrote, then was St. Francis himself an heresiarch, for it was he who taught his disciples to observe the holy Gospel which repeatedly tells us

⁵⁰ See the statement of Vittoria Colonna in a letter to Cardinal Ghinucci as to the treatment at this time of the Riformati in the friary of Santa Cetarina in the province of St. Louis, and of the Reform brethren in the province of St. Anthony. *Carteggio di Vitt. Colonna*, epist. XCVII, p. 164 ; *Tribulationes*, p. 56.

that it is "the spirit which quickeneth," etc. But one has only to look to these friars' lives to observe their humility and obedience, their poverty and charity and their ungrudging labours, in order to know them. As to their subjection to the bishops, is not this ordinance in accord with the mind of St. Francis who in his own day would have his friars observe it? And is it not well known how in every city and diocese scandals and dissensions arise daily because the religious do not obey the prelates? Then it is said that the Capuchins have no written approbation from the Holy See. Have they not the bull of Clement VII and other letters, including the recent letter of the present Pontiff confirming the election of the present Vicar General? But beside these they have the miraculous writings of their own fervent deeds and the bull of the wounds of Christ and the brief of the Stigmata of St. Francis in their souls, confirmed by the daily benedictions they receive from his present Holiness. They accept, too, all those declarations which oblige them to the strict observance of their Rule, but those which relax the Rule they have renounced and still renounce.⁵¹ In answering the charge that the Capuchins refuse obedience to the Minister General and that they admit Observants to their congregation to the scandal of the people, Vittoria follows the same line of argument as in her letter to Paul III. But a trace of sarcasm creeps into her reply concerning the change of habit. "Why all this clamour about the wearing of a habit worn by the great saint, when one sees a thousand habits that are without decency and a thousand varieties of habits worn by religious?" Why then, she asks, should the Capuchins exchange the obedience in which they have lived for ten years with the greatest perfection, in order to satisfy the ambition of those to whom the Generalate has brought such grave injury? She concludes with an impassioned plea that the cardinal will not destroy the Capuchins: they have suffered much already from the cardinal of Santa Croce (Quiñones) and the Minister General. Let these look to the reformation of their own and leave the Capuchins in peace. Now that the cardinals to whom she writes are better informed they will find no excuse before God if they allow themselves to be swayed by human respect; since Christ was not ashamed to

⁵¹ A reference to the ordinance of the late Chapter.

die for us.⁵² The effect of these letters was decisive as to the main point at issue. On August 25, Paul III published the bull *Exponi vobis* in which he confirmed and extended the privileges granted by Clement VII in the bull *Religionis Zelus*, and again explicitly placed the Capuchins under the suzerain jurisdiction of the Master General of the Conventuals, thus definitely exempting them from the jurisdiction of the Observants.⁵³

(iii)

The main position was won. But Quiñones and the Observants were not yet beaten. The frontal attack repulsed, there remained a strategic movement by which the Capuchins might yet be reduced to comparative impotence and the Observance supremacy as the dominant partner, if not as the ruling power, be yet secured ; and to this Quiñones now bent all his influence. The new move was to starve the Capuchins of their recruits from the Observant family and to prevent their spreading beyond the confines of the Italian provinces.

The question as to the right of the Capuchins to receive Observants in accordance with Canon Law, had, as we have seen, been a continued source of trouble. By Canon Law they undoubtedly had the right ; but successive decrees of the Papal Court had interposed to prevent Observant friars passing over to their ranks. Under Paul III, these decrees were of a temporary character, to allow the Observants a period

⁵² See the original text of this letter edited by P. Edouard d'Alençon (from the copy in the Vatican Archives) in *Tribulationes*, p. 31, *seq.* cf. *Carteggio di Vitt. Col.*, p. 110, *seq.*, Fontana, in *Documenti Vaticani d' Vitt. Colonna* (Roma, 1880), dates this letter " *anteriore alla Bolla del 25 Agosto, 1536 !*"

⁵³ *Bullar Cap.* I, p. 17. Wadding, *anno 1536, XI.*

In defining the exact position of the Capuchins in relation to the Conventuals, the Pope made use of almost the very words in which Eugenius IV had defined the dependence of the Observants themselves on the Conventuals in 1446. (*Ut sacra* of January 11, 1446. Wadding, *anno 1446, XI.*) Again, in answer to the charge that the Capuchins were violators of the Rule in not obeying the Minister General, Paul III quotes the words of Pius II in defence of the Observants against a similar charge made against them by the Conventuals, in which Pius II declared that the Observants satisfied the obligation of the Rule in obeying their own Vicar-General. (*Circa regularis* of January 12, 1464. Wadding, *anno 1464, XVIII.*)

for the establishment of "houses of recollection" which were to be centres of an internal reform. Constantly when the period had elapsed and the houses of recollection had not yet been established, a new decree was obtained allowing the Observants a further period of grace. We have seen how the original commission of cardinals had prohibited the Capuchins from receiving Observants until the work of the commission was concluded. Meanwhile numbers of Observants were clamouring to be allowed to go over to the Capuchin Reform, since no progress was being made towards reform within the Observant family.

It was with no shallow desire of increasing the numbers of the Capuchin congregation that Bernardino d'Asti, the Vicar General, now protested against the privation of the freedom of the Observants who so desired, to embrace the stricter life of the Capuchins. So far was he from any such ambition that at the last Capuchin Chapter a decree was made enjoining the strictest discrimination in the acceptance of postulants who came from the Observants: only the most fervent were to be accepted.⁵⁴ But to deny those who sincerely desired to live a more perfect life the freedom to do so, was to Bernardino a denial of the liberty of the Gospel; an injustice against which his wide charity forced him to protest.

In a letter addressed to one of the cardinals of the Court⁵⁵ he protests against these prohibitions as being contrary to both the natural law and the divine, by which all men are called to tend to higher perfection and, according to the words of Christ, to walk by the hard way and to enter by the narrow door. If everyone has a duty to choose the safer path, still more is it the duty of superiors not to stand in their way and impede them. Of a surety those who do hinder them; whoever they may be, will have to render a most strict account to the just judge Christ in the day of judgment. Calmly he discusses the question from the standpoint of Canon Law; then calls attention to the inconsistency of the Observants who themselves receive members of other Orders

⁵⁴ This decision of the Chapter is mentioned by Vittoria Colonna in her letter to the cardinals: "*Et questi, per mantenersene, ne acceptariano pochissimi et tutti ferventi, come gia in questo Capitolo hanno espressamente ordinato.*"

⁵⁵ The letter is published from an original text in the general archives of the Capuchins by P. Edouard d'Alençon in *Tribulationes*, pp. 42-46. cf. Paolo da Foligno, p. 285.

even when these (as the law allows) have been refused permission by their superiors. Finally he points out that the prohibition of the three cardinals who originally formed the commission is invalid since it was not published and sent to the Vicar General of the Capuchins until after three other cardinals had been added to the commission ; and these cardinals had not signed the decree. True, since the decree had been published the Pope had indeed *oracula vocis* allowed certain Observants to pass over to the Capuchins ; but such individual permissions did not meet the case. According to the common law and justice all who were sincere in purpose had the right to seek a stricter life and observance ; and to deny it to them was against justice and the liberty of Christ.

Vittoria Colonna, too, wrote in the same strain to several of her friends at Court, amongst others to Cardinal Contarini.⁵⁶

Nevertheless on January 4, 1537, Paul III published the brief *Regimini Universalis* whereby it was decreed that neither the Observants nor the Capuchins might pass the one to the other without the written permission of their respective superiors. Observants, however, who desire a stricter observance are to be allowed to betake themselves, with their superior's permission, to some place assigned for the stricter observance, provided they do not change the form of habit which they already wore. Where, however, such places are not already provided, they must be provided for at the next General Chapter. Should this not be done, the Pope will then take care to provide for those who wish to live under the yoke of a more penitential life.⁵⁷ Such is the substance of the brief as published. But in the original text submitted to the Pope were three extraordinary clauses—the Pope was to deprive himself of the power to grant permissions contrary to this decree, either by word of mouth or in writing ; the decree was to remain binding until the question had been considered either in the General Council

⁵⁶ See her letter to Ambrogio Recalcati in Tacchi Venturi, loc. cit. p. 30 ; also her letter to Contarini in *Carteggio di Vitt. Colonna*, p. 93. A more critical text of this letter is published by P. Edouard d'Alençon in *Tribulationes*, pp. 46-47.

⁵⁷ *Bullar. Cap. I*, p. 23. Wadding, anno 1537, XVII. But see the original unpublished text edited by P. Edouard d'Alençon in *Tribulationes*, pp. 49-51.

shortly to be held or in the forthcoming Chapter of the Observants ;⁵⁸ and until the General Council or the Chapter of the Order should be held, the Capuchins were to remain "in the state in which they now are" nor were they to establish themselves beyond the Alps. These three clauses were deleted before the brief was published, probably owing to a protest on the part of some of the cardinals.⁵⁹ The first draft of the decree was in fact an effort on the part of Cardinal Quiñones to neutralise the bull *Exponi vobis* and to reopen the whole case of the Capuchins. Quiñones failed to gain his more ultimate objective ; but he closed the door against further migrations of Observants to the Capuchin Reform. And he gained a second point when, on January 5, a Papal brief was published forbidding the Capuchins to establish themselves beyond the Alps.⁶⁰ Quiñones thus gained much even if not all he aimed to gain. Yet the Observants were not satisfied ; they pressed for a decision that those of their family who had already entered the Capuchin Reform during the past year with permission of the Pope, should now be ordered to return to the Observant communities ; but to this the Pope refused his assent.⁶¹

The General Council of the Church to which the case between the Observants and the Capuchins was now referred, was to have met in Mantua in May, but owing to political difficulties the Council was postponed. Nor did the Chapter of the Observants which was to have been held in 1538 take place. This meant a further postponement of the settlement of the controversy. It also meant a further upheaval amongst the Observants themselves ; for those

⁵⁸ i.e. the Chapter of the Cismontane Observants, which was due in 1538. The General Council had been convoked by Paul III on June 4, 1536, to assemble at Mantua on May 23, 1537. After being several times postponed, it eventually was opened at Trent on Dec. 13, 1545.

⁵⁹ A marginal note added by Cardinal Contarini states that he knew nothing about the proposal that the Capuchins should not establish themselves beyond the Alps. According to Fabricio Peregrino, ambassador of the Duke of Mantua, Paul III, on December 15, 1536, had added three more cardinals to the commission (cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon, *Tribulationes*, p. 46), but only the names of the six cardinals already forming the commission appear in the original text of the brief of January 4.

⁶⁰ The brief *Dudum siquidem* of January 5, 1537. *Bullar. Cap.* I, p. 23. Wadding, *anno 1537*, XVIII (where, however, the date is given erroneously as Jan. 3).

⁶¹ cf. *Tribulationes*, p. 51, note 4.

who were anxious for internal reform again met with the usual postponement ; and not a few were clamouring to be allowed to join the Capuchins. An attempt was now made to induce a number of Capuchins to come and live in Observant friaries with a view to reforming them ; and thus, so it was said, to bring about a division amongst the Capuchins themselves.⁶² To the eyes of Vittoria Colonna the situation was still critical for the Reform. Not only were the Capuchins threatened by insidious attempts to undermine them ; but it is evident from a letter she now addressed to Paul III, that a new campaign of slander was on foot, accusing the Capuchins of sympathy with the heretics and of a rebellious attitude towards the Holy See. The letter is characteristically outspoken and direct. She has learned, she writes, that the General of the Observants has been laying information against the poor friars he wishes to destroy. Let His Holiness if he wishes to know the true character of these poor friars send two impartial agents to all the cities of Italy and he will learn in what esteem they are held ; how stoutly they oppose the heretics, and how in all things they obey the wishes of the Sovereign Pontiff. If indeed it is the will of His Holiness that the Capuchins be destroyed, let him do it with his own hand and not through the agency of another ; but in that case Vittoria will journey about calling upon all good men to leave Italy where they can no longer remain, since His Holiness will do nothing to put down the wicked. But she trusts in his wisdom, since once the truth is brought to light, lies will fail. Needful is it that His Holiness should impose silence on those who, having already caused the door to be closed, now daily cause new troubles that they may destroy those whose exemplary life does not suffice to save them.

The storm now subsided for a time ; maybe the Pope, persuaded by Vittoria Colonna and the cardinals favourable to the new Reform,⁶³ made it known that the provisional settlement agreed upon by the commission of cardinals must be observed and no further attempt made to anticipate

⁶² Tacchi Venturi, loc. cit., p. 32. *Tribulations*, p. 54.

⁶³ It would seem from Vittoria Colonna's letter to Cardinal Trivulzio that he was actively in favour of the Capuchins. The Chronicles also mention Cardinal Sanseverino as actively sympathising with their cause.

the appeal to the General Council and the Chapter of the Order. Now and again echoes of the controversies break the silence ; ⁶⁴ but the Pope would not allow the truce to be broken. Cardinal Quiñones died on October 27, 1540. It is said that as he lay in his last sickness he sent to ask the prayers of the Capuchins, promising that if he recovered he would show a more paternal regard for them than he had shown hitherto.⁶⁵ He had been a fierce but honourable opponent ; and as such the Capuchins respected him.

Quiñones did not live to witness the failure of the General Chapter of 1541, in the matter of the promised reform. The Chapter met at Mantua and not at Rome as the Pope had wished. No provision was made either to inaugurate the reforms decreed so long ago by Clement VII or to arrive at some settlement with the Capuchins. In consequence some of the Observants considered that the prohibition against their passing over to the Capuchin Reform now ceased, and a new migration was only prevented by a Papal prohibition.⁶⁶ Not until twelve years later was any attempt at a general reform of the Cismontane Observants taken in hand by Capitular authority.⁶⁷ But it was chiefly in the "houses of recollection" that the reform took root, where the *Riformati*, as the friars in these houses were called, began rapidly to increase in numbers. The decrees prohibiting Observants from passing over to the Capuchins undoubtedly helped to swell the numbers of the *Riformati* ; towards the end of the century they formed no inconsiderable body amongst the Italian Observants. Yet the old difficulties still remained, and in 1579 the *Riformati* found it necessary to form themselves into a congregation practically distinct from the "Observants of the commu-

⁶⁴ Thus a brief of August 3, 1539, again forbids the Capuchins to receive Observants. See the text of this brief in *Tribulationes*, pp. 58-59. The original text is in the Vatican Archives. Again, a similar brief was issued on August 5, 1541. cf. *Tribulationes*, p. 59. Yet in this same year permission was granted to the Reformed Conventuals in Spain to admit Observants to their congregation.

⁶⁵ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, p. 1390.

cf. *Tribulationes*, p. 38, note 6.

⁶⁶ Brief *Cum Autem*, August 5, 1541, *ut supra*.

⁶⁷ At the Chapter held at Salamanca Constitutions were drawn up for the Observants of the Cismontane family, which included the provinces of Italy and Eastern Europe. They were promulgated by the Minister General Clemente Dolera, in 1554.

Wadding, *anno* 1553, XVIII.

nity," though they continued to acknowledge the Minister General as their Visitor and the head of the Order.⁶⁸ The Capuchins had not suffered in vain. In winning their own freedom for a stricter observance, they at the same time opened the way to reform for others ; it might in truth be said that in separating from the Observants they saved the Observant family more effectively than had they submitted to the Observant rule. And so in the end, notwithstanding the bitterness of the contest whilst it lasted, the Capuchins deserved well of their Observant brethren, as some of these eventually and generously acknowledged. Indeed, bitter though the contest was, in the suffering it caused to many, between the Capuchins and their opponents, at least those of the "internal reform" party, there was throughout a strong sense of spiritual kinship and underlying charity ; as was manifested in their more private relations. Between these the chief bitterness of suffering lay in the enforced separation for truth's sake, as each conceived the truth.⁶⁹

(iv)

It was well for the Capuchin Reform that during the great crisis through which it had passed, the leadership was in the hands of so prudent a leader as Bernardino d'Asti. He was a man of wonderfully calm temperament, sagacious and far-seeing ; one whose heart was set on the truth of things and not on appearances ; a man fearless in this reverence for the truth and in the simplicity of his loyalties : consequently deeply humble without servility ; utterly candid and without thought of self. He was, too, a man of vast charity ; yet virile and strong in his charity as he was in his love for the truth. He lived much within himself, spending hours daily in prayer and in pondering on the Sacred Scriptures, however pressing and multitudinous the external activities to which his charity and duty called him. His

⁶⁸ cf. Wadding, *anno* 1579, XX. Eventually the three reformed congregations of Observants, the Riformati, Discalceati and Recollets, far outnumbered the Observants of the community. In 1710 the Riformati alone numbered 30,050 friars in 1432 convents. (Diomede Falconio, *op. cit.*, p. lxx.)

⁶⁹ See *infra* the relations between Francesco da Jesi and the Venetian Riformati. Vol. II., Appendix II.

brethren loved him with a reverential love, as one on whom they could depend for wise counsel in an emergency and for sustaining sympathy in trouble. His calm strength was felt by all in the shock caused to the brethren by the apostasy of Lodovico da Fossombrone. To many of them it seemed for a moment as though the ground they stood on had suddenly become unstable. It was Bernardino's quiet strength which reassured them. In the bewilderment which followed the catastrophe some were for accepting the project of reunion with the Observants: Matteo da Bascio, as we have seen, did return to the Observant jurisdiction. Bernardino's unwavering conviction in the righteousness of the Capuchin cause, as the sole hope of reform in the Order, rallied the brethren and saved the Reform from extinction.

As soon as circumstances permitted, Bernardino undertook a general visitation of the brethren. Notwithstanding the efforts made to prevent their progress, the Capuchins now had settlements in Sicily, Tuscany, Lombardy and Genoa; they had increased in numbers in the Marches of Ancona, in the Roman province and in Calabria.⁷⁰ Bernardino's personal presence and encouragement was needed to calm their spirit and to encourage them individually and corporately to adhere to the stricter observance they had embraced, and to re-establish the common discipline which had suffered under Lodovico's erratic government and since his rebellion. His own example was his most convincing argument. He travelled from house to house on foot, never taking provisions with him on his journey but trusting in God's Providence to give shelter and food on the way. When he arrived at a

⁷⁰ Settlements were made in Sicily with the encouragement of Cardinal Palmerio who actually offered the Capuchins the monastery of the Holy Trinity at Mileto; but this the friars refused as not being in keeping with Franciscan poverty. (cf. *Litterae P. Ludovici Rhegini in Tribulationes*, p. 60.) In 1537 the hermitage of Monte Casale, sacred to St. Francis, was given for their use with the approbation of Paul III (cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* I, p. 101). A new house had been given them in Rome by the Colonna, at the church of San Nicola di Portiis (cf. *Carteggio di Vitt. Colonna*, p. 124); P. Edouard d'Alençon: *La Chiesa di S. Nicola di Portiis* (Roma, 1908). At Siena a house was given them by the city at the instance of Cardinal Piccolomini (Sisto da Pisa: *Storia dei Cappuccini Toscani*, I, p. 51). There was a friary at Porlezza in the diocese of Milan in 1540, (Valdemiro da Bergamo: *I Conventi e I Cappuccini dell' Antico Ducato di Milano* (Crema, 1894, I, p. 37); at Brescia in 1536 (Valdemiro da Bergamo: *I Conventi e I Cappuccini Bresciani*, Milano, 1891, p. 13); in Genoa in 1538 (P. Francesco Zaverio Molino: *Codice Diplomatico dei Cappuccini Liguri*, Genova, 1904, p. 103).

friary or a hermitage it was as a pilgrim often footsore and weary in body but blithe in spirit. In after years stories were told of these journeys which recall the simple and merry spirit of the *Fioretti*.

One such story was that of the innkeeper at whose expense Bernardino and his companion dined. They had arrived hungry at the inn and had called for food. The innkeeper supplied them with a frugal but sufficient meal, and when they had eaten he came demanding payment. Bernardino reminded him that they were poor friars and had no money ; but the innkeeper was insistent that they must pay since they had eaten. Whereupon Bernardino produced a slip of paper and wrote on it the prayer *Retribuere*, begging God to bless all who in a kind spirit do kind acts unto us. "That paper," said Bernardino, "is worth a hundred pence in the bank of heaven." The innkeeper took it doubtfully, yet being a good Christian dared not refuse it as payment ; and so the friars departed. But the next day a cardinal and his suite called at the inn. The innkeeper gave them of his best and himself waited upon them. But when at the end of the meal the cardinal rose and in stentorian tones intoned the prayer *Retribuere*, as is the manner of clerics, the innkeeper fell into a cold sweat. "Now am I caught again with their notes on the bank of heaven," he exclaimed, "and meanwhile they have eaten of my best." Whereat the cardinal, astonished, asked the cause and meaning of his words ; and the innkeeper explaining, received a fat purse as part-payment for the banquet he had provided.⁷¹

Bernardino's first act on arriving at a friary was to visit the Church and there pray for the brethren of the place. He would allow no special provision to be made for him as to either food or accommodation ; but shared the food and lodging of the community, making himself in every way one with them as the humblest amongst them. Nor did he order this or that to be done as though he were the master ; but his orders were given as admonitions of a brotherly love, as of a fellow disciple voicing the consciences of all. He was rigid as to poverty, it was said, but large in charity. A saying of his was treasured : "We who are in health can never

⁷¹ See the story as told by P. Carolus d'Arembergh : *Flores Seraphici* (Coloniae Agrippinae, 1640), I, p. 20.

cherish poverty enough ; but towards the sick and feeble even poverty must be a generous giver." But rigid as he was, he would yet have a reasonable mean : "Never more than is needed ; never less than is sufficient." Of his love of poverty, this is recorded. On his visit to the brethren of Santa Lea in the Marches of Ancona he found the friary of larger dimensions and built more solidly than was the rule of the Capuchins. He learned that the townspeople of the place who built the house insisted on thus building it. Bernardino could not approve, yet as it belonged to the townspeople he could not destroy ; but he prayed to the Lord to deal with it as was His will. Shortly afterwards it was damaged in a great storm and the friars had to desert it.⁷²

Thus under his guidance and personal persuasiveness the new congregation attained to a corporate self-consciousness which it had hitherto lacked, and to a definite internal discipline which responded to its high ideals. And for this reason, notwithstanding the efforts made to discredit it and destroy its independence, the congregation gained in the estimation not only of the common people, but of those in high authority ; so that amongst the cardinals at the Papal Court, not a few actively supported the Capuchins, and were anxious for their increase. Cardinal Contarini, as we have seen, did not approve when they were forbidden to take houses on the further side of the Alps. Giberti, the reforming bishop of Verona, was throughout in sympathy with them,⁷³ and so was Cardinal Gonzaga, Archbishop of Mantua.⁷⁴ The storm which had shaken them left them more solidly established both as to internal discipline and in public repute.

And yet another storm was even now brewing in a quarter none suspected — at least none amongst the friars, nor amongst the ruling powers in the Church—a storm that was to bring the Capuchin bark very nigh to destruction.

⁷² cf. *Relazione del luogo di Commenzone*, in *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, vol. xxiv, p. 23. Santa Lea was probably a corruption of Sant' Elia. According to another account, the friary destroyed was at Mogliano near Fano, whilst Santa Lea was built to replace the destroyed friary. cf. *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, loc. cit., p. 29.

⁷³ cf. Epist. LXVI, Vitt. Colonna in *Carteggio*, p. 100.

⁷⁴ cf. Vittoria Colonna's letters to Card. Gonzaga.

CHAPTER IV

THE APOSTASY OF FRA BERNARDINO OCHINO

(i)

FRA BERNARDINO OCHINO DA SIENA was elected Vicar General of the Capuchins at the General Chapter held in Florence at the Feast of Pentecost 1538. Bernardino d'Asti, in the course of his second visitation of the brethren in the Marches of Ancona, had been struck down on his arrival at Fano, with what seemed a mortal illness; and he had despatched Frat'. Eusebio d'Ancona to Bernardino Ochino bidding him as first definitor convoke the Chapter; for he was fearful lest even for awhile "the little ship threatened by storms should be left without a helmsman."¹ Next after Bernardino d'Asti no friar was held in greater esteem for his religious character than Ochino; added to this was his commanding personality and his high reputation as a preacher.² Even in the days of the great trouble under Clement VII, the people of Rome had crowded to his sermons in the church of San Lorenzo in Damaso during the Lent of 1534. Since then his reputation as a preacher of singular power had been growing. One who heard him preach in San Giovanni Maggiore at Naples in 1536 said: "he preaches with such power that he makes even the stones weep."³ But it was not merely his moving eloquence which made men hang upon his words, and even compelled the frivolous to listen. With a simple directness he laid bare the insincerities which too frequently did duty for religion; nor did he palliate the unreal sentimentalism which did

¹ Boverius, anno 1538, IX.

² cf. Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Narratione*, cart. 204: "E fer tanto il suo nome e la sua fama che beati erano chiamati i frati cappuccini ch' haveano un tal huomo nella religion loro."

³ Gregorio Rosso, cf. Karl Benrath: *Bernardino Ochino of Siena* (Eng. Transl. by Helen Zimmern, London, 1876), p. 21, note 2.

duty for a living, intelligent faith. "Of what use is it," he asks, "to wear a crucifix if we do not remember that we are partakers by our sins in the guilt of the Crucified's death? What sincerity is there in the confession of a man who, acknowledging his meanness in confession, resents being accused of it by his neighbour?" Relentlessly he searched the consciences of his hearers. Yet he was not merely critical. A certain mystical fervour lit up his exposition of the faith and of Christian conduct; and it was this, even more than his outspoken censure of the insincerities of many who professed the faith, which drew to him such earnest souls as Vittoria Colonna and her friends. His personal life gave weight to his words. Amongst his brethren in the Capuchin congregation, none was more austere than he, none more observant of the Rule and religious discipline. Even when he was preaching daily during Advent or Lent, he fasted rigorously, and his constant journeys were made on foot. When staying in the houses of the rich, he refused the comfortable bed, and slept on a hard mattress, or on the floor; and at table seldom took more than one dish.⁴ His compassion for the poor induced him frequently to pause in his sermons and recommend their needs to the generosity of his audience. His sympathy with the sick-poor showed itself in his letter to the Compagnia di San Domenico at Siena, when he urged its members to visit the city hospitals; "for these sick men are only waited on by hirelings who are without love and give them no word of comfort, so that their souls are often more sick than their bodies."⁵

With good reason then did the electors at the Chapter look to him as one who "would make a perfect Vicar General"; and indeed his government during the three years that followed justified their election. His first act was to confirm the ordinances made by his predecessor for the better government of the brethren; and in his conduct as Vicar General he faithfully followed in Bernardino d'Asti's footsteps.⁶ Under the leadership of Ochino the congregation continued to gain in the estimation of the people and

⁴ So writes Graziani, secretary to Cardinal Commendonì (cf. *Vita Cardinalis Commendonì* ii, cap. 9).

⁵ *Compagnia di San Domenico: Libro dello Deliberazioni*, del 1540, quoted by Benrath, loc. cit., p. 25.

⁶ Boverius, anno 1538, XI.

in the number of its foundations. Just before his election he himself had gained a house for the brethren at Venice on the conclusion of his Lenten course of sermons. The Observant friar, Fra Bonaventura, whom we have met with in the affair of the Venetian Chapters,⁷ after listening to Ochino's sermons, offered him with the consent of the Senate the small church and house of Santa Maria degli Angeli. Bernardino d'Asti, then Vicar General, accepted the gift and sent friars there. When shortly afterwards the pestilence broke out in Venice these friars, assisted by others sent to their aid, gave themselves to the service of the stricken inhabitants, and thus gained the gratitude of the city.⁸

About the same time that the friars were established in Venice a community of Reformed Conventuals at Sant' Angelo in Vado, in the Marches of Ancona, passed over to the Capuchins, after having attended the Lenten course preached by Giovanni da Fano in the town. These and other foundations took place whilst Bernardino d'Asti was Vicar General; but of not less importance were those which followed when Bernardino Ochino became the guiding spirit. When in June the Pope came to Genoa after his attempted reconciliation of the emperor with the French king, he was petitioned by the rectors of the hospital for incurables to allow them to invite the Capuchins to take over a house built for the Dominicans in that city. Four years previously, at the dispersion of the Roman community by Clement VII, some Capuchins had come to Genoa, and their devotion to the sick had left a grateful memory in the minds of the citizens. The rectors of the hospital therefore pleaded that the friars might be allowed to make a permanent settlement for service in the hospital. Paul III granted the request and the Capuchins shortly afterwards were established there.⁹

In 1540 Bernardino Ochino sent a Fra Mariano to plant the Reform in Corsica, where it quickly took root, and earned the gratitude of the bishops for the good work the friars did

⁷ See *supra*, p. 75.

⁸ Boverius, *anno* 1538, XII.

⁹ Boverius, *anno* 1538, IV-V. F. Z. Molfino, *op. cit.*, *ut supra*. It may be mentioned here that at Genoa and in many of the Italian cities the Capuchins still act as chaplains to the hospitals and prisons. They live in houses attached to the hospital, and give their entire services to the sick.

in reviving the faith of the people.¹⁰ About the same time Fra Giovanni Battista of Florence was sent with companions to establish the congregation at Piedmont. Fra Giovanni Battista was a bold man ; he won the respect of the people of Turin by courageous defiance of the captain of the French troops who held the citadel, Vico d'Asti, some little distance from the city, and whose exactions and oppression were the terror of the country around. Fra Giovanni Battista sought him out and upbraided him for his tyranny ; the captain answered the friar with contemptuous disdain and pillaged the neighbourhood all the more cruelly. Thereupon the friar denounced him publicly in a sermon. The captain retorted by demanding a public withdrawal under threat of further reprisals. Fra Giovanni Battista sent answer that if the captain would be present in the church on the following day he would give him the satisfaction he desired. The captain came and Giovanni Battista ascended the pulpit. Turning towards a crucifix that stood near, the friar besought the Crucified whose messenger he was, to answer for him. "Thou knowest, Lord," he prayed, "that I spoke but the message I believed to be Thine ; do Thou now manifest whether I spoke truly." Those present believed that they saw the head of the Crucifix bow in sorrowing approval of the friar : even the captain was disturbed in mind and went out, leaving the friar unharmed. Shortly after this the captain was killed in a skirmish and the citadel was set on fire by lightning in a great storm and totally destroyed. So runs the story as the people told it in telling how Fra Giovanni Battista and his Capuchins came amongst them.¹¹

At Siena, too, the city, proud of its citizen whose fame added to its glory, welcomed a settlement of friars.

It was during Ochino's government that the community of Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis in Naples, formed by the Spanish lady, Maria Longa, adopted the Rule of St. Clare and instituted a new reform of the Poor Clares inspired by the life and constitutions of the Capuchins. The Capuchinesses, as they came to be called, were

¹⁰ In 1543 when the Capuchins were forbidden to preach by Paul III, the Bishop of Corsica petitioned that an exception should be made in regard to the friars in Corsica.

¹¹ Boverius, *anno* 1540, VI-VII.

approved by Paul III, who, on December 10, 1538, appointed the Capuchins to serve the convent as chaplains and spiritual directors.¹²

Thus the Capuchin Reform continued to take root, and Ochino's growing reputation as a preacher cast a reflected glory over the congregation. Yet, ominous signs of a coming storm might have been detected, had it not been that at this period Ochino was almost universally held to be a man of high sanctity and single purpose. Moreover, amongst those who were eagerly looking for a renovation of the spiritual life of the Church there was as yet no disposition to criticise too closely "the new teaching" which infused a breath of life into the arid bones of the conventional system; the earnest reformers, most of them at least, were grateful for every sign of a new spring; they accepted the gift without too closely scanning it with an eye to heterodoxy. They had not yet arrived at the parting of the ways which was to separate many from those with whom they were now working in good faith and with a simple earnestness for the redemption of Israel. So it came about that when the Capuchins next met in General Chapter in 1541, Ochino was re-elected Vicar General in spite of his manifest reluctance to accept the election. His reluctance was taken as a sign of humility and that made him all the more desirable to the brethren who elected him.

(ii)

Ochino had come into a blaze of publicity by his sermons at San Lorenzo in Damaso in Rome in 1534 and the following year, when his eloquence and spiritual fervour attracted even cardinals and prelates to attend his sermons; nor were these repelled by his denunciations of the scandals and worldliness which were rife amongst the prelates and the leaders of Roman society. "His sermons," wrote one of these, "set forth the Gospel and show what a Christian life should be; he is not afraid to say what is necessary for the salvation of his hearers and sharply blames those in high

¹² *ibid.*, anno 1538, XIII.

places.”¹³ Before he joined the Capuchins he had already gained repute as a preacher, but his passing over to the Reform had stirred new depths in him and given him a greater fearlessness. In 1536, when he preached the Lent in the church of San Giovanni Maggiore at Naples, suspicions were first cast upon his orthodoxy and the Spanish viceroy intervened and forbade the continuance of the course; but Ochino so completely vindicated himself that the ban was withdrawn. His friends attributed the trouble to the jealousy of other preachers in the city;¹⁴ and this may well have been the case. Yet it was probably at this time that Ochino first came into contact with Juan Valdez, a Castilian gentleman, who, with his brother, Alfonso, had followed the emperor to Naples in 1529. In an age when those who affected to be gentlemen showed little regard for morals, Juan Valdez was of irreproachable purity of life. His delicate ascetic appearance bore the impress of one given to high thoughts, his charm of manner won all hearts. His mind was tinged with mysticism; his earnestness and sincerity were beyond doubt. He was a scholar of the type of Erasmus; but he had that almost oriental cast of thought, common amongst the Spanish thinkers of the period, which suspects a too defined logical clearness and prefers the illimitable vastness. Like so many who felt deeply in matters religious, he was in revolt against the shallow externalism which dominated the religious thought and conduct of the day.

For a time he had been in the service of Clement VII, and whilst in Rome had come into contact with minds kindred to his own. On the death of that Pontiff he returned to Naples and there became the centre of a coterie somewhat similar to the company of the Oratory of Divine Love which had done so much to foster the reforming spirit in Rome before the Sack. Not a few of the Roman society, and amongst them Vittoria Colonna and Caterina of Camerino, now associated with the Neapolitan circle. Of this informal society Valdez was the revered master and prophet; all the other members gladly acknowledged themselves his disciples.

¹³ Agostino Gonzaga in his report of March 12, 1535; Luzio, *Vittoria Colonna*, p. 26.

¹⁴ *Carteggio di Vitt. Colonna*, p. 138, seq. So also Gregorio Rosso, in Benrath, loc. cit., p. 68, note.

They were a distinguished body who assembled in Valdez' house at la Chiaio ; the noblest families, Colonna, Caracciolo, Gonzaga, Caraffa and Cibo were there represented ; there, too, were to be found such ardent intellectuals as Pietro Martire Vermiglio and Marc' Antonio Flaminio. It was a group very different in character from the Roman Oratory of Divine Love ; it lacked men of action and was composed almost entirely of intellectuals and women enthusiasts ; fervently religious in purpose, clean-living, mentally alert ; just such a body as in the circumstances of the time might easily diverge into heresy or religious fanaticism ; very certainly they were not content "to drink, eat and sleep," and take the pleasures of life with an easy conscience.¹⁵

It is difficult to determine how far Valdez considered himself an innovator in his religious teaching ; or whether he considered himself an innovator at all. His fundamental principle was that all good in man comes from the grace of Christ and that this grace is appropriated by each one individually by means of a living faith. To live by faith in Christ, so that Christ may live in us, is the cardinal factor in the Christian life. Such faith can only be realised by a mortification of the senses and self-discipline. To recognise the vanity of the world and detach oneself from it, to know God through Christ and to lose oneself in God, to cultivate interior faith, hope and charity—in this consists the beginning of the spiritual life ; to attain perfection one must destroy all self-will and withdraw from all sense-pleasure, and finally one must live always in spirit in the presence of the Crucified.¹⁶ His insistence on a living faith as the channel of the grace of Christ seemed to his opponents dangerously similar to Luther's teaching, though Valdez was careful to dissociate himself from agreement with Luther's doctrine and methods. He did not deny the value of good works ; for good works he held were the natural outcome of a living faith ; without charity a living faith is impossible. But the impression he gave his disciples was that good works

¹⁵ In 1547 Cardinal Ercoli Gonzaga wrote of certain religious in Mantua that there was no danger of them becoming Lutherans since "they had no other interest but to drink, eat and sleep." cf. Buschbell, *Carte Cerviniane*, p. 238, 278, quoted by E. Rodocanadi, *La Riforme en Italie*, vol. i, p. 126.

¹⁶cf. Rodocanadi, *op. cit.*

in themselves are not meritorious. As Pietro Carnesecci, one of his disciples, confessed to the Inquisitors, Valdez did not pursue his teaching concerning justification by faith to its logical conclusions; it was his disciples who emphasised its actual or possible unorthodox implications.¹⁷ Outwardly at least he was a good Catholic, punctiliously fulfilling the precepts of the Church; but his exposition of the Sacraments left a suspicion that he took them as symbols or seals of faith rather than in the full sense of Catholic teaching. There can be no doubt that many of Valdez' friends were unaware of any unorthodox tendency in his expositions of Christian doctrine. The doctrine concerning justification by faith in Christ, it must be remembered, had not yet been defined by the Council of Trent; and as against the unspiritual externalism which stood for religion with most people at the time, the teaching of Valdez and others of like mind, had an attraction for the spiritually minded.¹⁸ Moreover, these new teachers based their expositions—they were hardly arguments—upon the words of Sacred Scripture: and this reversion to the Scriptures was in itself refreshing to minds wearied with the speculative inanities or ribald jokes which were the stock-in-trade of the ordinary preacher.¹⁹ The religious atmosphere in such circles as that of Juan Valdez and his associates was tense; caught up into a more elevating thought and emotion the ardent revivalists did not stop to criticise; they just wanted to live; and all might have gone well had not the disrepute, into which the rulers had fallen, led many to challenge their authority itself.

Already when Bernardino Ochino first preached in Naples, in 1536, it would seem, certain ecclesiastics and the civil authorities were uneasy in regard to the movement

¹⁷ cf. *Dal com pendio de processi del Sant' Uffizio, Carteggio di V. Colonna*, App. II.

¹⁸ Amongst the treatises setting forth "the new doctrine," one of the most popular was that entitled *Del Beneficio di Jesu Cristo Crocifisso*, published at Venice in 1540. Such stout Catholics as Cardinal Badia, O.P., master of the Pontifical Palace, and Cardinal Morone highly approved of it. Yet others saw in it a nest of Lutheran errors.

¹⁹ "What am I to do with sermons?" the famous humanist, Pietro Bembo, is reported to have asked. "One hears nothing else than the *doctor subtilis* inveigh against the *doctor angelicus*, and then Aristotle comes in as a third and puts an end to the dispute" (*Ortensio Landi, Parad. II, 29*, quoted by Benrath, loc. cit., p. 37). The sermons of the Dominican popular preacher, Barletta, gave rise to the slang phrase, "to barlettise," that is to brawl theatrically.

inspired by Valdez ; by 1539 when Ochino again preached in the city, Gian Pietro Caraffa and his Theatines were on the watch for heresy ; they were the more alarmed because of the increasing number of adherents to the new doctrine, for Valdez, though a layman, preached frequently to the people both in the churches and in the public streets.²⁰

Ochino's friendship with Valdez brought him under the suspicion of the Theatines who sent secret agents to listen to his sermons and make notes of his teaching ; they even questioned their penitents who attended the sermons as to the impressions made on them. But at this time no definite charge could be made against him.

In the meantime he had preached the Lenten course at Venice at the invitation of Cardinal Pietro Bembo and other notable citizens.²¹ Whilst the course was still proceeding, Bembo wrote to Vittoria Colonna ; " I confess I have never heard more useful or wholesome sermons. I do not wonder at your affection for him . . . when he leaves here he will carry all hearts with him."²² Such was the impression made that a collection of the sermons was two years later published in Venice.²³ Even in cold print the sermons have a simple majesty of diction ; there are no flowers of rhetoric ; every sentence is chastely chiselled to convey the preacher's thought ; a restrained emotion vibrates throughout, yet there is no blatant attempt at effect. The language is simple and direct. So much for the form. But clothed in this eloquent simplicity, the thought compels attention ; it is the living thought of one who has passed his doctrine through the crucible of his own thought and experience. In these sermons Ochino certainly does not belittle the duty of the Catholic Christian to obey the commands of the Church ; it is the duty of everyone, he says, to go to confession as the Church ordains. Referring to the doctrine of transubstantiation, " How can you prove," he asks, " that

²⁰ According to Caricciolo *Vita Pauli IV* (quoted by Benrath, p. 63), Valdez had 3,000 adherents in Naples, but Pastor, *History of the Popes* (Engl. Trans.), vol. xii, p. 494, considers the numbers given by Protestant Reformers as " a gross exaggeration."

²¹ *Vide* Bembo's letter to Vitt. Colonna : *Carteggio*, p. 158.

²² *ibid.*, p. 169.

²³ *Prediche move predicato dal Reverendo Padre Frate Bernardino Ochino Senese* (Venice, 1541).

Christ's body is concealed under the form of bread and wine? How can I prove it? Even could I prove it a thousand times, yet would I not, since we are compelled to believe it whether we will or not." In his sixth sermon he categorically affirms in answer to "the heretics" the necessity of confession, of obeying the Pope as Christ's vicar on earth, of fasting and good works, and finally the dogma of purgatory as revealed in holy scripture.

Nevertheless, the main purpose running through the sermons is not so much to insist upon outward observances as to bring men face to face with the truth they profess, to make them scrutinise their consciences in the sight of God, to look to the crucified Christ as the mirror in which a Christian will recognise his own weakness and in whose holiness he will see his own iniquity. Christ is the law by which a Christian must judge himself. "They be but false Christians who do not reflect themselves in the mirror of the crucified Christ; they desire a Christ after their own manner, rich, proud and magnificent." Certainly in these sermons there is no "teaching of heresy."²⁴

About this same time Ochino wrote his Seven Dialogues published in 1542.²⁵ They purport to be conferences which took place between Ochino and Caterina, Duchess of Camerino. In all probability they give us an insight into the inner working of the circle to which Ochino was introduced in his association with Valdez.²⁶ That the conferences actually took place may be taken as certain since the Duchess Caterina never denied her part authorship. The general theme of the Dialogues is the love of God and our salvation through union with God in Christ. Assuming heretical tendencies in the Dialogues it would be easy to quote passages which confirm the assumption. On the other hand

²⁴ Some have proposed to detect a certain hesitancy in his answers to the heretical propositions above referred to. For instance, in answering the statement that "we need do no good works because faith alone and not works bring us to salvation," he does not directly deny the proposition, but contents himself with saying: "In any case it is safer to do good works"; he avoids the real issue. So Benrath, loc. cit., p. 88.

But Ochino in this summary of objections which "only proceed from the pride, arrogance and selfishness of the hearts" of the heretics, contents himself with a brief denial of each. A decisive reply would have entailed long argument.

²⁵ *Dialogi sette del Reverendo Padre, Frate Bernardino Ochino Senese*, Venice, 1542.

²⁶ See also the two undated letters of Vittoria Colonna in *Carteggio*, pp. 241 and 245.

Ochino's doctrines might well have been drawn from the orthodox mystical writings which he read with avidity when he joined the Franciscan Order. They can well bear an orthodox interpretation. So far then as Ochino's published writings in these years bear witness, there was no definite ground on which to accuse him of heresy ; and but for the events which are to follow, his sermons and dialogues would probably to-day be included in the ascetical literature of the Catholic Reformation.

The effect of the Lenten sermons in Venice in 1539 was to increase Ochino's reputation. Not only did Pietro Bembo express his delight and veneration, and his judgment carried weight with the learned, but the obscene jester, Pietro Aretino, was converted, and for a time at least became a reputable Christian and a writer of religious treatises.²⁷

In January 1540, Ochino was again in Naples.²⁸ The protonotary, Carnesecchi, who heard him preach at this time, declared twenty-seven years later when he was tried before the Inquisition, that Ochino certainly preached justification by faith alone, but so cleverly that only the few could detect it. But Carnesecchi's confessions at his trial need to be carefully scrutinised ; he imputed heterodox opinions or tendencies to many whom we know to have been loyal Catholics, perhaps to justify himself.

Still it is certain from other sources that Lutheran teaching was finding some acceptance with certain of Valdez' associates at this time. Carnesecchi himself had already begun to have doubts concerning the existence of purgatory and the efficacy of confession, though he had no thought of breaking away from the Church. His position at this period was probably that of many among the intellectual reforming party ; their wish and aim was to bring about a change of thought and doctrine within the Church, a change which to their thinking would purify Catholic teaching from the perversions which many read into it, and from which had

²⁷ Aretino in a florid letter announced his conversion to Paul III, at the same time praying the Pope's forgiveness for his scurrilous attacks on religion.

Ochino himself, however, does not seem to have taken Aretino's conversion seriously. See his diplomatic letter of thanks to Aretino for his gift of his commentary on Genesis—in which sarcasm is thinly veiled by courtesy (Benrath loc. cit., p. 94).

²⁸ See letter of Vittoria Colonna (*Carteggio*, p. 183).

issued the practical abuses which none could deny. In this attitude of mind they felt they were justified in walking warily lest too open an assertion of their opinions should arouse a violent opposition or lead to schism as in Germany. They did not want schism but purification; they were unaware perhaps that in their assemblies they were already developing a spirit of sectarianism. Nevertheless about this time it is clear that a hardening of the spirit was beginning to manifest itself amongst the intellectuals, owing in part to the growing power and influence of that section of the Catholic reformers led by Cardinal Gian Pietro Caraffa, whose intolerance of any freedom of expression was to cause such dire tribulation later on amongst Catholics themselves. The cleavage in the Catholic reform movement in its opposition to the heretical tendencies, was already beginning to be felt even in the Roman Court. It arose over the attitude to be adopted towards the heretics—whether they should be met by stern repression with recourse, when necessary, to the secular arm, or by a persuasive policy no less uncompromising in principle but relying for its strength upon a progressive intellectual and moral renovation in the Church itself. Caraffa and his party were for stern repression; Contarini and his party for persuasive measures.

In the panic caused by the overwhelming progress of the Protestant revolt and its appearance in Northern Italy, the Caraffa party eventually gained the controlling influence. Not altogether willingly Paul III revived and remodelled the Roman Inquisition in 1542.²⁹

Meanwhile Ochino had been re-elected Vicar General of the Capuchin Reform at the General Chapter held in Naples at Pentecost 1541. The rumour of his unorthodoxy set afoot by the Theatines had evidently found no credence with the friars who elected him. Had they not all been accused of Lutheranism because they laid more stress on the spirit than on the letter? And was it not becoming a common thing for men, of whose orthodoxy no reasonable man could doubt, to be accused of heretical tendencies by those who

²⁹ See the bull *Cum licet*.

During the reign of Paul III, as Cardinal Seripanda remarked, the proceedings of the Roman Inquisition were marked with moderation and almost leniency. It was after his death and when Caraffa became Pope under the name of Paul IV that its severity became a byword. See Pastor, vol. xii, p. 508.

were opposed to them in either policy or temperament? Moreover, there was Ochino's irreproachable conduct as a religious, his manifest austerity and unremitting labours. Add to this, the favour in which he was held by the Pope himself and by so many of the most zealous reformers in the Church such as Cardinals Contarini and Pole and the austere Giberti, Bishop of Verona. It was even rumoured that his name was amongst those destined for the cardinalate.³⁰ So Ochino was re-elected Vicar General, though, as we have said, much against his own will.

In the light of later events his reluctance to accept re-election has been attributed to a mock humility, which cloaked a proud ambition. After his apostasy no accusation was deemed too harsh against one who had betrayed the trust placed in him. It is, however, possible that in his reluctance to accept the confidence of his brethren Ochino's better self was asserting itself. There can be no doubt that at this time Ochino was doubtful of himself. He was beginning to realise the gulf between his own intellectual position and that of his fellow friars. His own confession at a later period makes this clear. Not long after he joined the Capuchins, he wrote, his eyes were opened and he recognised three things: that Christ alone is righteousness; that vows of human institution are immoral; and that the Roman Church is an abomination in the eyes of the Lord.³¹ If Ochino means that he definitely accepted these views at an early period in his career as a Capuchin, then his life for several years was a marvel of hypocrisy and insincerity, and lends colour to the accusation that his migration to the Capuchins was due to baffled ambition. But one must not take his later confession too literally: in the situation in which Ochino was when he wrote those words, men have a way of reading back into their past a definiteness of view or opinion which really belongs to a final stage. We shall, perhaps, be doing justice to Ochino if we take his confession to mean that he began to have doubts on these three points, not improbably after his first acquaintance with the Naples

³⁰ Thus Vincenzo da Gatico to the Duke of Mantua, October 24, 1539, quoted by Pastor, vol. xi, p. 487, note 4.

³¹ Ochino's letter to Girolamo Muzio, April 7, 1543: *Bernardini Ochini Senensis: Responsio ad Mutium Justinopolitanum* (Venice, 1543).

group in 1536; which doubts gradually became more and more definite as the years went on, developing from vague troublesome thoughts into dogmatic opinions as he found himself compelled to define his mental position more clearly. On the one hand, in his intercourse with Valdez he became acquainted with Lutheran writings,³² on the other, he was faced with the growing suspicions and charges concerning his orthodoxy and driven to analyse his yet nebulous theories. Meanwhile, like many others, he clung to the Church with a certain loyalty which for a time made him all the more insistent in observing the practices of devotion and asceticism against which his new opinions rebelled; in that lay his hope of eventually bringing into one his divergent loyalties to the Church and to the new doctrines. So it often happens with men when their first loyalties are shaken.

The first weakening in his struggle thus to harmonise his loyalties came after his re-election as Vicar General. He who had hitherto been an example of religious observance to the brethren of his Order, now suddenly began to trouble their minds by his frequent absences from the divine service of prayer; so that after awhile first one brother and then another expostulated with him on the disedification he was giving. His excuse was his incessant external labours for the Order and the constant stream of clergy and laity who came seeking his counsel. When at length the venerable Bernardino d'Asti, now Procurator of the Order, added his voice to those of the others, warning him that he could not govern well unless he prayed and led the brethren by example, Ochino replied: "Know you not that he prays well who works well for others?" Yet either to calm the minds of the brethren,—or it may be to calm his own conscience—Ochino went to the Pope and obtained a dispensation from reciting the Divine Office because of his many occupations.³³

Thus in the more intimate circle of his own brethren there came about a certain heart-searching and anxiety; and not only they, but others who hitherto had looked to Ochino

³² The works of Luther and the Protestant Reformers were read and discussed in Valdez' circle. *Bernardino da Colpetrazzo* (I, p. 526), says Ochino had obtained permission from the Pope to read all prohibited books with a view to writing against Luther.

³³ Boverius, *anno* 1541, XII-XIV.

with a reverence and security which admitted of no question, now felt a certain uneasiness. Thus Vittoria Colonna, who had come to sign herself his "most obedient daughter and disciple,"³⁴ on hearing a friend speak of him as a most godly man, replied, "God grant he may continue so."³⁵ She would not have answered thus a year or two earlier.

Yet with the public at large Ochino continued to be regarded as the most powerful preacher in Italy and as a man whose high character was beyond question.³⁶

The final catastrophe came swiftly. Ochino was again preaching the Lenten course in Venice in the church of Santi Apostoli. A friend of his, the Augustinian Giulio Terensiano, also a preacher of repute, had just recently been condemned for heresy by the Papal nuncio, Fabio Mignatelli, and at the nuncio's demand had been imprisoned by the Council of the Republic. Ochino from the pulpit passionately protested against his imprisonment. "Men of Venice," he cried out, "if such things may happen, what will be the end? O queen of the sea, if thou castest the heralds of truth into dungeons and chains and condemnest them to the galleys, where shall truth find a resting place? Would that the truth might be proclaimed; how many then, who now are blind, would see the light!"³⁷ It was a daring appeal. The nuncio replied by forbidding Ochino to continue his preaching. This caused a tumult in the city; the Venetians would not lose their favourite preacher. The nuncio gave way before the popular clamour after extracting from Ochino a promise not again to introduce into his sermons any polemical question. But the nuncio reported the matter to Rome. The more acute observers noticed too about this time a change of tone in Ochino's sermons. "He does not preach as he used," wrote one a little later in the year; "he has always Christ on his lips, but he no longer mentions San Geminiano."³⁸ Yet even so

³⁴ *Carteggio*, p. 241-245.

³⁵ Contile, *Lettere I* (Venice, 1563), 9.

³⁶ Cardinal Caraffa in his letter of bitter reproach to Ochino, 1542, bears witness to the general impression of austerity which Ochino gave until his apostasy. cf. Boverius, *anno* 1542.

³⁷ Benrath, *op. cit.*

³⁸ cf. Grillenzio's letter to Card. Morone, July 3, 1542, in Benrath, *loc. cit.*, p. 70.

the public at large were unaware of any heretical tendency, nor did his reputation as a preacher suffer. Only in Rome Cardinal Caraffa marked him down as a suspect and the Pope himself was getting alarmed as denunciations of the powerful preacher continued to come in.

Ochino was at Verona in July, staying at the friary. He had assembled a number of the brethren and was giving them a commentary on St. Paul's Epistles. Amongst them were some who avidly drank in his doctrine of justification by the grace of Christ.³⁹ He was thus engaged when he received a letter from Cardinal Farnese, couched in the most courteous terms, conveying to him an order from the Pope to come to Rome as his opinion was sought on matters of importance. Ochino was alarmed. He replied that he would go, but requested leave to delay his journey till the great heat was over. Meanwhile he sought counsel with the bishop, Giberti, and spoke to him of his fears. When on July 27 another letter arrived from Rome ordering him to come at once, Giberti urged him to delay no longer. "If you are guiltless," he told Ochino, "you have nothing to fear; if you have erred, give the world an example of humility and confess your error."⁴⁰ Ochino then set forth, but because of the heat he availed himself of the Pope's permission to do the journey on horseback. At Bologna he had a brief interview with the dying Cardinal Contarini, which increased his anxiety as to the reception awaiting him at Rome.⁴¹ From Bologna he went on to Florence, still with the intention

³⁹ Some of them followed Ochino in his apostasy; others confessed their former attachment to his doctrine and sought absolution. cf. Mignanelli's letter of Nov. 2, 1542, to Cardinal Farnese, quoted by Pastor, vol. xi, p. 539, note 1; and Cardinal Cervini's letter to Cardinal Carpi of June 27, 1543, *ibid.*, pp. 585-6.

⁴⁰ See Giberti's letter to the Marchese del Vasto of Sept. 11, 1542, in Benrath, loc. cit., p. 10. It seems evident from Giberti's letter that Ochino suspected he was called to Rome to answer the charges already made concerning his orthodoxy. At the same time he may have had some thoughts that the cardinal's hat would be given him if he could satisfactorily clear himself. This seems very likely from his own words: "Di poiche cominciarono asuspicare di me Paolo Papa ditto terzo non manco colla sua prudentia d'usar mezzi per tirarmi alle sue voglio con invitarnii a dignita"—quoted by Benrath, loc. cit., p. 104.

⁴¹ What actually took place as regards Ochino's interview with Contarini it is impossible to say with any certainty, so diametrically opposed are the accounts given by different writers. cf. Pastor, vol. xi, p. 491. Dittrich: *Contarini*, p. 849, *seq.*

of proceeding to Rome.⁴² But there he fell in with three of the Neapolitan group, Pietro Martire Vermiglio, an Augustinian Prior, Marc' Antonio Flaminio, and Pietro Carnesecchi, all three of a temper akin to Ochino's own at this moment.⁴³ If Ochino until this meeting was doubtful as to the ulterior motive of his citation to Rome, these three soon convinced him that it was not a cardinal's hat but trial before the Inquisition which awaited him. Pietro Martire, who had himself been cited to appear before the Chapter of his Order to answer the charge of consorting with heretics, told Ochino that were he to go forward to Rome, he would go to prison and perhaps to death. For himself, Pietro Martire had already decided on flight. Ochino dared not now go forward: he was not prepared to submit or recant; he certainly would not humiliate himself before "the Theatine" (Caraffa), nor put himself into his hands! Bitterly he decided on flight. On August 22 he wrote to Vittoria Colonna telling her of his decision, wishful to justify himself in her eyes. The next day he left Florence and took the road to Geneva. He was accompanied by three lay brothers: he had told them he was going to preach to the heretics beyond the Alps, and they, believing he was risking his life for the Catholic faith, gladly consented to accompany him. They discovered his true purpose as they neared the frontier. One of them, Fra Mariano, with tears besought Ochino to retrace his steps. Ochino for awhile seemed overcome with emotion as he looked back on Italy from the mountain pass. Then as the lay brothers were about to leave him he handed the seal of the Order to Fra Mariano and bade him take it to Bernardino d'Asti, the Procurator; then he set forward again towards Geneva and so passed out of the Catholic Church and the Capuchin Order.⁴⁴

Fra Mariano hastened back to Venice with the saddest news (as it seemed to him) that any man could carry. There he placed the seal of the Order in the hands of the

⁴² See his letter to Vittoria Colonna of Aug. 22, 1542, *Carteggio*, p. 247.

⁴³ But Marc' Antonio Flaminio under the influence of Cardinal Pole remained an orthodox Catholic.

⁴⁴ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, I, p. 523, *seq.* Bernardino had the details from Fra Mariano himself. According to Mario da Mercato-Seraceno (*Narratione*, cart. 234-235) Fra Mariano had been a soldier in the wars, he spoke German fluently and knew the lie of the country.

Vicar Provincial and told his story, and at once the Vicar Provincial set off to seek Bernardino d'Asti in Rome. At first the news seemed unbelievable: when it could be no longer doubted consternation spread through the whole Order. None was more fitted to deal with such sorrow than Bernardino d'Asti; he took the surest means to steady the brethren under the blow that had fallen; he ordered fasts and prayers that evil might not befall the Order through Ochino's apostasy, and that Ochino himself might be brought back to the fold.

To make matters worse, it soon became evident that Ochino was not without followers amongst the brethren, especially in the Venetian Province. The Father Guardian of Verona, who did not conceal his opinions, was imprisoned by the bishop, hitherto Ochino's friend; others followed Ochino in his flight.

Of all calamities that could have overtaken the Capuchin Reform—so long tried in the crucible of adversity—this was the saddest and most desperate; and many asked themselves whether it was possible the Order could now survive? Indeed for some time its fate was in the balance. The news was brought to Paul III as he was setting out from Perugia to return to Rome. As the Pontiff drew nigh to Spoleto, seeing a Capuchin friary in the distance he exclaimed: "Soon there will be no Capuchins nor Capuchin monasteries."⁴⁵ And that was the general opinion as Ochino's apostasy became known. With the fall of Ochino the Order seemed doomed beyond recovery.

(iii)

It is at all times difficult to judge of a man's motives, for the reason that men are seldom dominated by a single motive; and the apparent motive is often the weakest. I shall, therefore, not attempt to appraise the motives which led Ochino to cast off Rome for Geneva. That at the time of his flight he did not deal honestly with Fra Mariano and his two associates is undeniable; that for some time before his apostasy he concealed his unorthodoxy and masked his

⁴⁵ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, I, p. 526.

words when preaching, he himself confesses. Yet his confessions, as we have said, must not be taken too literally. After his apostasy he was anxious to defend himself against the charges of inconsistency and thwarted ambition, and to represent himself as a martyr for conscience' sake. His confessions do not always bear examination. Thus he asserts that the letters conveying the command to appear at Rome were written "con furia mirabile,"—"with astonishing fury"; the letters themselves shew an astonishing courtesy, considering the circumstances. But much allowance may be made for a man in the situation Ochino found himself towards the end. One thing seems evident; his decision at Florence was made in a panic. The critical moment had come with an unexpected swiftness. Caraffa had scored. Down to the last moment Ochino was the sought-for preacher of Italy. On the very day before his flight, Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga had written to his agent in Rome to invite Ochino to preach in Mantua;⁴⁶ and a few days previously the citizens of Siena were petitioning the Pope to send Ochino to preach in their city.⁴⁷ Imagine then the consternation when in September Ochino's flight and apostasy became generally known. Men found it difficult to account for his sudden defection. Many put it down to disappointed ambition, since contrary to expectation he had not been created a cardinal at the Consistory in June.⁴⁸ These overlooked his strange outburst in Venice during his Lenten course. But in truth his friends and admirers were bewildered. Some were inclined to think that in his sensitiveness he had taken refuge in flight from the atmosphere of suspicion which the Caraffa party were everywhere raising in regard to the intellectual reformers and to Ochino in particular. The popular feeling which had so long been in his favour now turned bitterly against him; he had fooled an unsuspecting people, and that they could not forgive.

The sad thing was that others suffered for Ochino's apostasy. It created an atmosphere of distrust; those who had been friendly with him, even though they at once dissociated themselves from him in his disloyalty to the

⁴⁶ cf. Luzio, *Vittoria Colonna*, p. 38.

⁴⁷ Pastor, vol. xii, Appendix 16.

⁴⁸ cf. Luzio, loc. cit., p. 39, *seq.*

Church, now fell under suspicion with the unthinking sort, even though their loyalty was well known and appreciated by those in authority and in particular by the Pope himself. Such devoted and single-minded Catholics as Cardinals Pole and Morone, and the lady Vittoria Colonna did not escape suspicion. Paul III shielded them by his marked implicit trust; but after his death they were more openly accused.⁵⁰

At this moment, however, it was the Capuchins who had to bear the brunt of the popular ill feeling and suspicion. Forgetful of their self-sacrificing devotion and ministrations, the populace turned upon them with a venomous ill will. When they appeared in the public streets they were hooted and decried as hypocrites and heretics; doors were closed against them and alms refused, so that they came near starving. Even their friends for the most part now viewed them with uneasiness and ceased to defend them.⁵¹ Their enemies openly rejoiced and jeeringly promised to attend their funeral. Only in the cloisters of the Camaldolese monks was sympathy shown them. There earnest prayers arose that the Capuchins might be comforted and saved. At the Papal Court it was accepted as certain that the Capuchins would be summarily suppressed. An Order that could breed such an arch-traitor could not be tolerated. It shows the position held by Ochino in popular estimation that his apostasy should thus summarily be imputed to the whole body of Capuchins. Pietro Martire's apostasy caused no outcry against the Augustinians—nor, for that matter, did Martin Luther's: the defection of Martin Bucer was not urged as a reason for the extinction of the Dominicans. There was not an Order in the Church that was not bewailing the apostasy of some of its more prominent members.

In a public consistory Paul III laid the matter before the cardinals. Nearly all urged the expediency of suppression. Only Cardinal Sanseverino remained silent until at length the Pope called upon him to speak. Sanseverino rose. "Holy Father," he said, "it is in my mind that in seeking to root up the tares we should beware lest we root up also

⁵⁰ cf. Luzio, *Vittoria Colonna*, p. 39. For the later accusations cf. *Dal Compendio de processi del Sant' Uffizio, Carteggio di V. Colonna*, App. II, p. 343.

⁵¹ Boverius, anno 1542, XLV.

the good wheat. The Order of Capuchins has grown up in the Church of God, resplendent with apostolic zeal, an example of virtue, and until now its fruits have been good. We all have seen it and rejoiced. Since its beginning it has given no cause to be suspected of heresy until this Ochino came ; he is the enemy who has sown tares amongst the wheat. In my judgment it would be wise to institute an enquiry into the lives of the several members of this Order lest we act precipitately in suppressing it." 52 Sanseverino's advice was accepted, and the Pope ordered that all the superiors of the Order should be brought from the various provinces to Rome to appear before him.

In the meantime, whilst the enquiry was impending, a Capuchin lay brother, Fra Timotheo by name, sought audience of the Pope, and laid charges of heresy against many of the brethren and in particular against the venerable Bernardino d'Asti. Timotheo had on one occasion been severely reprimanded and punished by Bernardino and had not forgotten it. The electors at the last General Chapter, he stated, were well aware, when they elected Ochino Vicar General, of the charges of heresy already made against him ; further he had heard Bernardino d'Asti remark that Ochino was a man after his own heart. Bernardino, called upon to confront his accuser, replied calmly that the electors had heard of the charges against Ochino, but they also knew that the Pope had declared Ochino to be above suspicion. As to the words attributed to him, he denied having spoken them. Timotheo, asked to produce witnesses, was unable to do so, and the Pope dismissed the case. Timotheo himself shortly afterwards apostatised. 53

Then came the assembly of the superiors before the Pope. The friars arrived at the Vatican, but for hours they were kept waiting in an ante-room. As evening drew on the rumour got abroad amongst the Romans that the Pope had consigned them all to prison ; the Observants, it was said, had been ordered to have habits ready to receive them when they were set free again.

52 Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, I, p. 529, *seq.*
cf. Boverius, *anno* 1543.

53 Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Narratione*, cart. 246 ; Mattia da Salò, *Historia Capuccina*, II, fol. 25, *a tergo*.

At length, when the friars were thoroughly weary, the Pope came to them, accompanied by Cardinal Carpi, the newly appointed Protector of the whole Franciscan Order. The Pope did not hide his displeasure ; he upbraided the Capuchins and declared that they deserved to be suppressed. At that Fra Francesco da Jesi spoke out—he who had stood well in the Pontiff's favour because of his reputed sanctity—"Holy Father, in the college of apostles there was a Judas ; yet Christ did not dissolve the apostolic college because of the traitor." But the Pope was in no temper to listen to any interruption, and sternly bade Francesco be silent. Yet after awhile he relented in his attitude. "You deserve to be wiped out from the Church," he told them, "but you have one who pleads in your favour, even your father, St. Francis : God wills to save you. I will be your father ; do you be sons to me." He then turned to Cardinal Carpi : "I commend them to your care. Dispose things as you deem best for them." Thus the ending turned to joy the sorrow and consternation into which the beginning of the Pope's speech had cast the listening friars.⁵⁴

Cardinal Carpi proved a good friend. He straightway appointed Francesco da Jesi, for whom he had a great admiration, Commissary General until a Chapter of the Order should be held ; and his sympathy did much to restore to the Capuchins peace of mind. However, because of the popular feeling against them, he bade them cease from preaching until the Pope should again allow them to preach.

At the following Pentecost the Chapter was held and Francesco da Jesi was elected Vicar General with Bernardino d'Asti as first Definitor and Procurator, to the satisfaction of Cardinal Carpi who revered them both.

(iv)

It was a difficult task which confronted the new Vicar General. Not only were the Capuchins in large measure isolated by the turnover in popular opinion, the defection of

⁵⁴ cf. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, I, p. 536 : Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Narratione*, cart. 252. Mario had the account of the audience (he tells us) from Eusebio d'Ancona, who was present.

cf. Boverius, *anno* 1542, IX-XII.

many of their former friends and the suspicion in which they were still held at the Papal Court, but the events of the past nine months had wrought a deep depression of spirit within the Reform itself. Not a few of the friars took the prohibition to preach as a mark that the Reform was merely tolerated and might yet be suppressed ; and in consequence some left the Reform and returned to the Observants. Moreover, there was an uneasy feeling amongst the Capuchins themselves as to how far Ochino's opinions had spread and influenced the brethren in Northern Italy, particularly in the Venetian province.⁵⁵ Happily Francesco da Jesi was not a man lacking in courage ; but it was a courage derived eminently from the simplicity of his faith and his sanctity. His supernatural goodness was of that diffusive sort which emanates and envelopes like a halo ; so that all who came in contact with him felt it and were dazzled by it. On the day he was installed Vicar General the brethren were convinced that they saw St. Francis appear above him in brilliant light and offer him a pilgrim's staff, saying ; " Francesco, receive this staff and go forth to visit and strengthen your brethren." At another time, when he was preaching to the brethren at Perugia on the occasion of his visitation, the refectory where they were gathered seemed filled with unearthly light. He was, as we have already remarked, a man of intellectual parts as well as of noble birth : yet it was by the light of his holiness that he drew men to him. Between him and Ochino there had long been an indefinable lack of sympathy, as between men of a different spirit.⁵⁶

That he succeeded in the difficult task of strengthening the brethren in the aftermath of their great affliction, later events proved. In his visitation in Northern Italy he brought back to repentance several of the brethren who had followed Ochino, and by his clear and fervid exposition of the faith, steadied the minds of those who, without following Ochino in his apostasy, were yet attracted by his doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's merits. He aroused the brethren, too, out of the timidity which had come upon many in regard

⁵⁵ Boverius admits this. cf. *anno* 1543, XXI.

⁵⁶ Boverius (*anno* 1543, XXII) says that Francesco da Jesi had for some time not held with Ochino's opinions and that this was well known to Cardinal Carpi.

to the stability of the Reform ; for even yet there lingered an opinion amongst the people at large that the Capuchins were in reality suppressed, and this opinion reacted on the spirits of the weaker brethren.

For this reason, on the feast of the Porziuncola after his election, Francesco convoked an assembly of over two hundred friars at Assisi.⁵⁷ It was a public demonstration that the Reform yet lived and would continue to live.

Amongst the Observants some there were who openly rejoiced at the pass to which the Capuchins had come ; but others—and these the Riformati who dwelt in “the houses of recollection”—were moved with a certain sympathy and in brotherly fashion hoped that the issue would mean the return of the Capuchins to swell the ranks of the internal Reform. Of these was Fra Francesco, a Venetian, custos of the Riformati in Umbria. Between him and Francesco da Jesi there was a long standing friendship born in the days when both were working together for the establishment of “houses of recollection.” When the great trouble befell the Capuchins, the Venetian Francesco wrote to Francesco da Jesi, inviting him and his brethren to join forces with the Riformati, assuring him of a fraternal welcome. To the Venetian it seemed that this trouble was a sign that God willed the Reform to abide within the Observant family and leaven the whole. Francesco da Jesi replied “courteously and lovingly” that this union was impossible ; but the Venetian friar was not easily to be put off. He had visions of the great gain to the cause of the Riformati if the two reforming forces were united. So when Francesco da Jesi assembled his brethren at Assisi, the Venetian Francesco came from Spoleto where he dwelt, in the hope of winning the Capuchins over to his plans. He came armed with arguments in favour of reunion, but chiefly this : that they would obtain a bull from the Pope which would give them an ampler freedom than any bull had yet given. To this Francesco da Jesi replied : “Frate mio, you may get a bull from heaven, but that will not make a true reform! It is not the bull but the life which makes the reform. That being so,” he continued, “one had but to look at the life led by this poor Capuchin congregation to see that it had all

⁵⁷ cf. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, I, p. 16.

the marks of the perfect reform they had both long desired, and indeed," he continued—launching forth on a line of argument familiar to both—"if you would know whether the Capuchin congregation is a true reform, nay the perfect and ultimate reform, see how exactly it answers to the prophecies of holy men who since the days of St. Francis have predicted the perfect reform which would renew the Order in the spirit of St. Francis himself and of his first brethren."

Doubtless in the old days these two had often discussed those prophecies which foretold the decline and eventual regeneration of the Franciscan Order, even as through all the centuries since St. Francis' day the more zealous brethren had cherished and pondered upon them, finding in them the mainstay of their hope and the strengthening of their loyalty. This almost Messianic belief in the destiny of their Order it was which explains the peculiar vitality of the primitive Franciscan tradition during the vicissitudes through which the Order passed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. To the votaries of this tradition the secular glories of the Order counted as nothing in comparison with the unworldliness and God-lovingness of the life of Christ which it was the destiny of their Order to re-establish on earth. That is what "strictest poverty" meant to them: a sacrament of the Christ-life as they understood it.⁵⁸ They were visionaries, those men who thus kept aflame that primitive Franciscan tradition, but visionaries who harnessed their vision to hard realities—the poverty, humility and selflessness of the Divine Redeemer of men by which alone they held the kingdom of their vision could be gained. Such men dream dreams and are apt to find their utterance in apocalyptic images: and so it was with many of those brethren who are known in Franciscan history as the Spirituals.

Here then in the hospice of San Lorenzo which overlooks Assisi⁵⁹ the two friends discussed again "the prophecies."

To Francesco da Jesi there could be no doubt that the Capuchin Reform answered in every detail to the conditions of the perfect reform set forth in the prophecies. In their

⁵⁸ "Diceva il Venerabile Fra Francesco da Jesi: La vera poverta consiste in non amare cosa nissuna terrena, ma solo la Divina Maesta et di fare perfettamenteamente la volonta sua" (Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, II, p. 1233).

⁵⁹ Francesco da Jesi and his companion were guests of the confraternity attached to the church of San Lorenzo on the hillside above the Duomo.

external life the Capuchins had conformed to the first Franciscan days ; they wore the same coarse garb as worn by St. Francis ; their houses were formed on the model of the first Franciscan places and in the matter of poverty they adhered to the strict rule as it was observed by St. Francis and his first companions. Moreover, as had been prophesied, this reform was brought about by simple and unlettered brethren as were Matteo da Bascio and Lodovico da Fossombrone and the other first fathers. And was not the prophecy fulfilled in the Capuchins, that the perfect reform would be tried by bitter persecutions and incredible troubles ?

Call it, if you will, a confession of faith rather than an argument. As such, it would seem, Francesco the Venetian took it ; for, writes the chronicler, " he departed fully satisfied ; and weeping, kissed the hands of our Father General." ⁶⁰

The incident explains much in the character of Fra Francesco da Jesi ; much too as regards the mentality in which the Capuchin congregation was reared. Not without reason have all the original Capuchin chroniclers traced the beginnings of the Reform through the long line of those " Spiritual " defenders of the primitive tradition, whose story is writ large in the religious history of the later Middle Ages.

For three years Francesco da Jesi gave himself unremittingly to the task of renewing the spirit and courage of his brethren ; and this he did not only by his words, eloquent with his own fervid faith, but even more by the example of his humble endurance and his austerity of life, and by the gentleness of his spirit imbued with the charity of Christ. And in the second year of his ministry his labours received an acknowledgment in a public act of the Pope. The ban which had been put upon the Capuchins as preachers was raised ; as a formal condition the Vicar General was required to satisfy the Pope as to the doctrine held by the congregation on the questions in dispute between the Catholics and the Lutherans. His statements concerning justification

⁶⁰ See the account of the interview in Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, p. 16. Bernardino was with the Vicar General at San Lorenzo, and had the story from Francesco da Jesi. cf. Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1544, XXIX.

See Appendix : *The Spiritual Tradition in the Capuchin Congregation*, Appendix, vol. ii.

by faith curiously anticipate the definitions of the Council of Trent.⁶¹

Once again the storm had spent itself, leaving the Capuchins purified and strengthened in spirit. Not at once did they fully recover the confidence of the people and the rulers. The glamour surrounding Ochino in which the whole congregation had shared had vanished with his apostasy. But that was not to their harm. In the comparative obscurity which followed they were given the opportunity to consolidate their freedom in the hard life they had chosen.

Two events were about to happen which were to have a marked influence on their destiny: the holding of the General Council at Trent and the appearance in Rome of a humble lay-brother whose manifest sanctity was to win back the heart of the Roman people to the congregation. Both these events mark a new era in the story of the Capuchins.

⁶¹ Cardinal Carpi, protector of the Order, had presented a list of questions touching the doctrine of justification and the other doctrines impugned by the Lutherans. The questions and answers are given in Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1545.

cf. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, II, p. 1370.

CHAPTER V

RECOVERY AND GROWTH

(i)

NOT at once, as we have said, did the Capuchins regain popular favour even when the Pope had publicly declared them guiltless of the heresy some had imputed to them. Ochino's fall had hit hardly the populace, who had worshipped him, and not least that large influential section of the reforming party within the Church who had put their faith in him. With no depth of character, but sensitive to ideas and with the faculty of making these ideas emotionally his own, Ochino had been drawn into the Reform movement and had become its most popular orator. As the whole history of his life proves, he lacked moral stamina and simplicity of conviction.¹ The glamour and prestige attaching to his name had consequently been a real danger to the Capuchins, and in other circumstances might well have wrecked the Reform by undermining the sincerity and simplicity of character which was its strength. Ochino's apostasy, cruel blow that it was, probably saved the Reform from a crueller fate than actually befel it.

But gradually the unreasoning suspicion gave way and the Capuchins became more securely rooted in the people's affection and esteem than before. Freed from the ephemeral glamour of Ochino's name, their inherent value asserted itself.

Firmly but gently Francesco da Jesi had re-established discipline which had been shaken in the great upheaval. Many had left the Reform and returned to the Observant fold, and it was with depleted numbers that the congregation emerged from its trial ; yet that was no loss but rather a gain

¹ Take, for instance, his part in the affair of the Venetian Chapters (*supra*, p. 75) and his constant shiftness after he joined the Calvinists at Geneva.

in strength. Ochino's fame had enticed not a few to become Capuchins ; there was seductiveness in the popular cry : " Happy are the Capuchins to have such a man."

Francesco da Jesi had steadied the spirit of the congregation by the pure flame of his mystic fervour. Bernardino d'Asti, who was again elected Vicar General in 1546, followed with his calm wisdom and incisive practical judgment. With both these men the Capuchin life rested for its security and spirituality upon two foundations—prayer and poverty. Francesco had declared the essential obligation of a Friar Minor to consist " in loving nothing earthly, but only the Divine Majesty and the perfect fulfilment of God's Holy Will." The same fundamental thought runs through a pastoral letter which Bernardino d'Asti addressed to the brethren in 1548. It is redolent of the primitive Franciscan spirit in its simplicity, and might well have been written by St. Francis himself.

It runs : " Reverend Fathers, and Brothers and Sons : salutations. Rejoice always in the Lord, again I say rejoice. The Lord is nigh and has a continual care of us. As precious garments adorn the body and make it to become more beautiful than it was, so are the holy virtues the precious garments and adornment of the soul ; in truth they make it more beautiful and bring it to such dignity and high station that the sinful and adulterous soul, the slave of the devil, is made the Spouse of the most high Emperor, our God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the queen and empress of the heavenly kingdom and empire. Of which virtues the most worthy and the chief is charity and love ; a virtue most sweet and desirable. Wherefore do even carnal, worldly and animal men feign to be clothed with charity ; but from such we must guard ourselves and flee, as our good Master admonishes us, saying that by their fruits, that is their works, you shall know them.

" I would, therefore, give you two examples and signs by which to know in yourselves and in others true charity. When you see a Capuchin friar continually solicitous for prayer and a real zealot of most holy poverty—when you see such a one charitable towards his spiritual brethren and other neighbours, believe that in him is true charity. But if you see one who is negligent in prayer and who takes

pleasure in a comfortable life and an abundance of sensual comforts, and who yet preaches and belauds charity, fly from him and hold him suspect ; believe not that his charity is a true charity, but more likely carnality or a love carnal and sensual ; since charity cannot abide in us without the other virtues, particularly and of necessity prayer and poverty.

“ And if you see a Capuchin friar who is not observant, nay who is not zealous for the full observance of most holy poverty, hold in suspicion his prayer ; hold in suspicion his zeal for poverty. For we have known certain friars in whom there appeared a certain zeal for poverty and afterwards they repented and returned to a comfortable life, whom indeed it is not for us to judge ; but I believe the chief cause of their ruin to have been their lack of humble prayer. . . . Certain it is that as a house cannot stand which lacks foundations, so with us, if we fail fully to observe most holy poverty, God will permit our congregation to come to ruin. Woe to those Capuchin friars who seek to relax the poverty of our life ; in truth they are not Friars Minor of St. Francis but of the kin of Brother Elias, and as the Apostle says, enemies of the Cross of Christ our God ; and destroyers of our congregation. Earnestly then do I exhort and pray each one of you in so far as you can, to give yourselves diligently to humble and devout prayer ; and that you beseech from your heart the Lord to give and increase and conserve in you the holy virtues, especially most holy charity and poverty, the which with prayer are the most necessary and precious adornment of a true Friar Minor ; without which no Capuchin friar can be pleasing to God nor hope to enter into the everlasting nuptials of the divine and heavenly Bridegroom.”²

There is a note of warning in the letter which indicates that there were some in the congregation who were faltering before the high ideal of the original Reform ; perhaps not all the waverers had already left the congregation. But that “ the true Capuchin friar ” pointed to in the letter was not a mere ideal figure but one commonly found in the Capuchin community, is attested by the “ lives ” of the

² *Litterae P. Bernardini Astensis*, in *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, vol. xxiv, pp. 20-21. Boverius, *Annales*, 1548, I-X, gives a free translation of the letter.

brethren which form so striking a feature in all the early chronicles of the Reform. To take a typical instance. There was Fra Matteo da Schio in the Venetian territory. He was sent with some companions to found a friary at Colle in the neighbourhood of his native town. He constructed a small friary of wattles and loam on the edge of a wood; and the belfry was the branch of a tree that grew near by. In this rude friary he and his brethren lived on rye-bread, herbs and beans; they fasted every day and frequently flagellated themselves until the blood ran. Never did they break silence except to speak of divine things or of the Rule they had vowed. In winter when the cold was bitter they would go to the wood to gather a few sticks and warm themselves at a scant fire. They never stored food beyond the need of the day, casting aside all solicitude for temporal things in their quest for the heavenly. From this poor friary the priests would go forth to evangelise the country around. On one occasion it happened that the friary was snowbound so that the lay brother could by no means go out to quest for food; but Fra Matteo bade the brethren be of good cheer for that God would not fail them. The dinner-hour came and since there was nothing to eat in the refectory the brethren gathered in the chapel to pray. Thus were they praying when the bell in the tree was heard to tinkle, and a brother going to the door found outside a sack of victuals; but he who had brought it was nowhere to be seen.

Fra Matteo was afterwards Vicar of the Venetian Province; he died in 1563.³

The friary of Colle was, as I have said, typical in its austerity and simplicity of many of the Capuchin friaries at this period. In the towns and in some country places the friaries were more solidly constructed of stone, yet here too the houses were small and narrow.⁴ The friars' wants were few, and so they were able to observe the highest poverty.

³ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, II, p. 644. Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1563, VI. d'Arembergh: *Flores Seraphici*, I, p. 103.

⁴ Some of the friaries of this period still remain and bear witness to the scrupulous care to adhere to the narrow limits set by the Constitutions. Visitors to Rome are shown the cell in which San Felice da Cantalice died in 1584; it was removed and set up in the Capuchin church in the Piazza Barberini, when the friars left San Nicola de Portiis in 1631.

Many of them kept an almost continuous fast ; no superfluities of any kind were allowed ; but the word "superfluities" covered much that most people would consider necessities. Until the time of Eusebio d'Ancona, who succeeded Bernardino d'Asti as Vicar General, the friars, except the sick and aged, slept upon a board with a bundle of twigs or of grasses for their pillow. ⁵

Asking so little, it nevertheless seemed to them that Divine Providence had a wonderful care of them ; and many are the stories told in the primitive chronicles of the marvellous interventions of God's charity whereby the brethren were succoured in times of need. There is one story worthy of the *Fioretti* which tells of the friars' simple confidence and of the responding care which their neighbours frequently had for them. It was again winter, and a great snowstorm cut off the brethren in the hermitage of Monte Casale from the town of Borgo San Sepolcro. The snow lay deep almost to the windows, and so strong was the wind that if a window were opened the snow was driven in so that everything was covered with snow. It was perilous to venture out, for Monte Casale is a nest perched on a steep mountain side with a deep ravine yawning below, and the road to the city three miles away runs high along the side of the ravine. Two strong brothers did offer to attempt the journey to beg food, since there was but a little bread in the house ; but Frat' Eusebio d'Ancona, the Vicar Provincial, would not allow them, so perilous was the road. The dinner hour came and the brethren assembled in the refectory. Frat' Eusebio took the few pieces of bread and distributed them. There was but a tiny morsel for each brother, yet, says the writer who knew these brethren, they were more refreshed in spirit by this scant meal than by many a better meal. But the wonder was yet to come. That evening in the town of Borgo San Sepolcro a voice was suddenly heard calling aloud : "The poor frati at Monte Casale will die of hunger !" and there was much concern in the town concerning the fate of the friars. Early next morning fifteen of the noblest youths of the town banded together, and loading a mule with food-stuffs, set out to relieve the brethren. They battled with the wind and snow, though they afterwards

⁵ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, II, p. 1243.

declared that it "was like riding through the air, so little trouble had they." They had come to the neighbouring height of Monte Leone, when a friar, Fra Angelo, thought he heard a human voice in the distance. He ran to a window, but because of the falling snow could see nothing; yet was he sure there was a voice calling, and he took it to be the voice of some wanderer in distress. Whereupon, with the permission of the Vicar Provincial, he essayed to go forth to succour the wanderer. Twice he got as far as the fountain outside the tiny courtyard and twice was driven back by the storm. A third time he again reached the fountain to be met by the youths with their load of provisions. It was their voices he had heard!⁶

The memories of such events were treasured by the brethren and drew them very near to God and man in simple gratitude.

Bernardino d'Asti, as we have seen, held that prayer and a rigid poverty were the securities for that seraphic love which St. Francis regarded as the hall-mark of a true Friar Minor. All through his administration and for long afterwards, the Capuchins jealously adhered to the original eremitical element in their vocation. Their "home-life" was dominated by the contemplative character of the hermitage. They met for common prayer at the stated hours of the Divine Office; then they scattered to their work or study in silence that they might cultivate the spirit of recollection and silent communion with God. They slept before the midnight office of matins; when that was ended they were at liberty to seek further repose; but commonly they sought their cells or went into an adjoining wood to spend the remainder of the night in prayer. Following the example of the first Franciscans, many of them would from time to time retire, with the permission of their superiors, to a solitary's cell, sometimes a rude erection in the wood near by, sometimes a mountain cave such as may be seen to-day in the wood adjoining the friary of Camerino. There they would give themselves entirely to the contemplation of heavenly things, taking but little food meanwhile and that usually but bread and water.⁷ It was from such retreats

⁶ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, loc. cit: *Flores Seraphici*, I, p. 25.

⁷ cf. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, *Della vita anacorita che tennero quei primi padri* (loc. cit., II, p. 1265).

that many of their most powerful preachers went forth to evangelise the cities and villages of Italy ; and that perhaps explains the impression of an unearthly power they left on the minds of those who came under the spell of their words. One must realise actually this background of the Capuchins' public life to understand their marvellous success as preachers and workers amongst the people in that far-off sixteenth century. It was not in the schools that they learned their message to men, but in the silent hours of prayer and in the hard battle with flesh and blood which their poverty and lowliness meant. To very many of them the hard poverty they embraced—poverty of earthly ambitions as well as of material comfort—was the renouncement of actual comfort and of this world's good fortune which might have been theirs had they so desired it ; for not a few of them came of noble or gentle stock, and many of them before they joined the Capuchins were of intellectual repute.⁸

For some years until after the Council of Trent the Capuchins had no theological schools or classes ; they studied individually and privately under the guidance of some experienced teacher. Such teachers were not hard to find ; for many of those who joined the Reform had taught theology before they came ; and at first and for some years, most of the priests of the Reform had been priests before they became Capuchins. Later, when novices came direct from the world and were unversed in theology, it was decided that no novices should be received as clerics destined for the priesthood unless they had already received an education which fitted them for the study of theology.⁹ Yet it still remained true that the Capuchins relied more on prayer and the study of the Scriptures as a preparation for the ministry of the Word than upon scholastic learning.

Of one thing they stood in dread—and that was the taking over of those duties of the sacred ministry which properly belong to the parish priest. Like St. Paul they held that they were called to preach the Gospel, not to baptise.

⁸ Almost every second name recorded in the early chronicles of the Order indicates some family of standing in the history of the provinces or cities of Italy.

⁹ Decree of the General Chapter of 1549 : Boverius, *Annales, anno 1549 ; Anal. Ord. Cap.*, vol. v, p. 74 : "*Nec ullus clericali militiæ adscribatur nisi apposite legere noverit.*"

To intricate themselves in the work of the secular clergy would involve them in contentions and scandals such as were too common as between the regular and secular clergy at the period, and moreover would insensibly distract them from the special vocation in which they were called.¹⁰

Some there were amongst them, especially in Southern Italy, who would have cut themselves off altogether from the world of men, living as did the anchorites of old in the fastnesses of the hills or deserted places, wholly given to the contemplative life; but this was never allowed to be the normal life of a Capuchin nor the fulfilment of the evangelical life which St. Francis had proposed to his Order. Even the lay brethren were not debarred from making known the Gospel of Christ to the people who after a time came to expect a sermon from any Capuchin who appeared amongst them. Like the primitive Franciscans they would speak of "the vices and virtues" of a Christian life and exhort the people whom they met to be good Christians. "And great fruit," says a chronicler, "came from these simple discourses." There was Frat' Egidio da Orvieto "a lay brother of great courage," who one day arrived at a castello in the Roman Compagna. At once the people crowded around him and demanded a sermon; but Frat' Egidio, shy of the crowd, thought by subterfuge to escape the unexpected honour. "I must have paper and pen to make notes," he told them; "there are many things to think of." The people replied that in all the castello they did not believe either pen or writing paper could be found; but a sermon they would have. "Well then," said the frate, "ring the bell and I will preach you a sermon." And he preached so earnestly that when the sermon was finished the people would not let him go, but kept him by force for fifteen days, demanding a sermon every day. It happened that during this time an Augustinian friar arrived at the castello, and Frat' Egidio sought him out and begged him to take the sermon; which the Augustinian did willingly. The people listened to the new preacher impatiently for awhile and then bade him be silent; they would have a sermon from Frat' Egidio.¹¹ But

¹⁰ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo: *Della vita anacorita*, loc. cit.

¹¹ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, loc. cit., *Della predicazione di quei primi padri*, II, p. 1268.

many a lay brother on the daily quest was spiritual counsellor and instructor to those at whose houses he called. We shall meet one such later on who was not undeservedly called "the apostle of Rome." But, says the old chronicler, when the *predicatori litterati*—the educated preachers—came to preach, so great a name they gained throughout Italy that many of them could preach only in the cities appointed them by the Apostolic See, so many cities demanded their preaching; and so, much good was done among the people both by the simple and the learned.¹²

It was not only in the matter of evangelising the people that the lay brothers at this period were associated with the external activities of the priests; they were also to be found filling the more responsible offices in the congregation as guardians of communities, novice-masters and even provincial superiors; the chief qualification for these offices being spiritual wisdom and religious virtue.¹³

Thus upon a foundation of earnest simple piety the Capuchin congregation was consolidated by a happy succession of Vicars General—Bernardino d'Asti, Francesco da Jesi and Eusebio d'Ancona—all remarkable for their manifest holiness of life and in whom the spirit of the first Franciscan days again shone with a clear light. With Eusebio d'Ancona we shall become more fully acquainted before this chapter in our story ends. But first it will be well to know something more of the men who carried the pure spirit of the Reform into the outer world, preaching the gospel of Christ as they learned it in the school of Franciscan poverty.

(ii)

They were all preachers, these Capuchins, preaching by deeds as well as by words; for so they interpreted that

¹² Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, looking back over half a century of intimate acquaintance with the first Capuchins, was not always exact as to numbers. His *maggior parti di loro* (*predicatori litterati*), who were thus directly under the orders of the Pope, is not to be taken literally. Amongst the friars who are known to have been specially commissioned by the Pope for particular cities were Bernardino Ochino and Giacomo da Molfetta. But there were probably others.

¹³ See the "lives" of a number of these lay-brother superiors in *Flores Seraphici*, I, p. 341, *seq.*

service of man which is one with the service of God in the gospel of the Franciscan life. With them "the true poverty"—abandonment of earthly desires and possessions that they might be free to love the Divine Majesty and fulfil His holy will—was a faith not for themselves alone but for the salvation of the whole world of men ; and to propagate that faith was a duty of love they owed to the world in which they lived. It was with this definite purpose, then, that they went forth from their hermitages and friaries. Not that they preached the abandonment of the ordinary duties of life to those who were not called to the special service to which they themselves were called ; their Catholic Faith prevented any such narrowing of the kingdom of God. But the message they bore was that of the sovereignty of the Divine Majesty and their labour was to induce men to rule and fashion their lives in obedience to the Divine Law as revealed in the Gospel of Christ. But because they were men who had learned their message in their own hard struggle against the ungodly inducements and habits of the time they lived in, their words when they spoke went true to their mark and men listened to them because they hit the truth as their hearers knew it in the hidden depths of their hearts. In the inexorable truth in which they faced their own lives, they faced their fellow men ; and in the knowledge of themselves learned in their own spiritual struggles, their words rang with the compassion and humanity of the fellow sufferer. So they preached from the one text on which their own lives were formed—the Gospel of Christ, and preached as only men can to whom that Gospel is the one way of life. "So it came about," says the reminiscient chronicler, "that the preaching of the Holy Scripture was renewed in the Church, where until now had been preached but the questions (of the Schools), philosophy, Æsop's fables and other dreams and vanities ; and when the Capuchins began to preach the Gospel, so pleased were all the people that when they found the Gospel was not being preached, they would not listen to the preacher ; and so other preachers were forced to lay aside their fables and preach the Gospel of Christ if they wished to be heard."¹⁴

¹⁴ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, II, p. 1268. This reform in preaching was not exclusively due to the Capuchins : it was a trait of all the new Orders

Amongst the more notable preachers at this time was Fra Giacomo da Molfetta. He was already reputed a powerful preacher when he passed over from the Observants to the Capuchins in 1536. To a natural gift of eloquence he added a well cultured mind ; he was well versed in classical and Italian literature, had a scholar's knowledge of Hebrew and Chaldaic and was an expert in theology ;¹⁵ a good example, therefore, of the *predicatori litterati*. As an expert theologian Giacomo was drawn by the Viceroy into the controversy concerning the new religious teaching of Juan Valdez which about 1536 was creating a stir in Naples ; and, in consequence of the reputation he then gained, he was sent by Bernardino Ochino, then Vicar General of the Capuchins, to preach in the cities of Northern Italy where the Lutheran and Calvinist doctrines were making rapid headway. At Forli he preached with considerable power and persuasiveness and brought many heretics back to the Church ; but his preaching was sharply criticised by some of the preachers of the city to whom his arguments seemed novel and strange and "tasting of sympathy with the new teaching." The same criticism of him was made at Bologna, where he had to submit to a stringent examination at the hands of a Dominican, when it was found that his arguments were based on an extensive knowledge of the works of St. Augustine : but they were not the arguments commonly taught in the Schools !¹⁶ From Forli he was sent to preach against the heretics in Ferrara, where under the protection of the Duchess Renée many Huguenots expelled from France had found a refuge. But at Ferrara he met with a chill reception from the Vicar Capitular, Ugo Boncompagni, himself a humanist of no mean parts, but no favourer of the new religious teaching. Rumours had reached him from founded in the early part of the sixteenth century. What the chronicler says of the style of preaching hitherto in vogue is borne out by contemporary witnesses : for instance, Cardinal Bembo's statement to Vittoria Colonna, already quoted.

¹⁵ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, II, p. 742. Giacomo da Molfetta had been elected Provincial of the Observants of Apulia at the early age of thirty-three. Two years later he was deposed by the Commissary General, Ilarione Sacchetti, presumably for his reforming tendencies. It is said that at the Provincial Chapter he had prevailed upon the Capitular fathers to abolish certain customs which were contrary to the Rule of poverty. cf. P. Salvatore da Valenzano, *I Cappuccini nelle Puglie* (1926), p. 43.

¹⁶ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, II, p. 740, *seq.*

Forli of Fra Giacomo's unconventional arguments and the suspicion attaching to them. At first he refused to allow Fra Giacomo either to preach or to enter the city, and Giacomo and his companion Fra Raffaele had perforce to take refuge in a poor church outside the walls. On the way to Ferrara, Giacomo had said to Raffaele ; " We will see if God is still to be found in Ferrara." Eventually Ugo Boncompagni consented to allow Fra Giacomo to preach a sermon in the cathedral on condition that he took as his subject the doctrine of predestination. It would be a test sermon, to be preached in the presence of Ugo himself and the civic and ecclesiastical dignitaries. Giacomo preached, and that was the beginning of Ugo Boncompagni's high regard for the Capuchins ; it was he who thirty-five years later as Pope Gregory XIII was to allow the Capuchins to found houses beyond the Alps. For the present he invited Giacomo to remain in the city and preach against " the new teaching," and a little later Giacomo felt he could say : " Indeed God is in Ferrara."¹⁷ In 1540 he preached the Lenten course in Ragusa on the Dalmatian coast and made so great an impression that the magistrates of the city obtained from Pope Paul III a brief commanding Fra Giacomo to return to Ragusa and preach there the following Advent and Lent.¹⁸ Giacomo went and so held the heart of the people that they wished to keep him with them as their Archbishop : but Giacomo would not hear of it ; his only ambition, as he replied about this time to the commissary of the Observant General, was to observe the Rule of St. Francis. On another occasion when Giacomo visited Ragusa, the citizens detained him by force for six months, that they might benefit by his sermons. With a fearless courage Giacomo denounced the vices of the time ; but his most powerful denunciation was for those who oppressed and bled the poor. He had no pity for the usurers and profiteers who fattened on the sufferings and needs of the people already starved by the ravages of war. During his preaching tour in Northern Italy in 1539 or thereabouts, he brought about the institution of the *Bottega di Cristo*—" Christ's Shop"—where food was sold to the poor at a

¹⁷ Mattia da Salo : *Historia Cappuccina*, II, p. 106.

¹⁸ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, III, p. 107.

price they could afford.¹⁹ Many were the stories told of Giacomo's fearless dealings with the usurers in his own native province of Apulia. One offender accused him to the governor of Lecce of having said in a sermon that three pitchforks were needed, one for the bishop, one for the accuser and one for the governor himself. Giacomo was cited to the governor's court. He easily proved that the accusation was a lie: then seizing the accuser's cloak and making as though he would wring it, he called out: "See how the blood of the poor runs." In sudden terror his enemies fled.²⁰ In the end his fearless courage brought about his death in a virtual imprisonment. In 1560—he was then an old man of seventy-one years—he again raised his voice against the tyranny of the Spanish governor in Apulia. For this crime Fra Giacomo was condemned to a rigorous confinement in the friary of Mesagne: and there he died the following year, loved by the people and revered as a saint. After his death a statue was raised to him and to this day his memory is kept green amongst the people he loved. He was a type of Capuchin well known in the chronicles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²¹

Another outstanding figure among the *predicatori litterati* was Fra Giuseppe da Ferno²²: A lovable man he must have been because all men loved him, and a man of extraordinarily sane judgment since leaders of men came to him for counsel. Like all the Capuchin preachers who have left their mark on the religious history of their time, Giuseppe was a man of wide sympathies and of no mean self-interests, with his eye upon the practical needs of the people, and a ready hand for whosoever was doing good work for God and the souls of men. The newly-founded congregations of Clerks-Regular—the Barnabites and the Somaschi—who were labouring heroically by the side of the Capuchins for the saving of the faith of the people in Northern Italy—looked to him as a sort of godfather, so keenly interested was he in their work, so intimate was he in their councils. One's last glimpse of

¹⁹ Mattia da Salo, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

²⁰ Archiv. di Stato, Milano, vista 19, t. II, p. 20, quoted in *I Cappuccini nelle Puglie*, p. 46.

²¹ cf. P. Salvatore da Valenzano: *I Cappuccini nelle Puglie*, pp. 38-62.

²² See Bernardino da Colpetrazzo II, p. 709, *seq*; Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1556, I.

him, when his own labours were over, is of the old friar as he rises from his sick bed and leaning on the arm of the young Fra Mattia da Salo goes forth to visit a community of the Barnabites, to give them his last words of encouragement.²³ His coming was always like a burst of sunshine or the waft of a refreshing breeze; such was the bright cheerfulness which cloaked his indomitable earnestness. One incident reveals the man. Arriving one day at a friary, he found the guardian lying sick. Giuseppe entered the sick room and glanced wistfully at the sick friar; cheerily he exclaimed: "Padre mio, why are you lying here instead of preparing a meal for a hungry man?" Then, bending over the sick friar, he signed his forehead with the sign of the cross. "Now," said he, "we will go together and see what meal they will give us." The guardian arose and went with Giuseppe, his sickness gone.²⁴

One of Giuseppe's preoccupations was the instruction of the young in their religious faith. The root of the religious indifference of the time and of the spread of heresy was to his mind the lack of religious instruction. The people did not know the faith they professed; to them the God they were asked to worship was an unknown God. That was why he was especially interested in the Somaschi, part of whose work was to instruct the poor. For the same reason he took an active interest in promoting the *Scuola della Dottrina Christiana*, founded in 1536 by a priest of Castellino da Castello for the instruction of youth. Inspired by this work, he himself the following year founded at Pavia a similar society, the *Compagnia dei Servi dei Puttini*—the Society of the Servants of Poor Boys—for teaching the children of the poor.²⁵ When later in 1548 he was anxious to give a surer permanence to this work he induced the magistrates of Pavia to apply to Saint Ignatius Loyola for two Jesuits to take over the instruction. Ignatius was unable to accede to this petition because of the fewness of his priests; whereupon Giuseppe interviewed the Archbishop, Cardinal del Monte, urging him to provide instruction, "especially for the orphans and

²³ Mattia da Salo, *Historia Cappuccina*, II, p. 193.

²⁴ Mario da Mercato-Seraceno relates the story in his *Narratione*. Mario was himself the sick guardian.

²⁵ cf. *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, vol. xxxix, p. 48.

converts"²⁶ Eventually, but not till after Giuseppe's death, his friends the Barnabites took over the work of the Society.

But the work by which Giuseppe is best remembered is his propagation of the devotion of the *Quarant'ore* or forty hours' adoration before the Blessed Sacrament—an exercise of devotion which was to play a great part in the apostolate of the Capuchins throughout the next century.

Some have claimed that Giuseppe da Ferno was the originator of this devotion. It is more true to say that he and his friend San Antonio Zaccaria, founder of the Barnabites, were its chief propagators; but that to Giuseppe the devotion owes the solemn form in which later it became an institution of the Catholic Church.²⁷

The origin of this *Quarant'ore* can be traced to the devotion of a priest in Milan who gathered the people together in successive parties to pray before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle for forty continuous hours, in memory of the forty hours during which the body of Christ lay in the tomb. It was practically a revival of the old medieval devotion to Christ in the sepulchre, which was a feature of the Holy Week services in some of the Cathedrals.

In 1537 Giuseppe da Ferno was preaching the Lent in the Duomo of Milan. It was a year of suffering, for Lombardy was devastated by the long-drawn-out wars between the Emperor Charles V and the King of France: and the heart of Giuseppe went out to the suffering citizens living in terror of fresh horrors. Then came to him the inspiration of a solemn act of reparation and intercession in which the whole city would unite as with one voice. Giuseppe would lead them to the feet of the Crucified Redeemer: and from the devotion of "the forty hours at the sepulchre" he conceived the plan of this great civic act of worship. The Blessed Sacrament would be borne solemnly in procession through the city and placed on the altars in various churches, and the citizens marshalled in companies would turn by turn

²⁶ cf. S. Ignatius de Loyola et P. Josephus a Ferno in *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, vol. xx, p. 249, *seq.*

²⁷ cf. *De Origine Orationis XL Horarum* a P. Eduardo Alinconiensi (Roma, 1897): *Contribuzione alla storia Eucharistica di Milano* del Sac. Obl. Achille Ratti (now Pope Pius XI) (Milano, 1895). See also the scholarly discussion of the subject by P. Valdamiro Bonari in *I Cappuccini della Provincia Milanese*, parte 2, vol. i, p. 53, *seq.*

take the watches of the adoration, led by the preacher who at each hour would give a short address on some mystery of our Lord's Passion, to excite sorrow for sin and love of the Redeemer. At the end of the forty hours' prayer the citizens would register their vow of a greater fidelity to their Lord who had died for them, and once again the Blessed Sacrament would be borne in solemn procession to receive the homage of a contrite people. Such was the devotion of the *Quarant'ore* as Giuseppe da Ferno inaugurated it that year in Milan. The effect was a marvellous renewal of spirit amongst the war-stricken Milanese such as had not been witnessed in the city for many years. The devotion spread rapidly throughout northern and central Italy; it became a feature in the missions of the Capuchins; a solemn act of civic piety acknowledging the Divine Redeemer as the people's Lord; an act to be prepared for with a due confession of sin and a promise of amendment of life. Thus at Borgo San Sepolcro, where Giuseppe preached in June 1538, for fifteen days before the *Quarant'ore*, the church bells rang by order of the City Council at stated hours, calling the people to recite five *paters* in honour of the five wounds of Christ Crucified that enmities might be healed, for the city was rent by rival factions; and for fifteen days agents chosen by the council were to work for peace and the healing of discords.²⁸ At Modena, where he preached the *Quarant'ore* in 1539, the devotion crowned a resolve on the part of the citizens to provide for the hungry poor; for Modena had become a city of beggars.

Thus with his love of Christ and of men, Giuseppe evangelised Lombardy, Tuscany and the Romagna, even Corsica. He died in 1556. On his deathbed he comforted and gladdened the brethren who gathered around him, as he had gladdened them all through his laborious life.

There were many other preachers at this time, worthy of special mention, whose practical services on behalf of the poor and the oppressed gave weight to their words and won

²⁸ See the interesting account of this *Quarant'ore* in the Archivio Comunale di S. Sepolero, serie XXXII, No nuovo 157 vecchio A. 172, quoted in *Anal. Ord. Cap.* I have not seen Fra Giuseppe's treatise on the *Quarant'ore* entitled in *Bibliotheca Scriptorum O.M. Cap.* (edit. 1747), p. 154: *Methodus sive Instructio celebrandi devotè et cum fructu Orationem XL Horarum*. It was published at Milan in 1571.

them the love of the people. It was Fra Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, the chronicler (though he did not consider himself one of the *litterati*) who induced the magistrates of his native town and of the neighbouring town of Torre, in the valley of Todi, to establish *Monti Frumentari*, or communal grain-shops, that the peasant farmers of the district might obtain grain at reasonable prices and so avert the ruin which threatened them.²⁹ Frat' Arcangelo of Palermo, of the noble family of the Caprona in that city, in his long missionary career as a preacher in Sicily, not only fostered the *Monti di Pietà*—for lending money to the poor without interest—but established Prisoners' Aid Societies and was instrumental in founding convalescent homes for the sick poor.³⁰ Such active works of mercy were indicative of the broad charity and human sympathies of the Capuchin preachers. But it was the simple earnestness of their preaching, devoid of the arts of eloquence, yet eloquent with the vivid intuitions of the spirit, which compelled their hearers to listen, and brought the obdurate to contrition and amendment of life. Very insistent were the early leaders of the Capuchins that their preachers should adhere rigorously to the rule of evangelical simplicity. At the General Chapter of 1555 Eusebio d'Ancona vigorously denounced a tendency which was showing itself in some of the younger preachers to cultivate the arts of rhetoric; not in studying books of rhetoric, but by prayer and the study of the Scriptures must the Capuchin preacher prepare himself for his apostolate; and not in flowers of oratory but in simple truth and fervour of spirit must he announce the word of God.³¹

(iii)

Meanwhile, the Capuchin congregation was again rapidly increasing in numbers; and in the wake of their more notable preachers friaries were multiplying. It is evident, as indeed one would expect, that as numbers increased the purity of the original observance demanded a watchful care on the part of the superiors. At the General Chapter of 1549, when

²⁹ cf. P. Francesco da Vicenza: *Il P. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo e i Monti Frumentari in l' Italia Francescana* (Roma, 1927), p. 131, *seq.*

³⁰ *Flores Seraphici*, I, p. 177.

³¹ Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1555, II.

Bernardino d'Asti was elected Vicar General for the third time, it was enacted that no friar should be elected guardian of a friary unless he had been five years in the Reform, and that none should be admitted as clerics who had not received an adequate education. In the General Chapter of 1552 it was decreed that no recourse should be had to money except for the necessaries of life and then only when such necessaries could not be procured by begging from door to door ; nor were any saleable goods to be received for the purpose of procuring flesh-meat or other foods ; no friars except the sick and infirm were to be allowed the use of pillows of straw, still less of wool ; the cloaks worn by the brethren were not to extend lower than the fingers ; guardians were to correct those officials of the community who were negligent in their duty, but otherwise they were not to interfere unnecessarily with the officials in the discharge of their duties ; and the brethren were forbidden to act as physicians to seculars. As we have seen, at the General Chapter of 1555, Eusebio d'Ancona, newly re-elected Vicar General, vehemently rebuked certain of the younger preachers. The life was undoubtedly a hard life, almost inhumanly hard as some had said, and only tolerable to such as had a joyous and simple faith. After the death of Paul III, the fervour of the Reform was somewhat endangered by a new influx of Observants. The often promised internal reform of the Observant communities in Italy was still delayed, and many held in consequence that the edicts of Paul III prohibiting the migration of Observants to the Capuchin congregation no longer had force of law. But many who passed over to the Capuchins did so from a spirit of restlessness induced by the disturbed conditions in the Observant family ; these, after awhile, finding the life of the Capuchins too austere, returned to their original communities after having caused disturbance amongst the Capuchins. In consequence of this, Julius III in 1551 issued a brief renewing the edicts of Paul III.³² The result of these prohibitory edicts was not

³² Brief, *In eminenti* of February 15, 1551, in *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* I, p. 24 ; Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1551, I.

According to Boverius Bernardino d'Asti had applied to the Pope to forbid the return of Observants who had once passed over to the Capuchins, and the brief, he says, was issued in consequence. The explanation is highly improbable. The brief of Julius III is almost word for word a repetition of the prohibitive

altogether what the Observant superiors desired. It is true they put a stop to migrations which would have emptied the Observant family in Italy of its more vigorous element. But at the same time these edicts largely contributed towards making the Capuchin Reform permanently separate from the Observant jurisdiction. Had the Reform continued to be mainly recruited from the Observants, the ultimate reunion of the two families might possibly have been brought about on the basis of a twofold observance under the direct jurisdiction of the Minister General : the system which did eventually save the Observant family from further disintegration. But the influx of Observants was checked, with the result that a new generation of Capuchins grew up who had never been Observants and who knew the Observants merely as adversaries of the Reform. It was largely the family feeling of Bernardino d'Asti and his generation for the Observants, which made the earlier Capuchins protest so vigorously against the prohibitory edicts of Paul III : with them the Capuchin Reform was distinctly a reform of the Observants. To preserve the life of the Reform, they had claimed exemption from the jurisdiction of the Observant superiors, yet they regarded themselves as carrying on the original purpose of the Observant reform itself; and hence they claimed as a right that all Observants should be free to join the Capuchins in the stricter observance of the Rule. The new generation of Capuchins, mainly recruited from outside the Observant family, no longer regarded themselves as Observants but as an entirely distinct branch of the Franciscan Order ; and in time came to regard the influx of Observants as a danger to the spirit of their congregation. Thus when in 1567 the Discalced Observants of Spain petitioned to be united with the Capuchins, their petition was not received with any great eagerness. They were told that such a union could not be brought about but with the consent of the Pope and the King of Spain ; but the Capuchins do not seem to have made any effort to forward the petition, though at the time they were in favour with the reigning Pontiff, Pius V.³³ Thus gradually the Capuchins

briefs of Paul III against which Bernardino d'Asti had formerly protested as an infringement of the liberty allowed by Canon Law.

³³ Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1567 ; cf. *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, vol. v, p. 80.

came to disregard their filiation from the primitive Franciscan fraternity as derived through the Observants, and to consider only their spiritual filiation in virtue of the Rule they aspired to observe. So as the years went by the Capuchins attained to an ever-clearer corporate self-consciousness, and the two congregations became as two distinct families though confessing to the same spiritual parentage.

But in the time of Paul IV danger came to the stability of the Capuchins from another source ; and this time it was a threatened effective union with the Conventuals. The internal condition of the Conventual Franciscans at this period was much the same as amongst the Observants ; the general body had become lax and demoralised even within the concessions granted them by the popes ; though again, as amongst the Observants, there had been a recurring movement in favour of reform. Long before he became Pope, Paul IV had urged the reform or the suppression of the Conventual communities in Italy,³⁴ and it was probably as a means of reforming them that he now contemplated an effective union of the Conventuals with the Capuchins.³⁵ The proposition filled the Capuchins with consternation ; the result would indeed have been fatal to the spirit of the Reform. For three years Eusebio d'Ancona dared not leave Rome lest some such arrangement be made during his absence. The question was complicated by the fact that two new congregations, one in Sicily founded by Girolamo Lanza during the pontificate of Julius III,³⁶ and a congregation of Reformed Conventuals in Spain, later known as Alcantarines, had assumed the habit and the name of the Capuchins, though remaining separate in jurisdiction.³⁷

³⁴ See his memorial sent to Clement VII in 1532 in Ranke : *History of the Popes*, vol. iii, Appendix 29.

³⁵ Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, *Narratione*, cart. 255.

³⁶ The Sicilian congregation arose at first as an independent society of hermits. They were allowed by Julius III to adopt the Capuchin habit and to profess the Rule of St. Francis "after the manner of the Capuchins." They were suppressed by Pius IV in 1662. Some of them then united with the Conventuals and founded houses of Reformed Conventuals. cf. Holzapfel : *Manuale Historiæ Ord. F.F. Min.* (Freiburg, 1909), pp. 531-532.

³⁷ The Reformed Conventuals, or Alcantarines, of Spain are styled : *Fratres Minores de Observantia Capuccini nuncupati* in the bull of Pius IV aggregating them to the Observants in 1565. (*Bullar Ord. F. Min. Discalceatorum*, I, p. 159). They had originally been Observants before they passed to the Conventuals for greater freedom in observing their reform. Julius III in 1552 gave them permission to wear the Capuchin habit.

The question of union with the Conventuals remained unsettled during the pontificate of Paul IV, but on the election of Pius IV in 1559, Tommaso da Citta di Castello, who had succeeded Eusebio d'Ancona the previous year, again protested against the proposed union, and to secure the independence of the Capuchin Reform, obtained a new Papal bull by which the Reform was confirmed in the rights and privileges granted it by Clement VII and Paul III ; by the same bull the Sicilian congregation of Girolamo Lanza and all others were forbidden to call themselves Capuchins or to wear the Capuchin habit.³⁸

By this bull the independence of the Capuchins was finally secured, and when in 1562 the Council of Trent resumed its sittings, the Vicar General of the Reform was for the first

³⁸ See the bull, *Pastoralis officii cura*, of April 2, 1560, in *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, I, pp. 25-28.

Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1555, III, states that fresh troubles arose after the death of Julius III and during the pontificate of Paul IV, and attributes the trouble to the rivalry of the Observants. Again, in recounting the events of 1558, he says that the Observants made another attempt to suppress the Capuchins, and won over "a certain cardinal" to their cause who actually prepared a bull of suppression to present to the Pope ; but that for some reason the cardinal "took flight," and left Rome before the scheme could be carried out. This detail of the cardinal's sudden flight is just the sort of dramatic flourish that Boverius delighted in. In view of the statement of Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, that Paul IV wished to unite the Conventuals and the Capuchins, I would be inclined to discredit the whole story of this intrigue of the Observants as told by Boverius, but for the fact that there is frequently an element of truth in this annalist's distorted statements. Possibly Clemente di Moneglia, the Observant General, in his design to reform the Italian Observants, made another effort to re-unite the Capuchins with the Observants. Clemente was created cardinal in 1557 ; is he the cardinal Boverius refers to ? We must await further, yet undiscovered, documentary evidence before we can give a definite judgment. Boverius, however, makes no allusion to the proposed union with the Conventuals. It should be noticed as throwing light on this situation, that Pius IV, after confirming the status of the Capuchins, disbanded the "Capuchins" of Girolamo Lanza in 1562. In 1565 he aggregated the Spanish Reformed Conventuals, also known as "Capuchins" to the Observants ; and the same year gave the Conventuals new constitutions. (cf. *Bullar. Taurinense*, VII, p. 401, seq.)

The question of the union of the Conventuals with the Capuchins was again brought up in 1568 as an alternative to the proposed union of the Conventuals with the Observants. The General of the Conventuals, Tancredo da Colle, was in favour of union with either Observants or Capuchins ; but the opposite party amongst the Conventuals supported by the learned canonist, de Navarra, prevailed upon Pius V to allow the Conventuals to remain a distinct congregation. The Capuchins themselves were opposed to the union.

cf. Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, loc. cit., cart. 255-256. Wadding-Luca, *Annales*, anno 1568.

time invited to the Council and given a place amongst the Generals of the Mendicant Orders.³⁹

When, in the following year, the reform of the Religious Orders was under discussion, and it was decided to grant to all mendicant Orders, including the Conventual Friars Minor, the right to hold property in common, the Council exempted from the decree the two Orders of "the Capuchins and the Friars Minor styled of the Observance." In the earlier days of Paul III the Observants had appealed to the future General Council to decide the fate of the Capuchins. The Council had now decided by recognising the Reform as one of those orders "which by their zeal for reform deserved to be treated with favour."⁴⁰ So after nearly forty years of troubled life the Capuchins at last came into their own. It was a triumph for more than their own freedom ; it was a triumph of that return to sincerity and truth which was the goal of the Catholic Reformation.⁴¹

³⁹ Bernardino d'Asti had been present at the Council in 1546, but only in the capacity of a minor-theologian, not as representing the Vicar General of the congregation, cf. Theiner : *Acta Conc. Trid.* I, p. 181.

⁴⁰ See the speech of Tommaso Stella, O.P., Bishop of Capo d'Istria (Justinopolis) in the General Congregation of November 25, 1563. *Ibid.* II, p. 496.

⁴¹ Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1545, XXX, has a story that when Bernardino d'Asti was at the Council of Trent a discussion took place in the Council concerning the headship of the whole Franciscan Order ; and that the Conciliar Fathers had decided to grant the headship of the Order together with the ancient seal to the Capuchin Reform ; but Bernardino d'Asti refused the honour, declaring that the Capuchins desired only their freedom to observe the Rule. The story is founded on a statement by Bernardino da Colpetrazzo in his Chronicle, I, p. 577, who says that the Council recognised the Capuchins as true sons of St. Francis, "*et questo fii che non poco fermo la pouva congregazione de li Capuccini che insino a questo tempo fii sempre in grand, timore.*" He then adds simply that the Council wished to give the seal of the Order to the Capuchins, but they refused it, "*nella loro humilita et non dare travaglio al corpo della religione,*" "in their humility and because they did not wish to cause trouble to the body of the Order." He does not mention Bernardino d'Asti in connection with this incident, and it is evident from the context that he refers to the final sessions of the Council, when Bernardino d'Asti had been dead nine years.

There is, however, no record in the Acts of the Council of any such proposed grant of the seal. If the proposition was made at all, it must have been made at one of the informal meetings. The story as told by Boverius is another instance of that annalist's irresponsible manipulation of the records he had at hand.

He also tells a dramatic story of an interview which took place during the Council between the agents of the General of the Observants, Francesco Zamora, and Tommaso da Città di Castello, Vicar General of the Capuchins. Zamora, he says, sent certain Riformati to negotiate with the Vicar General a reunion of the Capuchins and Observants. The interview is not improbable. But Boverius could not avoid a dramatic sequel. When Zamora, adds Boverius, heard of the failure of the interview, he was so disappointed that he immediately left for Spain ! (*Annales*, anno 1562, II.)

PART II
THE CAPUCHINS SPREAD ABROAD

CHAPTER VI

FRA FELICE

(i)

FRA FELICE DA CANTALICE¹ died in the Capuchin friary of San Buonaventura² by the Quirinal Hill, on May 18, 1587 ; and was at once canonised by the voice of the Roman people. Had they not for many years known that he was a saint ? It was of course right that a Requiem Mass should be said for his soul, and a *Libera* chanted on the day of his burial ; that was the proper form when a Christian died. But nobody believed that Fra Felice had need to be prayed for ; and as for burying his body in the common cemetery of the friars, that was not to be thought of. Fra Felice belonged to the whole city, not only to the friars, and the citizens would not be satisfied till his body rested in a marble tomb where anyone who wished might be free to come and pay him the homage of affection and invoke his intercession. So Fra Felice, the lay-brother of the Capuchins, was laid to rest in a marble tomb which happily was at hand, to the mingled sorrow and joy of the people of Rome ; it was well known that the Pope intended without delay to proceed with his canonisation.³

Forty-four years before this, Fra Felice had joined the Capuchins in the troublous time which followed the apostasy of Bernardino Ochino. He had been a farm labourer in his native Abruzzi, and had been drawn to the Capuchins through listening to the story of the Fathers of the Desert

¹ cf. Acta S. S. Maii, IV, die 18, p. 203, *seq.* ; Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, II, 1141, *seq.* ; Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1583.

² The Capuchins had removed from Sant' Eufemia in 1536. The church of San Buonaventura had hitherto been known as San Nicola di Porzi. To-day it is known as Santa Croce dei Lucchesi. cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon : *San Nicola de Portiis* (Roma, 1908).

³ Sixtus V died in 1590, before he could carry out his intention, and it was not until 1625 that Felice was beatified. He was canonised in 1724.

read to him by some friend of the family in which he was employed. There was a Capuchin hermitage near Cantalice and thither at last he found his way and diffidently stated his wish to become a friar if they thought him worthy. The guardian led him to the altar in the small church and there pointing to the crucifix, spoke of the hard life of Jesus Christ on earth, and asked Felice if he were ready to follow in the footsteps of Him Who had suffered so much for us. Felice replied that, God helping him, he would try ; and so he had been accepted and sent to Rome. At first the hard life led by the friars had seemed too much for his strength ; he was struck down with fever and for weeks lay helpless on the straw mattress which was his bed. The friars were debating about sending him home as one too delicate in health for their austerity, when Felice by sheer effort of will rose from his bed and declared that as the others fared so would he, and at once began to fast and work and pray with the best of them ; nor did he fall sick again until his last sickness, forty-four years later. He took his vows at the end of the year ; and from that time till almost the day of his death he was the questor of the Roman community, daily making a round of the streets to supply the brethren with their daily bread. Thus began the strange informal apostolate of this rugged simple lay-brother.

Strictly, his duty was to beg their daily bread for the brethren, and that he did with a will. Winter and summer he went his round, always barefooted, even without the sandals allowed to the weaker brethren, nor did he even on the coldest days allow himself the comfort of the cloak which the Rule permitted. Did anyone chide him for these austerities, Felice replied that sandals and cloak were needful for others, but not for one so robust as himself ; for him they were a needless luxury and a hindrance to his work. Moreover, he would say, he was one of those whom it is ill to pamper ; he was really but an idle, ease-loving ass, if people only knew him. To make him take his rest like others when his daily round was done—that would be his undoing. Felice thrived in his hard toil and pitiless self-crucifixion. Until the end he never missed his daily round except on Sundays and feast-days, and then he would be busy with services of charity within or without the friary. Yet in this daily round

of service he found the life of prayer and spiritual recollection which had drawn him to the Fathers of the Desert. The streets of Rome became his hermitage ; there he learned to live in constant communion with the unseen world ; the distractions and gossip of the city left him untouched. When after his death the lay-brethren, who at different times had been his companions on the quest, were asked to tell what they knew of his manner of life, they one and all bore witness chiefly to this, that he never spoke an idle or unseemly word. Thus Fra Domenico averred that Fra Felice " was sparing of his words, but what he said was good." Fra Francesco swore that " he never heard Fra Felice speak other than of good things." Fra Ruffino, that " never an idle word fell from his lips : his conversation was that of an angel rather than of a man, because his words were always well considered." Fra Marco was slightly critical : " Fra Felice," he said, " had a rustic simplicity and was without ceremony ; but his words were sweet and gentle, and everybody loved him."⁴ A wonderful testimony when you consider that for thirty-nine years Felice was doing a daily round of Rome and was the willing friend of all who had need of his services. In trouble or sickness all Rome came to think itself at liberty to call for him : cardinals and working-folk, the aged and the children—it was Fra Felice to whom they looked for kindly comfort or shrewd advice, and at length even for miracles. Perhaps it was in part his gay humour and indomitable cheerfulness and rugged good sense which wrought the miracles, and his way of never taking " nay " for " aye " when he meant to do others a service in spite of themselves. " O lazybones !" he cried out on entering the bed chamber of a man given up for dead by the doctors ; " O lazybones ! up and get out into the fresh air. It is exercise and fresh air you need, whatever the doctors say." The man got up—and lived.

Youth and children loved him, and he loved them. They would gather around him in the street and listen whilst he talked to them of Christ and His Blessed Mother. But it was by song that he mostly instructed them. He improvised verses which he taught them to sing ; and Fra Felice's songs became in some sort a fashion of the day. But Felice was a

⁴ cf. *Informatio de vita, morte et miraculis*, in Acta SS., loc. cit., p. 206, seq.

merry teacher and would take the fun and chaff of the students of the Jesuit college, whom he taught to sing his hymns, with a gaiety equal to their own.

Another there was in Rome, gay with the gaiety of holiness, and that was Padre Filippo, the founder of the Roman Oratory—known in the English tongue as Saint Philip Neri. He and Felice were kindred spirits. Meeting in the streets they would make merry and play the fool, whilst each felt he loved God the more for the presence of his friend. Rome laughed with both of them whilst to each she gave her profound reverence because of the wisdom she learned from each. For Fra Felice, like Padre Filippo, was spiritual adviser to many in their perplexities and troubles of soul; even also in more public affairs. It was to him that San Filippo went for counsel when San Filippo himself was consulted by San Carlo Borromeo concerning the constitutions of his new society of Oblate Priests. Felice dealt with everyone who sought him “with rustic simplicity and without ceremony,” as Fra Marco would say; he was no respecter of persons. To the powerful Cardinal Montalto—he who was to be Sixtus V, but had once been a Franciscan friar—Felice said on the eve of the Papal election: “when you are Pope, act as a Pope for God’s glory and the good of the Church; else it were better you had remained a simple friar.” To the Cardinal of Santa Severina he once administered a well-merited rebuke; and few there were who dared rebuke that imperious prelate. “My lord cardinal,” said Felice, “you have been appointed protector of the Order to protect it, not to meddle in matters that belong to the office of the superiors.”

One time when the city was stricken with plague and famine, Felice became questor for the poor of Rome and not merely for the friary. At first his superiors hesitated to give the desired permission. Felice answered their thought with a bold humility: “Think you, my fathers, that the friars will starve because the poor are fed? Believe me if the poor are fed, the friars will not go hungry”: and the superiors accepted the rebuke. So for a year Fra Felice fed many of the poor of Rome with the food he gained for them by his daily quest.

At last, when he was nearing his eightieth year, the end of

his labours came to him. Only with difficulty could he be prevailed upon to take to his bed : he would still be up and doing, even if only to comfort some other sick friar. When at length he could stand no longer, he exclaimed : “ The ass can go no more ; so he has fallen down.” True to himself to the end, he improvised a hymn as he lay on his death-bed, a simple verse which he sang repeatedly with great content:

“ Jesu, Jesu, O my love,
 Why tarry? Come, take my heart ;
 And neither now nor ever again
 Give back my heart to me.”

And so he passed away.

Fra Felice, as we have said, became a Capuchin in the dark days when the congregation was suffering for Ochino's apostasy ; he lived to see the Reform a flourishing congregation no longer confined to Italy but embarking upon its great adventure beyond the Alps. Within the thirty-nine years of his own apostolate in the streets of Rome he had seen the city transformed once again into a nursery of saints ; a saint had again occupied St. Peter's chair ;⁵ another was in the college of cardinals ;⁶ yet another who had been once a Capuchin novice nursed the sick in the hospitals of Rome.⁷ Then there were Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus and his second successor, Francis Borgia, and the beloved San Filippo ; many others too, who were not formally canonised but whose holiness was evident to men, saintly followers of the saints. The Rome which hailed Felice a saint was a different Rome from that which Matteo da Bascio had looked upon in the Jubilee year of 1525. But the transformation had not been accomplished without suffering. It had been ushered in by the horror of the sack of Rome ; it had proceeded under fear of the devastating Protestant revolt, the inrush of which had indeed been checked in Italy at a great price, but which was even still waging a bitter warfare in every country north of the Alps. Then there had been the fierce pontificate of Paul IV when the terror encompassed not only the heretics but

⁵ St. Pius V.

⁶ Saint Charles Borromeo,

⁷ Saint Camillus de Lellis.

even the orthodox Catholics whose way of thinking on all matters was not acceptable to that dour Pontiff. Rome had suffered, but so had all who had shared in the work of purification ; some not of their own will, others voluntarily as the price which must be paid for an errant world's redemption. With all his gaiety Fra Felice had suffered too. He might make light of his bleeding feet as he trudged along the frost-bitten streets, or of his bodily weariness which he would never confess. To himself he was one of the sinners upon whom God's judgment had fallen for his own good ; as he said, he dared not pamper himself. Luxury and the pampering of self had brought the Christian world to the pass it was in. In his broad charity Felice felt that he was somehow guilty of this universal sin, and in his own person he must repair the evil as far as he himself might. That was the secret of his self-crucifixion—a secret which only great lovers, San Filippo for instance, fully understood ; yet in a measure it was also the secret of those early Capuchins from whom Fra Felice had learned his life lesson. In their hard and austere life they believed themselves called not merely to the saving of their own souls ; with Christ they were bearing the iniquity of the world and atoning for its sin, the sin they made their own in their charity towards their fellow men. That was the primary purpose of their life, as it was of the Gospel which they aspired to fulfil. So had St. Francis lived and suffered in his love for his crucified Lord.

The root-principle of the life of these Capuchins was, therefore, the charity of Christ the Redeemer ; and to exhibit that charity in their self-crucifixion and in doing the works of mercy set forth in the Gospel, was their vocation.

In Fra Felice this vocation was manifested in its purest simplicity so that all could see and understand ; and as it was embodied in him it became as it were the sign-manual of the Capuchin in the eyes of the Roman people. To this day it is by Fra Felice and not by Ochino, or even by the most saintly of their popular preachers, that the Capuchin is judged as true metal by the Romans.

So it came about that a new glamour was thrown over the Capuchin congregation in the course of Felice's thirty-nine years of tramping the streets of Rome, a glamour different from that thrown by the glory of Ochino in the day of his

popularity, and more true to the inherent spirit of the Reform : it had much to do with the favour with which the Capuchins were now regarded at the Papal Court.

(ii)

Fra Felice had lived through that crucial period in any active society when the first enthusiasm and novelty of the vocation being spent, the society must settle down in the world in which it is to live and find its permanent place in the larger society of men. It is the period which determines the social value of the ideals or principles upon which the society is founded, and in the determination proves whether the motive principle of its foundation is of more than ephemeral utility. For no society can long endure which does not play its part in the wider world and contribute something of value to the common life of man. Nor again can it long endure unless it is capable of standing the test of the unheroic votaries of its ideals as well as of the heroic. Its vitality demands the conservation of its ideals and principles ; yet no less does it demand a freedom of adaptation to circumstance. By the time of Fra Felice's death the Capuchin congregation was no longer a company of a few hundred ; it numbered nearly six thousand friars divided into twenty Italian provinces⁸ apart from the inchoate provinces in France and Spain, Switzerland and the Low Countries. That in itself necessitated some departure from the earliest forms. The small hermitages of the first years would no longer house the brethren ; they must needs enlarge their friaries. Nor with such a number could the first rigour "hardly human" be maintained. To Mattia da Salo⁹ the friend and biographer of Fra Felice, it seemed that the joyous lay-brother was sent by God to teach the second generation of Capuchins how to serve God in their somewhat changed

⁸ The Italian provinces were those of Abruzzi, Basilicata, Bologna, Brescia, Calabria, Corsica, Cosentina, Genoa, Marches, Messina, Milan, Naples, Palermo, Apulia, Rhegio, Rome, S. Angelo, Umbria, Syracuse, Tuscany and Venice. cf. *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, vol. xxi, pp. 337-342 ; *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, *passim* At the General Chapter of 1587 the number of friars was estimated at 5953, *vide Anal. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 107.

⁹ cf. *infra*, p. 203.

conditions. "For now," he writes, "since the congregation could not continue in the rigour of such great hardship (as was in the beginning) it became necessary to build places and to have a regulated life like other Orders. It had now taken a form which, conjoined with the true and pure observance of the Rule, could be for the service of God and the edification of our neighbour and could give opportunity to all who wished to do penance."¹⁰ The friary, or *convento*, had in fact displaced the primitive hermitage built of loam and wattles, and a more organised discipline had succeeded to the free fervour of the original small communities.

The Capuchins had been happy in such an organiser as Bernardino d'Asti, whose administrative ability both as Vicar General and as Procurator had carried the congregation successfully through the first critical period of its development. With his eye always upon the essentials he had transformed the loosely organised communities under the personal rule of Lodovico da Fossombrone, into a compact company with an effective constitutional government, whilst at the same time his sagacious ruling had converted the first enthusiasms into intelligent principles. There was, for instance, his ruling as to the wearing of the cloak—a petty detail it might seem, yet at the moment a test case between an unintelligent and a possibly fanatical enthusiasm on the one side and vital principle on the other. Was it lawful to wear the cloak, seeing that no mention of it is made in the Rule which forbids the wearing of more than two tunics? Some contention it would seem had arisen over the question; the more rigid interpreters regarding the cloak as a forbidden luxury. Bernardino decided, in a carefully written answer, that the use of the cloak had been sanctioned by the practice of St. Francis himself and his first followers, and therefore was not opposed to the *mind* of St. Francis; but that, according to the practice of St. Francis, it might be used only by those who needed it against the cold. A simple answer, yet containing a true canon of interpretation for matters of wider import than the use of the cloak.¹¹ So in all his rulings one finds a tense enthusiasm tempered by saga-

¹⁰ *Acta SS.*, loc. cit., p. 210.

¹¹ See the letter of Bernardino d'Asti in Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1550, I.

cious common sense ; an idealism held fast to practical judgment.

It was upon this foundation of a fervid enthusiasm tempered by common sense, shared with Bernardino d'Asti by most of the leaders of the Capuchins, that the congregation avoided the two pitfalls which might have brought it to disaster : an unbalanced enthusiasm such as had at an earlier period brought the zealots for primitive Franciscan observance into disrepute ; and that "carnal prudence" which the zealots denounced, whereby in times past the primitive idealism of the Order had been sacrificed for the sake of what seemed to many a wider social utility.

In the early years of the Capuchin Reform, neither of these dangers was much in evidence. Ochino's blaze into fame had indeed contained an element of danger to the unworldly simplicity of the Reform, but the danger from Ochino had passed away in sorrow. Some few years later, as we have seen, Eusebio d'Ancona had had to rebuke certain of the younger preachers who, ambitious to make a name for themselves as popular preachers, had sought a cheap advertisement by cultivating a flowery eloquence. There had been one or two incidents of friars who succumbed to the temptation of allowing a friary to be built which was not in accordance with the strict poverty of the Order ; but these unfaithful ones had been so cursed by God that they were regarded as an example of unfaithfulness.¹² On the whole the friars had avoided remarkably the danger of their popularity.

Even more remarkable was the sanity of their enthusiasm for the primitive observance, considering that mentally and historically they were the inheritors of the Spiritual tradition in the Franciscan Order—that tradition whose sway had been marked by many a fanatical outburst as unintelligent and unsocial as it was sincere and fervid. We have seen how the General Chapter of 1536, under the guidance of Bernardino d'Asti, had turned down the proposition of Lodovico da Fossombrone that the Capuchins should live a purely contemplative life like that of the Camaldolese, and

¹² See the story related by Boverius of the friar who built a friary "between Lodi and Piacenza," which exceeded the limits of poverty; and who died in despair without receiving the sacraments (*Annales, anno 1565*).

put aside preaching and active service for others. Lodovico perhaps had in mind the example of his fellow townsman, the well-known "Spiritual" leader, Angelo da Clareno. Yet it was to the testimony of the three companions of St. Francis, enshrined in the *Legenda Antiqua*, and to the "Spiritual" literature generally, that the Capuchins constantly appealed for their own justification.¹³ What really saved them from the fanaticism and fate which overtook some former "Spiritual" communities, was their recognition of the social duties implied in the Franciscan vocation and their conviction that Franciscan poverty was of value only as it exhibited the charity of Christ the Redeemer both towards God and man. That was the bedrock of their sanity—their recognition that "love is the fulfilment of the law." It was not until a later period that somewhat of the fanatical "Spiritual" temper tinged the attitude of certain Capuchins in their controversy with the Observant apologists in the seventeenth century. Then on both sides temper ran warm; in the Observant writers there was a recrudescence of the same temper with which the Friars of the Community of any earlier time had pursued the "Spirituals"; on the Capuchin side the writers showed that argumentative fervour divorced from religious charity which had led the combative "Spirituals" of the fourteenth century into sectarian polemic. But again the social loyalties of the Capuchins as a body, their loyalties to the Church and to the service they owed the world, prevented the disedifying polemic running the course of an earlier day. No such temper had shown itself in the conduct of the Capuchin defence in the days when the congregation was struggling for existence; the Capuchins then and throughout the sixteenth century were too intent upon realities to lose their temper over theories.

The character of the congregation, at once mystical and practical, as it developed under Bernardino d'Asti and his successors during its formative period, is revealed in the new constitutions which gradually took shape. Based upon the original constitutions of Albacina which they substantially embodied, they assumed a form unique amongst the constitutions of Religious Orders. The constitutions as drawn up at Albacina were terse declarations of the laws which were to

¹³ See Appendix II : Vol. II.

govern the daily lives of the brethren in their common life: a series of statutes for the regulation of the community. At the General Chapter of 1535, not only were additional statutes added, but the very form was changed.¹⁴ The constitutions were divided into twelve chapters according to the number of chapters in the Franciscan Rule and the statutes grouped so as to form in some sort a practical commentary on the Rule. So far it was only a matter of arrangement and the addition of new statutes. But a radical change was made in the form in which the statutes were presented, a change indicative of the mental atmosphere in which the statutes were framed. The constitutions now are no longer a series of statutes; they are even more markedly an *apologia* for the Capuchin life, declaring the spirit in which the congregation is to be formed: and it is in this form that they were further developed in the General Chapters of 1552 and 1575. As they were thus shaped, the Capuchin constitutions would be the despair of the merely legal mind, for they appeal to a law beyond the positive, to the law of the spirit intent upon a more perfect fulfilment of the chosen life than any positive law can enshrine. They declare the positive law, yet lead up to it by a profession of faith which at times makes the ordinance when it is arrived at, fall flat as a mere afterthought. For instance, take this beginning: "Conscious as we are that the Evangelical teaching, wholly pure and heavenly, and utterly perfect, and brought down to us from heaven by the most sweet Son of God, and preached and taught by Him both in deeds and words, . . . alone teaches and shows the direct way of coming to God; and that all men are therefore obliged to observe it, especially Christians who have so promised in holy baptism, and yet more we Friars Minor, since St. Francis in the beginning and at the end of his Rule has made express mention of the observance of the sacred Gospel; his Rule too being naught other than the marrow of the Gospel; and as in his Testament he says that it was revealed to him that we should live after the manner of the Gospel: therefore in order that the friars shall have always before the eyes of their mind the teaching and life of our Saviour Jesus Christ and after the example of the virgin

¹⁴ See text of the constitutions of 1535 (recently discovered) in *Liber Memorialis Ord FF. Min. Capp.* (Romæ, 1928), 356 seq.

Cecilia carry the sacred Gospel at all times in their heart, it is ordained that every morning except Friday in every house a lesson of the sacred Gospel be read at table.”¹⁵

Or again, as concerning poverty : “ Since most high poverty was the beloved spouse of Christ the Son of God and of our father St. Francis, His humble servant, the friars must consider that it cannot be violated without grievously displeasing God ; and he who offends against her, verily he touches the apple of his eye. The seraphic Father was accustomed to say that the true Friar Minor must esteem money as no better than dust and even fly from it and dread it as a venomous serpent. How often our loving and zealous Father, foreseeing in spirit that many forsaking this pearl of the Gospel would fall so low as to receive legacies, wills and superfluous alms, wept over their damnation saying that that friar was nigh to perdition who made more account of money than of filth ; and experience can show that no sooner does a friar cast from him holy poverty than he falls into all other enormous and abominable vices ; wherefore the friars shall strive, after the example of Christ and His beloved Mother, to be poor in all earthly things that they may be rich in divine grace and holy virtue and in heavenly riches. Above all, let them beware when they visit any sick person lest they induce him directly or indirectly, to leave us any temporal thing ; and even should the sick person desire so to do, they must resist him all they can, remembering that they cannot possess at the same time riches and poverty.”¹⁶

The character of the new constitutions, here noted, marks the return of the Capuchin Reform to the freedom of spirit of the first Franciscan days ; it was so that St. Francis would lead his brethren by the spirit rather than by the law.

One ordinance was of fundamental import as linking up the Capuchins with the long line of friars who through the centuries had striven to retrieve the spirit of the primitive Franciscan days : the ordinance which decreed the observance of the Testament of St. Francis. It runs :

“ And to the end that as true and legitimate sons of Jesus Christ our Father and Lord, born again to Him in St

¹⁵ cf. *Le Prime Costituzioni*, op. cit., p. 39. On Fridays, according to another ordinance, the Rule of St. Francis was to be read instead of the Gospel.

¹⁶ *Le Prime Costituzioni*, pp. 58-59.

Francis, we may be participators in His inheritance ; it is ordained that all observe the Testament of this most blessed Father which he wrote for us when, nigh unto his holy death and adorned with the sacred stigmata, full of fervour and the Holy Ghost, he most ardently desired our salvation. This Testament we accept as a spiritual gloss and exposition of our Rule since it was written by this our Father to the end that we might the better and in a more Catholic spirit observe the Rule we have vowed. And since we are sons of the seraphic Father only in so far as we imitate his life and doctrine . . . therefore we exhort the friars that they each one strive to imitate this our good Father who was given us to be our rule, model and example ; and indeed our Lord Jesus Christ in him : and not only to imitate him in the Rule and Testament, but also in all his fervent words and heavenly deeds : to which end let them read frequently his life and the lives of his holy companions.”¹⁷ In this passage we hear the cry of the “Spiritual” Friars through all the years that separated the Capuchin Reform from the days of Brother Elias ; but it is that cry divested of all the rancour and defiance that had been imported into it by the bitter controversies of the fourteenth century. And in truth it would seem that those who built up the new constitutions had foreseen the possibility of a renewal of the old bitter controversy and had of deliberate purpose restated the “Spiritual” tradition in its purest form and with the “sweet reasonableness” of a pure charity.

But whilst on the one hand the new constitutions assert the essentially mystical character and outlook of the Franciscan vocation, they also in their growth reveal an alertness to the actualities of life without which the mystical temperament becomes ineffective and unsocial. The statutes or ordinances are in fact largely a practical commentary upon the abuses which had crept into the religious orders—and particularly into the Franciscan Order—and had conduced to their relaxation in the period before the Capuchin Reform ; in part they decree a return to older laws or cus-

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 40-41. For those who are not acquainted with Franciscan history, it may be noted that the observance of the Testament was one of the points of contention between the Zelanti or “Spirituals” and the “friars of the community.”

toms in the Franciscan Order ; in part they reproduce decrees of the Council of Trent ; and in part they are ordinances indicative of the new spirit and particular purpose of the new Reform as declared in the original constitutions of Albacina. In two matters did the Council of Trent cause a change in the original constitution of the Reform. No longer might lay-brothers be appointed superiors ;¹⁸ and the Capuchins like other religious must establish regular study houses for the theological training of their students.

One other provision too was made, not contemplated in the primitive constitutions—that for the sending of friars to convert the infidels both in the new worlds “ recently discovered by the Spaniards and Portuguese,” and in that field of missionary enterprise long cultivated by the Franciscans, the lands of the Mahommedans.

Yet wise and practical as the positive statutes are, the genius of the Capuchin constitutions lies in their declarations of faith and their lofty exhortations to the life of the Spirit ; it is in these that the law of the congregation is really enshrined. It is a law only to be apprehended—as any may perceive who reads them—by a vivid faith and obeyed by a free and sincere love of the mystic ideal of life they tell of. And in that the Capuchin congregation stands apart with those societies whose life is a freedom of spirit and whose compelling law is loyalty to the ideal they worship. With such societies the outer garment counts but little for strength and security ; it is the spirit that matters.

(iii)

So during the lifetime of Fra Felice certain changes had begun in the outer life of the Capuchin congregation ; as we have said, the *convento* had mostly displaced the hermitage ; a more ordered regime had succeeded to the loosely-bound community life ; stone had taken the place of wattle and loam. In other words, the primitive association had definitely become an organised society in fact as well as in name.

Mattia da Salo, himself of the second generation of Capuchins but attached by personal loyalties to many of the

¹⁸ By decree of Pius V they were, however, allowed to retain their votes in the local Chapters for the election of delegates to the Provincial Chapters.

heroic figures of the earlier days, speaks in his biography of Fra Felice of "a diminution of fervour" which had followed upon "the first rigours," but which had been restored in "the regulated life" of which Fra Felice was a shining example.¹⁹ The new constitutions had done their work. They had "regulated" the congregation without destroying its spirit—no small achievement when you have to deal with a body of men whose bond is the Spirit. Thus it was with an accession of power and of conscious assurance of itself that the congregation emerged from the perilous period of its first social development.

A new type—and yet the same type—of friar now comes on the scene; one who has been educated in his social responsibilities as a member of a wide-flung society and of a society that has found its place in the yet wider society of the Catholic Church; and still is true in all essential qualities to the ideals and aspirations which gave the Capuchin Reform its birth.

Such a one was Girolamo da Pistoia, the first *Praelector* or Master of the Capuchin theological school established in Rome in 1567.²⁰ Girolamo had married in his youth, but before he could take his bride to the home he had prepared for her, she fell sick and died. In his grief he threw up all secular ambition and became a friar amongst the Observants. With these he led a life of edifying austerity and study. But, thirsting for deeper and more practical knowledge, his mind found no satisfaction in the ordinary studies of the schools, and he was led to the study of St. Bonaventura whose works had long ceased to be read in the schools. From St. Bonaventura he had gained more than knowledge; he had learned that training of the will in knowledge which was the purpose of platonic philosophy and of that theological tradition in Christendom of which St. Bonaventura is a type. With this training Girolamo grew dissatisfied with himself and the easy observance around him.

Thus he had been drawn to the Capuchin Reform. His student habit remained with him; so that even when abroad

¹⁹ *Acta SS.*, loc. cit., p. 210.

²⁰ cf. Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1570, XXI-XXVII; *Flores Seraphici*, I, p. 55, seq.; Bernardus a Bononia: *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Ord. Cap.* (Venetiis, 1747), p. 121.

cf. Sisto da Pisa, *Storia dei Cappuccini Toscani* (Firenze, 1906), I, p. 104, seq.

preaching, he would spend half the night between prayer and study. Yet would he at times willingly put aside his studies to serve the sick in the hospitals or fulfil other calls of charity. He was particularly pitiful towards unfortunate women whose circumstances in life made temptation easy. At Florence one Lent, he induced a rich lady to found a home for homeless girls ; and on no subject did he preach with such pathetic persuasiveness as on the temptations of Magdalen.²¹ As a theologian he was held in repute. He took part in the proceedings of the Council of Trent on its reassembling under Pius IV, and later was appointed personal theologian to Pius V. By this Pontiff he was frequently consulted on matters affecting the welfare of the Church, and such was the Pope's regard for him that Girolamo would have found himself clothed with the cardinal's purple but that at the first news he threw himself at the Pope's feet and begged to be allowed to remain a simple friar. Pius V, himself a saint, understood, yet would not allow the earnest petition unless Girolamo would nominate a prelate worthy to fill the place he himself refused ; and Girolamo named Giulio Santorio, archbishop of Santa Severina. When in 1567 he was appointed *Praelector* of the newly established *studium generale*, Girolamo gave to the Capuchin school a distinct character by introducing into it the method and teaching of St. Bonaventura; and so thorough was he, that he planned a new edition of St. Bonaventura's works which was later completed during the pontificate of Sixtus V.²² His end was a worthy crowning of his life. At the head of a company of thirty Capuchins he was sent by Pius V to minister to the spiritual needs of the Papal fleet in the crusade against the Turks in 1570. He and two of his companions died in serving the plague-stricken crews as they awaited the mustering of the Christian forces off the island of Crete. Girolamo was buried in a church on the island ; but when the war was over Cardinal Giulio Santorio had his body brought back to Italy and laid to rest in the graveyard of the friars at Caserta.²³

²¹ See the sermon on the conversion of Mary Magdalen in the form of a dialogue between Martha and "her young sister" in *Della Prediche dell' humil' servo di Christo, F. Girolamo da Pistoja* (Bologna, 1567).

²² cf. *infra*, Vol. II, ch. xiv.

²³ cf. *Regestum, Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, 354.

An incident which happened on the road to Venice, where Girolamo was to join the Venetian fleet, reveals his simple faith. He and a companion, Fra Anselmo da Pietramolara, were making the journey on foot, and one evening found themselves in a woodland tract with no shelter in sight for the night ; and that day they had journeyed far and were both hungry and weary. Fra Anselmo, soldier though he had once been, grew discouraged at the prospect of a night in the open with a gnawing emptiness for company. Thereupon Girolamo bade him be of good cheer, and kneeling, prayed to the Holy Family of Nazareth to grant them a hospitable shelter. With words of trust in God's Providence he led his companion forward until after a little while they descried a cottage in a wood. Thither they went and were hospitably admitted and found themselves the guests of an old man and his wife and child. The story relates that when the two friars awoke " in the morning greatly refreshed " they found themselves lying in a meadow by the roadside. To his astonished companion Girolamo remarked : " We did not vainly seek a shelter, Anselmo : See how St. Joseph with the Virgin Mother and the Divine Child have entertained us." To which story various interpretations might be given ; but it helps us to understand the soul of Girolamo da Pistoia.

Of a different cast of character to Girolamo was his companion on the road to Venice, Anselmo da Pietramolara :²⁴ yet he too deserves mention as one of a class frequently to be found in Capuchin history. A Southern Italian, passionate and impetuous but single-minded and devoted to whatever task he had in hand, Anselmo was a soldier by temperament. He had in fact been a soldier before he became a Capuchin, and had taken his soldiering with the careless intensity of a soldier of fortune, recking little of what might befall beyond the day. As a religious he seems to have been much of the same disposition : whether in long watchings of prayer or hard penitential discipline or the active duties of the apostolic ministry : always intense, always ready. After Girolamo's death, he returned to Rome ; and the next year was appointed by the Pope superior of the Capuchins who were to serve as chaplains to the Papal contingent of the allied fleet in the last crusade against the Turks. No captain in that

²⁴ Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1584 ; d'Arenberg, op. cit., III, p. 86.

well-manned fleet took his duties more seriously than Anselmo. It was his part to see that the men who were to fight for the cross should fight as soldiers of the cross ; and to this end he and his fellow Capuchins preached daily as that vast armada of two hundred ships of the line went in search of the Turkish fleet: they lived amongst the men as pastors with their flock. When at length the hostile fleets joined issue at Lepanto, Anselmo and his Capuchins were in the midst of the fray, encouraging their men and attending to the wounded. Three Capuchins were killed in the battle: Anselmo himself was wounded and his habit was in shreds from the arrows which pierced it ; yet till the victory was won he remained at his post, inspiring his fighting flock with his own courage and assurance of victory. " The Capuchins bore themselves splendidly," wrote the Lieutenant-Commander, Marc' Antonio Colonna, in his report to the Pope ; and to the Vicar General of the Order he wrote begging that Anselmo might be allowed to accompany the fleet on its next offensive in the following year. But when that futile adventure was over, Anselmo went back to his friary where he gave himself with a simple devotion to prayer and penance, till some few years later, in 1578,²⁵ he was sent as Commissary to govern the friars in France, where he again distinguished himself by his service of the sick at a time when Paris was stricken with an epidemic of fever. At last, worn out with labours and austerities, he returned to Rome to make his report concerning the French provinces. Then seeking rest, he journeyed as far as Camerino in the Marches of Ancona and there, like an over-tired child, laid himself down, exclaiming : " This is my rest." In three days he was dead.

(iv)

One there was amongst those chaplains to the Papal fleet who five years later became a central figure in that drama of death and suffering, the great plague, which swept over Northern Italy, in the years 1576 and 1577. Fra Paolo da

²⁵ *Anal. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 105.

Salo²⁶ was one of two brothers—*par nobile fratrum*—whose names are remembered to-day in the history of their country: a third brother too, was a man of no mean parts. All three were Capuchins. But whereas Fra Giovanni, the youngest, is known only as an editor of books,²⁷ Paolo, and his yet more famous brother Mattia—*i due Bellintani*—were men of action as well as of books. Of Fra Mattia we shall have much to say further on in this story: his part was played on a wider stage.

Fra Paolo was the son of an ancient and wealthy family who had left their home in Gazzano²⁸ to settle in Salo while Fra Paolo was but a child. Of his early years as a Capuchin we know nothing, and he might have remained one of those hidden heroes of ordinary life, had not the plague found him in the friary of Lodi when the Podestà of Crema came telling how the dead lay thick in Venice and there was none to bury them. With pleading words Paolo wrote to the Visitor General of the friars in Milan, begging “for the love of Christ, Who gave His life for mine,” to be allowed to offer his services to stricken Venice. But meanwhile the plague had reached Milan and had struck that city and its territories with sudden and unexampled violence. Bravely at the first outburst had the saintly archbishop, Carlo Borromeo, taken upon himself the sorrow of his people. When others fled, he refused to flee. Daily the mortality increased: the civic authorities were powerless to arrest it; and the terror of the citizens was worse than death. San Carlo—for even now men in their hearts had canonised him—moved fearlessly amongst the stricken population, comforting the sick, ministering the sacraments and organising relief: yet did the terror get worse and with the terror the demoralisation of the city.²⁹ An appeal to the superiors of the religious orders for chaplains to serve the hospitals at first brought

²⁶ cf. Frederico Odorici: *I Due Bellintani da Salo* (Milano, 1857); P. Valdimiro da Bergamo: *I Conventi ed I Cappuccini Bresciani* (Milano, 1891), p. 99, *seq.*; *ibid.*, p. 535, *seq.* Concerning the family of the Bellintani, cf. Valdimiro da Bergamo, *ibid.*, p. 213.

F. Paolo Bellintano da Salo in *Eco di S. Francisco* (Sorrento). Fase XXII, 30 Nov. 1877.

²⁷ cf. Valdimiro da Bergamo, *ibid.*, p. 178-179. Giovanni edited four books of Fra Mattia.

²⁸ The house where they resided is still known as *Casa Bellintane*.

²⁹ It is said that 100,000 died of the plague in the city and its territories.

little comfort to San Carlo ; only Fra Giacomo da Milano, Visitor of the Capuchins,³⁰ promised to call for volunteers to minister to the sick.³¹ It was then that he received Fra Paolo's letter and readily gave him permission to serve the sick ; but at Milan, not in Venice. Paola replied that it mattered not to him in what place he might serve, so that he might serve. Without delay he set forth for Milan. His journey was broken by a bout of fever ; and when the fever left him he was still too weak to walk. Anxious to serve, he wrote to San Carlo and asked that a vehicle might be sent to bring him to the city. Meanwhile twenty Capuchins had been accepted for service ; some were placed in the hospital of San Dionigi in the city, others in the hospitals of Vittoria and Monza in Milanese territory. But it was to the lazaretto outside the walls of Milan, where the sick were herded in thousands, that Fra Paolo was personally conducted by San Carlo. Four friars had already been placed there, but three of them were dead ; and their places were filled with other friars awaiting the call to service. It was a ghastly service ; in the lazaretto as in the city, vice was let loose in its most hideous forms. The hired nurses neglected and robbed the sick and dying ; unfortunate women plied their trade even there ; the sick were often carted to the common grave before they were dead ; when night fell the lazaretto was made hideous with ribald dancing and obscene revelry as if in defiance of death. There was no physician in attendance ; the only medical service was that of the barbers—the unskilled apothecaries of the day. Even food was lacking owing to the dishonesty of the tradesmen who gave short measure, and of the attendants who purloined the food for their own profit.³² Such was the condition of the lazaretto

³⁰ See Fra Giacomo's letter to the Bishop of Brescia, giving an account of the early days of the plague, in *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, vol. xxvi, p. 249, seq.

³¹ cf. Paolo da Salo : *Dialogo della Peste*, cap. xi : " Solo il molto reverendo Commissario di Provincia chiamato il P. F. Giacomo Calderino da Milano famigliarissimo del signor Carlo Borromeo disse che . . . se avisse trovato alcuno atto e volenteroso di andari a questa santa opera, gli avrebbi dato ogni licenza. Gli altri superiorificero ancora loro la sua scusa, e cosi ognuno se ne ritorno al suo convento." Later other Orders sent helpers (*Dialogo*, cap. xv), amongst them a contingent of San Filippo's priests from the Roman Oratory.

³² W. H. Ainsworth's description in *Old St. Paul's* of the demoralised state of London during the plague of London might almost have been taken from the contemporary accounts of the plague in Milan in 1576. cf. *Dialogo della Peste*, op. cit., cap. v, et passim.

when Paolo was appointed governor with full powers, as the city magistrates wordily decreed : “ to cause our ordinances to be observed and to punish malefactors and examine and interrogate even with torture those suspect of crime ”—in truth to do what the city fathers found themselves unable to do, to bring order into disorder, to drive out the ghouls who fattened on the misery of the stricken and cleanse the lazaretto from its rampant vice.

Paolo's first step was to separate those detained on suspicion of being infected from the really sick, with whom they had hitherto been herded. Next he organised regular supplies, and eliminated the dishonest trader ; and established a more efficient medical service in place of the “ barbers.” His hardest work was with the ghouls and conscienceless nurses and with the unhappy women whom the dread disease itself could not keep from the lazaretto. Yet within a few weeks, with merely a handful of police to comb out the unhappy colony, he freed the place of these vampires, though not until his whipping-posts had become the terror of those who plundered the sick and the dead. There was an iron will and relentless judgment behind the tenderness of Fra Paolo. Before long the mortality in the lazaretto and in the city rapidly diminished ; and the moral tone of the lazaretto was transformed. The ribald revelries gave place to religious services ; the obscene song to the religious chant ; the hideousness of hell to the resigned peace or hope of a Christian sufferer.

The plague ran its course in Milan for one long year. The carnage was terrible especially in the earlier months ; yet at the end Milan congratulated itself that its fate was not so bad as in many other cities where more than half the population had died ; and for that the thanks were due to the cool-headed judgment and untiring energy of two men, San Carlo Borromeo and Fra Paolo da Salo.

Milan breathed again calmly in August 1577 ; it was free of the plague. But from Brescia, Paolo's “ fatherland,” came the wail of a city devastated and suffering still. Thither Fra Paolo with a band of Capuchins now hastened, sped by the goodwill of the Milanese in their sympathy with their still stricken neighbours. “ With God's help,” wrote the magistrates of Milan, “ our own need is practically over whilst

Brescia, as we hear to our infinite sorrow, is in a bad way ; wherefore we are willing to let them go." Yet the Milanese would have the Bresciani know that Fra Paolo was no ordinary man ; to the good work he had done "solely for the love of our Lord" both for the bodies and souls of the people during his government of the lazaretto, they bore eloquent testimony.³³

At Brescia, Paolo took charge of the lazaretto whilst others of his brethren spread themselves over the city to attend the sick. Again, as at Milan, he brought order into the confusion he found. At his coming in August there were four thousand persons in the lazaretto ; by the end of September the number was reduced to seven hundred :³⁴ before November the plague was almost wiped out of the city. Then Paolo and his band of friars left the city to serve the sick in the outlying districts of the diocese ; till at the end of another four months all Brescian territory was free. The Capuchins having done their work now returned to their friaries—all except Fra Paolo who, undaunted by his two years fight with death, went to fight it again in plague-stricken Marseilles. And after that Fra Paolo is found no more in history. He was perhaps the Fra Paolo who was guardian of the friary at Treviglio in Lombardy in 1590. But wherever he finished his days, the remembrance of the first plague was with him a vivid memory ; and for the instruction of others, he left at his death a manuscript treatise in the form of a dialogue,³⁵ relating his experiences and the measures he adopted. Generously he gives the praise to San Carlo whom he evidently worshipped as the ideal bishop and pastor, as indeed did all Lombardy after that terrible visitation ; and he mentions as worthy of honour a number of highly placed citizens who at the risk of their lives served in the hospitals. But he could be caustic in his description of the stupidity of the official regulations, as in the instance he gives of his

³³ Letter of the "praeses et conservatores sanitatis mediolani," in P. Valdimiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 541-542.

³⁴ See the letter of Fra Giandomenico to San Carlo Borromeo, dated September 28. P. Valdimiro, *op. cit.*, p. 543. In Brescia according to the letter written by the bishop to the Pope, the mortality had reached 300 deaths a day, *ibid.*, p. 544.

³⁵ cf. Frederico Oderici : *I due Bellintani*, *op. cit.* ; P. Idelfonso da Como : *Il Dialogo della Peste di P. Paolo Bellintani in L'Italia Franciscana*, Ottobre-Dicembre, 1926, p. 324, *seq.*

first coming to Milan before he went there to serve the sick. He had come from Brescia, where the plague had already made its appearance. At the gate of Milan he was refused admission lest he should bring infection into the city ; but his friends, as many who wished, were allowed to visit him outside the gate ! In his dialogue Paolo pleaded for an immediate segregation of the infected at the very start ; for an effective disciplinary supervision and for organised supplies of food and medicine ; he dealt too, with the religious organisation, quoting the ordinances of San Carlo as a model of prudence and wisdom. To us to-day his recommendations seem elementary principles of common sense. But we to-day are benefitting by the uncommon sense of such men as Fra Paolo da Salo.

CHAPTER VII

THE CAPUCHINS CROSS THE ALPS

(i)

It was in 1574 that the Capuchins were formally allowed by the Pope to make settlements beyond the Alps. In truth the congregation had reached that stage in its existence when an expansion of its boundaries could hardly any longer be denied it. From the beginning of its existence it had manifested that instinct which in secular life makes for conquests peaceful or otherwise, an instinct which cannot be denied, if those who are moved by it would live. This instinct had shown itself when Lodovico da Fossombrone had brought the nascent Reform out of its seclusion in the Marches of Ancona and planted it in Rome, and again in its continued increase and rapid extension throughout the Italian provinces in spite of opposition and attempted suppressions.

Historians have attributed the survival and increase of the Capuchins to the unworldliness and austerity of their lives ; but that is not the full explanation. Unworldly and austere they were, as some thought, almost to the verge of an inhuman endurance. But they were alive with a spiritual life which was in touch with the fundamental needs of the human spirit of their time. In the utter simplicity of their religious appeal, they struck a chord which vibrated with sincerity and truth in a world conscious of the insincerities with which it had long been doped. The fundamental simplicity of the Capuchins in their quest for the spiritual life had been their strength, and it had brought them very near both to God and to the heart of their fellow men. The problem they had faced in their own life was in fact in its elemental issue the problem that lay in the religious restlessness, and even in the defiance of religion, which then stirred not one people but a world of peoples. In their activities covering the whole of the Italian peninsula during the past

fifty years, the Capuchins had become more and more conscious that they had a mission to men extending beyond the confines of their own religious observance of the Franciscan Rule ; their social kinship with the world had revealed itself more and more clearly and comprehensively ; and with this clearer consciousness the tide of development had set in which was to break down many boundaries, not least the geographical.

On several occasions the Capuchins had been petitioned to establish themselves outside Italy. The first petition had come to them in the days of their first organisation, and it came from certain of the clergy and people of Ireland, whose delegates appeared at a General Chapter and besought the capitular fathers to send friars to that country, or failing that, to give them a copy of the constitutions according to which certain religious houses might be reformed ; but the Chapter was unable to accede to either request.¹ About the same time two Observant Friars from the Netherlands came to Rome and joined the Capuchins with the intention of returning to their own country and introducing the Reform there. They did become Capuchins but were not allowed by the Pope to return and settle in the Netherlands. One of these was the theologian, Franciscus Titelmann.² Then in 1567 had come the petition of the Discalceati friars in Spain to be allowed to join the Capuchin congregation.³ More successful, as it eventually proved, was the request made to the Capuchin Vicar General at the Council of Trent in 1563 by the Cardinal of Lorraine that Capuchins should be sent to France.⁴ At the moment nothing came of the project, and ten years were to elapse before the matter was seriously taken in hand. In the meantime that happened which was to bring about the Cardinal's desire and to indite a new chapter in Capuchin history, in some manner in the fashion of its first beginning. And once again a young Observant friar was the hero of the part.⁵

¹ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo. I, p. 494.

² cf. *supra*

³ cf. *supra*.

⁴ Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1562. According to Boverius the Cardinal actually was accompanied on his return to France by two Capuchins ; but if so, they must have returned to Italy without making a settlement in France.

⁵ For the history of the beginnings of the Capuchin Reform in France, cf. *Chronologie historique des Capucins de la province de Paris*, by Père Philippe de Paris in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS. Fr. 25,044 ; *Eloges historiques*

In 1564 there lived in the friary of the Observants in Paris Frère Pierre Deschamps who was reading for the priesthood. He was of Amiens where his father was a merchant, and he had entered the Franciscan Order four years previously when he was but seventeen years of age. During the four years he had spent in the Paris friary he had read with avidity the chronicles of the Order in all that related to the first Franciscan days ; and as with many others, the longing had come to him to live more simply as St. Francis and his first companions had lived. It was the story of Matteo da Bascio repeated—the ardent idealist and the unsympathetic community and a stealthy flight as the only means of gaining freedom. Pierre, however, had not gone far on his way to Spain, whither he was probably drawn by the fame of the Alcantarine reform, when he was arrested by agents of the community and conveyed back to Paris and imprisoned as an apostate in the friary. But after awhile he managed to communicate with a secular friend in the city, and with his aid again escaped one day when the friars were at vespers in the choir. The friend hid him until the hue and cry of his escape had died down ; and this time Pierre was able to reach Spain unhindered. Then followed three years of wandering in Spain and Portugal in search of the life he aspired to. Finally he made his way to Rome, arriving there in May 1567, and presented himself before the Vicar

des Capucins illustres de la province de Paris, by Père Maurice d'Épernay, in same library, MS. Fr. 25,046-47 ; *Abrégé historique des Illustres Religieux Capucins de la Province de Paris*, by the same author, in same library, MS. Fr. 25048 ; *Abrégé des Annales des Capucins de la Province de Paris*, by P. Maurice d'Épernay, in same library, MS. Fr. 5859 ; *Annales des Capucins de Paris*, by Père Maurice d'Épernay, Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS. No. 2879.—The most authoritative of these sources is *Chronologie historique* by Philippe de Paris. Maurice d'Épernay, who compiled his works mainly from the *Chronologie* and other lost writings of Philippe de Paris, is not always accurate in his statements.

See the account of the origins of the French Provinces, given in *Les Capucins en Franche-Comté*, op. cit., p. 155, seq. cf. P. Rocco da Cesinale : *Storia delle Missioni dei Cappuccini* (Paris, 1867), vol. i, p. 113, seq.

The account given by Boverius is curiously inadequate and misleading ; the part played by Pierre Deschamps is hardly recognised. d'Aremberg, too, in his account of the French pioneer (*Flores Seraphici*, II, p. 402) does him less than justice. d'Aremberg, following Boverius, primly remarks : *Quapropter his minime insistendum censeo quae ab anno 1568, quo is ab Observantium ordine descivit usque ad annum 1573 in quo apud Cappuccinos Romae probationis annum instituit, ab eo gesta sunt, tanquam non legitime ab eo facta* ” (p. 403). Had he forgotten the history of the first Capuchins ? The whole history of Capuchin origins is the history of a legitimate and successful rebellion.

General of the Capuchins with the request that he might be received into their congregation and return to establish the Reform in France. The Capuchins sympathised with him, but pleaded that the edict of Paul III prevented them from founding houses outside Italy. They suggested to him to return to France and live the Capuchin life without formal profession until Divine Providence should make the way clear. Pierre acted on the advice. On his way back, he met with a hermit, and they agreed to live together in a strict observance of the Franciscan Rule, and to assume the Capuchin habit.⁶ The hermit was henceforth known as Frère Michel. They then came to Paris, and a merchant gave them a small house with an adjoining chapel in the village of Picpus outside the city. Here two priests joined them, Pierre Besson de Dreux who was a few years hence to be martyred for the faith, and Daniel de Chaumont, who for some years past had lived the life of a hermit near Argenteuil. No sooner, however, did the Paris Observants learn that Pierre Deschamps was at Picpus than they had him arrested and imprisoned as an apostate. But now Aymeric de Rochechouart, Bishop of Sisteron, and a prelate with influence at Court, took Pierre and his associates under his protection. Pierre was given up and restored to his small community, and Bishop Aymeric ordained him priest and consecrated the little chapel under the invocation of Saint Mary-of-the-Angels, the name dear to St. Francis. Other associates now joined the original four : not only did they take the Capuchin habit, they also styled themselves Capuchins. But life was not easy ; not only the Observant friars but other mendicant orders also in the neighbourhood, resented the intrusion of another mendicant community ; and especially of an upstart community which, properly speaking, had no legal existence either in the Church or in the State. On the other hand the people were much drawn to these " Capuchins " because of their simple piety and austere life ; and this did not soothe the irritated feelings of the other mendicant communities who became more

⁶ According to *Abrégé historique des Capucins illustres*, MS. cit., fol. 30, Pierre had received permission from the Capuchin Procurator to assume the habit ; Mattia da Salò in *Historia Cappuccina*, MS. cit., II, p. 137, on the contrary, declares that no such permission was granted.

clamorous against the new-comers the more the popular favour went out to them. It became evident to friends of these "Capuchins" that the new community must be regularised, and in 1572 Bishop Aymeric interested the king on their behalf and letters patent were issued declaring the royal will that the "Capuchins" of Picpus be maintained and conserved in all the rights and prerogatives of their Order and observance approved in Rome, with the same right to quest for alms as other mendicant Orders, and to celebrate mass and recite the Divine Office in their chapel; and the Observant friars and other mendicant religious were warned to take note of this declaration and to cease molesting the said "Capuchins."⁷

Still the fact remained that the Picpus "Capuchins" were not of the Order approved at Rome, whatever the royal letters might say.

Once again, therefore, Pierre Deschamps set out for Rome; but on this occasion he went armed with letters from the king and the Cardinal of Lorraine. He so far succeeded that the Vicar General of the congregation consented to send back with him two Italian Capuchins to investigate the situation. The Italian Capuchins were Fra Dionigi da Milano and Fra Remigio da Lodi; and it was taken as a good omen by the friends of Pierre that the two Italians bore names dear to the French nation.

Meanwhile, during Pierre's absence in Rome, the small community at Picpus gained favour in another high quarter. The queen-mother, Catherine de Medicis, was out driving one day when she came to the small chapel of the friars at Picpus. The simplicity and poverty of the place and of the friars attracted her. She had known and revered Capuchins in Italy, and she immediately determined to adopt the "Capuchins" of Picpus and to establish them in a house in the suburb Saint-Honoré.

The Italian friars on their arrival at Paris took up their abode with Pierre Deschamps at Picpus. They were received by the king and the queen-mother; and by none were they more cordially welcomed than by the Cardinal of

⁷ See letters of Charles IX of April 16 and August 20, 1572, in *Chronologie Historique*, MS. cit., fol. 4, *seq.* cf. l'Abbé J. Morey, *op. cit.*, p. 162, *seq.* and p. 170, *seq.*

Lorraine. But now a difficulty arose which for awhile brought negotiations to an end. The Picpus "Capuchins" enjoyed a small revenue from some land given them by Bishop Aymeric. The Italians declared that it was against the Rule of St. Francis, as they observed it, to hold any revenues however small; but Pierre Deschamps, strangely enough, refused to renounce the bishop's gift; and not until the Italians had left Picpus and accepted the hospitality of the Jesuits in Paris did Pierre give way. The incident is not without significance; to the Italians the freedom and simplicity of their life meant everything: Pierre Deschamps probably had been more attracted by the note of penitential austerity.

Eventually matters were arranged to the satisfaction of the Italian envoys, and once again, in the spring of 1573, Pierre Deschamps crossed the Alps, accompanied by Frère Michel and bearing letters from the king and the queen-mother, and from the Cardinal of Lorraine. The French Ambassador at the Roman Court was also instructed to negotiate with the Pope for the abrogation of the edict of Paul III. At the feast of Pentecost Frère Pierre arrived at Ancona, where the General Chapter of the Capuchins was being held. The Chapter decided with the Pope's approbation to send friars to France and to take over the Picpus community.⁸ Pierre Deschamps and Frère Michel were to go to Rome to undergo a year's probation in accordance with the constitutions of the Order; and meanwhile the Holy See would be petitioned formally to declare the Capuchins free to make settlements outside Italy. Partly perhaps owing to the death of the Vicar General, Vincenzo da Mont²-Ulmo, it was not until the summer of 1574 that Pierre Deschamps' vision was realised. On May 6 of that year Gregory XIII published a brief, formally abrogating the prohibitory edict of Paul III, and permitting the Capuchins "to go forth freely to all parts of the earth, and there found houses and provinces."⁹ Without further delay

⁸ The decision was communicated to the Cardinal of Lorraine in a letter received by him on July 17, 1573. He replied the following day, expressing his gratification at the news and asking that the friars should arrive in September. See the Cardinal's letter in *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 23.

⁹ cf. Brief of Gregory XIII, *Ex nostri pastoralis officii*, of May 6, 1574.

Boverius, *Annales, anno 1575*, III, where the date is incorrectly given as 1575.

a small band of Capuchins, ten in number, under the leadership of Fra Pacifico da San Gervasio, set forth for Paris.

That decision to cross the Alps was of tremendous vital importance in the history of the Capuchins ; within half a century it was to bring them into intimate association with the great world-struggle in which the modern world was born, in almost every country of Christendom, and to send them forth as missionaries into the wilds of North and South America, into Central Africa and to little known kingdoms of Western Asia. And with this far-flung freedom of territorial expansion and contact with many peoples was to come a broader mental and social outlook and the inevitable developments which result from it.

(ii)

Paris had once again called to Assisi ; but it was not to be in the university that these younger sons of St. Francis were to win their laurels, but in the larger school of a nation's life where the problems are immediate and actual, written in blood and the soul's pain. And in that school for nigh upon a century the Capuchins were to play no mean part.

Pacifico da San Gervasio, the superior of the expedition, was an experienced leader. He had been already Provincial of the province of Milan, Commissary General in Crete and Apulia. He was a man of practical sagacity but great simplicity, one who believed rather in the efficacy of prayer than of arguments when dealing with heretics and other rebellious folk.¹⁰

In the *Bullarium Ord. Cap.* (I, p. 35 and V, p. 2) the date is given as 1574. Both Boverius and the Bullarium, however, give the year of Gregory's pontificate as "anno quarto." But Gregory XIII was elected on May 13, 1572, and the date consequently should read "anno secundo." The date is correctly given in *Chronologie Historique* MS. cit., fol. 15.

The brief of Pope Gregory XIII notes the fact that the decree of Paul III, forbidding the Capuchins to take places beyond the Alps, was already held to be abrogated. Paul III had issued the prohibition on the supposition that the position of the Capuchins in their relation to the Observants would be discussed at the next General Chapter of the Observants. The subject, however, was not brought up at the Chapter. Nevertheless, as the brief remarks, the Capuchins had refrained from taking houses outside Italy out of reverence for the authority of the Holy See.

¹⁰ cf. Boverius, *Annales, anno 1575* ; *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 25 ; d'Aremberg, op. cit., I, p. 72 ; *I Cappuccini nelle Puglie*, op. cit., p. 75 ; Valdimiro da Ber-

At Lyons, where the friars rested for awhile, the magistrates and some of the leading citizens besought Pacifico to send back to them from Paris some friars to found a house in their city. At Orleans, Pacifico had a friendly encounter with a Calvinist and won him back to the Catholic Faith ; it was the opening of the great missionary effort the Capuchins were to make in France against the Huguenots.

The first public appearance of the Capuchins in Paris was at the funeral of Charles IX, at whose invitation they had come.¹¹ Catherine de Medicis, now queen-regent pending the arrival of Henry III from Poland, welcomed them warmly, and shortly afterwards gave them the house in the suburb Saint-Honoré. Then the Cardinal of Lorraine claimed a detachment and housed them at Meudon near his own residence. The Picpus house was abandoned because of the continued hostility of the other mendicant houses ; perhaps, too, because of the difficulty over the land given by Bishop Aymeric. In the spring of the following year, some friars were sent with the licence of the queen-regent to make the promised settlement in Lyons.¹² But before that settlement was made, Fra Pacifico, the leader of the expedition, was dead. Such was the reverence in which he was held, that for two days his body must lie in state to satisfy the devotion of the people before they would allow his burial in the church of Saint-Germain-les-Auxerrois. To take his place, Fra Mattia Bellintani da Salo, Definitor General of the Order, was now sent as Commissary to France.

No happier choice of a leader at this moment could have been made. Mattia was the younger brother of that Fra Paolo da Salò whom we met in plague-stricken Milan ; and he was a man to confer distinction upon any enterprise with which he was associated, a man of many parts, as brilliant with his pen as he was eloquent in his speech ; and withal a tireless worker.¹³ Born in 1534, he had been regamo : *I Conventi e I Cappuccini dell' antico Ducato di Milano*. P. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., I, p. 119.

¹¹ Charles IX died on May 31, 1573.

¹² *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 115.

¹³ *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, p. 104. Concerning Mattia da Salo, *vide* Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1611 ; Fred. Oderici, *I Due Bellintani*, op. cit. ; Valdimiro da Bergamo : *I Conventi ed I Cappuccini Bresciani*, op. cit., p. 212, *seq.* ; also *Biografia e Bibliografia del P. Mattia da Salo*, in *Miscellanea Franciscana*, anno III, fasc. I (Foligno, 1888), p. 22, *seq.*, and fasc. II, p. 39 ; P. Gianantonio M. da Brescia : *Vita del P. Mattia Bellintani da Salo* (Milano, 1885).

ceived into the Capuchin Order by that Fra Pacifico da San Gervasio whom he now succeeded in France. Mattia was then eighteen years of age. As a student he was avid of knowledge. He was introduced to the works of St. Bonaventura by Fra Girolamo da Pistoia—he who loved the Holy Family ; and continued his studies under the learned Scotist, Fra Girolamo da Montefiore, the Vicar General who now despatched him to France. The study of the Scriptures fascinated Mattia, and for their reading he mastered the Greek and Hebrew languages. But study in a Capuchin friary had its difficulties ; and we read of Mattia studying the epistles of St. Paul at night by the light of the sanctuary lamp in the church of the friary because the friary was too poor to afford him other lighting. His persistence was characteristic both of his piety and determination. At twenty-seven he was licensed to preach and at the same time was appointed to lecture in theology. Thus began his active career. His first sermons were preached during the Lent of 1561 in the cathedral of Foligno, and he at once made his mark. An impassioned preacher, he was yet thoughtful and persuasive, robust and gentle ; and he had a happy gift of weaving his thoughts in the woof of Scriptural language. It was said of him, “ that he combined the penetration of the eagle with the sweetness of the swan ; that in him was to be found the love of the beloved disciple, the wisdom of St. Paul and the zealous activity of St. Peter.”¹⁴ The Petrine quality in his character became evident during his first Lenten course. He was not content to preach ; he formed an association of “ practical Christians ” who undertook to live according to the teaching of Christ. And yet in his first years as a preacher he was shy and diffident, at least out of the pulpit. In 1564 when he was preaching at Spoleto, he was asked to address a massed gathering of the citizens with a view to bringing about a cessation of faction warfare. Mattia when he faced the crowd was dumb-stricken and “ knew not what to say.” A man in the crowd thereupon came forward and pleaded for peace, whilst Mattia stood beside him a humble listener. But the year following, at Narni, finding himself in a similar position, he forced himself to

¹⁴ See the preface to his posthumous work : *Quadragesimale Ambrosianum duplex. Accomodantur conciones ad usum Romanum*, t. II (Lugduni, 1624).

speak and spoke with effect. Four years later at Cava in the kingdom of Naples, the inspiration came to him to promote the Forty Hours adoration as it had been preached by Fra Giuseppe da Ferno and from that time he propagated the devotion so zealously as to be considered its second founder.¹⁵ Commonly when he preached a Lenten course, he left behind him some practical memorial of his labours. As at Foligno he instituted the association of "practical Christians," so at Nola he founded a "compagnia della misericordia"; at Pavia he introduced a truce of God amongst the faction-loving students of the University; at Brescia he established the practice of evening mental prayer. He was at the same time a copious and brilliant writer, whose works compelled thought whilst attracting by the freshness of their style; a man too of affairs constantly employed in administrative offices of the Order and called upon by bishops to handle difficult situations. Such was Mattia da Salo. San Carlo Borromeo admired and loved him as his "true apostle."¹⁶ San Felice da Cantalice loved him too. When Felice lay dying, Mattia hurried to the bedside of the saint. "Dost thou know me?" Mattia anxiously enquired. Felice replied: "I know thee well, O flowering May—O maggio fiorito."¹⁷

Mattia was in France early in 1576. On his way he had tarried awhile in Savoy and had induced the Duke, Emanuele Filiberto, to allow the Capuchins to settle in Chambéry,¹⁸ notwithstanding the opposition of the Calvinists: he thus took possession of a field of labour in which the Capuchins were to win for themselves an imperishable name in the religious history of that country.

From Savoy Mattia went on to Lyons, where he met the energetic Fra Girolamo da Milano, and arranged at the request of the Bishop of Avignon to send friars to his city. A few years later, as we shall see, Avignon was to become the centre of a separate Capuchin province. At Paris, letters given him by San Carlo Borromeo to the king and the Papal

¹⁵ Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1611. Amongst Mattia's works is a treatise on the devotion: *Trattato dell' origine delle Quarant'ore e alcuni pii esercizi di dolori di Gesu Cristo* (Venezia, 1586).

¹⁶ See San Carlo's letters on the occasion of Mattia's going to France, in A Sala: *San Carlo Borromeo Documenti*, II, p. 423, seq.

¹⁷ Giannantonio M. da Brescia, op. cit., p. 79.

¹⁸ cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 132.

nuncio, secured their goodwill which quickly ripened into friendship. In July, Henry III confirmed the acts of his predecessor and the queen-mother which allowed the Capuchins to settle in France and gave them the franchise of the kingdom.¹⁹ No detailed account of Mattia's administration has come down to us, but sufficient is known to reveal his superb energy. By 1578 such progress had been made as to lead to the establishment of two provinces in France, with their respective centres at Paris and Lyons.²⁰ In addition to the four settlements at Paris, Meudon, Lyons and Avignon there were friaries at Roanne, Orléans, Caen and Marseilles.²¹ In 1577, Mattia obtained from Pope Gregory XIII a brief empowering him to establish confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament throughout France, Savoy and Flanders and in the Papal dominion of Avignon.²² Devotion to the Eucharistic Presence was to be the chief means employed by the Capuchins in France as elsewhere to strengthen the faith of Catholics in the presence of heresy. Yet more significant was Mattia's petition to the Pope to grant him faculties to absolve priests who had obtained their benefices by simony. The explanation is given in a letter Mattia wrote to San Carlo Borromeo: "I believe Your Lordship knows, or will know, how the vice of simony works for evil in poor France; nor is it wonderful if the wrath of God is enkindled against her, and that by the hands of the Huguenots the clergy are deprived of that which they unjustly possess or use so evilly. . . Having preached the Lent in Avignon I have secretly gathered certain priests into a confraternity to help them live and conduct themselves as good priests." Mattia goes on to say that he proposes to ask the Pope for faculties to absolve simoniacs and to allow them to retain their benefices on condition that they lead good lives. It is useless, he says, to expect them to resign their benefices, since they have no other means of subsistence.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁰ *Anal. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 104.

²¹ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, pp. 64, 90, 102. The friary of Roanne is not mentioned in the *Bullarium*. But cf. *Les Capucins en Franche-Comté*, op. cit., p. 181; and P. Apollinaire de Valence: *Toulouse Chretienne: Histoire des Capucins* (Toulouse, 1897), vol. i, p. 5, note 1. The friary of Roanne was founded in 1577 by Pierre Deschamps.

²² *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 3.

The reforms of the Council of Trent must be introduced, but step by step.²³

Thus at a bound did Mattia da Salo commit the Capuchins in France to the apostolate they were to carry on with conspicuous valour during the next century, the revival of the people's faith and the purification of the clerical and religious state.

Mattia returned to Italy in 1578. We shall meet with him again many times in the course of this story, for his work in France was but an incident in a long life filled with varied activities.

Fra Anselmo da Pietra-Molaria—he who had distinguished himself at the battle of Lepanto—succeeded Mattia da Salo as Commissary of the province of Paris, whilst Fra Girolamo da Milano succeeded as Commissary of the province of Lyons.²⁴ But in 1580 provincial chapters were held and these two provinces were then fully constituted, with Ministers Provincial of their own choosing.

The two provinces grew with amazing vitality. Within another ten years the province of Paris numbered eight friaries whilst that of Lyons had increased to fourteen houses including two in Savoy.²⁵

In the meantime the Paris province had sent friars to Belgium where a settlement was made in Antwerp in 1585 and in Brussels in 1587. In Belgium they were cordially received by the Observant friars and a number of these with the permission of their superiors at once passed over to the Capuchin congregation; but within a year so many were those who passed over and those who wished to pass over, that a decree was obtained from the Pope forbidding any further migration.²⁶

Alessandro Farnese, the governor-general, welcomed them

²³ Letter of April 17, 1577, in Giannantonio M. da Bergamo, op. cit., p. 72.

²⁴ *Anal. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 104.

²⁵ The Paris houses were: Paris (1574), Meudon (1574), Caen (1577), Orléans (1578), Etampes (1581), Chartres (1584), Bourges (1588), Blois (1588). Those of Lyons were: Lyons (1575), Chambéry (1576), Avignon (1576), Marseilles (1576, 1579), Roanne (1577), S. Jean de Maurienne (1580), Salins (1582), Arles (1584), Aix (1585), Montmeillant (1586), Salon (1587), Dole (1587), Gray (1588), Toulon (1588). cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, *Tabular Topographicae*, p. 389, seq. The *tabula* for the Paris province gives Rheims as founded in 1574; but I have found no confirmation of this.

²⁶ See the letters of Sixtus V and of Cardinals Sanseverina and Montalto in Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1586, 2 seq.

as he had already welcomed the Jesuits and showed them every favour. At his request, Sixtus V in 1586 ordained that Belgium should be a province distinct from Paris ; and the following year the General Chapter of the Order appointed Frat' Ippolito da Bergamo to govern the new province in the capacity of Commissary General. Frat' Ippolito was a Capuchin in whom the original simplicity of the congregation was veritably incarnated in its austere form. He would allow only small friaries and churches of the severest simplicity ; under his rule the friars fasted almost continuously, though, says the chronicler, " by nature but not by fault the Belgians were great eaters." He rigidly inculcated that the brethren should seek knowledge in prayer rather than in books. To the preachers he allowed only the Bible and one or two commentaries ; to the clerics, the *Imitation of Christ* and Herpf's *Speculum Perfectionis*.²⁷ He impressed a character on the Belgian Capuchins which endured.

The same year that the Capuchins entered Belgium, a company of them under the leadership of Fra Benedetto da Cremona, were sent to Lorraine at the request of Henri of Lorraine, Bishop of Verdun, and other princes of the ducal house. If the favour of princes is a dangerous gift to religious men, the Capuchins of Lorraine were encompassed with temptation. Marguerite of Savoy, widow of Antoine de Luxembourg, and Marguerite Madeleine de Clermont, wife of the Marshal Montmorency, built them a friary at Liney, the Bishop of Verdun established them in his episcopal city. Catherine, Duchesse d'Aumale, gave them a house in S. Michel ; and that was but the beginning of favours. The Capuchin churches became the chosen burial places for the members of the ducal house. Henri, Bishop of Verdun, having invited the Capuchins to Lorraine, would himself have resigned his See to have become one of them ; but as he was not allowed to do this, he commonly wore the Capuchin habit and lived as nearly as he might as a Capuchin friar, and at the end was buried as a friar in a friar's grave. His nephew, Henri, Comte de Chaligny, followed his example and thus set a fashion which long continued not only in Lorraine but

²⁷ Boverius, *anno* 1587, 12-14. Herpf (Harphius), a Franciscan Observant. As an authority on the interior life he ranked high amongst spiritual writers in the sixteenth century.

elsewhere in France amongst the more devout Catholics.²⁸ In the stormy days when Henry of Navarre was fighting for the crown of France, Lorraine became a refuge for many Capuchins of the Paris province who sought a more peaceful atmosphere.

Meanwhile in 1587, a new province had been carved out of that of Lyons—the province of St. Louis as it was officially styled, including Avignon and Provence.²⁹

Yet that was not all. Quite independently of Paris and Lyons, a new province had been founded in Languedoc, one that was to contribute a chapter of picturesque adventure to Capuchin history, as we shall see.

The coming of the Capuchins to Languedoc happened in this wise.³⁰ At the General Chapter of the Order held in Rome in May 1581, a messenger appeared from the parliament of Toulouse and presented a letter which requested that Capuchins should be sent to that city. The petition was earnestly supported by Paul de Foix, Archbishop of Toulouse and at that time ambassador of the King of France at the Papal Court. Whereupon the newly-elected Vicar General of the Order, Gianmaria da Tusa, commissioned Fra Tommaso da Torino, guardian of the friary at Lyons, to proceed to Toulouse to report upon the situation. Fra Tommaso was cordially received by the premier president, Duranti, and other members of the parliament, and so satisfactory was his report that the following year a band of Capuchins, nineteen in number, was sent from Rome, and Fra Gasparro da Pavia, at the time guardian of the friary of Roanne,³¹ was appointed

²⁸ cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 195. Boverius, anno 1585, 7.

²⁹ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 107. Boverius, anno 1587, 3.

³⁰ The principal sources for the early history of the Capuchins in Languedoc are: *Recueil chronologique des choses qui concernent la fondation et le progrès de la province des Capucins d'Aquitaine ou de Tolose . . . fait par le commandement du R. P. Emmanuel de Besiers*. MS. in Archives de la Haute-Garonne, serie H, fonds des Capucins, No. 7 in folio and *Memorabilia praeicipua provinciae Aquitaniae sive Tolosae fratrum ordinis sancti Francisci Capucinatorum piae posteritati dicata*, *ibid.* No. 1. Another independent manuscript, but with the same title, *Memorabilia*, etc., exists in the municipal archives of Bordeaux. I have not had an opportunity to consult the manuscript sources. For my account of the Capuchins in Languedoc I have relied mainly upon the scholarly research work published by P. Apollinaire de Valence in *Toulouse Chretienne: Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit.; and in his: *Capucins et Huguenots dans le Languedoc sous Henri IV, Louis XIII, et Louis XIV*, in *Revue du Midi*, November 1894.

³¹ By a confusion of names Gasparro is usually described by the chroniclers of the Order as having been guardian of the friary of Rome.

Commissary. On their arrival President Duranti and the members of the parliament gave the friars a public welcome, and installed them in the College de Verdalle outside the City.³² The college was spacious, too spacious thought Fra Gasparro, for poor Capuchins, and he only consented to accept it on condition that the roof should be lowered and the building altered to symbolise the poverty and austerity which the friars professed. When some expostulated with him, he replied that the people of Languedoc delighted in lordly mansions ; all the more reason that the friars should be safeguarded against the temptation to follow their example. In fact it was this love of poverty which won the respect of the light-hearted people of Languedoc, that and the friars' simplicity. With awe the people listened to the grave chant of the Divine Office in the friars' chapel, so unlike the lighter chants to which they were accustomed ; they wondered when they saw the altar decorated with fresh flowers instead of the rich ornaments they saw elsewhere.³³ Everything went well for awhile ; then came trouble. A number of Observant friars straightway joined the Capuchins ; their superiors protested and Duranti, the premier president, took up their cause. He demanded an undertaking from Fra Gasparro that no Observant should be received by the Capuchins. Gasparro replied that it was a question of Canon Law with which the civil power had no authority to meddle. Thereupon Duranti threatened to compel the Capuchins to obey his orders. The crisis was growing acute when the Duc de Montmorency, the leader of the Politique party in the war between the Catholic Ligue and the Huguenots, established the Capuchins in Béziers and Agde which were outside the jurisdiction of the parliament of Toulouse. Gasparro went to Béziers to conduct the business of these foundations. This added fuel to the fire as between himself and president Duranti to whom Montmorency was little better, if indeed better at all, than a Huguenot. Gasparro was now accused of being an ally of the hated 'Politiques' as against the Catholic 'Ligue.' Agents

³² The College as an educational establishment had been closed some years previously. It had then been occupied for a few years by the Order of Minims, but these too had abandoned it.

³³ P. Apollinaire de Valence, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

were sent to the friary in Toulouse to search for incriminating documents. The documents did not exist, which only made the matter more suspicious. The people of Toulouse, even more ardent Ligueurs than the parliament itself, nevertheless stood by the Capuchins : but for their devotion the friars undoubtedly would have been driven out of the territories of Toulouse. Meanwhile Gasparro prudently remained at Béziers awaiting instructions from Rome. The instructions came in the form of a fresh contingent of Capuchins and a diplomatic letter which he was to deliver to President Duranti. Thereupon a fourth friary was founded at Albi. But Duranti was not the man easily to brook opposition, and the personal relations between himself and Fra Gasparro continued strained. So at the General Chapter of the Order held in Rome in 1587 Gasparro begged to be relieved of the office of Commissary, and Fra Girolamo da Castel-Ferretti was sent to Languedoc in his stead. It was thus that the Capuchins against their will became involved in the affairs of the Ligue with which later on they became more involved, less unwillingly. Under Girolamo da Castel-Ferretti the good relations between the parliament and the Capuchins were restored, owing in part to the services rendered by the friars in attending the sick during the pestilence of 1587. By the end of the century there were fourteen friaries in Languedoc and not less than fifty-two in France. Half a century later in 1650, the Capuchins in France were divided into ten provinces, in which were two hundred and eighty-seven friaries, and five thousand three hundred and sixty-three friars, about one fourth of the entire strength of the Capuchin congregation at that period.³⁴

But this amazingly rapid increase in the number of the friars in France was less amazing than the energetic activities by which they won the position of influence they came to occupy, and the deep spirituality which after all was at the root of their success. But of this we must tell the story in

³⁴ Holzapfel : *Manuale Historiae Ord. Frat. Minorum* (Friburgi Brisgoviae, 1909), pp. 559-560. This number does not include the province of Savoy where in 1650 there were twenty friaries and two hundred and seventy-one friars. The *Bullarium Ord. Cap. V, Tabulae Typograph.*, p. 389, *seq.*, gives a larger number of foundations before 1650 ; but its dates are not always correct. The French provinces were those of Paris, Lyons, St. Louis, Aquitaine, Toulouse, Tours, Normandy, Brittany, Burgundy, Lorraine.

another chapter. For the moment we will follow the invasions by the friars of other lands which took place simultaneously with the beginnings of their settlement in France.

(iii)

Next after France came Spain. In 1576 the magistrates of Barcelona despatched a letter to the Vicar General requesting that Capuchins should be sent to that city. The letter ran quaintly: "Most Reverend Father in Christ. Miguel Quirola a pharmacist of this our city has recounted to Us many things concerning the glory and holiness of your Order; also We have heard both by word of mouth and by letters, how greatly amongst you flourishes austerity of life and regular observance, for which reason the religious of your Order are everywhere spreading abroad amongst the people and, by their manifest goodness of life and their preaching of the divine word, confer the greatest benefits on the Christian people. Wherefore this our city also greatly desires that a monastery of your Order should be built within our city's walls, although by God's grace it abounds in monasteries of religious Orders in which are men illustrious for the life and doctrine they set before us." With this exordium the magistrates offered to give over to the Capuchins a house and church dedicated to Santa Madrona, abutting the city walls; and declared that should the friars be sent, nothing will be wanting on the part of the city to bring the business to a felicitous end. The Vicar General, says the chronicler, perceived even from the style of the letter the very real piety of the magistrates "and without delay selected Fray Arcangelo d'Alarcon of the Province of Naples to be Commissary General, and sent him with five companions to Barcelona."³⁵ As a matter of fact, however, Fray Arcangelo was not sent until the next General Chapter in 1578.³⁶ Fray Arcangelo was himself a Spaniard of a noble family in Tarragona; he was one of three brothers who became Capuchins,³⁷ of whom Fray Juan in 1596 was

³⁵ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, pp. 306-307.

³⁶ *Anal. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 105. cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, p. 307, *ad finem*.

³⁷ Boverius, *Annales, anno 1598*; d'Aremberg, *op. cit.* II, p. 100.

commissioned to establish the Order in Valentia. Both brothers had already done good work in the kingdom of Naples.

Fray Arcangelo and his companions arrived at Barcelona in the summer of 1578³⁸ and their first act was to make a pilgrimage to the ancient shrine of Montserrat where they commended their future in Spain to the protection of the Blessed Virgin. Their first dwelling was the dilapidated convent of Santa Madrona, but so unhealthy was it that they all fell sick. The magistrates then gave them the small church of Santa Eulalia in a retired spot outside the city ; but having brought the friars from Italy the people of Barcelona were not content they should dwell at a distance, but would have them in the city where they might be seen and be of service ; so the friars were shortly established in a house by the city walls, known as Montecalvario. Novices came immediately, many of them from the noblest houses of Spain.³⁹ And they were shortly joined by a number of Observant friars, amongst them Fray Jose of the noble family of the Rocca-berti, and his Father Guardian, Fray Antonio. But the Capuchin life proved too hard for Fray Antonio and he returned to the Observants. Afterwards when anyone mentioned the Capuchins in his hearing, Fray Antonio would tell them : "To be a Capuchin one must be an angel or a man of stone." Fray Jose was of the angelic sort.⁴⁰ Distinguished both by birth and learning, he was the humblest of men. An admirer once asked how many years he had been a religious. Jose replied : "The years in religion don't count : what counts is the virtue one has acquired in the years ; and I have acquired none." That was his sincere belief. His self-abasement was such that he thought himself honoured if the humblest lay brother spoke to him. His life was a life of prayer. He was fifty years of age when he joined the Capuchins ; he died at fifty-six with the reputation of a saint.

Throughout Catalonia and the district of Rousillon to the north, the Capuchins were readily welcomed and within twelve years they founded no less than sixteen friaries. Before

³⁸ Boverius, *Annales*, 1578, III, *seq.*

³⁹ cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 308, where a list of these families is given.

⁴⁰ Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1584, 12 b, *seq.*

the end of the century a new province had arisen in Valentia, and a beginning was made in Aragon.⁴¹

But outside Catalonia they encountered difficulties. Shortly after Fray Arcangelo had come to Barcelona, another small colony of Capuchins under Arcangelo's brother, Fray Juan, were brought to Spain by the Marchese S. Croce, a captain in the Neapolitan Navy, who wished to take them with him to his native Castile. But the Castilians would not admit them;⁴² and for some years national pride set up a barrier against Capuchin settlements in Castile and elsewhere. Spain, it was argued, had already an abundance of religious orders, and there was the Spanish Franciscan Reform of the *Discalceati* or *Alcantarines*. What need then of a foreign importation?⁴³ Nevertheless by 1650 there were five Capuchin provinces in Spain and over one thousand seven hundred friars.⁴⁴

In Spain the Capuchins found themselves amongst an entirely Catholic people—a unique experience in their short history, for even in Italy they had had to face a widespread menace of Protestantism.

In Switzerland where they made their next appearance, in 1581, they were at once thrown into the very vortex of the Protestant struggle with Catholicism.

Some years before this the Capuchins, at the call of the border-bishops, had thrown out missionary outposts into that no-man's-land, as the Great Powers seemed to regard it, the *Valtellina*.⁴⁵ As far back as 1550 Capuchins had penetrated into the uplands of *Rhaetia* only to be driven back by the outcry of the Protestant ministers. Again they went at

⁴¹ The first houses in Spain, according to the Bullarium, were Barcelona (1578), Gerona (1581), S. Celonio, Solfina, Villa franca del Parnades, Manresa (1582), Blanes (1583), Figüeres (1584), Tarragona (1589), Valentia (1596), Saragossa (1598). To these must be added Perpignan (1580), Ceret (1581-1582), Prada (1586), Vinca (1589). These four friaries were incorporated into the province of Languedoc in 1663, cf. *Gotholonenis Fundatio Provinciae in Anal. Ord. Cap. V*, p. 351, *seq.*, where a different order of foundations is given.

⁴² Boverius, *Annales, anno 1578, IX*.

⁴³ See the petition to Philip IV on behalf of the Capuchins signed by Doctor Blasius Gundisalvus a Ribero (circa 1640). A copy is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Arch. Seld. A. subst. 9 (15).

⁴⁴ Holzapfel, *op. cit.*, p. 559. The five provinces were Catalonia, Valentia, Aragon, Boetica (Andalusia) and Castile.

⁴⁵ cf. P. Rocco da Cesinale: *Storia delle Missioni dei Cappuccini, I*, p. 97, *seq.*

the appeal of San Carlo Borromeo and again were expelled by the law which forbade foreign priests to minister in the country. In the Valtellina the majority of the people still clung to the Catholic Faith, whilst in the Grisons the Protestants were in the ascendant and it was they who dominated the petty mountain states who formed the Ligue. At length San Carlo appealed to the Capuchins to send Padre Francesco da Bormio,⁴⁶ a native of the Valtellina, to the succour of the stricken Catholics. Francesco da Bormio was a man after San Carlo's own heart; austere with himself, ever ready to be of service to others. In his youth he had studied in Germany with the intention of serving his native land in some official capacity: he understood his people and their determined hostility to foreign rule. But he had abandoned a secular career and become a Capuchin. He was Provincial in Milan at the time of the great plague and had stood by San Carlo in his heroic efforts to save the people. Before that he had gained repute as a preacher in Lombardy. Yet he was the humblest of men as well as one of the kindest. It is related how when he was Provincial, he once visited a small friary where there was no spare room to lodge in—the friary was mainly a wattle hut. Francesco would not allow that any brother should vacate his own room to him, but himself slept in an empty wine-vat in a neighbouring vineyard. Even when preaching a mission he would spend several hours of the day in prayer, and never relaxed his fasts. That was the man San Carlo now chose to undertake a new mission in the Valtellina. The mission was short-lived. Francesco worked heroically; he not only put new heart into the despondent Catholics but he won several Protestants back to the Church: and that made him a marked man with the Calvinist ministers, and for a time he went in danger of his life. Eventually he was waylaid and captured and cast into gaol on the plea that he was an emissary of the hated Spaniards. He proved his innocence on that charge, but though his life was spared he was expelled the country.

At that time San Carlo's eyes were turned towards the unhappy condition of the Catholics in Switzerland. Of all

⁴⁶ Concerning Francesco da Bormio cf. Boverius, *Annales, anno 1583*; d'Aremberg: *Flores Seraphici*, II, p. 75, *seq.* P. Valdimiro da Bergamo: *I conventi e Cappuccini dell' antico Ducato di Milano* (Crema, 1893).

the cantons five only stood firm for Catholicism ; and the marvel was that these had so far remained loyal. It was not the zeal of the clergy that kept them loyal. To remedy the evil, San Carlo had established a college in Milan under the direction of the Jesuits for the education and spiritual training of a new body of clergy to minister to the Swiss Catholics. But the danger demanded more heroic measures. In 1574 the Jesuits had established themselves in Luzern and opened a college there ; San Filippo at San Carlo's appeal had sent some of his Oratorian priests to serve the people in their spiritual needs, and now San Carlo turned to the Capuchins. So it came about that at the General Chapter of 1581 Francesco da Bormio with five companions was commissioned to cross the Alps into Switzerland and establish the Order there.⁴⁷ The six friars arrived at Altdorf under the great St. Gothard on the eve of the feast of our Lady's Nativity and were received by Colonel Walter von Roll who had been the orator of the Catholic Cantons at the Council of Trent. Francesco da Bormio when first his eyes rested on the town snugly clinging to the mountain-side, was moved almost to tears. " Here will be my rest for ever !" he exclaimed. Some there were in the town, especially among the clergy, who resented the coming of the Capuchins, Catholics though they called themselves, and ready as they were to fight for the name against their Protestant neighbours, they had no wish to be disturbed in their easy-going conscience. Yet in a short while Francesco da Bormio won their respect by his persuasive eloquence ; and when Walter von Roll set about building the friary, the foundation stone was willingly laid by the dean of the clergy, Heinrich Heil, he who had once unblushingly presented his illegitimate children to receive the blessing of San Carlo when the Saint was visiting Switzerland as Apostolic Legate. The following year the Capuchins were invited to establish a friary at Stans on the border of the lake ; but again a party of the Catholics received them with resentful scorn, and because of their coarse habit treated them as mummies ; and here too, some of the

⁴⁷ *Anal. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 105. Concerning the history of the Swiss province cf. *Chronica Provinciae Helveticae Ord. S. P. Francisci Capucinatorum ex annalibus ejusdem provinciae manuscriptis excerpta.* (Solodori, 1884) ; P. Anastasius Burgler ; *Die Franziskus-orden in der Schweiz* (Schwyz, 1926) ; Boverius, *Annales, anno 1581* ; *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* IV, p. 1, seq. ; P. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., I, p. 12, seq.

clergy were hostile to their coming. Fra Francesco da Lugano eventually won them over by his burning eloquence, and once again the deserted churches were filled with devout congregations. A third foundation was made the following year in Luzern where the family of Pfyffer, who had already built a college for the Jesuits in the city, now gave the Capuchins an ancient sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin which stood on their upland estate, the Wesemlin, overlooking the city ; and here the friary was built. Those three friaries, with others shortly to be founded, still remain to-day, witnesses of the fast affection which soon was to bind the Catholic Cantons to the Capuchins.

But before the settlement was made in Luzern, the heroic Francesco da Bormio was dead. Early in the year he was preaching in Luzern when news came to him that one of his first companions in this Swiss adventure, Frater Sebastianus, a young Swiss cleric, lay dying at Altdorf. Francesco hurried back and was in time to comfort the last hours of the youthful friar. It was Francesco's last journey. After the burial of Frater Sebastianus he himself fell sick : he died on April 23 as they were reading to him the Gospel of our Lord's Passion. He had found his "rest for ever" at Altdorf. San Carlo was much moved when he heard of Francesco's death, "A great man has been taken from us," he exclaimed, "a great servant of God has left behind him a Church which suffers a grave loss by his death." Francesco da Bormio was one of those pioneers who are great in the idealism and energy they impart to others. In a short eighteen months he laid the foundations of a province which for four centuries has maintained itself in the purpose which drew him across the Alps, and which, notwithstanding the vicissitudes of religious or irreligious passion through which the country has passed, has been kept fast to the soil by the grateful reverence of a people. Before his death the first small band of Capuchins had been swelled by a further contingent from Italy and still more by the entrance of novices. In seven years seven friaries were established ;⁴⁸ by 1650 they had

⁴⁸ cf. *Chronica Capp. Prov. Helvet*, pp. 6-26. Besides those mentioned in the text, friaries were established at Schwyz (1586), Appenzel (1587), Solothurn (1588), Baden-in-Argan (1588). In the *Bullar. Ord. Cap. IV*, p. 364, the date of Baden is given as 1591. cf. Magnus Kunle O. M. Cap. : *Die Schweizerisch Kapuziner provinz* (Einsiedeln, 1928).

increased to thirty-two and the number of friars had grown to four hundred and fifty.⁴⁹

Thus within eight years from that fateful brief of Gregory XIII the Capuchins had spread to France, Spain, Savoy and Switzerland ; and four years later to Belgium. A second dispersion beyond the Alps began in 1593 when a body of friars, at the request of the Archduke Ferdinand and his wife Anna Caterina of the ducal house of Mantua, were sent to the Tyrol : that was the beginning of an invasion which within a quarter of a century was to cover the dominions of the Hapsburgs, Bavaria and the Rhine Provinces with Capuchin friaries and missions ; whilst in the same period Flanders and the Walloon country were to become flourishing provinces.⁵⁰ Within the same period, too, a missionary province was to be established for Ireland, England and Scotland, and a beginning was to be made of those extensive missionary enterprises which within little more than thirty years were to spread over three continents. But of this second wide dispersion the story will be told as this history proceeds.

⁴⁹ Holzapfel, *op. cit.*, p. 560.

⁵⁰ *Bullar. Ord. Cap. IV*, p. 123, *seq.*

CHAPTER VIII

AN ADVENTURE INTO POLITICS

(i)

WITH their freedom to make settlements beyond the Alps, the Capuchins were now launched upon the great adventure of the Catholic Church to regain her lost provinces or at least to secure those in which the issue between Catholicism and Protestantism was still in the balance. It had taken the authorities in the Church a long time to realise the seriousness of the Protestant revolt. A false sense of security and a too great preoccupation with Italian politics had blunted the perception of the Roman Court ; and when at last the disaster had come and heresy had advanced almost to the walls of Rome, the Church had been forced to fall back upon defensive tactics to save the principle of her authority and retard the spread of "the new teaching." During that first period of defensive reorganisation the Capuchins had suffered much from the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust always generated by great moral convulsions ; as did many loyal Catholics in every rank of the Catholic body. Even the Jesuits, safeguarded as they were by their acknowledged position as the Pretorian guard of the papacy, did not escape a suspicion of unorthodoxy on the part of the ultra-conservatives. But they were a new society owning no definite kinship with any of the established parties within the Church. They might be regarded as upstarts and be viewed with the hostility commonly shown by older bodies or schools towards a successful upstart. But the Capuchins had been formed out of an older organisation ; their Reform was a reaction against the abuses and spiritual inefficiency of the medieval system in the days of its decline ; and not everybody can distinguish between an orthodox reaction and an unorthodox revolt. It was an evidence of the inherent sanity of the

Papacy—or, as Catholics hold, of the special divine Providence watching over the Church—that the Capuchins had been allowed to continue at all. For as the congregation grew and developed it became evident that here was something more than an ordinary reform of a religious order aspiring to revert to its original fervour and observance, as were for example the Franciscan reforms of the Spanish *Discalceati* and the Italian *Riformati*. There was that which gave the Capuchins a more distinctive and universal character. Perhaps it came from the very simplicity in which they sought to observe the primitive Franciscan life ; for the Franciscan beginning, like all really great beginnings, belonged to no particular age. It is as great ideals take root in the common life of men that they somewhat shed their universality and take on the colour and particular form of the common life in which they are planted ; and as they give rise to an organised society the colour deepens and the particular form becomes more marked. The Franciscans of the first days might have belonged to any age ; a generation later they were definitely of the thirteenth century, permeating the thirteenth century spirit with an original religious ideal and vigour, yet thereby becoming in some measure subject to the spirit they informed. But the Capuchins in their reaction towards primitive Franciscanism shed, consciously and unconsciously, much of the medieval tradition, and curiously wedded the primitive idealism and Rule of the Franciscan life with the mental outlook and character of the age into which they immersed. With them the primitive Franciscan spirit was reborn into the sixteenth century, mentally and spiritually as well as in point of date. That was their unique distinction amongst the Franciscan reforms of the sixteenth century. Hence, whilst it would be true to style them Franciscans of the primitive observance, it would be equally true to style them Franciscans of the Catholic Reformation period, so intimately akin were they in mind and spirit with the vital elements which distinguish that period of the world-life from the life of the centuries which immediately preceded it. To this fact must in part be attributed the great influence of the Capuchins during the period of the Catholic Reformation.

Not without significance is it that throughout the long

period of their great adventure for the Faith, most of their leaders were men who in any circumstances would have played a part in the remaking of the world either nationally or provincially. The statement frequently made by later historians, that the Capuchins were the "apostles of the lower classes," is true only in the sense of our Lord's declaration of His mission: "the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Their influence was felt on all sides, and their members were recruited from all classes. Of their leaders most came from the greater and lesser nobility or from the class which filled the universities and higher schools—the classes most nearly touched by the new world-spirit which was abroad.¹

Of such were four novices who were to be found in the friary of Saint-Honoré in Paris in the early autumn of 1587; three of them were noblemen of France; the fourth an English gentleman. The three Frenchmen were now known as Frères Ange, Léonard and Honoré; in the world they were Henri de Joyeuse, comte de Bouchage, Jacques Favre de Querquifinan, and the seigneur Charles Bochart de Champigny. The English Frère Benoît, was William Fitch of Canfield in Essex, who had left his country to be reconciled to the Church of his fathers.

Frère Benoît² had entered the friary a few weeks before the Frenchmen; and with him two other "Englishmen"; though one was a Scot, and the other from Wales. The Scot was named Frère Chrysostom; he from Wales was known as Archange de Pembroke, and both were to win an honourable name in the story of the Capuchin missions. Frère Benoît too, was drawn to his native land by a missionary's zeal, but only to spend two years in gaol and then, as an act of royal grace, to be expelled the kingdom. That adventure doubtless added to his merits; but it is as a master-mystic

¹ Henri Brémond: *Histoire Littéraire du Sentiment Religieux en France* (Paris, 1916), I, p. 141, has remarked of the French Capuchins: "*Les premiers Capucins français comptent dans leur rangs presque autant d'humanistes et peut-être plus de gentilhommes que les Jésuites*," but the history of the Capuchins in Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and England during the period of the Counter-Reformation bears out the statement in the text.

² cf. Jacques Brousse: *La Vie, Conversion et Conversation miraculeuse du R. Père P. Benoist Anglois* (Paris, 1621).

Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1610, 30, seq.

and a leader in the religious revival in France that he will appear in these pages.

For the moment we are more concerned with his French companions in the friary, whose entrance amongst the Capuchins was the sensation of Paris for more than a week. All three were within the circle of the Court ; Henri de Joyeuse in the heart of it. For he was of that boon company—the Joyeuses and the Nogarets—upon whom Henri III lavished titles and wealth in the fond hope of surrounding himself with loyal friends as against the party leaders whose power and ambitions drove him to distraction.³ A weak man was Henri III, perhaps not wholly sane ; a strange mixture of the *dévo*t and the rake ; in his pathetic loneliness appealing for the affection of a friend. His clinging affection for Henri de Joyeuse must be put to his credit ;⁴ for Henri de Joyeuse in the midst of his court life had kept his soul free ; and his natural gaiety cloaked a serious mind and a spirit that looked beyond the passing moment.⁵ His was the laughing spirit so deeply earnest, often found in Languedoc. His brothers worshipped him with the tenderest affection—no light witness to a man's character ;⁶ and his brief married life was of the happiest. Catherine de Nogaret de la Valette, his wife, was of as serious a mind as her husband. It was agreed between them that at the death of the one, the other should enter a religious order. When a few months after his wife's death Henri de Joyeuse, riding with the king, came across some Capuchins on the road, he remembered his promise and straightway felt himself drawn to the Capuchin Reform. Some weeks later, to the amazement of those who knew him, he quietly became a novice in the friary of Saint-Honoré. That day—it was September 4—he should have

³ Anne de Joyeuse, the eldest brother of Henri, was created duc de Joyeuse and married to the queen's sister, Marguerite de Vaudemont ; Scipion, the second brother, was made Grand Prieur of Languedoc ; François was created Archbishop of Narbonne and Cardinal.

⁴ See the king's letters on the entrance of Henri de Joyeuse into the Capuchin friary, published by P. Edouard d'Alençon : *Pages inédites de la vie du P. Ange de Joyeuse*, in *Etudes Franciscaines*, August 1913, p. 138, *seq.*

⁵ The story of Henri de Joyeuse has been frequently told. Much that has been written of him is pure romance. But see Jacques Brousse, *La vie du R. P. Ange de Joyeuse* (Paris, 1621) and the critical study of his life by P. Apollinaire de Valence in *Histoire des Capucins*, II, pp. 1-176 and the valuable *Pièces extraites du cabinet du Cardinal de Plaisance*, *ibid.*, III, p. 204, *seq.*

⁶ cf. Edouard d'Alençon, *Pages inédites*, *ut supra*.

presided at a meeting of the Confraternity of the *Penitents Gris*. The fraternity were awaiting his arrival when a messenger brought word that he had entered the friary as a novice and consequently could not attend the meeting. It fell to his friend, Charles Bouchart de Champigny, to announce the news. Overcome with emotion, the young de Champigny, who had himself been contemplating a similar step, enthusiastically spoke of the sacredness and privilege of the religious life which de Joyeuse had embraced. His address became a sermon. Jacques Favre de Querquifin, listening to de Champigny, at once resolved to follow de Joyeuse. Within ten days the three friends were reunited as Capuchin novices. Thereupon their relatives and friends were astir. They invaded the friary and begged the novices to return. The king came and protested that life without de Joyeuse at his side would be mere desolation. For their own greater peace the novices were sent to Orleans. Again the king protested; he reproached the guardian of the Paris friary for denying him at least an occasional sight of de Joyeuse and the benefit of his spiritual conversation. Then others of the *Penitents Gris* followed the three leaders and Paris knew not who next would become a Capuchin.

But shortly Paris had other things to think of. Events were shaping which have an immediate interest for this story. On October 20 occurred the disaster of Coutras when Henri of Navarre defeated the royal army led by Duc Anne de Joyeuse; and the duke and his youngest brother Claude were done to death by a private assassin after the battle; and this was followed by what many considered a shameful peace on the part of the king. Thereupon suspicion of the king's sincerity grew apace; to the Ligueurs he seemed an ally of the hated Huguenots. In truth the king feared both Ligueurs and Huguenots; to him the Ligueur appeared nothing more than the sword in the hand of the Guise whom he suspected of aiming at the throne. Henri of Navarre—twice perverted Protestant and therefore unthinkable to the Ligueurs as a future king of France—had been acknowledged rightful heir by the king three years previously on the death of the duc d'Alençon and thereupon that party of Catholics who followed Montmorency as against the Guise, declared themselves for Navarre. The war which followed was very

largely a party struggle between the Montmorency and the Guise as to who should hold the power in the State ; largely too a struggle between the foreign influences at the Court and those who claimed that France was for the French ; yet with these purely political issues religion was inextricably involved. Roughly speaking the Huguenots stood for a Protestant France, the Ligueurs for a Catholic France and the Politiques for a State in which both religions should be recognised though the monarchy would be Catholic ; for the Politiques, though supporting the succession of the Protestant Navarre, had no doubt of his reversion to Catholicism once he gained the crown.⁷ But behind the nobles were the people and to them undoubtedly the religious question was uppermost in their minds ; though often enough even with these religion and politics were closely interwoven. Yet for the Ligueurs at large the issue they faced was the preservation of France as a Catholic nation. If to us of to-day the Ligueurs seem intolerant, let us remember that the Huguenots were equally, if not more, intolerant. Huguenot supremacy would have meant the entire suppression of Catholicism ; as in fact it did wherever the Huguenots held the power. We speak with virtuous horror of St. Bartholomew's Eve ; but the progress of the Huguenot faith in France had been marked by repeated massacres of the Catholics, equally barbarous. The Politiques with their professed tolerance for the Huguenots were trusted by neither of the extreme parties.

Such was the feeling when Henri III brought his Swiss troops to Paris in 1588 as a defence against the growing hostility of the citizens and the power of the Guise. That inept move led to the day of the barricades when Paris rose in revolt and the king's life was saved only by the connivance of de Guise. Then came negotiations and the meeting of the States-General at Blois in December. Meanwhile, however, the parish-priests and the preachers had become the virtual leaders of the citizens in revolt. At Blois the king sullenly capitulated ; then immediately sought to revenge himself by the brutal murder of the duc de Guise and his brother

⁷ It should be remembered that Montmorency, the leader of the Politiques, had earlier urged the alliance of France with the Catholic powers as against the Protestant powers ; whereas the Guises, the leaders of the Ligue, had favoured the alliance with the Turks and Protestant states. Such was the political confusion of the period.

the cardinal. It was a mad act. Paris in a frenzy renounced its allegiance and the city witnessed horrors which anticipated the revolution two centuries later. The nobles no longer had the power to control the populace. Pope Sixtus V on hearing of the double murder excommunicated the king ; yet because he would not definitely outlaw Henri de Navarre beyond hope of reconciliation, the Paris mob spoke of outlawing the Pope. The king in alliance with Navarre marched on Paris—there to meet his death at the hand of the fanatic Jacques Clement on August 1. Meanwhile the revolution had spread. In Toulouse the people had declared against Henri III in spite of the vacillating attitude of the parliament and here, as in Paris, hesitancy to renounce allegiance to the king met with summary vengeance. The premier-president Duranti, notwithstanding his past record as an adherent of the Ligue, had been brutally murdered by the populace on February 10.

But the death of Henri III brought about a further complication. Henri of Navarre by law was now King of France, unless indeed his excommunication as a pervert rendered him incapable of assuming the crown as the Ligueurs contended. The war was now carried on with more intense feeling. True, the duc de Mayenne who succeeded his brother the duc de Guise as leader of the Ligue, lacked the gift of leadership and the military talent of his murdered brother. At Arques and Ivry Navarre was victor. And now relations between the nobles of the Ligue and the citizens of Paris grew strained. Terrorism reigned in the city and within the Ligue two parties were forming ; the people's party supported by Spain, and the nobles some of whom at least were anxious to carve out independent principalities for themselves. The day came when Mayenne brought his army to Paris and hanged a number of the citizen-Ligueurs and crushed the terrorism by force. With the aid of the Spaniards the Ligue continued to struggle for another four years but with a gradually lessening support from the nation at large. Henri IV made his abjuration of the Calvinist faith at St. Denys in the hands of the Archbishop of Bourges on July 25, 1593 ; but the absolution given him was invalid according to the ecclesiastical law since his case was reserved to the Pope. Thereupon fresh fuel was added to the fire and a new

schism occurred in the ranks of the Ligueurs. Those of Gallican tendencies upheld the absolution pronounced by the Archbishop ; the more orthodox Catholics refused to recognise the king till he should be absolved by the Pope. When at length in September 1595, the king was absolved by the Pope, the Ligue was practically dissolved ; only in Brittany did the gallant Mercœur maintain an armed opposition for three years longer.

The Ligue had done its work so far as religion was concerned ; it had undoubtedly kept France amongst the Catholic nations. And yet it had been a perilous adventure for the Church as well as the monarchy. It had raised the spectre of a republic or confederated State, and had resuscitated Gallicanism ; and by an irony of fate it became the task of Henri IV to restore the monarchy to power and to strengthen the authority of the Papacy in the Church in France.

So much it has been necessary to relate to make clear the position of the Capuchins in France at this period.

At the beginning of the uprising in Paris in 1588 Bernardo d'Osimo, the Capuchin provincial, assembled his friars and bade them work and pray for peace ; and to emphasise his message he led them on a penitential pilgrimage to our Lady of Chartres. It was a dramatic gesture to still the passions of the people. At the head of the procession walked Frère Ange de Joyeuse bearing a cross and crowned with a crown of thorns, he the king's favourite ; and how the people at that moment hated the king's favourites ! On either side of Frère Ange walked friars bearing emblems of our Lord's Passion : behind came the body of the friars chanting litanies and psalms. Many who watched them wept with emotion ; it was a day of emotions though mostly of fiery passion.⁸

A year later Girolamo da Castel-Ferretti, the successor of Bernardo d'Osimo, thought well to send Frère Ange and Frère Honoré to Italy to study theology at Venice. Thus it was at a distance that these two heard of the murder of the Guise ; yet for Ange de Joyeuse the event was to have unlooked-for consequences—though not immediately.

⁸ Bernardo had already won the heart of the Parisians by his mystery-representations in the Church of St. Honoré ; cf. Boverius, *Annales, anno 1891*, 7, *seq.*



LE PÈRE ANGE DE JOYEUSE

Now began the six troublous years which were to try the spirit of the Capuchins as of all in France. Hitherto the Capuchins had kept apart from the party struggles, perhaps owing to the moderating influence of their Italian superiors. Now it was no longer possible that they should not in some way be drawn into it. At Orléans, Pierre Deschamps—he who had been the leader of the Picpus “Capuchins”—boldly denounced the king’s perfidy in murdering the Guise. That he did so from a high sense of duty cannot be doubted. He had been in high favour at the Court; he had been shielded in his time of trouble by the royal protection: later, Henri III and his queen had several times chosen him to carry their votive gifts to the churches in the Holy Land, when the queen was hoping by prayer to obtain an heir for the throne. His outspoken denunciation aroused the wrath of some Huguenots: and a plot was laid to murder him; but the plot miscarried and it was the saintly Pierre Besson, another of the Picpus band, who was slain as he stopped to pray at a wayside shrine of our Lady on the road which leads from Orléans to Paris.⁹ His slayers mistook him for Pierre Deschamps. Warned of the danger, the elder Pierre fled incontinently to Brussels and died there a few days after his arrival. There was a pathetic sadness about his death. On reaching Brussels, worn out by the journey, he went to the friary of the Capuchins and told his story. He had no credentials to prove his identity, and was refused admittance. At length the Carmelite friars in the city took him in and it was in their midst he died.¹⁰ One writer indeed tells us that Pierre Deschamps’ flight was caused by his refusal to countenance “the king’s conspiracy to kill the heretics, though he himself laboured zealously to convert them.”¹¹ If that statement has any foundation in fact it only brings him into line with the general conduct of the Capuchins during this perilous period when the churches were sounding with the call of the preachers to the citizens of Paris and elsewhere, to rise and slay the enemies of the Faith: for it is to their credit that there is no known instance either in Paris or Toulouse,

⁹ Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1589, p. 68; *Abrégé Historique des Ill. Capucins*, MS. cit., 3.

¹⁰ Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1589, 75.

¹¹ *Bibl. Script. Ord. Cap.*, p. 212.

where passion was at its height, of a Capuchin joining in that unholy crusade.¹² Yet some of them became ardent Ligueurs, especially in Languedoc, and by their activities in the politics of the Ligue drew upon themselves the stern rebuke of the Roman Visitor, Fra Anselmo da Reggio.¹³ But these were the few. As a body they supported the Ligue purely in its determination to maintain the Catholic character of the monarchy; and their opposition to Navarre was dictated by conscientious loyalty to the laws of the Church, not from factious political motive: that perhaps partly explains why throughout the war the Capuchins kept the respect and often the affection of the Politiques as well as of the Ligueurs, and won the admiration of Navarre himself; for Navarre never failed to recognise the courage of conviction. Thus when in 1591 Navarre entered Andelys in Normandy he sent word to the Capuchin friary that he would attend Vespers in their church. The guardian firmly informed the duc de Longueville, the king's messenger, that the laws of the Church forbade them to celebrate divine service in the presence of those under the Church's ban. De Longueville took the high hand and threatened that unless Vespers were chanted, the friary would be burnt to the ground and the friars dealt with as traitors; and so turned on his heel and swung out of the friary, leaving the friars in fear of death. But shortly the duc de Nevers arrived to assure them on the part of the king that he was well affected towards them and would respect their scruples.¹⁴ It was so that Navarre eventually won the kingdom. However, at Caen, a Huguenot stronghold, the Capuchins voluntarily quitted the town that they might not be drawn into the political troubles.¹⁵

(ii)

But it was in Languedoc that the struggle was carried on in its bitterest form; and it was here that the Capuchins came

¹² Referring to Toulouse P. Apollinaire de Valence (op. cit., II, p. 12, note 1) says: "*Nous n'avons eu le chagrin de rencontrer aucun Capucin parmi ceux de ces religieux qui s'acquirent alors dans Toulouse une triste notoriété.*"

¹³ cf. *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., II, p. 1. Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1590, 2.

¹⁴ *Neustria Seraphica seu memoriale FF. Min. Cap. provinciae Normaniae in Anal. Ord. Cap. XXVIII*, p. 122.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 266.

into greater prominence during the war. Guienne was controlled by the Huguenots : Toulouse and its territory was in the hands of the Ligueurs ; outside Toulouse to the east Catholics were sharply divided into Ligueurs and Politiques, but the Politiques were in the ascendant. At Béziers Henri Montmorency held his court ; in Toulouse the people looked to the Joyeuse as their natural leaders. Catherine de Medicis had vainly striven to bring about a matrimonial alliance between Joyeuse and Montmorency, thinking thus to strengthen at once the royalist and the Catholic cause in that part of the kingdom ; but the Joyeuse, royal favourites though they were, had a pride of Faith which would not brook an alliance with a Politique ; though they did not hesitate at times to risk the anger of the populace by their protection of unoffending Huguenots.¹⁶ As we have seen the constable Henri Montmorency favoured the Capuchins with as much goodwill as did the Tolosans ; at his own expense he had settled them in Béziers and Agde in spite of Huguenot opposition, and at no time did his reverence for them wane ; they had the freedom of his court and could enter at their will ; which they did, not always as petitioners for his favour. Thus when in 1587 Montmorency arrested Jean Vossou, the first president of the parliament of Béziers, on suspicion of conspiring to deliver the city to the Ligueurs and had him strangled in prison without trial, Frère Martial de Limoges, who was then preaching a course of sermons in the Cathedral, went to the palace and in the presence of the courtiers, denounced the crime. Even Montmorency himself was taken aback by his daring and exclaimed : " My good Father, I think you have lost your senses." " Would to God," replied Frère Martial, " that I were the fool and you not the tyrant. But the just God sees you and in time will punish your crime in murdering an innocent man." To the astonishment of the court, Montmorency accepted the rebuke with a good grace and would not allow the friar to be molested.¹⁷

¹⁶ In August, 1572, the Mareschal de Joyeuse (father of the first duke) as governor of the province had refused to execute the king's orders to exterminate the Huguenots. The massacre of October 4, when three hundred Huguenots were slain, occurred during his absence at Béziers ; it was due to a popular rising.

¹⁷ cf. P. Apollinaire : *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., I, pp. 334-335.

Three years later when the war between the Ligueurs and the Politiques was at its bitterest, two Capuchins, Pères David de Castelnandary and Joseph de Marseille, were on their way from Toulouse to Villenouvelle a few days before Palm Sunday, when they were set upon by a band of Huguenots and cruelly ill-treated. The Seigneur de Maureville, a Politique, rescued them and brought them to his château; there in his chapel they celebrated the Holy Week and Easter services; in Easter week de Maureville himself conducted them back to Toulouse.¹⁸

But as at Paris so in Toulouse, the murder of the duc de Guise had given a new sacredness to the Ligueur in the eyes of many Catholics who until now had given the Ligueur an unimpassioned support. The king's mad act had stamped the Politiques in the eyes of the Ligueurs with the dye of his infamy; and when on the assassination of Henri III, the Politiques acknowledged the Huguenot Navarre as king, their act was taken as the consummation of villainy. From that moment the Capuchins ranged themselves on the side of the Ligue, and some of them actively adopted its political programme, though to their honour they took no part in the incitement to the massacre of the Ligue's opponents.

And now it is that Frère Ange de Joyeuse comes into the fray, and eventually finds himself the captain of the Ligueurs in Toulouse.

Scipion de Joyeuse, who had succeeded to the dukedom on the death of his brother Anne, abandoned the king after his excommunication by the Pope and placed himself at the head of the Ligue in Languedoc.¹⁹ His agents in his negotiations with Mayenne and the King of Spain were Capuchins.²⁰ Fra Anselmo, the Roman Visitor, protested against their employment in political affairs; but beyond a protest, he could do nothing. At that moment the Ligue spelt Catho-

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 342, *seq.* Père David died a few months later from the effects of his ill-treatment. P. Apollinaire points out that this ill-treatment was at this period an isolated incident in Languedoc. It was after the war of the Ligue, when the Capuchins began their intensive activity for the recovery of Languedoc to the Catholic Faith, that they incurred the hostility of the Huguenots.

¹⁹ He accepted nomination as lieutenant-governor of Languedoc from the duc de Mayenne on June 8, 1589. On the other hand, François Cardinal de Joyeuse, protector of French interests at the Papal Court, continued in his allegiance to the king.

²⁰ *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., II, p. 21.

licism in the eyes of the Tolosans. Two years later we find Frère Ange de Joyeuse in Provence, not improbably commissioned by the Pope himself to take a hand in the political struggle.

Of all places outside France, Venice, whither he had been sent to study theology in 1589, was the last place where a man of the antecedents and family connexions of Ange de Joyeuse would find peace of mind in the political situation which had arisen; for Venice watched events in France with a keen eye to its own political advantage and its sympathies were with Henri of Navarre and the Politiques. Hardly in fact had Frère Ange settled there than he discovered that in Venice he would not be free from the distractions of the world he had left.²¹ A visit from his brother, the Cardinal de Joyeuse, who arrived in Venice after the excommunication of Henri III, did not contribute to his peace. Meanwhile he had been ordained priest and was profiting spiritually by the counsels of that remarkable saint, Fra Lorenzo da Brindisi, under whom he was making his studies.

In 1591, as we have said, he was in Provence. He went there as an affiliated member of that Capuchin province, and the following year was appointed guardian of the friary at Arles. That he went to Provence in search of peace of soul no one will believe. Take the situation in which he found himself; his cousin the duc de Nemours was strengthening his position as governor of Lyonnais with a view to an independent principality; another relative, Bernard de la Valette, governor of Provence, was in sympathy with the Ligueurs of the South and their contemplated scheme of a political confederation under the protection of Spain. The Pope, without definitely committing himself to the scheme, had blessed the project as an alternative to a Protestant monarchy. Was Frère Ange sent to Provence to watch the progress of the Ligue and to intervene as circumstances should demand? We can only hazard a conjecture. In January, 1592, Bernard de la Valette was killed at the siege of Roquebrune in war with the Duke of Savoy, and his

²¹ See the letter of the Procurator of the Order, Fra Cristoforo d'Assisi, dated March 5, 1589, granting him permission "to go to a friary in Lorraine or in some other Province of Italy in order that he might be free from the affairs and distractions of the world." Arch. Vatic. *Politicorum*, I, 25, fol. 384; given in *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., II, pp. 24-25.

younger brother the duc d'Epéron, brother-in-law to Frère Ange, was appointed by Henri of Navarre governor of Provence. A shifty character was d'Epéron, playing always for his own hand, no matter to whom he swore his loyalty.

Meanwhile Scipion de Joyeuse was heading a punitive expedition against the Huguenots of Montaubon who had ravaged the territory of Toulouse. The Huguenots had appealed to de Themines the Politique for aid to repel the Tolosans. D'Epéron, on plea of loyalty to the king, took sides with de Themines. Frère Ange now pays him a visit and endeavours, though unsuccessfully, to gain, if not his support for Toulouse, at least his neutrality.

Then in October came the military disaster at Villemur when in the retreat Scipion de Joyeuse was drowned in the river Tarn. Had he listened to Frère Ange, he would have retired earlier from Villemur before de Themines' forces could come to the aid of the town ; and Ange de Joyeuse might not have become a favourite subject of romantic story-tellers.

The disaster of Villemur was a blow the Tolosans were not prepared for. It left them without a military leader and threatened to complete the triumph of the Huguenots and Politiques, and, as many believed, the entire subversion of the Catholic Faith in Languedoc.

And now Toulouse and all that was Catholic in Languedoc, bishops and clergy, the religious orders, the magistrates and people, with one voice demanded that Frère Ange, now by right duc de Joyeuse, should assume the government of Toulouse and become captain-general of the army. Frère Ange was at the moment in the friary in Toulouse. The Estates were assembled and theologians of repute were called in to decide whether in such an emergency as threatened both the Catholic Faith and the liberty of Toulouse, it was the duty of Frère Ange to leave his friary and take up the duties which his birth and the city's choice imposed upon him. Was it lawful for him to do so ? Could he in conscience refuse ? were the two questions the theologians must answer. Their unanimous reply was that it was not only lawful but a duty he could not in conscience lay aside ; the public good demanded the sacrifice of his personal inclinations. The guardian of the Capuchins was then appealed to and he and

the senior members of the community agreed with the theologians. Thereupon Frère Ange reluctantly consented on condition that when he was no longer needed for the service of Toulouse he should be free to return to his friary. Further he stipulated that the matter should be submitted to the General of the Order and to the Pope as soon as might be, for their approbation. He then doffed his habit—not without tears, said the brothers who were with him—and donned the robes of office. In the Council Hall he was received with acclamation as governor of Toulouse and commandant of the army.²² A messenger was then despatched to the Pope to relate what had happened and to request his sanction.²³ This is not the place to enter into the details of the administration and conduct of Frère Ange, now Henri duc de Joyeuse, during the seven years of his government of Toulouse and Languedoc. He at once reorganised the army, and his military dispositions won the respect of Montmorency and led to the conclusion of a truce for a year between the two leaders—a truce which was further extended before the end of the year. In October, 1593, the Ligueurs of the South met at Albi and swore not to recognise any but a Catholic king “approved by the Pope according to the ancient tradition of France”; but it is evident that the duc de Joyeuse and his brother the cardinal were already conscious that the only solution of the nation’s crisis lay in Navarre seeking his absolution from the Pope and becoming the approved Catholic king of France; and their resistance from this time was to force the king to take that step. When eventually Henri IV submitted to the Pope and was absolved, the duc de Joyeuse was ready to give him his allegiance. For awhile he was held back by his loyalty to the Tolosans. The king wished to reward Henri Montmorency by making him governor of the whole of Languedoc; but the Tolosans refused to be governed by one whom they had so stoutly resisted and whom they could not yet forgive. In 1596 the king gave way and Henri de Joyeuse was confirmed as governor of Toulouse.

²² For a full account of these proceedings see *Pièces extraites du cabinet du Cardinal de Plaisance, ut supra.*

²³ The messenger, however, was captured by pirates as he was crossing the sea, and it was not for some months that official news reached the Pope.

Two years before this the duke had ceased to be a Capuchin ; it was considered more becoming that he should be transferred to the military order of St. John of Jerusalem, and Clement VIII issued briefs to that effect.²⁴ It was confidently hoped by the Tolosans that the duc de Joyeuse be finally given back to them ; and it does not seem improbable that he himself for a time regarded his return to the Capuchins as no longer practicable. Yet not for long. In 1597 at the time of his daughter's marriage to the duc de Montpensier, he was already contemplating his return to the Order he had left, and a letter he received about this time from his fellow-novice, Benoît de Canfield, the Englishman, strengthened his resolve.²⁵ But there were difficulties in the way. The Tolosans and his friends at Court would certainly strive to prevent the accomplishment of his wish ; and the General of the Capuchins, when first approached, hesitated : he doubted whether such a step would be pleasing to the Pope, the king, and the people. De Joyeuse thereupon appealed directly and successfully to the Pope ; the work, he wrote, which had drawn him from the cloister was finished : France had a Catholic king and the affairs of Toulouse were satisfactorily settled. He might have added that even the long-standing hostility between the houses of Montmorency and Joyeuse was ended and the two seigneurs were friends.²⁶

On May 8, 1599 Henri de Joyeuse again put on the Capuchin habit and renewed his vows in the friary of Saint-Honoré, Paris, where he had been first received as a novice twelve years before. The final step was taken swiftly and secretly before anyone, except the Pope and the Capuchins, was aware that it was seriously contemplated. Even the duke's household—he was on a visit to the court at Paris—were unaware of his purpose, when at dusk in the evening the duke bade them not disturb him in his chamber. His affairs had been put in order ; and he had sent a letter to be delivered the following morning to the king by the hands of

²⁴ The brief dated June 9, 1594, and a second brief dated May 5, 1595, are published from the originals in the Vatican Archives in *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., III, p. 252, *seq.* cf. *Bullar, Ord. Cap.* V, pp. 31-32.

²⁵ See the letter in *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., II, p. 106, *seq.* The letter is further interesting as a revelation of the soul of the writer.

²⁶ See the letters of Joyeuse to Montmorency (*Biblioth. Nat.*, MSS. FF3570, fol. 48 ; 3607, fol. 84) *ibid.*, pp. 79, 136.

the duc de Montpensier. In the dusk of the evening Henri de Joyeuse arrived at the Capuchin friary ; by eleven o'clock he was again Frère Ange ; and at midnight he took his place amongst the brethren at the midnight office in the church. When the next morning the king received his letter, he is said to have exclaimed : " Now surely we shall have peace in the kingdom when our captains turn monks !" but he went straightway to visit Joyeuse in his friar's cell ; and that day there was no peace in the friary because of the visitors who arrived to bid the duke farewell.²⁷

The return of Ange de Joyeuse, with all it signified as to the political situation, was to the Capuchins not the only happy issue of the fierce strife in Languedoc. There was the conversion (as they viewed it) of Henri Montmorency, the founder of their friaries at Béziers and Agde, but still the leader of the Politiques. He too, in some sort, ended his days as a Capuchin after some years of deepening piety. They say his conversion began that day when Frère Martial de Limoges bearded him in the midst of his court for the murder of Jean Vossou ; for from that time " there came a great change in the conduct of the Constable."²⁸ After the peace it was his wish to build himself a small house attached to the sanctuary of Notre Dame du Grau, the Capuchin church at Agde, that he might retire there and prepare himself for his end ; but the king's wish kept him busy with affairs of State. When at last weighed down with years he obtained permission to retire from the court, it was at Agde under the spiritual direction of his Capuchin confessor that he spent his last days in religious exercises and deeds of charity. And when he died he was clothed, as he had wished, in the Capuchin habit " as one of the brethren " and buried without pomp in a simple grave before the altar in the church.²⁹

²⁷ It was only at the expressed wish of the Capuchins that de Joyeuse returned to the Order in Paris ; his own inclination had been to seek re-admission to the Order in Switzerland or some province where he was less well known.

²⁸ *Receuil chronologique* quoted in *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit. I, p. 336.

²⁹ *Conversion et dernières années du connétable Henri de Montmorenci*, *ibid.*, I, p. 333, seq. Henri Montmorenci died on April 12, 1614.

(iii)

In the meantime, whilst Henri de Joyeuse (as he was again called) was serving the Church and Toulouse in the way his conscience and the will of his ecclesiastical superiors had bade him, the Capuchins were suffering much for the faith that was in them—though but for Navarre himself they might have suffered more. It all came about because Navarre though a Protestant and personally excommunicated by the Pope would insist—and his officials insisted even more—that public prayers should be offered for him in all the churches of France; and this insistence became general after the abortive ceremony of abjuration at St. Denis. Before that abjuration the clergy generally refused to pray for him; after the ceremony at St. Denis most of them, whether from conviction or from fear, prayed publicly for the king. But amongst the few who still refused on the ground that the king's absolution was invalid, were the Capuchins.³⁰

The situation as it developed had its incidents not without a dry humour, though tragic enough to the sufferers. When Navarre came to Lyons after his abjuration at St. Denis, the king's lieutenant visited the Capuchin friary to demand public prayers for the king. He was met by the venerable Jean de Maurienne who replied that it could not be done without violating their conscience as true sons of the church. The lieutenant in a temper bade them in the king's name leave the city at once. It was then nightfall. Early next morning before daybreak the friars left their friary and set out to leave the city, chanting as they went the psalm *In exitu Israel*. They chanced to pass under the window of the chamber where the king was sleeping. Aroused by the chant, the king asked his servant what the noise meant and was told the Capuchins were leaving the city as he had ordered. The king went to the window and putting out his head, bade them return to the friary; only as a favour he begged they would cease their chanting! But in after days

³⁰ Other religious who refused were the Jesuits, Minims and Carthusians. In Languedoc the Carmelites also refused. cf. *Recherches historiques sur la compagnie de Jésus du temps P. Coton* (Lyon, 1876) I, p. 153; *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., I, p. 345.

he would speak of Père Jean de Maurienne as the model of what a religious ought to be.³¹

It was from the city officials, anxious to prove their loyalty now that Navarre was actually king, that the friars suffered most. Thus there was the affair at Béziers which dragged on for months. The bishop, of Politique tendencies, had ordered public prayers for the king after the abjuration at St. Denis ; only the Capuchins and Carmelites refused to obey the order. D'Ausserre, president of the parliament, "the smallest and humblest creature of his majesty" as he signs himself, thereupon undertook to force the Capuchins to obey. Day after day he sent peremptory orders and threatening messages, only to receive the same reply : "until the Pope permits, our conscience will not allow." Then he had recourse to all manner of petty persecutions ; and even threatened to exile the religious and put the guardian to death. At that the guardian and friars secretly left the city and fled to Narbonne. Then the citizens, loyalists as they were, rose up in wrath against d'Ausserre ; and he must plead with the Provincial Minister to order the friars to return. Friars from another community are sent there ; and the papal legate at Avignon instructs them that they may pray for the king with a clear conscience. They thereupon pray for the king at all their services in choir. Still the persecution continues. Just then the General of the Order passes through Languedoc on his way to Spain and forbids the friars to pray publicly for the king till Rome has spoken. More threats from d'Ausserre ; who meanwhile writes his fulsome letters to the king testifying to his own activity on behalf of his majesty's welfare, than which he desires nothing else on earth. Then follows a second flight of the Capuchins and immediately messengers are kept busy carrying appeals to whomsoever might have influence in the matter, to Montmorency, to Ventadour, even to Cardinal Aldobrandini in Rome, to prevail upon the friars to return. They do eventually return when word has come from Rome that they may lawfully pray for the king even though he be not yet absolved. President d'Ausserre receives them ; he attends mass in their church and piously assists at the prayer for the king. "When the priest pronounces the words : *Henricus Rex noster*, the president beams

³¹ *Les Capucins en Franche-Comté*, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

with happiness and throws himself upon his two knees ; but when the priest says : *Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum*, he puts on his hat." So writes the Guienne chronicler, not without pardonable malice.³²

In Paris the king one day entered the church of St. Honoré whilst mass was being said : the celebrant at once left the altar. There followed a visit from the Cardinal Gondi to the Capuchin friary, who on behalf of the king remonstrated, and urged the friars to obey the king's order as the other clergy were doing. They replied that they must obey God rather than man ; the king was excommunicated and the law of the Church was clear. At this the king was angered and threatened to expel them from the kingdom. The Cardinal prayed him to be patient, and returned to the friary. It was arranged that the friars should send a messenger to Rome to consult the Pope. Messengers were sent who laid the situation before Clement VIII ; he bade them verbally to inform their superiors that he was willing the friars should pray for the king until it was ordered otherwise. The Capuchins on receiving this message despatched Père Pacifique de Souzy to wait on the king at Fontainebleau, and inform his majesty of the Pope's message. Père Pacifique was well received and when he had given the message the king asked him if he had already that day celebrated mass. On learning that the friar had yet to say his mass, the king asked him to celebrate in the royal chapel, and himself was present with some of his courtiers. Afterwards he remarked to those who were with him : " These Capuchins are good men :³³ their conduct proves it. For conscience sake they resisted me and so proved they loved and did not hate me. They will, I am certain, be faithful to me now as they have been to the Roman Church." From that time the king frequently attended mass at Saint-Honoré and often went to listen to the Capuchin preachers.³⁴

Yet towards the end of 1598 the intervention of two Capuchins in the matter of the registration of the Edict of Nantes led to a contest between the friars and the parliament

³² *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., I, pp. 345-371. See the fuller account in *Capucins et Huguenots dans le Languedoc*, loc. cit.

³³ " Les Capucins sont gens de bien."

³⁴ *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., I, p. 346, seq.

of Paris, in which the king was compelled to play a not too willing part.

It happened thus. In April, 1598 the king had issued the famous Edict of Nantes. To most of the Catholics it seemed an act of weakness, if not of perfidy, tending to strengthen the Huguenot party, and thus to endanger the peace of the kingdom—as in fact it did ; for the Huguenots in their strongholds in the South ignored the provisions in favour of the Catholics whilst claiming the rights accorded to themselves ; and thus caused the last of the religious wars under Louis XIII. But the hand of Henri IV had been forced at the siege of Amiens when the Huguenots demanded the price of their allegiance.

The edict was still awaiting its formal registration by the Paris parliament to become the law of the kingdom. We must remember the days of suffering the nation had passed through to judge rightly the actions of men on both sides. Père Jean-Baptiste Brulart de Sillery, brother of the future chancellor, was preaching the Advent in the church of Sainte-Etienne-du-Mont. All Paris was simmering with excitement over the edict : the parliament hesitating yet bending to the influence of the Huguenots who had a place in it. Père Jean-Baptiste, ever fearless as he was ardent, proposed to organise with the sanction of the bishop of Paris a solemn procession of the Blessed Sacrament through the streets of the city, in which all the citizens were invited to join, to pray that God would avert the registration of the edict. At that the parliament took fright and promptly forbade the procession. On January 6, the feast of the Epiphany, Jean-Baptiste, preaching in the church of Saint André-des-Arts in the presence of the Procurer-General, passionately denounced the edict and declared that no member of parliament could vote for its registration without sin. Jean-Baptiste was no unknown preacher ; his brother was at the time a member of the court of parliament and shortly was to be sent to Rome as the king's envoy at the Papal Court. The following day or the day after, the king summoned the members of the parliament to his presence and courteously but firmly informed them that if they failed to register the edict, he would know how to supply their places : then addressing M. de Sillery he bade him

advise his brother, the Capuchin, to be more prudent in his words. The edict was registered on February 23. And there the matter might have ended. But the Lenten course in the church of Saint Germain-l'Auxerrois was that year preached by one of the most eloquent preachers in France, the Capuchin Père Archange de Lyon, and he took as his theme the vindication of the Catholic doctrine of the mass as against the recently published work of the Huguenot, Duplessis-Mornay.³⁵ To his astonishment on March 10, he received an intimation from the lieutenant-civil that he must moderate his language in his references to the teaching of the Huguenots and in particular in regard to the book of Duplessis-Mornay. Archange replied that his business was his own, as the lieutenant's business was his ; let each stick to his own last. The following Sunday the king was present when Père Archange continued his course. The preacher dealt with the falsified quotations from the Fathers of the Church with which Duplessis-Mornay supported his argument, and concluded by an appeal to the king to forbid the book. He appealed on the ground of justice, since the Huguenots would allow no Catholic book to be circulated in the towns under their control. Some days later the book was ordered to be publicly burnt. The event did not endear the Capuchins to the Paris parliament.

Then came the case of Marthe Brossier, the peasant girl possessed by a devil. At least so her father asserted when he brought her to Paris ; and so thought the theologians and physicians who examined her. The bishop of Paris was much exercised in mind, and in his perplexity sent for two Capuchins, Benoît de Canfield and Père Seraphin, to exorcise the girl according to the rite of the Church.³⁶ The case was a sensation of the day ; crowds assembled to witness the examinations. The king, fearing perhaps some political move—popular assemblies were dangerous things at the time—ordered the parliament to stop the examinations and to imprison the girl. In all probability the wisest course was to stop the case, but technically the act was a breach of

³⁵ *La Probation de la S. Messe et sacrifice.* (Paris, 1599.)

³⁶ An ordinance of the General Chapter of 1552 says : *Nulla modo fratres se immisceant in exorcismis et in conjurandis spiritibus.* *Anal. Ord. Cap. V,* p. 76 ; a prudent ordinance perhaps in an age when the conjuring of spirits was widely practised, as much amongst the Protestants as amongst the Catholics.

Canon Law and of the rights of the ecclesiastical court. What followed on the part of the Capuchins can only be justified by the circumstances. Let it be remembered that the authority of the Church was at grip with the growing erastianism of the Catholic States as well as with militant Protestantism : that is the keynote to the history of this time. The Capuchins with the Jesuits were at this period the most active protagonists of Papal authority and ecclesiastical liberty.

On the Sunday following the girl's imprisonment Père Archange de Lyon preached in the Capuchin church at Saint-Honoré and denounced the parliament for its illegal infraction of Canon Law. Thereupon the parliament sent an usher with a formal summons to Père Archange to appear before the parliament on a charge of contempt of the king's authority. Here was infraction number two of Canon Law, since as a religious Père Archange was in the first resort amenable only to an ecclesiastical court ; with which fact Archange was not slow to justify his refusal to obey the summons. Eventually, however, by a trick the parliament obtains possession of the persons of Père Archange and the vicar of the friary ; they spend a night in prison and next morning are brought before the parliament. They refuse to answer to the charge on the ground that they can be tried only by an ecclesiastical court, and in this they are supported by Jean-Baptiste de Sillery, the acting Provincial, who himself appeared before the parliament to enter a protest against their illegal assumption of jurisdiction. But the parliament over-rides their protest and forbids Père Archange to preach for six months. The Papal nuncio Silingardi, in sending a report of the affair to Cardinal Aldobrandini, wrote that the charge against Père Archange was but a pretext on the part of some members of the parliament of Huguenot sympathies to get rid of the preacher on account of his successful attack on Duplessis-Mornay's book.³⁷ As Père Archange was in any case due to return to his own province of Toulouse, the sentence of the Paris parliament did not affect him. But Jean-Baptiste de Sillery's protest on his behalf was not forgotten.

And now Ange de Joyeuse again enters the scene. It was said that when the usher brought the summons from the

³⁷ See the Nuncio's letter in *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., II, p. 166.

parliament to Archange de Lyon, and had taken his departure, leaving the summons behind him, the former governor of Languedoc picked up the summons and threw it after the departing usher. It may have been but malicious gossip meant to annoy the king, who at first did not approve of the high-handed treatment of the Capuchins. But a few weeks later a report was brought to the king that Ange de Joyeuse, in a sermon at Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie, had protested vehemently against the violation of the Edict of Nantes to the prejudice of the Catholics, in the licence given to the Huguenots to establish a conventicle at Grigni within five leagues of Paris. The establishment of the Grigni conventicle was perhaps another instance of the growing power of the Huguenots in the parliament. The protest, coming from one of such rank and antecedents in the kingdom, could not be safely ignored. And now we have the singular case of the king writing to his two principal agents in Rome, the Cardinal de Joyeuse and M. de Sillery, suggesting that they apply to the General of the Capuchins to remove their brothers from France. The Father General readily acceded to the request : the political activities of some of the French friars, as we have seen, did not commend themselves to the Roman superiors ; and here was a case in which it would be difficult for one at a distance to distinguish between a legitimate and an illegitimate intervention. The letters of obedience calling Ange de Joyeuse and Jean-Baptiste de Sillery to Italy were actually sent to the king ; but again the Papal nuncio in Paris intervenes with an appeal to the Pope to prevent an injustice being done to the two Capuchins and an injury to the Catholic cause in France. The affair, he says, is nothing but a plot on the part of the parliament to bring about the expulsion of the Capuchin preachers from France. Since the expulsion of the Jesuits from Paris, the Capuchins have been the mainstay of Catholicism in the kingdom ; if they are expelled, it will spell ruin to the Church.³⁸ In the end Ange de Joyeuse remained in Paris and became a popular preacher there ; the king himself at times being present at his sermons. But Jean-Baptiste, in spite of the repugnance of his Provincial,

³⁸ Archives du Vatican, Nunziatura di Francia, XLVII, 138. cf. *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., II, p. 172.

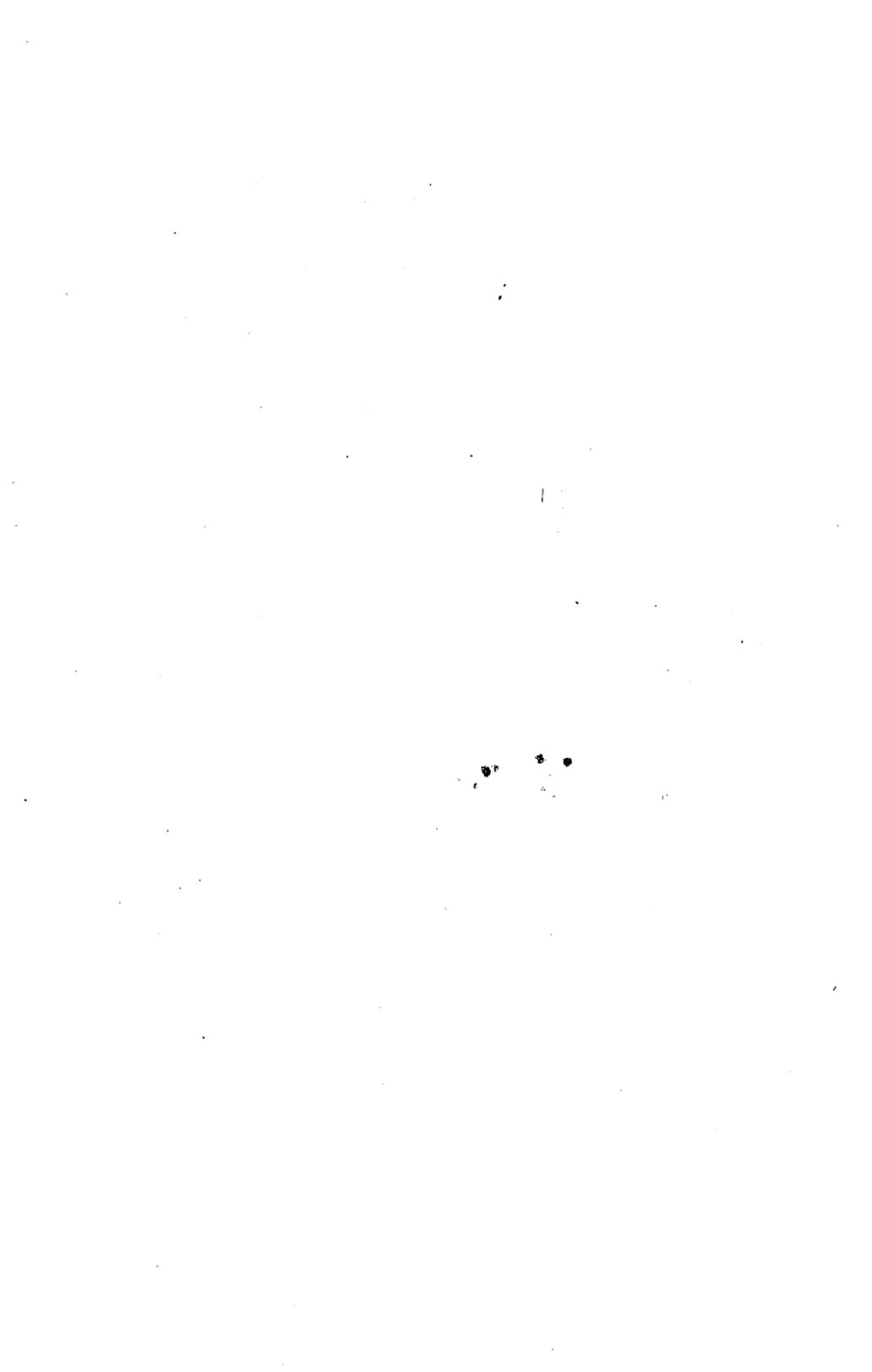
Honoré de Champigny,³⁹ to let him go, left France and was affiliated to the Capuchin province of Venice. Shortly afterwards he was sent as a chaplain with the Papal army in the war against the Turks and gave his life in attending to the sick and dying. It was a noble ending of a career that never lacked courage.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, whilst these events were taking place, the Capuchins were already beginning a new phase in their activity for the spiritual renovation of France.

³⁹ Père Honoré had been absent from France during the earlier phase of this affair.

⁴⁰ See the account *Vie et mort du Rev. Père Jean-Bapt. Brulart* in *Chronologie Historique*, MS. cit., fol. 91, seq.

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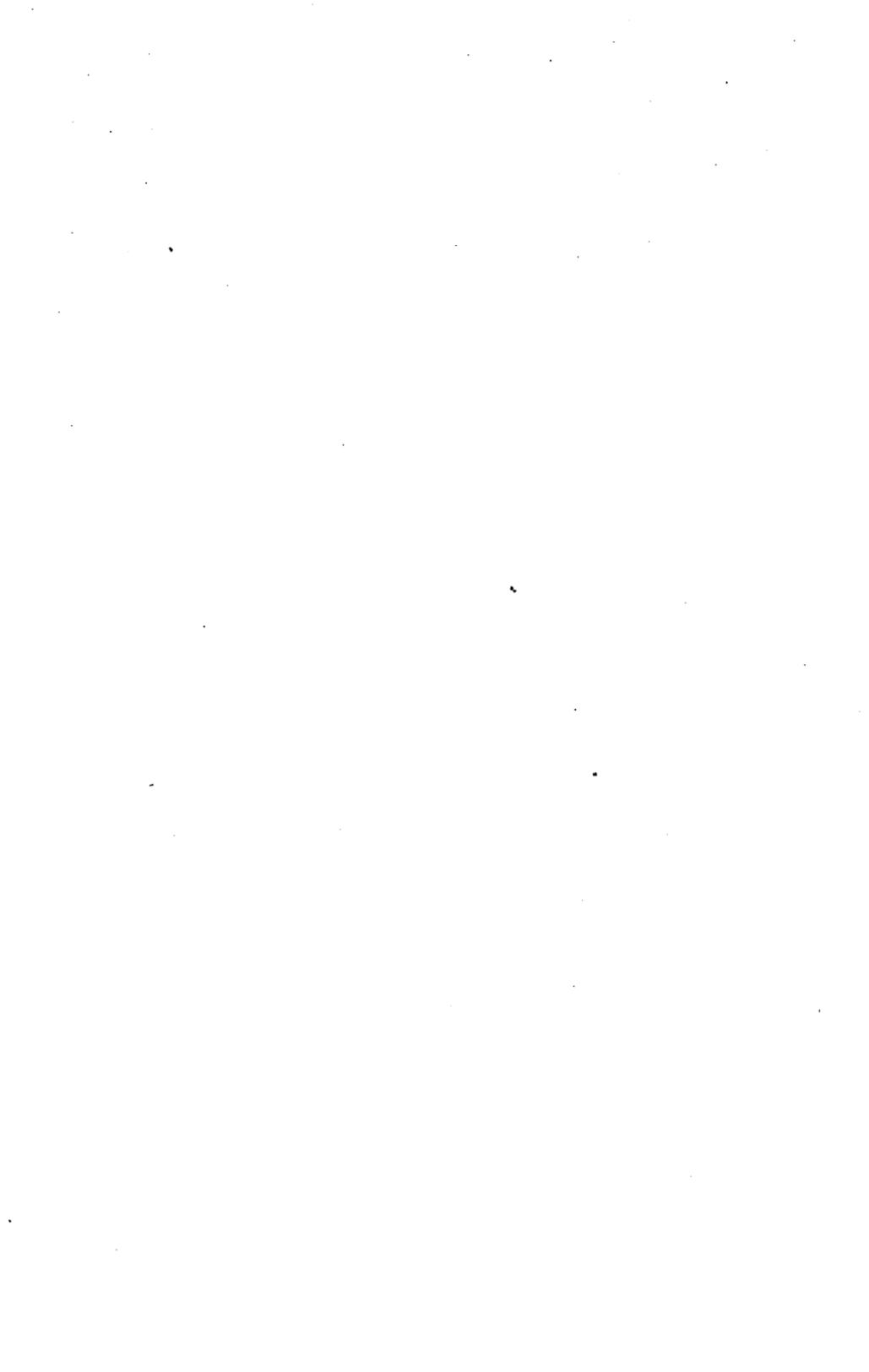




THE CAPUCHINS



VOLUME TWO





SAN LORENZO DA BRINDISI
From a painting by P. Labruzzi CIRCA 1610

FATHER CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C.

THE CAPUCHINS

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CONTENTS

VOLUME TWO

| <i>Chapter</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|---|-------------|
| IX THE CAPUCHINS EVANGELISE FRANCE AND SAVOY .. | 253 |
| X THE CAPUCHINS ENTER GERMANY | 284 |
| XI MORE MISSIONARY PROVINCES | 322 |
| XII FRA CRISTOFORO AND OTHERS | 348 |
| XIII THE FOREIGN MISSIONS | 370 |
| XIV THE CAPUCHINS MAKE LITERATURE | 397 |
| EPILOGUE.. .. . | 429 |
| APPENDIX I | |
| Of the Sources of early Capuchin History .. | 431 |
| APPENDIX II—ILLUSTRATIVE DOCUMENTS | |
| 1. Letter of Vittoria Colonna to Paul III .. | 441 |
| 2. The Capuchins and the Spiritualist Tradition | 447 |
| 3. Extract from a Sermon of Fra Girolamo da Narni on the text " <i>Homo quidam fecit canam</i> "? | 454 |
| 4. Extracts from the Sermons of Fra Mattia da Salo's <i>Delli dolori di Gesu Christi</i> | 460 |
| 5. Extracts from P. Yves de Paris: <i>La Théologie Naturelle</i> | 463 |
| INDEX | 471 |

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME II

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| SAN LORENZO DA BRINDISI | <i>Frontispiece</i> | | | | |
| FRA GIACINTO DA CASALE | .. | .. | .. | .. | 298 |
| LE PÈRE YVES DE PARIS | .. | .. | .. | .. | 414 |

CHAPTER IX

THE CAPUCHINS EVANGELISE FRANCE AND SAVOY

(i)

OF Père Honoré de Champigny¹ the Capuchins of Paris have always been more proud than of any of the remarkable men who, at this period and for some years later, made the Paris friary a centre of attraction ; and this is to the friars' credit as men of a religious profession. For Honoré's pre-eminence was due to his excelling sanctity. Not that he lacked natural qualities of mind and character which in any case would have made his company desirable in a community ; he had in an uncommon degree that calm sagacity which wins trust and confidence where more brilliant qualities often fail ; and for that reason, probably, he was never allowed from the day he was ordained priest to efface himself in the humbler duties of an ordinary friar's life, but in offices of authority continually had to bear the burden of the lives of others. He was a mystic by nature as by grace ; but one of those practical mystics in whom knowledge of the world and the ways of men blend with their searching consciousness of God and the life of the spirit. And with all his gifts for the ruling of men he had the child-like heart which looks to see the good in all things ; the world never soured him, nor did experience mar his cheerful simplicity. His was the earnestness of the unspoilt child. Some friars on their journey once called at the friary of Nancy when he was guardian there. It was a Friday, a day always sacred to Honoré as the day of our Lord's death. They were garrulous

¹ A " Life " of Père Honoré was published at Paris in 1549 by P. Henry de Calais—*Histoire de la vie, mort et miracles du R. P. Honoré Bochard de Champigny*, with a view to the introduction of his cause for canonisation. Owing mainly to the political troubles in France, the cause was not formally " introduced " at Rome until 1870. The process is still in being. cf. E. Mazelin : *Histoire du Vénérable Serviteur de Dieu le P. Honoré de Paris* (Paris, 1882).

with the gossip of the road. Honoré looked at them and reminded them that it was more becoming to observe the day of our Lord's death with silence and penitence than with idle gossip. The simplicity with which he said it shamed their forgetfulness and on their return to their own friary they declared that the guardian of Nancy was a saint. Everyone loved him though his simple integrity somewhat awed them. One may recall an incident when he was preaching a Lenten course in the town of Orange where the Huguenots were a power. The governor, himself a Huguenot, was to make his entry into the city and a contention arose as to whether the Catholic clergy or the Huguenot magistrates should be given the place of honour in the procession. The Huguenots at length declared that the question should be decided by the Capuchin preacher, whose decision they would accept. Honoré gracefully returned the compliment ; it was, he said, for the governor to decide such a matter ; and the governor decided in favour of the clergy. It was a notable achievement in those days of carping hostility. There was a day too, in Flanders, whither Honoré had been sent as visitor of the friaries in that country. With some companions he was making the journey by boat and was about to alight on the river bank when they found themselves in the presence of a posse of Calvinist soldiers in arms against the Spaniard. The friars at once put off again from the bank, but Honoré himself was seized and roughly bidden prepare for the gallows. In his heart he rejoiced that he might die for the Faith he loved—loyalty to one's Faith was veritably a soldier's loyalty in those days. But amongst the Calvinists he espied a French Huguenot. " My friend," Honoré remarked good-humouredly, " to be a mere Frenchman is evidently no safeguard in this country." At once the Huguenot claimed him as a compatriot and led him away to safety ; and at that Honoré felt chagrined ; he had lost his expected martyrdom ! Yet this was the man who was sought after by people of position in the world's affairs, to be their spiritual guide and counsellor. Four times was Honoré elected Provincial of the Paris Capuchins after Henri IV had gained the crown ; and for three years he governed the friars in Lorraine ; and under his rule the Order grew in strength and there began that marvellous activity and missionary

enterprise of which we are about to speak. He was ably seconded in the administration at Paris by Léonard Favre—the seigneur de Querquifirian of the *Penitents Gris*—who outlived him by many years and is regarded by the Paris Capuchins as the greatest of their administrators.² Less of a mystic than Honoré de Champigny, he had more of the statesmanlike quality, a bolder if not a more penetrating genius in what appertained to the destiny of the Order. He was five times Provincial of Paris. It was under his administration that the Paris “Missions” both at home and abroad attained their widespread development; it was he, too, who forced the Roman authorities to give the Order an international, as opposed to a purely Italian, central government, and refused to take part in any General Chapter in which the representatives of the Provinces were not free to speak freely and vote according to their conscience.³

Honoré de Champigny and Léonard Favre were in truth the worthy captains of the Paris Province during the first thirty years and more of the seventeenth century; and they captained as remarkable a company as could be found anywhere in Christendom at that time. Take but the more illustrious of the band: Ange de Joyeuse, Benoît de Canfield, Joseph le Clerc, Yves de Paris, Zacharie de Lisieux, Athanase Molé—men whom the whole nation regarded with awe or respect; with them you must place that group of bold adventurers into unknown lands, Yves d'Evreux, Pacifique de Provins, Claude d'Abbeville and those sturdy warriors of the Lord, Archange de Pembroke, Ange de Raconis, Laurent de Paris, Eusèbe de Merlon, Raphael de Dieppe and Jean-Baptiste d'Avranches. But behind these were those numerous companies who spread rapidly throughout the north and west of France so that in almost every city and town there was to be found a Capuchin friary, whilst other companies went beyond the seas to win new lands to the Faith they loved. It was a marvellous body of men of energy, directed by leaders of large vision and indomitable strength of soul. To tell their story as it should be told would require

² “*Cette lumière séraphique qui a été sur le chandelier de l'Ordre pendant quarante ans, le grand homme*” (*Eloges historiques*, MS., cit., fol. 177).

³ See the documentary evidence in *Le Chapeau cardinalice du P. Joseph* by P. Apollinaire de Valence (Nîmes, 1894).

leisure and opportunity which are not mine ; nor could it be told within the limits set by this book. Here I can but indicate their labours as in barest outline, and do no more than suggest the quality of the men.

It was in the spirit of Franciscan chivalry that they spread themselves out, counting no cost so that they might gain to Christ His Kingdom, even though it might mean for them the martyr's death. A few of them did die at the hands of the Huguenots, and one was eaten by savages in the Caribbean isles. A whole community perished at Calais in 1625, by poison said to have been administered by some Huguenots.⁴ Occasionally preachers were murdered in localities where passion ran high. Thus Père Jerome de Condrieu was brutally butchered by Huguenots near Privas in Languedoc in 1629, during the rebellion of the duc de Rohan.⁵ Such instances of extreme violence were exceptional, but sufficient to put a violent death amongst the contingencies to be faced. But if violent deaths came seldom, hardship and arduous labour and incessant solicitude were a daily portion ; and to the external labours was joined the unmitigated severity of the Capuchin life. As we follow them in their varied activities as preachers, writers and missionaries, we must not forget the home life in which they were trained for their ministry. The author of the *Chronologie Historique*, who knew these men, tells us that at the time when Ange de Joyeuse and his friends became Capuchins, "the ancient fathers of the Province of Paris lived in very great austerity of life, and a sublime poverty showed in all their ways ; the quest brought them in nothing great ; sometimes they went for more than six weeks without eating flesh or fish ; often drinking water for lack of wine."

Probably this extreme lack of even the necessaries of life was due to the wars during which the religious houses suffered severely, and even many abbeys became impoverished. But the chronicles witness to the fervent severity with which the French Capuchins continued to observe the

⁴ Marcellinus de Pise, *Annales Ord. Cap.* III, p. 132 ; *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V p. 27.

⁵ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* VII. cf. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., II, p. 346. See the account of his death given in an edited manuscript by Jacques de Bannes quoted in *Essai sur les origines monastiques dans le diocèse de Valence* (Valence, 1881), p. 99, seq. The name of the author is not given.

Rule and constitutions of the Order ; and as we shall see throughout this period of almost incredible external activity, the French Capuchins were acknowledged masters in the ways of the interior life and of mystical prayer.

Their first campaign was to revive the Faith amongst the indifferent Catholic masses and to rescue the country from the grip of the Calvinist heresy. To this purpose they began to organise their Home Missions immediately after the peace of 1596. In 1608 Ange de Joyeuse, during his brief provincialate,⁶ obtained from the Pope missionary faculties for the preachers to absolve and reconcile heretics to the Church ; and other concessions to facilitate their missionary activities. He claimed in fact all the faculties granted to preachers in missionary countries.⁷ Hitherto, in accordance with the constitutions of their Order, the Capuchins had refrained from hearing confessions and administering the sacraments to the laity. In 1602 Clement VIII had indeed permitted the Definitor General of the Order to grant temporary licences to the preachers to hear confessions ; but it was with reluctance these licences were issued ; it was feared that if the friars became confessors the Order would gradually lose its contemplative character ; nor do the Italian superiors seem to have been able to realise the actual conditions in France and other nominally Catholic countries where the Church was still in real jeopardy.⁸ Certainly so far as France was concerned the General Superiors, as events proved, need not have feared that the contemplative aspect of the Capuchin vocation would be lost sight of. Yet the hesitation was an honourable evidence of fidelity to the primitive Capuchin ideal.

They were prodigious workers those Capuchin missionaries, setting no bounds to the zeal that urged them on. There was for instance Père Palémon, who laboured in Artois ; he would preach three or four times in the day and assemble the poor and the simple folk in the streets to instruct them in the faith.⁹ And too, Eusèbe d'Embrun who traversed Picardy, preaching in six or seven villages or hamlets a day—

⁶ He died that year at Ripoli in Italy as he was returning from the General Chapter.

⁷ *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., p. 184, seq.

⁸ *De confessione saecularium in ordine nostro in Anal. Ord. Cap.*, XIX, p. 251, seq.

⁹ *Bibl. Script. Ord.*, p. 205.

until his superiors forbade him to preach more than thrice in a day. He loved the country folk : he would gather the peasants around him and teach them the Catechism ; he was assiduous in visiting the sick, and when preaching in the towns he did not fail to visit the prisons. The people called him " the holy missionary." He died on a Friday at the hour our Lord died on the Cross, at the age of thirty-three.¹⁰ Of such sort were these men who soon became known in almost every city and town of France and amongst the country folk from Normandy to the Lyonnais and from Picardy to Languedoc. The more notable preachers did not confine themselves to one province but not infrequently were found preaching throughout the kingdom, sometimes beyond. Thus Jerome de Laurens, a noted preacher of Lyons, laboured in Provence and Languedoc, and even in Flanders. He was notable not only as a preacher but as a scholar ; his knowledge of the Scriptures and the Fathers made him a redoubtable antagonist in his disputes with the Huguenots. Henri IV more than once nominated him to a bishopric, but he steadfastly refused the honour ; his heart was in his missionary labours. When in 1617 he was drowned in a storm whilst crossing from Martiques to Marseilles, his obsequies were solemnly performed in a number of the cathedrals of Languedoc and Dauphiné, so keenly was his loss felt.¹¹

Then there was Père Ange d'Abra de Raconis : a Huguenot by birth, his family had narrowly escaped death on St. Bartholomew's Eve. In his youth he had thrown himself into religious controversy against the Catholics until he found himself a convinced Catholic. By public conferences and sermons he afterwards brought many Huguenots into the Church ; one of them was his nephew, Charles-François de Raconis, the brilliant lecturer in philosophy at the Sorbonne, and later bishop of Lavour. His sister, after her conversion, was the friend of Madame Acarie, the reformer of the French

¹⁰ Marcellinus de Pise, *op. cit.*, p. 153 ; *Bibl. Script. Ord.*, p. 82 ; *Eloges Historiques* (MS. cit.), XXI.

¹¹ Marcellinus de Pise, *op. cit.*, p. 93 ; *Bibl. Script. Ord.*, p. 115. See the charming account of the home life of the de Laurens family written by Père Jerome's sister, Jeanne : *Une famille au xvi siècle*, ed. Charles de Ribbe (Paris, 1867). Two of Jerome's brothers were archbishops respectively of Embrun and Arles ; another brother was physician to Henri IV.

Carmelites. Amongst other adventures for the Faith, Père Ange worked for a time in London, as chaplain to the French embassy.¹²

But of all the Capuchin preachers in Paris Père Athanase Molé perhaps was held in special reverence ; his memory was kept green, until the great revolution, by the *Maddalennette*, the home he caused to be founded for unfortunate women ; the first organised attempt to deal with a great evil in the city.¹³ A lovable character he must have been, utterly unconscious of any merit in the work he did, and living only for others. "They say," said Jean Estienne to Père Athanase, "that you do marvels in converting these sad Huguenots." "It is true many come to me and change their religion," replied Athanase, "but it is the good God Who converts them." Jean Estienne, secretary of the chamber of the king, himself afterwards became one of his converts. "He was a man of great wisdom," he wrote, "of sweet and ready conversation."¹⁴

Nor may we leave unnamed the Hebrew scholar, Père Séraphin de Rouen, who is said to have converted three thousand Huguenots in Normandy during his apostolate of fourteen years.¹⁵

These tell us something of the quality of the increasing army of Capuchins who took their place in the front line of the Catholic offensive for the recovery of the Church in France.

Nor were these missioners content merely with the spoken word ; they wielded the pen and wielded it vigorously. Written in the heat of the fray, much of this controversial literature was of ephemeral value ; it was not meant for the student's bookshelf, but for the platform. Probably nobody to-day, at least outside Northern Ireland, would be seriously interested in the book of Père Silvestre de Laval in

¹² Cyprian de Gamachus : *Mémoires de la Mission des Capucins près la Reyne d'Angleterre*, ed. Apollinaire de Valence (Paris, 1881), p. 205, *seq.* ; *Bibl. Script. Ord.*, p. 15 ; cf. Rocco da Cesinale, *op. cit.*, I, p. 167, *seq.*

¹³ From small beginnings the *Maddalennette* quickly grew into two large institutions.

¹⁴ See J. Estienne's account of his own conversion : *Traité de la conversion de Jean Estienne, Secret. de la chambre du Roy* (Paris, 1621), quoted in Rocco da Cesinale, *op. cit.* I, p. 173 ; Villecholle, *Récit d'un grand nombre d'hérétiques convertis par le R. P. Athanase Molé, Capucin* (Paris, 1624), *ibid.*, II, p. 363.

¹⁵ *Bibl. Script. Ord.*, p. 228.

defence of the papacy "against those who denounce the Pope as anti-Christ,"¹⁶ but it did its work. The rapid sale of some of these books proves that there were readers awaiting them. A voluminous work of Père Raphael de Dieppe, an apologia for the faith against all heretics, went through several editions, and in more compendious form was issued especially for Huguenot readers.¹⁷ Père Raphael finished his career as a missionary in the wilds of New England.

Yet it must be remembered that their campaign against the Huguenot heresy was but part of the larger campaign for the renewal of the Faith in the kingdom. The saddest thing of all in France at that time was the widespread ignorance and indifference in regard to religion on the part of large masses who nominally were Catholics; and this was largely the result of the spiritual inefficiency of the body of the clergy. The refusal of the French monarchy to recognise the reform decrees of the Council of Trent had kept in being the flagrant abuses within the clerical estate, which had so much contributed to the Protestant revolt. In the petitions of the French bishops to the Holy See to allow the Capuchins to hear confessions, the reason invariably given was the fewness of competent confessors.¹⁸ If only the Catholic clergy had been as earnest as the Huguenot ministers, it was said, there would have been no Calvinism in France. The wholesale destruction of churches by the Huguenots, wherever they obtained ascendancy, had, moreover, left large bodies of Catholics without any aid of religious rites. After the war of the Ligue, indifference to religion amongst the masses had become an almost greater danger to the Church in France than was the Calvinist teaching.

With these nominal Catholics the Capuchin method was simple and effective. The preachers instructed the people in their religion, and taught them to pray. It was the same method which had already proved so effective in Italy. A Capuchin mission usually included the Forty Hours' adoration;¹⁹ frequently it began with it; in that atmosphere of

¹⁶ *Bibl. Script. Ord.*, p. 231.

¹⁷ *Methode très facile pour convaincre tout forte d'hérétique et particulièrement les modernes* (Rouen & Paris, 1640). The compendium was published in 1645. *Bibl. Script. Ord. Cap.*, op. cit., p. 220. cf. Pellegrino da Forlì: *Annali dell' Ordine dei FF. Min. Cappuccini* (Milano, 1882), I, p. 230, seq.

¹⁸ cf. *De confessione saecularium*, loc. cit. ¹⁹ See *supra*, p. 162 and p. 205.

prayer the preacher appealed to the mind and heart of his audience. Religious processions and pilgrimages to the ancient shrines not infrequently entered into the scheme of the mission ; they were an appeal to the lingering memories of the past, as well as a natural expression of religious feeling.²⁰ These Capuchins understood human nature. Yet they were far from being content with the mere expression. One of the notable features in their apostolate was their insistence on mental prayer as a foundation of true religious piety ; mind and heart must go with the outward expression. It was mainly the missionaries—writing to support their preaching—who produced the numerous books on mental prayer which figure so largely in the *bibliotheca* of Capuchin writers during the Counter-Reformation period.

Doubtless, as contemporary writers universally declare, the austerity, poverty and simplicity of life of the Capuchins did much to gain them a hearing ; their own life gave to their appeal the needful note of sincerity as much with the Huguenots as with the Catholics. In the Huguenot West, as elsewhere, it was to the missions meant primarily for the Catholics, that the numerous conversions of the Huguenots were mainly due. After all, especially amongst the simpler folk many, perhaps most, had adhered to the Calvinist conventicle because religion there seemed a more living thing than in the parish church. When Catholicism came again before them as a vital thing they easily returned to it. Gladly they accepted bread where hitherto they had found but stones. It seems clear, too, that the Capuchins as a body won the respect of the mass of the Huguenots and were received by them with more tolerance than was usually accorded to the religious orders.²¹

(ii)

By 1613 the Capuchin missionaries had spread into almost every province of France. The Cardinal of Lorraine noting

²⁰ Yves de Paris, keen analyst of human nature, refers with wistful appreciation to the processions which entered into the Capuchin mission. *Les heureux succès*, p. 660 ; cf. *infra*, chap. xiv.

²¹ Amongst other evidences is the request of Louis XIII that Capuchins be sent to Le Vigan in Languedoc. He gave as a reason "*que communément ils sont reçus des huguenots avec moindre aversion que plusieurs autres.*" *Histoire des Capuchins*, op. cit., p. 211.

this fact in a letter to the governor of Rheims wrote : " not in one place but in divers provinces and cities of the kingdom they labour with ardent zeal and charity to bring about the salvation of the souls of the faithful ; and by instructions and persuasive sermons, as well as by the example of their holy life, have so succeeded that the fruits of their harvest daily become manifest to all eyes."²² They were particularly active in the provinces where the Catholic Faith was in greatest danger. They had spread over Normandy, where Père Jean-Baptiste d'Avranches, theologian and Greek scholar, had proved himself a persuasive controversialist ;²³ they had penetrated into the Dauphiné, Guienne and into the Huguenot stronghold in Poitou. In the Dauphiné they had as leaders Père Marcellin du Pont-Beauvoisin, " the apostle of the Dauphiné " as he came to be styled ; and Père Etienne de Tende, who with his associates evangelised the valley of Château-Dauphiné.²⁴ But in the Dauphiné it was more easy to convert Huguenots than to arouse the indifferent Catholics. When in 1611 Charles-Salomon Duserre, Bishop of Gap, invited the Capuchins to come and restore Catholicism in his diocese, Père Michel-Ange d'Avignon, during a Lenten course in the cathedral brought back to the Faith forty-four Huguenots, leading men in the city ; but it took Père Marcel de Carpentras and his associates who followed at Gap seven years to bring the Catholics to a sense of their religious duty. Yet the people can hardly be blamed: it was the inefficiency of the local clergy which had let them sink into their indifference.²⁵

In the West we meet with that enigmatic genius, Père Joseph le Clerc du Tremblay, who first appears as an active figure in history in the mission field of Poitou. It is not here we shall pause to consider his multiple activities. For the moment we introduce him to the reader as the strenuous visionary worker and organiser of the Capuchin missions in Poitou and its adjoining territories. He enters

²² *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 59.

²³ Père Jean-Baptiste was of humble birth and had worked himself to fame when he was invited by Clement VIII to Rome to codify the Greek manuscripts in the Vatican library. Whilst thus engaged he became acquainted with the Capuchins and entered the Order. Marcellinus de Pise, *op. cit.*, p. 76, *seq.* ; *Bibl. Script.*, p. 140.

²⁴ *Bibl. Script. Ord.*, p. 177.

²⁵ *cf.* G. Fagniez : *Le Père Joseph et Richelieu* (Paris, 1894), I. p. 296, *seq.*

on the scene at Saumur in 1606 in the course of a preaching tour. He had been a priest two years, and like many of the missionaries, had taught theology before he became a missionary. At Saumur he came into controversy with Duplessis-Mornay, governor of the town—he who had written a book on the Mass ; and it was indicative of Père Joseph's future career that in Saumur, under the nose of this *Pape des Huguenots*, he founded a Capuchin friary.²⁶ From that beginning Père Joseph began to take an ever-deepening interest in the religious problems of the West. The situation was difficult for Catholicism. Many of the higher nobility were Huguenots and most of the land was farmed or owned by Huguenots ; and the tenants followed the religion of the land-holders. As in the Dauphiné and wherever the Huguenots had long dominated, the Catholics were sunk in religious indifference or tepidity. Under the leadership of Père Joseph, Capuchin missions were established in Poitou, Niort, Saint-Maxence and Loudon ; camping-places of men inspired by an enthusiasm similar to his own.

But this was only the preparation. In 1617 Père Joseph launched the organised missionary enterprise, largely the creation of his own mind, which was to be carried out by an *élite* corps of specially chosen friars. The immediate objective was Poitou ; shortly it extended to other provinces.

These new missions were organised on an intensive war footing and armed with every missionary faculty, and dependent on the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office,²⁷ so that the missionaries once sent could not be recalled without the permission of the Congregation ; in other words they were "apostolic missionaries" like the missionaries sent to the Indies and lands of the infidels ; but it is to be noticed that they had a special faculty not needed amongst the infidels, that of absolving priests guilty of simony. Père Joseph was appointed superior of the mission. At first this missionary band numbered six friars ; in a short time it increased to twenty.

²⁶ G. Fagniez, p. 283, *seq.*

²⁷ After 1622 these missions came under the jurisdiction of the newly-established Congregation of Propaganda Fide.

The work was solemnly inaugurated on Christmas Day at Lusignan. It began with the Forty Hours' adoration; then followed sermons and conferences. From the neighbouring country crowds came to listen to the missionaries; the churches proved inadequate to hold the congregations and the mission had to be conducted in the open air. As it was at Lusignan so it was at Thouars where the Huguenot duc de la Trémoille ruled, and at Odet. At Thouars the mission was marked by a resumption of the ancient pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Notre-Dame des Ardilleurs at Saumur. Such was the immediate success that new missionaries had to be at once recruited. During the first ten years of this Apostolic Mission the conversions amongst the Huguenots were estimated at fifty thousand. Amongst the Catholics there was a veritable revival of faith; and at the same time there came a change in the lives of the clergy, numbers of whom were aroused to a sense of their priestly vocation and pastoral duty.²⁸

A similar Apostolic Mission was undertaken by the friars of Languedoc in 1619; and in 1629 another, manned by friars from Provence, invaded the Cevennes.²⁹

The Languedoc Mission had for its objective Béarn within the shadow of the Pyrenees. The missionaries were chosen from the most pious and learned members of the Languedoc communities; for Père Daniel de Saint-Sever did not underestimate the intellectual and polemical ability of the Huguenot ministers of the kingdom once ruled by Jeanne d'Albret. Jeanne might be heartless, but she was fastidious as to the intellectual quality of her Calvinist ministry. Père Daniel was himself a scholar; he was a doctor in theology and was reputed for his knowledge of oriental languages.³⁰ Amongst his associates were Père Simon de Mont-de-Marsen, of whom the chronicler of the Guienne Capuchins writes: "he was a man of fascinating conversation, loved and honoured by the great, strong and powerful in controversy: he gained a great reputation in Béarn, particularly in Pau, where he was generally esteemed by great and lowly, by Catholics and Protestants alike."³¹ Another was Père Pascal de Tarbes,

²⁸ cf. *Relatio generalis Pictaviensis PP. Capuccinorum* (Roma, 1888), a report sent to the S. C. of Propaganda in 1629 giving the number of conversions down to 1628; cf. Fagniez, loc. cit., I, p. 292.

²⁹ cf. *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., I, p. 184, seq.

³⁰ *ibid.*, II, p. 272.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 324.

learned in Canon Law and at one time the idolised leader of the students in the university of Toulouse; noble and generous in disposition but a redoubtable debater.³²

For nigh on sixty years Calvinism had ruled in that mountain-shadowed kingdom of Béarn since Jeanne d'Albret with bloody hand introduced the reformed religion amongst her subjects. Hers is a brutal story of a brutal age. In Béarn now part of France since Henry of Navarre became his Christian Majesty, the provisions of the Edict of Nantes granting Catholics in Huguenot territories liberty of conscience had been even more ignored than in other Huguenot strongholds. The bishops under the king's protection had returned to their dioceses, but theirs were dioceses with hardly a church and with but few priests. In their need the bishops called in the Jesuits and Capuchins to succour their flock and reorganise the Church.

Père Daniel preached the Advent sermons in Pau in 1619: the church was little more than a shed, but half-roofed. It was the first time a priest had publicly preached in Pau for fifty years. When he passed on to organise the mission in other centres, he left in Pau Père Simon de Mont-Marsan to carry on the work. Two years later when Louis XIII visited the town in his progress through Béarn, the inhabitants petitioned that a Capuchin friary should be established there, and with the king's aid a church and friary were built. It was the beginning of numerous Capuchin settlements in the Huguenot-ridden territories bordered by the Pyrenees; settlements which everywhere marked the progress of the Capuchin effort to win back the country to the Catholic Faith.

(iii)

Yet in those early years of the seventeenth century the religious effort in France was far from exhausting itself in the struggle between Catholicism and the Huguenots. As elsewhere—in Italy and Spain for instance—Catholic piety had awakened to a new and deeper life and had cast off the sterilising depression which had weighed it down a century before. The early dawn of the Catholic Reform movement

³² *ibid.*, p. 379.

had given place to the vigour and labour of the day, a day alive with definite movement and absorbing purpose. The Catholic spirit was awake ; it had cast off the nightmare of its helplessness in the clutch of a rampant worldliness and advancing heresy. No longer did it feel helpless, but was buoyant with the self-confidence of its renewed youth ; and in nothing more clearly did this confidence show itself than in the new mystical piety which had already renovated the religious life of Italy and cast a golden haze over the Church in Spain, and was now working for the regeneration of Catholic life in France. As it was in the mystical piety inspired by the contemplation of the Sacred Humanity of our Lord that the Faith was reborn in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, so now did it receive a new life from the new mystical piety of Christ's nuptials with the souls of His true followers

Its appearance in France—as also elsewhere—was ushered in by a reform of the cloister. In Italy it was in the cloisters both of men and women that the flame of the new piety and reform had blazed up ; in Spain, St. Theresa had eclipsed in renown St. Peter of Alcantara and even St. John of the Cross ; in France “the great abbesses,” if they did not lead the movement, yet are as outshining stars in its firmament. No history of the religious revival in France can fail to tell of Madame Acarie and the reform of Carmel ; of Marie de Beavilliers, Marguerite d'Arbouze, Madeleine de Sourdis, Antoinette d'Orléans and the Benedictine reforms of Montmartre, Val-de-Grace, Saint-Paul-de-Beauvais, and Calvary.³³ These reforms were social events in the religious life of France ; their influence was felt far outside the cloister. And in the working out of these cloistral reforms all that was most vigorous in the new spiritual France came together ; Jesuits and Oratorians, rare spirits of the new type of secular clergy, Carthusians, reformed Benedictines ; and with them the Capuchins.

Amongst the earliest counsellors of Madame Acarie was Benoît de Canfield. It was he who in the strange ways by which she was set apart from the world of fashion, discerned the leading of the Divine Spirit. But it was more particularly with the reform of the Benedictine nunneries that the

³³ cf. Henri Bremond : *Histoire Littéraire du Sentiment Religieux en France*, II:

Capuchins were concerned. These nunneries, many of them, had become little more than comfortable clubs, eminently respectable but lacking the conventual spirit, still more lacking the Benedictine spirit of self-sacrifice and contemplative prayer. The nuns had their private incomes, and their separate tables to which they invited their friends ; the Divine Service was part of the routine of the day, it was hardly the engrossing occupation of their life ; they did not mingle in the outside world, but the world had a great freedom of entrance into the abbey. That was the state of things which the new mystical piety came to remedy.

The reform of the Benedictine nunneries began at the abbey of Montmartre in Paris. The nuns of Montmartre had a good name for regularity of religious life until the wars of religion had reduced to poverty so many of the abbeys and churches of France. It was the poverty of the common life that had led the nuns to seek a greater comfort in the retention of their own incomes for their personal use ; whilst the general social demoralisation caused by the wars had led to laxity of religious observance. In 1597 Marie de Beavilliers, a nun of the abbey of Beaumont-les-Tours, was appointed abbess of Montmartre ; she was but twenty-three years of age, but had been a professed nun for seven years. At Beaumont, Marie de Beavilliers had been unhappy with the highly respectable but easy-going observance, she had longed for the stricter life of the true Benedictine community. At Montmartre the coarser worldliness of the nuns offended even lax Beaumont. Strange though it may seem, Montmartre sheltered two souls of exquisite saintliness, Catherine and Marie Alvequin, who later were to reform the Augustinian Penitents of Paris : to these the coming of Marie de Beavilliers seemed God's answer to their prayers. But no sooner did the young abbess show her determination to restore order and insist on regular observance than the community rose in rebellion and as decidedly refused to obey. At this point Père Benoît de Canfield comes on the scene. Marie de Beavilliers took him as her director and counsellor. Père Benoît already was reputed a master in the spiritual life and many sought his counsel. But if Marie de Beavilliers expected him to assist her at once to reform her community, she was quickly disillusioned. Instead,

this master-mystic put the abbess herself to school, to learn the ways of the Lord ; during the year she was under Père Benoît's direction she was set to learn to govern herself in the hard way of the mystical life. The account of the conferences in which the director schooled the abbess shows us Père Benoît initiating his disciple into the mysteries of the divine union of the soul with God ; long silences interrupting the discourse when, caught up into the mystery, Père Benoît sat motionless and in rapture of spirit. Thus began that mystical revival which eventually was to make Montmartre a nursery of mystics, and through the reformers sent out to reform other nunneries, to spread far and wide the pure white flame of mystical piety. At the end of a year Père Benoît relinquished his charge as the director of Marie de Beavilliers, to return to his native England as a missionary; but he left with her a treatise that was to be amongst the most cherished works on which the mystical revival of the seventeenth century was fed during many years, his book *Le Règle du Perfection*.³⁴ Before his departure from Paris, he commended the spiritual care of Montmartre to Père Ange de Joyeuse, and it was during the two years that he directed the community that the rebellion was subdued and the greater part of the nuns became the whole-hearted disciples of the abbess. Benoît de Canfield had formed the spiritual life of the Abbess ; Ange de Joyeuse set himself to win over the community ; his combined firmness and affability gained the victory.

From Montmartre the reform spread to the abbey of Val-de-Grace when Marguerite d'Arbouze, a disciple of Marie de Beavilliers, was appointed abbess of that royal abbey; and amongst Marguerite's most intimate counsellors was the venerable Honoré de Champigny. When shortly after she assumed the government, the abbey was transferred to Saint-Jacques in Paris, Père Honoré, then Provincial, appointed the Master of the Capuchin Novices to give regular conferences to the nuns, and especially to instruct them in mental prayer.

Père Honoré had already been instrumental in bringing about the reform of the priory of Saint-Louis de Vernon, and of the abbey of Montvilliers in Normandy. Still

³⁴ cf. *infra*, chapter xiv.

earlier in 1607, he had stood valiantly by Madeleine de Sourdis in her reform of Saint-Paul-les-Beauvais. Madeleine de Sourdis was cousin to Marie de Beavilliers and with her had taken the nun's veil at Beaumont-les-Tours. Hardly had she arrived at Saint-Paul-les-Beauvais when Père Honoré made her acquaintance, and at once recognised the high character and deep spirituality which was to place her amongst the great reforming abbesses of the time. Père Honoré had long prayed for the reform of Saint-Paul, to whose generosity the Capuchins of Beauvais owed much, and now in holy conspiracy with the young abbess, he began frequently to preach to the nuns urging them to a stricter observance of their Rule and teaching them the ways of the interior life. His exhortations had their effect. On 8 June, 1607, the nuns assembled in Chapter unanimously resolved to give up their private incomes and accept the common life. That was the beginning. Before long Saint-Paul was a model Benedictine community.³⁵

His next act was to overcome the scruples of the saintly Etienne Carion, chaplain of Beauvais Cathedral, to undertake the spiritual direction of the community. In his solicitous care for the Reform, Père Honoré associated with himself Benoît de Canfield, who, after several years imprisonment in England, had been expelled from the country and had returned to Paris, and, too, Ange de Joyeuse and that other master of the spiritual life—also an Englishman—Père Archange de Pembroke. Like Montmartre and Val-de-Grace, Saint-Paul quickly became a centre of the spiritual life of France; there as on common ground and drawn by a common sympathy met the religious forces that were working for the spiritual regeneration of the country.

Hardly less remarkable was the congregation of reformed Benedictines of Notre-Dame du Calvaire, founded in 1617 by Madame Antoinette d'Orléans, daughter of Léonor, duc de Longueville, under the direction of Père Joseph du Tremblay. The formation and spiritual development of this congregation was one of the life interests of that many-sided genius; and his spiritual conferences to the Filles du

³⁵ *Histoire des Bénédictines de l'Abbaye de Saint-Paul* (Archives de Beauvais) quoted by F. Mazelin, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

Calvaire would alone have given him a place in the history of religion in France.³⁶

It is in truth difficult to over-estimate the part played by these reformed nunneries in the making of the new spiritual France. They drew their mystical fervour from all that was most vigorous in the religious life around them, and in turn transmitted their own renewed piety through the length and breadth of the country ; not only in the cloisters but in the court and the châteaux from which their numbers were recruited. The reform of the nunneries was in fact as much apostolic work as was the conversion of the Huguenots and the uplifting of the faith of the Catholic masses.

(iv)

In that revival of mystical piety which was the spiritual backbone of the Catholic Reformation movement, not only in France but throughout Catholic Christendom, the Capuchins worked indefatigably. Their achievement in this respect is indeed their chief claim to a remembrance in history. But of that we shall speak elsewhere ; as also of the new peril to the Catholic Faith into which the Capuchins were drawn when they had hardly won their spurs in the struggle with the Huguenots—the peril of Jansenism.

For the moment we will follow them in another of their adventures, their services to the sick in the years of the dread pestilence which swept over France at the beginning of the second quarter of the century. It came to add yet greater misery to a people harassed by wars and struggling under the economic distress caused by the wars and the general disturbance of the kingdom ; and the suddenness with which it struck now in one district and now in another added to the terror. Many were the Capuchins who died at their posts of duty during the scourge ; many more were those who volunteered to fill the gaps caused by death in the brave service of the stricken populations ; and in after years it was not forgotten how in every district at the news of an outbreak the Capuchins were among the first to give their services. Amongst those who died, victims of their charity, was the great-hearted Père Alfonse de Rouen. His had been a long

³⁶ cf. H. Bremond, II, p. 187, *seq.*

record of service in the care of the sick in the ever recurring epidemics, when in 1633 news came to him of the sore straits of the town of Orange. He at once set out on the long road from Normandy. Four hundred lay stricken in the hospital on his arrival in the town; and the whole place was in mourning. Day and night he laboured by the beds of the sick and dying, both as priest and nurse, till in sheer pity the townspeople, Huguenots as well as Catholics, took charge of him who had no thought for himself, and plied him with gifts of food and comforts—most of which, however, went to the needy poor. When the worst was over at Orange, news came that his native city was now in the grip of the plague. Worn out as he was, he returned to Rouen and with two other Capuchins took charge of the hospital. But two months later he himself was stricken and died; and shortly after his two companions fell sick and died also.³⁷ Of similar fame was Père Bernardine de Chaumont, who after serving the stricken people of Montbeliat in Burgundy, died in service in the hospital of Lyons in 1636.³⁸ More than eighty Capuchins died of the pestilence in Burgundy in the great outbreak of 1636.³⁹ In 1630 seventeen Capuchins died in ministering to the souls and bodies of the stricken people in the Dauphiné; they nursed Huguenots and Catholics with the same charity.⁴⁰

Further south in Languedoc the pestilence appeared in 1627 and quickly spread from town to town. For five years it raged, wearing down the spirit of the people by reiterated outbreaks. No more poignant story of simple heroism can be found than the plain narrative of events told by the Capuchin chronicler of Languedoc. "I now undertake," he writes, "the recital of the most lamentable events save the desolation wrought by the civil wars, that befell this province of Capuchins since its foundation; those of the general pestilence which ravaged a great part of this kingdom and hurled itself upon the towns within the boundaries of this province." He then tells how the pestilence broke out at Saint-Flour in Auvergne and from there was brought to Figeac by a

³⁷ Pellegrino da Forli, *op. cit.*, I, p. 87, *seq.* Altogether Père Alfonse had spent fourteen years in the service of those stricken by pestilence.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 210.

³⁹ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 147; Pellegrino da Forli, *op. cit.*, I, p. 213, *seq.*

⁴⁰ Fagniez, *loc. cit.*, p. 297.

voiturier at the time that the Capuchins were preaching the Advent sermons in the town. The people prayed, but the pestilence took its course ; everyone fled who could ; and there were not sufficient priests to tend the sick. The town consuls came to the Capuchin friary and pleaded for aid in succouring the sick. " One morning the Guardian assembled his religious and explained the public calamity that had befallen the town, and the request the consuls had made. He then directed the priests to say mass and the other religious to communicate, with the intention of obtaining from God the light needful to show them how they should act in this crisis. After that he enquired of each one separately what he was disposed to do. All asked to be employed in the service of the sick, each alleging in his own favour some reason for preference." Eventually the Guardian chose two of the strongest—Père David de Gimont and Frère Georges de Mirande. These " bade farewell to the brethren and betook themselves to the huts of the plague-stricken at the commencement of the year 1628. Their presence in this place of sorrows was a great consolation to the unfortunates whom the plague had brought together. But Frère Georges was attacked by the contagious disease and died on 25 April. Three other martyrs of charity succeeded him and gained the same palm. They were PP. Martineau de Bordeaux, Bruno de Rodez, Cassin de Castelnaudary . . .

"After the death of Frère Georges the sickness developed in so intense a fashion that all the inhabitants and even the consuls thought well to leave their houses and go into the country to breathe a purer air. Hardly had the inhabitants left the town than the Huguenots, who were still in rebellion in these parts, came to ravage the country. The magistrates placed some soldiers to guard the town and gave the command to one of the principal townsmen. After five days the commandant was stricken ill with the plague and died. His successor perished likewise after about four days ; and now nobody was willing to accept the dangerous post. Then the magistrates and the people prayed Père David to re-enter the town and take the command. . . Père David excused himself, alleging his incapacity and the spirit of his holy profession ; but he was overcome by the prayers of the magistrates and the tears of the people. So he took command of

the town. Every evening he entered the town and gave his orders to the soldiers and made his rounds during the night. Every morning he left the town and returned to the plague-stricken and gave himself to the needs of the victims. He continued this rôle for five months with indefatigable zeal, occupying himself equally with things spiritual and temporal, administering the sacraments and distributing the *vivres*.

“Sauveterre, a large town in the diocese of Rodez, was the second place where the plague showed itself in the year 1628 . . . Here we have not a friary ; but as the people had always been most attached to us, they had recourse to us in their great need. . . As the police in this town were unequal to the various exigencies of the situation in establishing services for the sick and the dead, our religious were constrained to add to the administration of the sacraments all other needful duties. Often must they take up with their own hand and carry to the grave the bodies of those who had been dead five or six days, which they found at the entry of the houses or outside the doors. This contact settled their infection and their death, which happened at the end of June.”

And so the narration continues, taking town by town. At Parmiers two of the first three volunteers died within a month and their places were taken by others in the plague-encampment ; the same happened at Castelnaudary and at Castelsarrasin. At Saint-Antonin many Huguenots were converted at seeing the charity of Père Antoine de Toulouse, whose companion died of the plague. At Béziers, Frère Didace fell at his post : knowing that he must die, he leaned against his bed, and sang the *Te Deum* “with a powerful voice not ordinarily found in the dying.” Ten others died in the service of the sick in that year 1628 ; and yet more in the four years following. It is a noble record.⁴¹ The French Capuchins in their marvellous activity as preachers of the Word had not forgotten the Gospel warning, that it is not they who teach but they who do and teach who are great in the kingdom^{of} of heaven.

⁴¹ *Recueil chronologique . . . des Capucins d'Aquitaine* quoted at length in *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., I, pp. 378-418.

(v)

Meanwhile across the border of the French monarchy in the dominions of the Duke of Savoy, but in that part of the Duke's territories united with France in the bond of a common language, the Capuchins had done valiant duty in the swift campaign which had made the Chablais once again a Catholic land and had rescued the Vallais from the impending subjugation of that country to the Protestant supremacy of Geneva. At the time when this mission was undertaken, the Capuchins in Savoy were still under the jurisdiction of the Capuchin province of Lyons. Such was the success of the mission that fourteen years later Savoy was erected into a missionary province of the Order under its own superiors : for here as elsewhere the mission led to the establishment of friaries to consolidate the work of the mission.

It was, as has been said, a swift campaign, particularly in the Chablais ; which seems to prove that here as in many other parts, the people had submitted to Calvinism without true conviction. Their hearts had not gone over with their change of opinion, though for a time they clung with a militant obstinacy to the opinion they had embraced. Hardly otherwise can we explain the reconversion of the Chablais to the Church and the saving of the Vallais, an incident of first importance to the cause of Catholicism in France, establishing an outpost against the still menacing designs of Geneva ; and it was the first notable success in the extended missionary campaign to break the Calvinist hold on the entire Alpine borderland of Piedmont and Lombardy.

Since 1595, Capuchin missionaries had been at work side by side with the Jesuits in the Alpine valleys on the confines of Savoy and Piedmont, where the Waldenses, supported by the Calvinists, had suppressed the exercise of the Catholic Faith and seized the churches of the Catholics. Padre Valeriano da Pinerolo—himself a native of the district—had been the organiser of this mission. The pastors, as one would expect, were violently opposed to the invasion, and it would have gone hard with the missionaries had not the Duke of Savoy intervened to protect them and to forbid the coercive measures taken by the pastors to prevent the people from listening to the missionaries' preaching. Given an open

field the Capuchins made headway with their incessant preaching and their public conferences with the pastors. In the Val di San Germano, Padre Filippo da Pancaliero, in 1596, received the abjuration of over six hundred of the valley folk, and in three years his converts numbered thirteen hundred.⁴²

About the same time that this mission was launched, the Duke of Savoy petitioned the Capuchins of the province of Lyons to send missionaries to assist in reclaiming to the Catholic Faith his duchy of Chablais.⁴³ That territory had been occupied by the government of Berne in the days of Duke Charles the Good, and during the occupation Catholicism had been stamped out with all the energy of Calvinist intolerance. Not that the Calvinists met with any firm resistance; it was the common story of a weak faith giving way before the strong. And now, though the territories had been again returned to the successor of Duke Charles, the Calvinist faith still ruled, and the Catholics were but a handful.

Two years before the coming of the Capuchins, François de Sales—that second St. Francis whom everybody loves—had begun his apostolate in the Chablais, and for two years had laboured heroically without any sign of success. Had he listened to the advice of others he would have given up the thankless task; but François de Sales was of heroic build: his heart was in the conversion of this people, and his only reply to the critics was to call for a more intensive apostolate,

⁴² *Histoire Abrégée des Missions des Pères Capucins de Savoye par le Père Charles de Genève 1657 traduite en François par le Père Fidèle de Tallisien, Capucin, 1680.* (Chambéry, 1867.) Père Charles wrote his memoirs of the mission at the instance of the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide and the Papal nuncio at the court of Turin. He had been himself one of the missionaries whose labours he describes. The original Latin manuscript seems to have disappeared. Though written to preserve the memory of the part taken by the Capuchins in the conversion of the Chablais and the Vallais, the history has been well described as “*un monument de la plus éminente sainteté et à l'héroïsme du dévouement de l'immortel François de Sales*” (Editor's Preface). It is to be regretted that the editor of Père Fidèle's translation has not subjected it to a critical examination. It is evident that Père Fidèle interpolated more recent events in the last chapter of Père Charles' work since he records events of the years 1658, 1660 and 1686

cf. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., I, p. 202, seq. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, V, pp. 133-135. Boverius, *Annales, anno 1596*, 4.

⁴³ cf. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., I, p. 247, seq.; Boverius, *Annales, anno 1596*; *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, V, p. 137.

and the calling in of the Jesuits and Capuchins to assist in the work. To the Capuchins were at first assigned the vallaiges of Gaillard and Ternier ; whilst François continued his seemingly hopeless labour in Thonon. The task of reclaiming to the Church the vallaige of Gaillard, under the very walls of Geneva, was given to Père Chérubin de Maurienne. He was a man of remarkable pertinacity and daring ; a robust fighter and a hard hitter, yet withal a merry fighter with no strain of bitterness towards his worst enemy. Soon the pastors and politicians came to hate him, the people to give him the admiration his clean fighting deserved. Between him and Saint François was quickly formed a close friendship, such as men of different characters but a common intense loyalty are apt to form. Saint François admired Chérubin's selfless audacity ; Chérubin, Saint François' wisdom and sanctity. And Chérubin was eloquent with a forcible eloquence such as the people love. The magistrates of Geneva forbade the people to attend his sermons ; Chérubin flooded the city with leaflets inviting the Genevese to come and listen : and the people came. Then the magistrates endeavoured forcibly to prevent them ; and the people asked why they were afraid ; and continued to come in spite of magistrates and pastors ; and conversions became common. Chérubin's weapon was his use of the Scriptures, in the knowledge of which he was a master. He challenged the pastors to public conferences. At first they came readily, later not so readily, and eventually the magistrates of Geneva forbade the conferences : meanwhile Chérubin's converts increased. In September 1597 he launched his first great offensive at Annemasse over against Geneva. With permission of the bishop, Claude de Granier, he held the devotion of the Forty Hours' adoration of the Blessed Sacrament which as we have seen was a main arm of attack in all Capuchin missionary enterprises.⁴⁴ The devotion was published far and wide, even by means of leaflets in Geneva itself. From all parts of Savoy Catholics came to be present ; whilst Calvinists from the immediate district and from Geneva joined in the crowd. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed for adoration on the richly decorated altar of the oratory ; outside in the open air was the pulpit. The

⁴⁴ Charles de Genève, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

Catholics from distant parts came in organised bodies, walking in procession, and as each body arrived they halted at the pulpit, and a sermon was preached ; then followed the service of adoration. It is said that thirty thousand people took part in the devotion ; and in his report to the Duke of Savoy, Chérubin stated that five thousand Calvinists made their abjuration. The pastors of Annemasse fled to Geneva, leaving the churches in the hands of the Catholics. Thereupon Geneva appealed to Berne, and the Bernese threatened Savoy with war. Savoy at the moment was watching France and could not afford a war with Berne. Chérubin, therefore, was transferred to Thonon, but his work in the Gaillard was continued by his associates. At Thonon he found but a dozen Catholics, the first-fruits of the heroic apostolate of Saint François ; but the Saint had sown the seed which the robust Capuchin was to reap. Undaunted by the issue at Annemasse, Chérubin at once adopted the open offensive in Thonon. Hitherto mass had been said but privately ; Chérubin said mass publicly in the church of Saint-Hippolyte of which the Catholics had part use. He preached, too, in the public squares and on market days in the market place. A minister was brought from Lausanne to debate with him in public conference. Chérubin met him smilingly—Chérubin's smile was one of his assets—and in the opinion of the audience he held his own. So matters went on for some months, during which Chérubin claimed and obtained the exclusive use of Saint-Hippolyte. Then in September was held the Forty Hours' adoration. From Savoy, Burgundy and Switzerland came crowds of pilgrims to take part in the devotion ; they numbered in all about twenty thousand persons. It was a great festival. On the first day the bishop, Claude de Granier, "reconciled" the ancient church of Saint-Augustin which sixty years before had been taken by the Calvinists, who had broken down the altars. Now the Calvinists voluntarily brought back the consecrated stones, and the altars were restored ; and mass was sung solemnly for the first time since the Calvinists had taken Thonon. From various parishes came processions of Calvinists to make their abjuration in the hands of the bishop ; from Bellevaux came three hundred ; from St. Cergne came another three hundred, bringing with them a cross that for

many years had been kept by the villagers secretly ; two hundred came from Fessy and sixty from Pergny and a few from the city of Geneva and even from Berne. The processions and sermons continued day and night. On the second day, François de Sales preached : it was the harvest at last for which he had laboured with unquenched zeal and hope during two desolate years.

The following year, 1598, the devotion was again held with enhanced solemnity ; and this year the Duke of Savoy and the Papal nuncio, the Cardinal de Medici, took part. Calvinism in Thonon finally capitulated ; Veret, the last of the ministers left for Geneva ; and Thonon was once again a Catholic town ; practically the whole population had returned to the Catholic Faith.⁴⁵

Chérubin's work was now to secure the ground gained and to extend the Catholic conquest. At his suggestion provision was made by the Pope and the Duke of Savoy for the maintenance of the parish priests who were now installed in the restored churches ; but his chief work was the establishment at Thonon of the Sainte-Maison, under the patronage of our Lady of Compassion, as a centre of missionary activities.

The project of the Sainte-Maison had been in Père Chérubin's thoughts for some time before he went to Rome in 1599. It seems to have started with the idea of a house where poor converts, suddenly deprived of means of sustenance by their abjuration of Calvinism, might be temporarily sheltered ; and where the missionary priests might have a lodging or a rest between their missionary journeys. By the time he went to Rome the scheme had enlarged itself in his mind ; it was to include a training institute for priests destined to undertake the work of the missionary, and a school for the teaching of letters.

Clement VIII entered whole-heartedly into the scheme, and by a bull dated September 15, 1599, authorised its foundation and the appropriation of certain benefices towards its maintenance. François de Sales was nominated as its first prefect, and the organisation committed to Père Chérubin.⁴⁶ The Duke of Savoy gave generously to the

⁴⁵ cf. Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1601, 1.

⁴⁶ Charles de Genève, *op. cit.*, p. 80, *seq.*, and p. 108, *seq.*

foundation,⁴⁷ and to assist the work a confraternity of our Lady of Compassion was instituted with the Pope's approval. To inaugurate the scheme, Clement VIII at the petition of the Duchess Marguerite of Savoy, granted the extraordinary favour—as it was in those days—of a Jubilee, to take place at Thonon and to last two months. The Jubilee was fixed to begin at Pentecost 1602. It was published not only in Savoy but in Switzerland and the adjoining provinces of France, Germany and Milan. The magistrates of Berne took alarm and closed their frontier to any transport of food into the Chablais; the governor of Savoy took counter-measures to ensure a food supply. During the two months of Jubilee one hundred and sixty-two thousand pilgrims came to Thonon to make their confession and gain the indulgence. One hundred confessors had been brought to Thonon to hear confessions. Each day four sermons were preached. The Jubilee completed the conversion of the whole of the Chablais. That same year, on September 17, the festival of the stigmata of St. Francis, Bishop de Granier died; and François de Sales succeeded him as Bishop of Geneva.⁴⁸

Père Chérubin was now commissioned by the Pope to undertake a missionary campaign to save the Catholic Faith in the Vallais.⁴⁹ Unless succour be sent at once, the Pope told him, the Vallais will be totally lost to the Catholic Faith. The Vallaisons, as a chronicler remarks, were neither Catholics nor Calvinists so far as the people generally were concerned; the nobles were Huguenots. The Catholic clergy still held the churches, but they did not trouble the consciences of their reputed flock, being themselves for the most part as indifferent to religion as were the people.

Père Chérubin still busy with the foundation of Sainte-Maison at Thonon, despatched Sebastien de Maurienne and Augustin d'Asti. They took up their residence at St. Gingez, which lies on the Savoy side of the river which divides the Vallais from Savoy, since the temper of the Vallaisons was uncertain; the magistrates of Berne having sent warning to beware of the Capuchins. For some time the two mis-

⁴⁷ See also his letter in favour of the Capuchins of June 20, 1601. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, V, p. 127.

⁴⁸ Since Geneva had come under Calvinist rule the Bishop of Geneva had his residence at Annecy.

⁴⁹ cf. Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1601, 4, seq.

sionaries crossed the river each morning and laboured in the immediate country around Montey ; each evening they went back to St. Gingez. At length the inhabitants of Montey gave them a hospice in the town. One Sunday they went to Saint-Maurice, and preached four sermons to the people. When they were about to return to Montey in the evening, the townsfolk begged them to remain the night and preach again on the morrow ; and so it happened every day for three weeks. At the end of that time the parish priest, who had been absent, returned and his alarm was great when he learned what had taken place ; he feared the wrath of the Huguenot seigneurs. Yet being a good man he entertained the two friars at his table and begged them to lodge in his house. So there they remained, preaching daily and holding conferences with the Calvinist ministers. On Christmas Day three Calvinist families made their abjuration. As to the Catholics hitherto indifferent, they seemed eager to accept the ministration of their Faith now offered them. At Martigny the friars met with less welcome on the part of the people ; there Calvinism was a more positive force. At first the preachers met with insults and mockery and even blows ; till, won by their patience and the simplicity of their life, the townsfolk relented and came to the friars to apologise for their ill-treatment. After that they listened willingly. The Capuchins now preached every day in the church or the market place. This aroused violent opposition on the part of the ministers, who sought to prevent their preaching on market days, urging that the preaching interfered with business, and would ruin the markets. Finally the magistrates of Berne intervined and threatened the Bishop of Sion with reprisals if the Capuchins were allowed to remain in the country. The bishop, whose philosophy was to avoid trouble if he could, ordered the governor of the Vallais to expel the Capuchins within three days ; the governor refused, saying he would resign the governorship rather than hand over the Catholics to the wolves. Thereupon the bishop took courage ; he invited the Capuchins to send preachers to the episcopal city itself, and issued letters patent recognising the mission and the Papal faculties accorded to missionaries.⁵⁰ Meanwhile some of the missionaries had penetrated

⁵⁰ cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, V, p. 128.

into the higher valleys, but there they were met by the language difficulty ; the people in the higher valleys spoke German. A messenger was therefore sent to the Capuchins in Switzerland begging them to undertake the mission in these parts ; and so it was arranged.

But now a further trouble arose. The bailiff of Sion, Jossin, a Calvinist, learning that the Capuchins had been invited to preach in the city, entered into communication with Berne and Geneva ; with the result that a new demand was made to the bishop to expel the Capuchins from the Vallais. Such was the news that greeted Père Augustin on his arrival at the episcopal palace. The canons of the cathedral were in a panic of fear ; the bishop was too indisposed to receive the preacher whom he had invited. None knew what the issue might be ; it was feared that the Calvinists in the valleys, aided by Berne, would rise and drive out the bishop and seize the churches as they had done elsewhere. In this predicament, Père Augustin bethought him of Père Chérubin as the one man who might save the situation ; and set off for Thonon to bring him to Sion.

Père Chérubin arrived at Sion in time for the Eve of the Ascension. It was the great festival of the year and from all the outlying parishes the people came to the city to take part in the religious services. The redoubtable dean of the cathedral invited Chérubin to preach at the festival, but the Calvinists declared that should he attempt to mount the pulpit, they would kill him. Some of the Catholics fearing for his life, now begged him to desist and leave the city. Chérubin smilingly replied that he was in God's hands, and went to the pulpit guarded by Riedmatten, the dean. Chérubin, as we have said, was an eloquent preacher ; but it seems his sermon that day was a marvel of tact as well as of eloquence. Some Calvinists attempted to make a demonstration ; the people—*le petit peuple*—forced them to desist. Chérubin by his address won their hearts.

After that he remained some time in the Vallais, preaching in the towns and countryside ; and during that time he induced the Duke of Savoy to remit a portion of the debt due to him from the Vallais.

In 1604 the diet met, and notwithstanding the violent opposition of the Calvinists, declared by a majority of votes

that the Catholic religion was the religion of the Vallais, and ordered that the Capuchins should be everywhere received without molestation. At that the Calvinist minority rose up in armed rebellion; they numbered in their ranks the greater part of the landed "seigneurs." Aid was sent to the Catholics from Savoy and the Catholic cantons of Switzerland; and the Catholics were thus enabled to hold their own. The Calvinists then appealed to France, declaring that the Capuchins were working in the interests of Savoy and Spain. In the political situation of the time it was a subtle move. The king of France directed his ambassador at the Roman Court to ask for the recall of the Capuchins; but on enquiry the Pope exonerated the friars from any political intrigue, and they were left to carry on the mission.

Meanwhile Père Chérubin had returned to Thonon to direct the organisation of the Sainte-Maison, and the extension of missions in the Chablais and its adjoining territories; and to that work he gave the remainder of his days. In 1611 he was in Rome on business concerning the missions. The Capuchins of Savoy were now formed into a separate missionary province; and further Papal provision was made for the work of the Sainte-Maison. But Chérubin had come to the end of his labours; on his return journey he fell sick at Turin, and died on 20 July. One thinks of him as a man of splendid energy and a disarming smile.⁵¹

He died, but his works remained. Under the Italian, Diego da Cittanova, who became head of the mission in 1613, the work developed. Diego had been a lawyer and judge in his native Marches of Ancona before he became a Capuchin. He was a man of wide vision, and of an energy hardly less incisive than that of Père Chérubin. Under Diego's direction the Sainte-Maison began to send out "flying squadrons"—*missions volantes*—to minister to the needs of the Catholics in territories far and near; they were eventually to be found in the lands of Berne and the Vaud, in the district of Gex, in the Alpine Valle d'Aosta and even in the Calvinist districts of Burgundy.⁵²

⁵¹ See besides Charles de Genève, *op. cit.*; *La Vie du P. Chérubin de Maurienne*; (Paris, 1911); Rocco da Cesinale, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 247-317.

⁵² cf. Charles de Genève, *op. cit.*, p 181, *seq.*; Rocco da Cesinale, II, p. 296 *seq.*

The work of these "flying squadrons" was often done on the road. They made friends with the wayfarers they met ; they mingled with the labourers in the fields ; under the open sky they instructed and preached. The Calvinist peasantry in time looked for their coming and came to meet them on the way, bringing their sick and their children to be blessed. And not only the peasantry. Even in Berne and Lausanne, well-to-do Calvinists at times offered their hospitality, and kept them for days to discuss religious doctrines. "Had they been Catholics," says the chronicler of the Mission, referring to the Calvinists of Berne and Lausanne, "they could not have received us more affectionately ; so many good gestures could not but be presages of the desire they had to be converted who showed such goodwill to the missionaries."⁵³ But not everywhere was the harvest so plentiful as in the Chablais where François de Sales had watered the soil with his tears and prayers.

⁵³ Charles de Genève, p. 182.

CHAPTER X

THE CAPUCHINS ENTER GERMANY

(i)

THE Capuchins first entered Germany in 1593, in which year they were invited by the Archduke Ferdinand to make a settlement at Innsbruck.¹ Here they were in the midst of a Catholic population, but not far off on all sides they were encircled by militant Protestantism. On the one side lay Switzerland, where friars were already carrying on an energetic missionary campaign, and also the Grisons, that hotbed of Calvinism where twenty years previously they had made an heroic effort to succour the oppressed Catholics and where twenty years later they were to make a second and more successful invasion; to the north lay Bavaria and Swabia where the struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism was still bitter; whilst to the east in the further dominions of the Hapsburgs, it could hardly yet be said that Catholicism was in the ascendancy, notwithstanding the Catholic character of the Hapsburg rulers. Of the friars who settled in Innsbruck it has been said, such was the example of their holy life that the piety of the people was enkindled; and as time went on they were invited to establish other friaries not only in the Tyrol, but beyond in Bavaria and Franconia.² In 1596 they were established in Salzburg; in 1600, in Munich; sixteen years later the first friary was founded in Franconia at the invitation of the Prince-Bishop of Wirzburg.³

At Salzburg their friend was the Prince-archbishop Wolfgang Theodoric, he who sought to make his city another

¹ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 123, *seq.*; *Anal. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 108.

² *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 123.

³ Concerning the Capuchin Province of Franconia, see *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 165, *seq.*; *Origo et erectio antiquæ Provinciæ Franconicæ* in *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, XIX, p. 183, *seq.*

Rome not only in faith but in the splendour of buildings ; and at first it was a sore point with him that the Capuchins would accept no building but such as manifested their devotion to poverty.⁴ Maximilian I, who welcomed the friars to Bavaria, understood them better. Their poverty and simplicity appealed to his own deeply devout spirit ; he himself was no stranger to the penitential garb.⁵

In 1597 came a call from Bohemia. Early in that year Zbyneck, Archbishop of Prague, with the consent of the Papal nuncio Aldobrandini, wrote to the General of the Capuchins, to send workers to his diocese " to bring back to the Catholic Faith those who had wandered from it."⁶ He wrote a few months later to Cardinals Camerini and Paravicini, inviting their mediation with the Pope and the Capuchin General that Capuchins should be sent to Prague :⁷ with the result that two years later thirteen friars were despatched under the leadership of Lorenzo da Brindisi, a Definitor General of the Order.⁸

That was the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Capuchins and their adventures in the work of the Counter-Reformation. Before this new chapter came to a conclusion, the Capuchin Order was to be spread over every state of Southern Germany from the Tyrol to the confines of Poland and Croatia ; and even in Poland the friars would be known by individual missionary workers. Six Capuchin provinces were thus to be founded in Southern Germany besides two on the Rhine, which were of separate origin.⁹

The course of these early adventures in Bavaria and the dominions of the Hapsburgs is in the main dominated by three strong personalities, Lorenzo da Brindisi, Giacinto da Casale and that encyclopædic genius known to posterity as Valeriano Magno—all three Italians, though the last was in

⁴ *Chronica Bavaricæ Capucinatorum Provinciæ* (Augustæ Vindelicorum, 1869), p. 10.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 171.

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

⁸ On July 7, 1598, Cardinal San Giorgio had written to the Archbishop of Prague, announcing that the Pope had given an order that twelve Capuchins should be sent to Prague, and asking the Archbishop to arrange accommodation for them on their journey from Innsbruck, *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 177.

⁹ The six provinces were Tyrol, Bavaria, Franconia, Bohemia, Austria-Hungary and Styria. Those on the Rhine, founded from Flanders, were Cologne and the Rhine province.

part of Polish origin. They were ably supported by friars of German birth; such as Ludwig von Einsiedln, a converted Lutheran and notable preacher;¹⁰ Samuel von Grieffenfels, a saintly religious and able administrator:¹¹ and later, Procopius of Brandenburg, who worked manfully for the reformation of the clergy as well as for the revival of faith amongst the Catholic laity.¹²

Yet it is the three Italians who hold the stage and give a distinctive interest to the history of the Capuchins in Upper Germany and the Hapsburg dominions during the first half of the seventeenth century.

Lorenzo da Brindisi¹³ was of Venetian origin, of the family of Rossi, not unknown in Venetian politics. His father had taken service with Ferdinand I of Naples, and so it happened that Lorenzo was born at Brindisi; but at his father's death he was sent to Venice to complete his schooling. As a boy he was of an unusually serious cast of mind, fonder of religious exercises than of games: he was studious, given to much reading; but his mind was of the acquisitive sort rather than the speculative; and he had a natural facility for languages. In later years he himself declared that if the Bible were lost he would be able to dictate both the Old and the New Testaments in their original Hebrew and Greek texts!¹⁴ He could preach in French, German, Spanish and Hebrew besides his native Italian. At twenty-three whilst

¹⁰ *Chron. Bavar. Cap. Prov.*, op. cit., p. 11, seq.

¹¹ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 176.

¹² Procopius was not only renowned as a preacher; he was also a voluminous writer. He is said to have published two thousand six hundred and seventeen books and pamphlets! cf. *Bibl. Script. Ord. Cap.*, op. cit., p. 217.

¹³ Summarium Proc. Bonaventura da Coccalio: *Ristretto istorico della vita . . . del B. Lorenzo da Brindisi* (Rome 1783), published on the occasion of the saint's beatification; Anthony Brennan: *Life of St. Lawrence of Brindisi* (London, 1911), based mainly upon the foregoing *Ristretto istorico* and the letters of the nuncio Spinelli in the Vatican Archives (unfortunately it is insufficiently documented); but for the labours of San Lorenzo in Germany, see his own narrative written at the command of the Minister General and edited by Père Edouard d'Alençon, with copious extracts from the hitherto unedited letters of Spinelli and others in the Vatican Archives and the Bibliotheca Angelica: *De S. Laurentio a Brundusio documenta inedita in Anal. Ord. Cap.*, XXV, p. 79, seq. and XXVI, p. 53, seq.; see also the documents edited for the first time concerning Lorenzo's embassy to Spain in 1618-1619, *ibid.*, XXXVI, p. 138, seq.

¹⁴ He attributed his knowledge of Hebrew to the special aid of the Blessed Virgin before whose statue he was accustomed to study the Scriptures on his knees in an attitude of prayer.

yet in deacon's Orders he acquired repute as a preacher in various cities of Italy. Provincial Minister in Tuscany when but thirty-one years of age, he was elected Definitor General at thirty-seven. Meanwhile he had been drawn to undertake a special apostolate for the conversion of the Jews. He preached to them in their own tongue, and prepared himself for the work by mastering the more famous Rabbinical writings. Such was his reputation that Gregory XIII and Clement VIII both invited him to Rome to preach to the Jews there. He made many converts, yet continued in friendly relations with the rabbis and the Jewish population generally wherever he came; only once in Venice did a section of the Jews show any hostility to his preaching. The reason given for this general friendliness was his perfect courtesy.

The picture we have of him shows a man of commanding presence, grave and imperturbable; he had a piercing glance and a decisive turn of speech softened by a quiet smile which often played around his lips; a man of few words except when occasion demanded or when he was deeply stirred, and then his words would flow forth in unpremeditated eloquence but always to the point. In his humility he preferred to obey and serve; but when duty obliged him to rule and direct, he ruled with the decision and natural assumption of authority which belongs to the born ruler; nor would any human respect tempt him to shelve his own responsibility. Quietly but firmly he once reminded the Papal nuncio, Spinelli, that he was the superior of the friars, and reversed the nuncio's appointment of chaplains to the imperial army in Hungary;¹⁵ and in France when making his visitation as General of the Order, he intervened with seemingly a high hand in the elections of a provincial chapter.¹⁶ Men stood in awe of him; yet admired and revered him. He lacked perhaps the qualities which excite an affectionate comradeship; but he never lacked a devoted—if a somewhat awed—attachment from those with whom he worked. For many years before his death he was spoken of as "the saint"; in his journeys through Italy people would run to catch a

¹⁵ *Documenta inedita, Anal. Ord. Cap.*, XXV, p. 138.

¹⁶ *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., I, p. 277.

glimpse of him and to ask his blessing when the cry "il santo" announced his approach.¹⁷

But he himself thought of nothing but of the service he must render to the Lord he served ; he lived but to do his duty. When at length he lay dying at Lisbon, it was with the serenity of one who knew no will but the will of his Lord.

Such was Lorenzo da Brindisi who in the summer of 1599 assembled his small band of twelve friars at Venice, and having consecrated them to the service to which they were called, set forth with them to traverse on foot the long road, which lay through the Tyrol. They reached Vienna in August. Leaving part of his band there, Lorenzo pressed on to Prague, where he was received by the Archbishop and lodged in a hospital, till a friary could be built for the friars on ground adjoining the imperial gardens. At the time of their arrival sickness of a pestilential sort was raging in the city, and the friars gave themselves to attending the sick in the hospital : but on Sundays and feast days Lorenzo preached in the hospital church, and notwithstanding the sickness the church was filled with citizens curious to hear the preacher.

The reception of the friars by the city itself was of a mixed character, and for the most part disconcerting. Prague was not yet a Catholic city ; its population was typical of the population of the Hapsburg dominions at the time. On the whole the popular sentiment was Protestant rather than Catholic ; or of that confused sort which inclined towards Protestantism in doctrine and religious services even when not definitely committed to a breach with Rome. The symbol of this confused sentiment was the communion under both species which Ferdinand I had wrung from the Holy See on the supposition that such a concession would save the Hapsburg dominions from following the complete apostasy of the Protestant North. The result was that with large numbers of the people it was difficult to say whether they were Protestants or Catholics ; whilst the greater number of the land-owners and well-to-do citizens were confessedly in opposition to the Church. To all these the coming of the Capuchins was a challenge. At first the well-

¹⁷. cf *infra*, chapter xii.

to-do portion of the populace met the challenge by throwing ridicule on these men whose dress symbolised a poverty and uncouthness which offended the social respectability and commercial success of the new gospel. The Capuchins could not appear in the streets but they would be greeted with cries of derision, of which the least offensive was "Bare-feet !"

But soon derision gave place to violent hostility as Lorenzo's sermons began to be discussed and talked about. Once as he was crossing the old bridge of Prague, a crowd set on him and would have thrown him into the river but for the timely intervention of the nuncio's nephew who happened to come on the scene in company with some youthful friends.

Meanwhile in Vienna the Capuchins were experiencing an even more violent opposition from the Protestants ; the house in which they lodged was attacked by a mob and the superior narrowly escaped being shot.

Then in the summer of 1600 Rudolf II returned to Prague ; the nervous disease from which he was suffering had become more acute ; melancholia and delusions had supervened. He had welcomed the coming of the Capuchins and contributed towards the building of the friary ; now he took a sudden dislike to them and was persuaded they had designs on his life. The diet which met at Prague later in the year decreed the expulsion of the friars from the kingdom ; Rudolf at the intervention of the Papal nuncio and the archbishop refused to sign the decree, but a little later under the delusion that their presence in the city was the cause of his illness, he ordered them to leave ; then as suddenly he revoked the order, crying out that they were protected by a Power greater than he. During these mad crises, Lorenzo acted with supreme tact. He was dealing with a case of insanity and shaped his course accordingly. His acquiescence in the invalid's moods at last turned suspicion into confidence ; and Rudolf now left the friars in peace.

In the meantime, Lorenzo had paid a visit to Vienna and had founded a friary there, and at the request of the Archduke Ferdinand had sent friars to make a settlement in Gratz. This had meant the bringing of another contingent of Capuchins from Italy ; and amongst the new-comers was

Benedetto of the Passionei of Urbino, a persuasive preacher, whose power lay in his manifest holiness.¹⁸

In Germany, as in France, the friaries became centres of an intense missionary activity both for the revival of the faith of the indifferent Catholics and for the combating of militant Protestantism; and not only did the preachers occupy the pulpits in the cities, they spread abroad into the country districts to instruct the peasantry,¹⁹ and, as in France, adopted the system of Apostolic Missions for regaining certain districts to Catholicism.²⁰ And in Germany as elsewhere the Capuchins worked to revive the faith by means of devotion to the Eucharistic Presence. They established confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament, preached the devotion of the Forty Hours' adoration, and fostered the practice of frequent communion. In Munich their first act was to establish such a confraternity and a monthly day of adoration in the friary church; ²¹ moreover they instituted penitential confraternities to combat the general licentiousness in the cities. Such was the confraternity of the Passion, established in Prague at the time Fra Mattia da Salò was preaching there. The members dressed with austere simplicity, practised bodily mortification, heard mass daily and were active in works of charity. On Good Friday they went in procession through the streets of the city; some of them clothed in the white garb of a penitent, flogged themselves with the discipline as they went along; others, dressed in black robes, carried emblems of the Passion. These processions, it is said, deeply stirred the faith of the Catholics and were witnessed with respect by the Protestants.²² In such wise did the main body of the Capuchins work for the recovery of the Catholic Faith throughout Southern Germany.

¹⁸ Benedetto was beatified in 1867; cf. *Bullard. Ord. Cap.*, X, p. 527 Concerning his connection with the Mission in Germany, see *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, XXVI, p. 156, *seq.*

¹⁹ *Chron. Bavar: Cap. Prov.*, p. 26.

²⁰ The Missions in the diocese of Salzburg were undertaken at the request of Archbishop Sittich in 1613. See the Archbishop's letters in *Bullard. Ord. Cap.*, IV, pp. 124-125. They were reconstituted in the eighteenth century. *ibid.*, pp. 143-151. In the constitution of Archbishop Leopold the office of the missionaries is "to go from place to place and from house to house, catechising and instructing the peasantry, etc."²¹

²¹ *Chron. Bavar. Cap. Prov.*, p. 11.

²² *Bullard, Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 277, *seq.*, where the brief of Paul V is given confirming the statutes of the confraternity.

Their story is one of unostentatious patient endeavour, of daily difficulties unflinchingly faced amidst the turmoil and bitter animosities of the warring religious bodies and later of the devastating wars to which the religious turmoil was to lead. The witness of their silent heroism lies in the continuously growing settlements they effected throughout the warring land and in the affection of the people who stood by them in all that period of dire trouble. No better witness could they desire.

But our story must necessarily be of the men who heartened and led them, and who played the more manifest part in history. So we return to Lorenzo da Brindisi.

It was in the second year of his mission, 1601, that the opportunity came which was to impress his personality on the imagination of the country and some years later to bring him into the high politics of the empire. That opportunity was the renewed offensive of the Turks in Hungary. Canescha had fallen before their assault, and for the moment the Estates of the Hapsburg dominions had hushed their religious controversies and declared their support of the war to repel the invading foe. The Pope had sent an army to assist the Emperor ; it was a war between the Crescent and the Cross. With the Papal army twelve Capuchins had been sent as chaplains ; and the Pope ordered Lorenzo da Brindisi to supply four chaplains to the imperial forces. At the request of the Archduke Matthias, Lorenzo himself went with the army. Early in October the imperial forces came into touch with the Turks at Stuhlweissenburg—the Alba Regale of the old Hungarian monarchy. Lorenzo had been active amongst the Catholic troops, preaching and administering the sacraments in preparation for the approaching battle. To the Lutheran contingents his presence was a source of merriment and mockery : “ Wolf-monk ! Wolf-monk ! ” they sang out whenever they gained sight of him. The fighting was at first inconclusive ; the Turks held their strong position in the hills, and the imperial forces had suffered much loss. Doubtful of success, the imperial commanders contemplated a retreat. It was then Lorenzo intervened. He scouted the idea of a retreat, and urged a massed attack. When the command still wavered he urged the more insistently, pledging his word that he himself would

lead the army to victory in the name of the Cross. His personality bore down opposition. For four days the fighting continued: Lorenzo rode at the head of the troops, holding his crucifix aloft and with his words heartening the men. Wherever the battle was hottest, there rode Lorenzo. Then occurred one of those strange happenings not unknown in battles. Wherever Lorenzo appeared the balls from the Turkish artillery fell harmless ; to the troops—Lutherans and Catholics alike—he seemed protected by some invisible force, and there came to them the conviction that with him at their head victory was certain, and they followed him unwaveringly into the thickest of the fight. By the evening of 14 October the Turkish force was broken and in flight. The victory of Stuhlweissenburg had again saved the empire ; and it was to Lorenzo that both the leaders and the men attributed the victory.²³ After the battle a number of the Lutherans were reconciled to the Church ; and later, not a few of those who had followed Lorenzo in the fighting, followed him to the cloister and became Capuchins.

The following year Lorenzo was elected General of the Order and had to leave Germany, to the regret of the Emperor and the nuncio. But his heart was with the German mission, and to supply his place in Prague he sent thither the veteran preacher, Mattia da Salò, who a quarter of a century before had done such good work in France. Mattia was now over seventy years of age, but the fire of youth was still in him. As a preacher and writer his fame had travelled beyond the confines of Italy ; and at Prague, during the three years he was there, he did gallant work in reviving the Faith and combating the teaching of the Lutherans.

Lorenzo himself returned to Prague in 1606. After the General Chapter of 1605, when he laid down the office of General, he had retired to Venice wishful for the solitude of a friar's cell ; but solitude was not for him. Bishops called for him to preach in their dioceses ; the Emperor commissioned him to settle a quarrel between the Duke of Mantua and one of his vassals ; and in 1606 the Pope, at the Emperor's request ordered Lorenzo to return to Prague as Commissary

²³ *Summarium Process*, 85 seq. ; see the letter of Urban VIII to the Emperor-elect, Ferdinand II, December 28, 1624, in *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, II, p. 292.

General of the Capuchin Missions in Southern Germany. And now he was to display on a larger scale the commanding qualities he had shown in the military operations at Stuhlweissenburg.

All students of German history know of the affair of Donauwörth, and how from a contention between the town and the Benedictine abbey, was struck the spark which set Germany at war with itself for nigh fifty years. The free town of Donauwörth, unimportant otherwise in history, was typical of the Protestant ascendancy in this, that whilst claiming the benefit of the peace of Augsburg in all that benefitted the Lutherans, it had persistently curtailed the liberty of worship which the treaty had given the Catholics. For instance, the Benedictine monks by right of the treaty should have been free to carry out the liturgical processions of the Rogation Days as had been the custom for centuries ; but the Lutherans of Donauwörth had insisted that the processions be shorn of their proper solemnity and that the monks should confine their procession to a back lane in the vicinity of the abbey, and even so should not unfurl their banners. The monks had submitted for a time, but in 1606, when the Rogation Days came, the abbot was no longer willing to slink along a back lane with furled banners, and boldly asserted his right to march forth with becoming dignity. At that the Lutherans had assailed the monks, and broken up the procession.

Lorenzo da Brindisi, on his way to Prague some months later, came to the abbey and heard the story from the abbot. He himself was not a man to sit down tamely when justice or the liberties of the Church were at stake, as the Duke of Mantua had already learned. On his arrival at Prague, he took up the case of the abbey, both with the Papal nuncio and the Court. The Court was inclined to leave the matter alone ; to Lorenzo this attitude was an illustration of the vacillating weakness which had done infinite harm to the Catholic cause.²⁴ He continued to urge that justice should be

²⁴ For the part played by Lorenzo see his own narrative, *Anal. Ord. Cap.* XXV, pp. 201-211. He adds simply : “ *fu cosa notoria a tutti che se non fusse stato a Praga fra Lorenzo da Brindisi, il quale non senza grand rossore de ministri di Cesare ne fece pin volta passata in pulpito riprendendo il poco zelo della Religione Catholica, non sarebbe fato niente, temendo di non irritare con quest’ attione gl’heretici e cagionare guerra nell’ Imperio.* ”

done to the abbey, and as private expostulations bore no fruit he publicly denounced from the pulpit the slackness of the Imperial Court in defending Catholic liberties. Eventually, as we all know, the Aulic Council delegated Maximilian of Bavaria to deal with the matter, and Donauwörth was forcibly compelled to forgo its usurped rights and to admit the liberty of Catholic worship ; even to receive the Jesuits. Duke Maximilian had rightly regarded the affair of Donauwörth as a test case and had dealt with it accordingly.

The Protestant states now took up the challenge ; none of them but was in the same legal or illegal position as small Donauwörth in regard to the peace of Augsburg ; and they were in no mind to recede from it. There came the diet of Ratisbon some months later. The Catholics were willing to confirm the peace of Augsburg with a clause that " whatever had been done in contravention of the same should be abolished, and things restored as before." But that was just what the Protestants were determined not to agree to ; and the diet broke up without any decision being arrived at. How the Protestant princes then entered into the League of the Union and swore to maintain themselves if need be by force of arms, need not be described here ; nor how they were abetted by the insurrection in Hungary and Austria and the bloodless revolution in Moravia which gave the government of these states to the Archduke Matthias. For the moment the fate of Catholicism lay in the balance. Matthias was indebted for his crown to the Protestants and paid for it by a policy of concession. The Emperor Rudolf had become little more than a figure-head, and Matthias, the future emperor, was suspected of a leaning towards Protestantism. The political disunion of the Hapsburg princes threatened to create a Protestant ascendancy in the empire just when Catholicism had begun to recover the ground it had lost in the earlier days of the Protestant revolt. But at that moment, Maximilian of Bavaria came forth as the leader of the Catholics : together with seven Ecclesiastical princes he formed the Catholic League sworn to defend the Catholic cause. But the League as thus constituted could not hope to stand against the Protestant Union ; it looked for allies in the Ecclesiastical Electors, in the zealous Arch-

duke Ferdinand, and above all in the King of Spain. Without their support the League could prove no effective force against the Union and the vacillating weakness of the House of Austria.

Such was the situation when, in 1609, the death of the Duke of Julich and Cleves without an heir threw the question of the succession into the already seething cauldron; and Protestants and Catholics became alert to secure the accession of the duchy to their respective territories. Both parties felt that a trial of strength could not long be delayed.

To secure the assistance of Spain was the pressing need of the Catholic League, and Lorenzo da Brindisi was chosen by the Duke of Bavaria, with the concurrence of the Spanish ambassador to the Emperor, to go to the Spanish Court as the League's envoy. Lorenzo's task was difficult enough. The King of Spain expressed his willingness to give support to the League, but manifestly resented the leadership of Bavaria as a reflection on the house of Austria. Negotiations dragged on : Lorenzo appealed to the king's reputation as a Catholic prince and to his own political interest in supporting the League; pointing out that the triumph of the Protestant princes in Germany would react on affairs in the Netherlands. Under the spell of Lorenzo's personality the king at length promised to send supplies to the Spanish ambassador in Prague, and to raise two regiments of infantry and one of cavalry : with that promise Lorenzo left Spain. The nuncio at Prague and the cardinals at the Papal court were dissatisfied with the meagreness of the promised support ; still more so when it became known that the promised supplies were conditional on the princes of the Austrian house joining the League. But Lorenzo, in an interview with the Pope, reassured His Holiness ; and then by the Pope's order went to Munich to assist as adviser to the Duke of Bavaria and as chaplain-general to the League's forces.²⁵

As Lorenzo had shrewdly surmised, the mere promise of support from Spain would make the German Protestant princes and their Dutch ally pause before committing themselves to war. Meanwhile he worked to gain adherents to the League amongst the Catholic princes; no easy task

²⁵ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, II, p. 289. For the documents relating to Lorenzo's mission to Spain, see *Anal. Ord. Cap.* XXV, p. 248, *seq.*

because of the divisions inspired by private interests which existed amongst the Catholic princes. Eventually the Archduke Ferdinand joined as co-director of the League with the Duke of Bavaria.

Lorenzo remained for three years in Munich as adviser to the duke in the formation of the League ; but his work was not wholly connected with politics. Always he was first the missionary-preacher. When affairs permitted he went on missionary tours in the neighbouring territories, sometimes to the danger of his life. He is said to have brought many Lutherans back to the Church. With Catholics in high position, whose lives were a scandal, he dealt with unflinching sternness. It was noticed that never did his serenity desert him, whether in diplomatic difficulties or in his dangerous adventures in Protestant districts during his missionary tours. Once when Rudolf II attempted to browbeat him in some negotiation concerning the proposed marriage of King Matthias and the Princess Elizabeth of Bavaria, Lorenzo calmly remarked : "A flea can do as much mischief as an elephant : I shall pursue the course that I believe to be in the interest of the Catholic Faith." His unruffled serenity and his single purpose were his strength.

In 1613 he felt that his work in Germany was accomplished and finally returned to Italy. His life there for the next six years was a triumph of the spiritual grace that was in him. Wherever he went men flocked to look upon the saint and to ask his blessing or counsel. More than once the friars had to smuggle him out of the town to avoid the continuous incursions of the crowds into the friary to gain his blessing or his prayers. In 1618 he was again withdrawn from the missionary labour he loved, and commissioned by the Pope to negotiate peace between the Duke of Savoy and the Spaniards concerning the Mantuan succession. The next year, at the Pope's command, he undertook an embassy to Spain on behalf of the Neapolitan estates, to bring to the king's notice the iniquitous tyranny of the viceroy, the Duke of Ossuna. He bade farewell to Italy, knowing that he would not return. He died at Lisbon on 22 July, 1619. At once his body was taken possession of by King Philip as the body of a saint, and secretly transported to the royal convent of Poor

Clares at Villafranca in Galicia ; and from all the Catholic princes, with whom he had had dealings, came requests to the Holy See for his beatification.²⁶

(ii)

Giacinto da Casale brings us into the midst of those events which for a time consolidated the Catholic power in Southern Germany, and promised yet further gains to the Catholic Church in the Protestant North.

In the history of the Counter-Reformation there is perhaps no more humiliating page from the point of view of the Catholic apologist, than that which tells how, in the hey-day of its triumphant march, the Catholic power in Germany was thrown back by political animosities and intrigues amongst the Catholic princes themselves. As has been often pointed out, the weakness of Protestantism throughout the long struggle of the Counter-Reformation lay in the religious disunion of the Protestant bodies ; the weakness of Catholicism in the political disunion of the Catholic powers. Constantly in critical moments the Catholic States betrayed the cause of their common faith for the sake of their separate political ambitions ; and in no instance more lamentably to the political interests of Catholicism than in the events which resulted in the Thirty Years War. It is, of course, a question whether the spiritual interests of Catholicism would have been ultimately benefited by its political ascendancy ; politics and religion are seldom close friends even when they are close allies ; yet the fact remains that the political disunion of the Catholic States, which resulted in the Thirty Years War, not only arrested the growing ascendancy of Catholicism in Germany and eventually welded Northern Germany into a strong Protestant power but further gave the Protestant powers the political ascendancy in Europe, notwithstanding the abortive military glory of France under Louis

²⁶ See the letters of the Archduke Ferdinand and the Duke of Bavaria in *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* II, p. 292 ; IV, p. 154. The process was at once begun by the diocesan ordinaries, but it was not until 1783 that Lorenzo was beatified. (*Bullar. Ord. Cap.* IX, p. 172.) He was canonised by Leo XIII in 1881. Lorenzo's voluminous writings are being prepared for publication by the Capuchins of Venice.

XIV. In the end perhaps Catholicism was spiritually the stronger for being shorn of political power and prestige ; yet in the mighty struggle of the seventeenth century, who could have ventured to predict it ? At the moment Protestant political ascendancy had everywhere meant the forcible suppression of Catholicism. So much must be said if we are rightly to judge of the part taken by such men as Giacinto da Casale in the events of their time.

Giacinto, by right of birth Conte d'Alfiano,²⁷ was one of the most powerful preachers of his day ; to an aristocratic training at the Court of Mantua he united sound scholarship and extraordinary holiness of life. By preference he would have chosen the primitive hermitage of his Order with occasional excursions into the world of men to preach the Word of God. He loved solitude and only imperative duty drew him from it ; he shrank from honours and applause with a sensitive shrinking. Spare and emaciated in build and of a delicate constitution, he seemed to live by spiritual vitality ; his eyes, as seen in his portrait, were frank and fearless.

He had first come to Germany in 1606, and had won repute in Prague by his fervent preaching ; he had worked too to bring about a reconciliation between Rudolf II and Matthias of Hungary. Then he had returned to Italy where his preaching wrought marvels of conversions and excited extraordinary enthusiasm.²⁸

In 1613 came his first diplomatic mission : in that year he was commissioned by the Pope to accompany Cardinal Madruzzi to the diet of Ratisbon. It was a momentous assembly inasmuch as it directly led up to the trial of strength which had long been foreseen. The princes of the Protestant Union would not recede from their demand for an elected Aulic Council which would strengthen their cause ; the princes of the Catholic League were equally determined to

²⁷ Marcellinus de Pise : *Annales*, t. III, p. 673, *seq.* ; *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* III, pp. 229-289 ; P. Venazio da Lago Santo : *Apostola e Diplomatico : Il P. Giacinto da Casale Montferrato, Cappuccino* (Milano, 1886) ; *Rocco da Ceasinale*, op. cit., II, p. 539, *seq.*

²⁸ "Fu il P. Giacinto ammirato da tutta Europa e un oracolo di dottrina e un esemplare di virtù e legittimo erede d'un spirito veramente apostolico e venuto non solo un altro S. Bernardo un secondo S. Giovanni da Capistrano ma anche un nuovo Giona un altro S. Paolo anzi qual uomo calato dal Cielo." Vita del P. Giacinto, MS. in the General Archives of the Capuchins, Rome, Arm. A., fol. 6. We shall elsewhere refer to the report of his preaching at Piacenza in 1617, see *infra*, chap. xii.



I. N. R. I.

R. P. HYACINT. Casalen. Capuccin. Verbi Dei
Concionator ferventissimus.

*Audite, et auribus percipite. Dato Dño Deo Vestro gloriam
antequam contenebrescat, et, antequam offendant pedes vestri
ad montes caliginosos. Lv. 17. Philipp Sadeler fecit.*

FRA GIACINTO DA CASALE

From a portrait by Philippe Sadeler CIRCA 1623

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make no concession. There was the newly elected emperor, Matthias, bidding for the support of both parties ; and in a measure committed to the Protestant party. Giacinto da Casale threw all his eloquence into the support of the League and against the policy of concession. To allow equal representation to the Protestants in the Council would, he urged, mean nothing else than the enslavement of the Catholic Church to the Protestant chariot. Without any doubt he was right ; and without any doubt, too, the Protestants knew he was right. Tolerance, as we have already remarked, was¹ an unrecognised word in the religious vocabulary of the early seventeenth century. Men did not fight for the right to tolerate what they did not agree with, but to bring their opponents under their heel. Liberty of conscience meant liberty for my conscience, not for yours ; as Cromwell and his Puritans a little later taught the English. It was not for liberty of conscience that the Protestant princes sought to strengthen their position in the one imperial institution which they did not dominate, or in which they did not hold the balance to their own advantage. What they had gained they meant to hold, whatever its legality ; and to increase it if they could. That was the plain position and the Protestant princes would have laughed with scorn at any man who thought them capable of taking another. Giacinto da Casale by his championship of the claims of the Catholic League might win their hostility, but he would not thereby lose their respect. What in the circumstances was perhaps stranger was that in spite of his uncompromising attitude towards concession, he won the warm regard of the Emperor Matthias and his consort, the Empress Anna, who invited Giacinto to establish the Capuchins in Ratisbon, and assisted in state at the laying of the foundation stone of the friary.²⁹ When Giacinto returned to Rome the following year, he was received with marked favour by the Pope and Cardinal Ludovisi.³⁰ Popular rumour spoke of his elevation to the cardinalate ; but when this came to the ears of Giacinto, he

²⁹ *Chron. Bavar. Cap. Prov.*, p. 14. The empress Anna was a princess of the house of Mantua, at whose court Giacinto had been trained in early youth. See her letter to him, dated Sept. 26, 1607, conveying to him part of her collection of relics. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, III, pp. 239-240.

³⁰ See letter of Paul V to the Elector Schweikard, Archbishop of Mainz, in *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, III, p. 240.

hurriedly left Rome and went on a preaching tour to Venice. The cardinal's hat was no temptation to him nor any honours the world could give. Yet he had one weakness. He dearly loved holy relics. He accepted some relics from the Pope, as he had already accepted some from the Emperor and Empress. All his life he collected relics wherever he went. He made the Capuchins rich with them.

For seven years he laboured in Italy before he was to return again to Germany; they were years of marvellous fruitfulness in the renovation of the religious life of many an Italian city, as we shall see elsewhere.

In the meantime, events were moving fast in Germany towards the trial of strength between Catholicism and Protestantism, which had long been foreseen as inevitable by the leaders of the Catholic League. The revolution in Bohemia brought matters to a head. The luckless Elector-Palatine, Frederick V, accepted the crown of a brother prince, in violation of the tradition which ruled the princely houses, with the purpose of putting himself at the head of the Protestant party. For awhile militant Protestantism renewed its energy not only in Germany but in France and the Alpine valleys. The battle of Weissberg put an end to the adventure of the Elector-Palatine in Bohemia, and brought him under the ban of the empire. Bavaria took possession of the Palatinate, and the Protestant union was dissolved. In the Valtellina the Catholics rose up against their Calvinist oppressors, and Austria and Spain occupied the passes in the Grisons. In the meanwhile the Emperor Matthias had been succeeded by Ferdinand II—Ferdinand the staunch Catholic and the one Hapsburg who might have given body to the shadowy imperial title, had the issue been left between him and the Protestant North.

But now the political ambitions of the Catholic Powers begin to cross his path. France straightway objects to the occupation of the Grison passes. In consideration of the part taken by him in the Catholic League, Duke Maximilian of Bavaria claims the electoral dignity forfeited by Frederick V; thereby the Catholics would have a majority in the electoral college, and the imperial dignity would be secured to a Catholic prince. But Spain at the moment is coquetting with James I of England, father-in-law of Frederick V, and

hesitates to support the claim of Bavaria ; and France has no wish to see the Hapsburg grow stronger by an alliance with Bavaria to the further diminution of the power of the Protestant states. Neither Spain nor France is disposed to forgo her own separate political ambitions for the sake of religion in Germany.

Ferdinand II, anxious as he was to reward Duke Maximilian with the vacant electorship, hesitated in the face of the disapproval of these two powers.

In this predicament, Gregory XV, the newly elected Pope, despatched Giacinto to Germany to urge upon the Emperor the necessity in the Catholic interest of conferring the electorship upon a Catholic prince, and preferably upon the Duke of Bavaria who was regarded in Rome as the sincerest champion of the Catholic cause ; and Giacinto, moreover, was instructed to win over to Bavaria's support the other Catholic princes of the empire, amongst them Schweikard, the Elector-Archbishop of Mainz, whose regard for Giacinto's judgment was known in Rome.³¹

The importance of Giacinto's appointment is evident from Maximilian's fervent letter of thanks to the Pope ; the sending of Giacinto, he wrote, was a proof of the Pope's solicitude for " the afflicted state of the Catholic religion in Germany " ; he protested that in seeking the electoral dignity his one purpose was to place the Catholic religion in honour and security, and to vindicate the authority of the imperial majesty against the attempt of the rebellious states to subvert it ; thus did he hope to bring peace to Germany.³² Coming from Maximilian no one can doubt the sincerity of his statement.

That Giacinto regarded the preferment of the Duke as a decided gain to the Catholic cause, is evident from the confi-

³¹ See the Pope's letters recommending Giacinto to the three ecclesiastical electors and the other princes, in *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, III, pp. 255-266 ; Giacinto had already acted as Schweikard's agent in Rome in 1614 ; *ibid.*, p. 240.

See also the letter of Gregory XV to Schweikard, *ibid.*, p. 266, and the important letters of 10 September, 1622, to the three electors and princes requesting that Giacinto be heard in the meeting of the princes at Ratisbon ; *ibid.*, pp. 272-277.

³² See Maximilian's letter to the Pope, in *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, III, p. 245. The duke had a year earlier applied to Paul V to send Giacinto to accompany him on his expedition to aid the emperor against the Bohemian rising, but the Pope had refused. See Giacinto's letter to the Cardinal Secretary, *ibid.*, p. 246.

dential letter he wrote to the Pope, on 12 September, 1621, announcing the Emperor's decision to confer the electorship on the Duke, "subject to certain conditions."³³

To gain the Duke's assent to these conditions, Giacinto then went to Bavaria. He found the Duke at Straubingen, on the eve of invading the Palatinate. Giacinto accompanied him on this expedition, and the Duke having agreed to the Emperor's terms, Giacinto celebrated the rout of Mansfeld by saluting the Duke as the future elector in the cathedral of Heidelberg.

But the goodwill of Spain had yet to be secured before the emperor would actually confer the dignity; and a few weeks later Giacinto received orders from the Pope to proceed to the court of Madrid and any other court as might be deemed needful to complete the success already attained.³⁴ So towards the end of October, Giacinto hurried to the Spanish Court. Expedition was necessary, for England was negotiating the Spanish marriage and the question of the electorate was amongst the points under discussion. Of the promised relief to the English Catholics, which the English ambassador held out as a certain consequence of the marriage, Giacinto was altogether sceptical; and in that he proved a shrewder judge of affairs than did Père Joseph du Tremblay when later the French marriage was arranged. Giacinto spent the greater part of a year in Madrid:³⁵ not altogether as a diplomat. He preached the Lenten course of 1622; and such were the crowds who flocked to hear him, that it was necessary to erect a pulpit in one of the public squares.

Whether he had any direct relations with the Prince of Wales during his stay at the Court, I know not; but a later event would seem to point to some friendly understanding with the English Prince. His companion, Fra Zaccaria Boverio da Saluzzo, we know had some conversations on

³³ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, III, p. 246. The electorship, as is known, was at first conferred on Maximilian personally for his lifetime only, and not on the Bavarian house.

³⁴ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, III, p. 241; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 266-270.

³⁵ The question of the co-operation of Spain and Austria in the Grisons evidently formed part of his negotiations. See the letter addressed to him at this time by the Archduke Leopold, *ibid.*, pp. 247. The anxiety with which his return to Germany was awaited is expressed in a letter of the Archduke Charles; *ibid.*, p. 248.

religion with Prince Charles, and was so impressed by his goodwill that he wrote a book for the Prince's instruction.³⁶

When towards the end of the summer, Giacinto returned to Vienna, he bore with him the assurance of the King of Spain's personal goodwill towards Maximilian; though in truth Spain did not regard with too good a will the increasing power of the Duke whose success and popularity seemed a slur on the House of Austria.

Giacinto preached during the following Advent and Lent at Ratisbon, and worked incessantly to support the reforming efforts of the Duke Maximilian in Bavaria and the Palatinate; and amongst other achievements procured the rehabilitation of the currency, the depreciation of which told severely on the poorer people. He strove, too, to avert the threatened war with France over the Grison passes. Immediately on his return to Germany, he had despatched a letter to the King of France, and this had been followed by a mission to Paris, entrusted to his confrère, Valeriano Magno. Louis XIII in a long-delayed reply committed himself to nothing; he merely begged Giacinto to believe that what he was doing he was doing solely for the glory of God, and expressed the joy it was to receive a letter from him. But all these good words did not prevent France from forming an alliance with the Protestant powers.

Giacinto was not deceived as to the impending crisis; and he now transferred himself to Brussels³⁷ to negotiate co-operation between the Spaniards and the Elector Maximilian against Christian of Brunswick; and from there he despatched his fellow Capuchin, Alexander d'Ales, to England, to negotiate secretly at the English Court for some relief of the Catholics in England, and to open the way to an understanding between the Duke of Bavaria and James I. But beyond fair words, nothing seems to have come of this mission.³⁸ He was at Brussels when Gregory XV died and

³⁶ *Orthodoxa consultatio de ratione veræ fidei agnoscendæ et amplectendæ: in communem omnium veræ religionis studiosorum gratiam et utilitatem, aucta uberius illustrata et in duas partes distributa . . . auctore R. P. Zacharia Boverio Salutiensi* (Romæ, 1635). In the dedication to Card. Antonio Barberini, we are told that the book was written ten years previously for the instruction of Charles, Prince of Wales, as a result of familiar conversations with the prince concerning religion.

³⁷ See the Pope's letters to the Archduchess Isabella and to Spinola, May 7, 1622. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, III, pp. 270-271; *ibid.*, pp. 278-279.

³⁸ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, III, p. 248. See also the interesting letter of the Nuncio to Urban VIII, concerning this mission; *ibid.*, p. 249.

Urban VIII was elected Pope. Giacinto hoped now to be relieved of his diplomatic duties ; his heart was in the friar's apostolate ; courts and diplomacy were distasteful to his spirit.³⁹ Moreover, Gregory XV had been his friend and of a like mind to himself. He was not so sure of Gregory's successor. But Urban VIII confirmed Giacinto's commission.⁴⁰

We next find Giacinto in Paris in an endeavour to come to some agreement with France. Louis XIII received him with marked honours and it was agreed as a basis of further negotiations that Austria and Spain should surrender the Valtellina and the Grison passes to the Pope, to be occupied by Papal troops.⁴¹ To this agreement it may be noted Père Joseph du Tremblay was a party ; it was the first occasion of the meeting of the two friars. That Giacinto did not fully trust the French Capuchin is evident from his complaint that Père Joseph would not fully reveal what was in his mind.⁴²

Without delay Giacinto returned to Germany to win over the Austrian princes to the agreement ; thence to Rome to secure the assent of the Sovereign Pontiff. Urban VIII was not too willing to undertake the burden ; he drew back before the expense of holding the passes, but Giacinto pleaded that only so could peace be maintained between the empire on the one side and France and her allies, Savoy and Venice, on the other. Eventually the Pope consented, and Giacinto went back to Germany.

He was again in Rome in 1625, and for a time he gave himself mainly to the work he loved best, the work of the evangelist. Yet his interest in Germany did not cease, he was in constant correspondence with the Catholic princes and acted as their agent at the Papal Court.⁴³ The renewed menace from France, due to Richelieu's rise to power, occupied much of his attention. With a single mind to the interests of Catholicism, he still strove to bring about an

³⁹ Whilst in Brussels he established the Confraternity of the Knights of the Passion. The confraternity was limited to forty members of noble blood. They undertook to assist at the Devotion of the Forty Hours, and to have a care for prisoners and orphans and others in need. The confraternity was approved by Urban VIII in 1626. *ibid.*, p. 88, *seq.*

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 277.

⁴¹ See the letter of the Archduke Leopold to Giacinto, *ibid.*, p. 250.

⁴² cf. Fagniez, *op. cit.*, I, p. 196.

⁴³ cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, III, pp. 251-253.

understanding between France and the Elector Maximilian: it is evident that upon such an agreement he based his main hope for securing the Catholic interest in the empire. Was it that he distrusted the political ambition of the house of Hapsburg or its record of weakness in the past? That he distrusted the religious policy of Spain is evident from a sermon he preached whilst he was at the Spanish Court, when he denounced the king's interference with the liberties of the Church, and prophesied Divine judgment on the royal house. Once again, during his stay in Rome, he came into negotiations with Père Joseph du Tremblay. The French Capuchin had been commissioned by Richelieu to obtain the Pope's approval of the French policy in regard to the Valtellina, and to bring about some understanding with Giacinto concerning the restoration of the Palatinate to the heirs of Frederick V. The meeting of the two Capuchins was stormy; it was the clash of two characters and two points of view utterly dissimilar; of the prophet and the politician.⁴⁴ With Giacinto there was but one question to be considered, the direct interest of the Catholic religion; with Père Joseph—well, of Père Joseph's point of view many books have been written, and yet men question.

And in Germany itself things were not going as well as was desirable between the Catholic princes themselves. True, in the Catholic states, the Church was being reinstated and reorganised with a firm hand; but already the political disunion between the Catholic States, healed for a time in the struggle with the Protestant union, was beginning to show itself again; the suspicion of Hapsburg ambition towards a centralised monarchy was again raising its head; and again Maximilian and other princes were anxious for Giacinto's speedy return to act as intermediary between the princes. So in the summer of 1626 Giacinto received orders from the Pope to go back to Germany.⁴⁵ He set out on his journey with a premonition that it was his last; on his arrival at Genoa he was already sick unto death. By the advice of the doctors they carried him to Casale, his native town, hoping against hope that he might revive there. He died at Casale on 18 February, 1627.

⁴⁴ cf. Fagniez, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

⁴⁵ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, III, p. 283. See the Pope's letters to the princes and to Tilly and Wallenstein; *ibid.*, pp. 285-288.

(iii)

In relating the labours of Fra Giacinto da Casale for the Catholic cause in Germany we have mentioned the names of the friar, Valeriano Magno, whom we have seen employed in the same cause, and of Père Joseph du Tremblay, the French Capuchin.

Père Joseph Le Clerc du Tremblay, "the grey Cardinal" of history, enters much into the political affairs of Germany at this time, as he enters into all affairs upon which the iron Richelieu laid his hand. A marvellous genius was Père Joseph, to whom the world has not yet done justice, seeing in him mostly the shadow or the master—so uncertain is its judgment—of the masterful minister of Louis XIII. In this story we have met him in the mission-fields of Poitou, and as the founder of a religious congregation of reformed Benedictines; we shall again meet him as the organiser of a gigantic missionary enterprise; a man of many parts as will be seen.

In this place of our story, he enters as the cross-purpose in the council of the Capuchins concerned in the Catholic supremacy in Germany. We have seen him in opposition to Giacinto da Casale; we shall see him again at a critical moment in European history, foiling the efforts of his fellow friars, Valeriano Magno and Diego de Queroga, in their endeavours to maintain the union of the Catholic German princes. It may be well, then, to pause in our relation of the Capuchin activities in Germany, to consider what manner of man was this redoubtable antagonist sprung from their own Order, and yet of a mould different from theirs.⁴⁶

As has been said, Père Joseph was a man of many parts; the disquieting thing for anyone who attempts to depict him is that he was not a man of simple character; at least not

⁴⁶ cf. G. Fagniez, op. cit.; J. Parmentier: *De Patris Josephi Capucini Publica Vita qualis ex ejus cum Richelio commerciis apparet* (Paris, 1877); L. Dedouvres: *Le Père Joseph devant l'histoire* (Angers, 1892); *Vie du R. P. Joseph de Paris du Sr. de Hautebresche* (Paris, 1889); *Le Père Joseph Polémiste* (Paris, 1895); *Le Père Joseph de Paris* in *Etudes Franciscaines* XXXIII, p. 78, seq. (Paris, 1921).

The eighteenth century biographies of Père Joseph are all written in the partisan spirit of the period. René Richards' *Histoire de la Vie du R. P. Joseph de Clerc du Tremblay* is a panegyric. The anonymous *Le Vritable Père Joseph* is a reply in the opposite spirit: so, too, is the account of him in Levassor's *Histoire Générale de l'Europe sous le règne de Louis XIII.*

yet has anyone penetrated to his simplicity. That he was consciously a lover of power, I doubt ; but by natural instinct he grasped at power, the power which shapes affairs. Ambition is writ large on everything he touched ; but that is no condemnation. His love of ruling the actions of others is at all times manifest ; yet that, too, need not condemn a man. Such inborn traits may well be the foundations of a generous service of God and mankind. That Père Joseph aspired to sanctity and the life dedicated to the holiest purpose, none can doubt who is not predisposed to doubt ; and but for his success there would have been but one judgment of him, however puzzling his complexity : a religious man, sincere even in his mistakes. His religious sincerity comes into question in connection with his incursion into politics ; and in that he differs from the Capuchin diplomatists with whom he frequently found himself in opposition. Of their sincerity and singleness of aim no doubt has been raised. Their diplomacy has been criticised, but of their single motive there has been no question ; they were manifestly the servants of the Church and of the Catholic cause.

To men of his day Père Joseph was a man who never revealed his ultimate thought ; was he himself quite sure of his ultimate thought ? There is a portrait of him showing us the man, spare, austere, of tenacious will and lofty thinking, but with a troubled uncertain look in his searching eyes. It is not far wrong of the Père Joseph of history.

And yet, that he had elements of spiritual and intellectual greatness only a bigot will deny. He was no charlatan.

Was he at heart a Capuchin ? In some respects undoubtedly. Yet there is the persistent difficulty. It is always necessary in judging of his quality to add the qualifying phrase. Possibly, in whatever society Père Joseph found himself, he would have been " a man apart," not merely by sheer individuality but also by some negative quality.

But it is from the point of view of his religious profession that Père Joseph's politics are apt to be baffling. In following his political career, one is tempted at times to apply to him our Lord's warning to St. Peter, " He who takes the sword shall perish by the sword " : and it is perhaps in that moment of temptation that we get a true insight into Père Joseph's religious character, seeing in him the Peter who

loved his Master, but as yet did not understand his Master's spirit ; the Peter anxious to serve, thinking if need be to die by his Master's side ; yet still a stranger to his Master's heart. And this trait of spiritual immaturity seems stamped upon all his achievements. As a leader in the mystical life of prayer, it has been said that he leads with the sureness of personal experience in the first steps, but is as one inexperienced when he ventures further afield ;⁴⁷ in his missionary organisations one feels that there is more of " the prudence of the world " (put, it is true, to a noble purpose) than of the simple faith that moves mountains ; his daring military project for the recovery of the Holy Land and the epic poem with which he would fire Christendom to undertake the crusade, leave one unconvinced of true spiritual vision. In a word, the Peter of the sword. Had he been a lesser man, insistence on the limitation of his spiritual quality would be ungenerous. It is the greatness of his ambition and success which compels criticism.

That he contributed to the establishment of the Protestant political ascendancy in Germany and Europe cannot be denied ; that he was in company with not a few churchmen of repute in the line of policy he advocated, must be remembered ; that he was an instrument of Divine Providence for the ultimate severance of the Catholic cause from the political entanglements which were its encompassing weakness, may well be believed ; that he was conscious of any conflicting disloyalty with his professed zeal for the Church, may unhesitatingly be denied.

A declaration in one of his letters gives the key to his political action : " from France must come the remedy (for the evils of Christendom) as being the heart of the (Christian) body."⁴⁸ To strengthen and exalt France, to the end that France should impose peace on Christendom, and then become the centre of a vast missionary activity—that undoubtedly was his dream and ambition ; and there at least was nothing ignoble. That in his vision of the Church triumphant he saw an ascendant France as the world's saviour—well, saints have had the same dream, only it was

⁴⁷ *Henri Bremond*, op. cit., II, p. 181.

⁴⁸ " *C'est de la France que doit venir le remède comme estant le coeur de ce corps* " (Letter MS. to the prioress of Lencloître quoted in *Fagniez*, op. cit., I, p. 72).

not the France of Richelieu's ambition they dreamed of, but the France ascendant in the spirit of the Crucified Redeemer. But that was not a dream that would have come to the Peter of the sword on the eve of the crucifixion. Yet Peter loved his Master even then ; and of Père Joseph's love of Christ and His Church the witness is abundant.

He approved of Richelieu's action in driving the Pontifical troops from the Valtellina,⁴⁹ and so broke faith with the Pope ; but when Père Joseph was a party to the agreement with Fra Giacinto, Richelieu was not yet in power, and Joseph was praying for a man who would save France and Christendom. In Richelieu he believed he had found the man ; and having found the man of his ideal, it was characteristic of Joseph to be loyal to him ; he was always loyal to those in whom he believed. Men have debated whether Joseph was Richelieu's tool or his guide ; it is probably the truth that he was neither ; rather it would seem that the two men were yoked together in a common ambition to make France the predominant power in the world's politics ; Richelieu thinking first of France as a secular power, Joseph of France as the Catholic power ; and each interacting on the other. Certainly to Joseph the France of Richelieu's ambition was the sword which was eventually to smite the unbeliever, be the unbeliever Protestant, Turk, or Catholic ; for to Joseph the Hapsburg was an unbeliever in that he stood in the way of Père Joseph's ideal of a united and Catholic Christendom.

Not improbably Joseph's vast conception of a new crusade which for awhile enlisted the diplomatic consideration of the Catholic powers, represents the purpose of his political activities in its purest form ; and it probably was the failure of that project which drove him to the baser levels of world politics.

The scheme briefly was to unite the Catholic powers in a determined effort to recover the Holy Land and thereby effect at the same time a better mutual understanding between them, based on an interest which was outside their mutual jealousies and separate ambitions. The scheme was thought out and planned with that meticulous regard for

⁴⁹ cf. Fagniez, *op. cit.*, I, p. 196, note 1. Still Urban VIII's indecisive policy concerning the Valtellina must be taken into account,

detail which made Joseph an ideal organiser. The crusade would be international in the best sense ; not a mere alliance of governments, but carried through by the Catholic manhood of Europe. The army was to be recruited with the assent and support of the governments, but it would be organised and directed by the new order of knighthood, the *Milice chrétienne*, under the commandership of Carlo Gonzaga, duc de Nevers, and heir presumptive to the Duchy of Mantua. Père Joseph laid the scheme before the Pope during his visit to Rome in 1616, and it met with the Pontiff's approval. Savoy and the Italian States promised support ; Spain dallied with the idea ; encouragement came from the Emperor and the Archduke Ferdinand. National commanders were then appointed to organise the crusade in Germany, Spain and Italy, in association with the duc de Nevers. At a meeting of the leaders at Olmutz, on November 17, 1618, the articles of organisation were agreed to and the *Milice chrétienne* was solemnly proclaimed at Vienna on 8 March, 1619. Its declared object was to maintain concord within the Christian commonwealth, and to extend its domain ; to defend it against the infidels and to redeem Christian captives. Ambassadors were then sent to the great powers and to the Pope to secure formal approval and support. France hesitated to give overt approval, as she had no wish to break immediately with the Turk ; she suggested that the Pope should take the lead. The French king, however, sent Père Joseph to Spain to secure the formal adhesion of the Spanish Court : but now Spain grew wary suspecting the motive of the French. Then Austria grew suspicious and drew back. Negotiations dragged on for seven years. In 1625, the Pope made a final effort to arouse interest in the project, but it was now recognised that there was no unity amongst the Catholic powers, and the carrying out of the scheme was indefinitely postponed.⁵⁰ As one biographer has remarked, had the crusade taken place, there would probably have been no Thirty Years War, and later on, no Eastern Question.⁵¹

Curiously, at the same time that Père Joseph went to Rome to lay his scheme before the Pope in 1616, the Capu-

⁵⁰ See the letters of Urban VIII in *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, V, pp. 49-50.

⁵¹ Fagniez, *op. cit.*, I, p. 158.

chin Valeriano Magno, in co-operation with king Sigismund of Poland, had begun a similar organisation under the title of Knights of the Conception, to defend the Christian borders against the Turks. The Pope approved this organisation in 1617 :⁵² but the outbreak of war with Sweden prevented any further development ; moreover Poland was to be included in the *Milice chrétienne*.

Not unlikely the withdrawal of the Spanish and Austrian support from the proposed crusade embittered Père Joseph, and threw him back on the political supremacy of France as the one hope of a future united Christendom. And with the acknowledged failure of the *Milice chrétienne*, Richelieu came into power. From the first, Richelieu had plainly expressed his doubts of the *Milice chrétienne* as a means of uniting the Christian powers ; he gauged the European situation better than Père Joseph. Yet it is to the honour of Père Joseph that even though his dream came to nought, he dreamed his dream of a united Christendom fighting for a common good instead of Christian people fighting each against the other. In that at any rate he was a Franciscan and a Catholic. Better, too, had he persisted in his first dream in spite of its failure ; but Père Joseph fell short of the greatness which persists in face of failure: success was needed to feed the flame of his energy. He now turned to Richelieu, and the world lost an inspiring idealist in the political realist. That this did not make for his own happiness we know ; the years brought him the disillusionment of one who had clogged the wings of his spirit with the dust of earth. Almost to the end he was still peering into the future, wistful that his dream might be realised ; but even of that it may be doubted whether he finally had any hope.⁵³ The war between the nations which had been let loose was still dragging out its cry of agony when he died in 1638. Two things only might assuage the bitterness of his disillusionment ; far and wide on the borders of Christian civilisation and in the wilds beyond, the missionaries he had sent forth were working manfully to broaden the kingdom of the Divine Master he loved ; for that he loved to the end the Lord of his youth, let no one doubt. And at home in France

⁵² *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, pp. 181-182.

⁵³ cf. Henri Bremond, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 191-192.

the seed of his early enthusiasms had blossomed in provinces returned to religion, and in the convents of the *Filles de Calvaire* which enshrined in faithful remembrance the mystical fervour of his verdant years. But these, the real achievements of his restless life, we relate elsewhere.

(iv)

With Valeriano Magno we are back again amongst the Capuchins who laboured with love for Germany.

Valeriano was of the family of Magni of Milan, who claimed to have been driven from Friuli when Attila, king of the Huns, invaded Italy. Different branches of the family had settled in Venice, Naples and Milan; and had grown wealthy. Though born in Milan, Valeriano was educated in Prague, his father having migrated there in the service of the Emperor; and his brilliance attracted the attention of the nuncio, Cardinal Aldobrandini, later Pope Clement VIII, who wished him to enter the Papal Court. But Valeriano had been deeply impressed by the preaching of Lorenzo da Brindisi, and in consequence became a Capuchin at Prague in 1602.

His contemporaries in speaking of him made great play upon his family name; "great by name and great by fame" was the general verdict of his time.⁵⁴ "Philosopher, theologian and diplomat" one epitaph calls him; and he deserves the triple title in no ordinary degree. In whichever aspect you take him, he was a man amongst men. Yet the title by which he himself would prefer to be known is that of apostle. It was as the evangelist of God's kingdom that he was always happiest. Of several of the Capuchin preachers of this period, for instance Giacinto da Casale and Girolamo da Narni (whom we shall meet elsewhere), it was said by

⁵⁴ *Hic gradum siste viator—vide audi, et mirare—parva haec tumba—VALERIANUM— . . . prosapia magnum, sui abjectione seipso Majorem—pietate doctrina et rebus praeclare gestis—inter Fratres Minores suo aevo—facile Maximum,*" etc. (*Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 204). See also in the epitaph composed by Guidobald, Archbishop of Salzburg: *En tibi, Viator Valerianum Magnum . . . Magnarum tamen rerum ingens compendium: qui magnus inter Minores,*" etc. (*ibid.*, p. 203). Also the nuncio Caraffa: "*In Bohemia Archiepiscopus, non solum sua vigilantia sed etiam virorum opera, specialiter Valeriani Magni . . . vere viri Magni, verbo, opere et corpore,*" etc. Ardinghelli, IV, p. 173, in *Valdimiro Bonari de Bergamo*, op. cit., p. 197.

contemporaries that they were as "another Paul." Looking back across the intervening centuries I know of none of them who seems to bear a greater similarity to the character of the apostle of the Gentiles than Valeriano Magno. "All things to all men" in his burning charity; virile in his thought, decisive in his judgments, eloquent in his speech, fearing God but no man, bearing daily the solicitude for the Church he loved, ready in whatever way it came to him to do battle for the cause of Christ; as patient in adversity as he was strong in action; and at the end able to say truthfully that he hated no man but had loved all men with a true love—such was Valeriano of the Magni.⁵⁵

He was but twenty-six when his preaching drew crowds to hear him, and his sermons were the talk of the imperial court. Amongst his first converts was the Prince of Lichenstein, he who had led the Protestant interest at the court in the days of Rudolf II. Three years later, in 1616, Valeriano was the leader of the Capuchins sent at the request of King Sigismund to evangelise Podolia, and it was during this mission that he conceived the idea of forming the military order of the Knights of the Conception. The scheme came to nothing, as we have seen; but it was the beginning of the close friendship between Valeriano and Sigismund and Sigismund's successor Vladislas. Then came the truce between Sigismund and Russia and the Capuchins were withdrawn from Podolia. Valeriano returned to Vienna. In 1621 and again in 1623 he was sent by the Emperor to the court of Louis XIII to negotiate concerning the affairs in the Grisons. But his heart was not in diplomacy. He was above all things the apostle, burning to win back to the faith the lost tribes of Israel. Manfully he worked with Cardinal Harrasch to catholicise Bohemia, preaching and writing incessantly. He was an encyclopædic writer; polemicist, theologian and philosopher; and withal a ceaseless worker in all affairs that concerned the apostolate for which he lived. In 1624 he was appointed Provincial of his Order in Bohemia; but this brought him no respite from wider labours. Yet that

⁵⁵As P. Valdimiro da Bergamo has remarked (*I Cappuccini Milanesi*, op. cit. p. 218), Valeriano Magno deserves an adequate critical biography. As a man of affairs and as a philosopher, he has strangely been forgotten. It is an instance of the inadequate treatment hitherto accorded to the history of the Counter-Reformation.

he loved the retirement of his friar's cell is shown by the facility with which he became engrossed in his writing of books whenever the opportunity came to him ; and his books were for the thinkers, not for the crowd. " A strenuous and constant assertor of the true, tenacious of the right " is one summing up of his character ;⁵⁶ and it is borne out in all he did.

There was the settlement of the affairs of the Church in the Austrian dominions to which the Emperor Ferdinand set his hand in 1626 ; and which was formally promulgated in the Edict of Restitution in 1627. Valeriano attended the imperial council convoked by the Emperor in Vienna to consider the matter. Three questions were set for consideration : the extirpation of heresy, the propagation of the Faith, and the restitution of alienated Church property. Valeriano stood out boldly against the policy of forced conversions of any character ; such conversions he held were apt to be merely an insincere conformity. He claimed that the bringing back of heretics to the Church was the proper work of missionaries, and he proposed that the country be divided into missionary " regions " to be worked by the different religious orders. As to the restored Church property in Bohemia he won the consent of the meeting that it should not be given to the religious orders but be set apart to establish four new bishoprics and two seminaries. It was not without opposition he gained his point : and his claim that the Caroline University in Prague should be restored to its original purpose under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop, and not be transferred to the Jesuits, was the beginning of a misunderstanding between good men which was to cost Valeriano much suffering in the end.⁵⁷ But throughout his life he never counted the cost to himself. It was the same when he was sent to Rome by Cardinal Harrasch in 1628 to lay before the Pope an account of affairs in Bohemia. He was commissioned to obtain the abolition of a religious society of women, for what reason I know not.⁵⁸ But they were influential inasmuch as they were connected with persons in power. Valeriano was never forgiven for his part

⁵⁶ *Biblioth. Script. Ord.*, p. 243. Concerning Valeriano as a writer see *infra*, chap. xiv.

⁵⁷ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 189.

⁵⁸ cf. Valdimiro da Bergamo, *op. cit.*

in their suppression. So he was all his life a man who won friends and raised up enemies by his sheer integrity. Cardinal Harrasch, in his difficult task of reforming his diocese, relied upon Valeriano for counsel and support much as the valiant Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln at an earlier date relied upon friar Adam Marsh ; and in truth there is a marked similarity of character between the two friars.

In 1628 the cardinal obtained from the Pope an order that Valeriano should be relieved of the office of Provincial Minister and left free to assist that prelate in his work for the Catholic cause in Bohemia ;⁵⁹ and the following year Valeriano was appointed prefect of the new Capuchin missions in Bohemia, Austria and Silesia.⁶⁰ That was the work in which his heart lay. Yet again he is called from it in 1630 when the Pope appointed him to attend the diet of Ratisbon as adviser on behalf of the Emperor to the Papal envoy Giulio Mazarini, who later by a strange turn of fortune's wheel was to succeed Richelieu as chief minister in France.

The diet marked a momentous crisis in the unhappy chain of events which were to throw back the forward march of political Catholicism. Who could have foreseen that the death of a petty prince in Italy would not only pit the Catholic powers against each other, but lead to the division of the Catholic forces in Germany and to the humiliation by the Catholic League of the most Catholic Emperor since Charles V? Yet that was what the disputed succession in the Duchy of Mantua led to—that and the appointment of the seemingly invincible Wallenstein to lead the imperial army. The Mantuan question had thrown France and the Pope together in a determination to curb the Hapsburg pretensions in Italy ; jealousy of the upstart Wallenstein and of the growing power of the Emperor had thrown the Catholic League into alliance with French diplomacy. In the councils of the Catholic princes the question of religion was relegated as a side issue, and the uppermost thought was a question of territory and their separate political interests. It was a festival for the cynics. But there were others besides the cynics, men who in the welter of politics were genuinely

⁵⁹ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 182.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 183-184.

concerned, each in his own way, how to save a situation so hopelessly muddled from ending in a debacle of all their hopes for the future of the Catholic Faith. Whether they were wise or unwise in the parts they separately took is a matter on which different men will hold different opinions.

The diet met ; and its interest to our story lies in the fact that across the table of dispute Capuchin worked against Capuchin : on the one side Père Joseph setting his keen brain to hold the Catholic electors apart from the Emperor ; on the other side Valeriano Magno working to win back the Catholic League to the Emperor's support. To Père Joseph the Hapsburg ascendancy, as we have said, meant the frustration of his dream of an eventually united Christendom. To Valeriano Magno the disunion between the Emperor and the League meant the cast-back of the Catholic cause in Germany. For the sake of the greater cause, Valeriano had counselled the emperor to relinquish Mantua. But he would not counsel the dismissal of Wallenstein, believing as he did in Wallenstein's good faith and in his unique ability to lead the imperial army to victory.⁶¹ Père Joseph gained the day. Ferdinand is said to have remarked : "The Capuchin has six electoral caps in his hood."

Valeriano's independent action did not commend him to Urban VIII ; nor again did his attitude in the events that followed upon the diet of Ratisbon. As he had foreseen, the dismissal of Wallenstein meant the defeat and virtual disruption of the imperial forces. Ferdinand, beaten in the field, was forced to make terms with the Elector of Saxony and his Protestant allies. These demanded the revocation of the Edict of Restitution which had given back to the Church the property alienated since 1555. The League and its partisans were at once in arms against any concession in the matter of ecclesiastical property. But Bohemia was overrun and occupied by the Protestants, and Austria was threatened ; nor could the army of the League, as events proved, save the military situation. The disunion of the Catholic princes had done its work ; in that Valeriano's judgment had proved correct. Ferdinand was practically helpless to withstand the

⁶¹ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 190. Valeriano in 1632 went to Rome with Wallenstein's explanation and assurances of his policy. See letter of Urban VIII to Wallenstein, of July 1, 1632, in Valdimiro da Bergamo, *I Cappuccino Milanesi*, loc. cit.

Protestant demand ; yet at the same time any concession was denounced by his opponents at Ratisbon as unworthy of a Catholic prince. In this crisis Valeriano, supported by the Spanish Capuchin, Diego de Queroga,⁶² the envoy of the Spanish King at the imperial court, counselled concession with a limitation. It was better, urged the Spanish Capuchin, to surrender property and save religion than to lose both.⁶³ The Edict of Restitution was therefore amended and its operation limited to securing to the Church the property possessed in the empire in 1624. Thereupon the Elector of Saxony withdrew from Bohemia and the Protestant alliance. The Capuchins in Bohemia sang a *Te Deum* for the deliverance : but others thought only of the lost property and the lost prestige, and did not forget the part played by Valeriano. Yet during the occupation of Prague by the Saxon Elector, Valeriano and the Capuchins had remained in the city to protect, as far as they could, the Catholics from the Lutheran soldiery, whilst many of his opponents fled.⁶⁴

In the matter of the Polish succession on the death of Sigismund III, it was mainly through the advocacy of Valeriano at the imperial and Papal courts that Vladislas obtained the crown. The supporters of the younger prince Casimir had urged against Vladislas that he was a lukewarm Catholic inclined to favour the heretics ; Valeriano, who knew the elder prince intimately, regarded the charge as untrue and a mere cry to discredit him. It was again a political move masking itself under the banner of religion. Events again proved the justness of Valeriano's judgment ; Poland had no more Catholic prince than Vladislas III. Throughout his reign Valeriano continued to be his adviser and friend ; and it was in conjunction with the king that Valeriano in 1634 laid before the Pope his project for an organised mission to work for the reunion of the Russian Church with the Holy See. A nuncio was indeed sent to

⁶²Diego de Queroga was confessor to Phillip IV of Spain, who recommended him for the cardinalate, but Diego steadfastly refused the honour. He was frequently employed by the king in public affairs. cf. Pellegrino da Forli, op. cit., II, pp. 139-141.

⁶³See the letters of the nuncio Baglione—Ranke, *Hist. of the Popes*, Bk. VII, Chap. V, loc. cit., p. 273.

⁶⁴Vladislas III, in his letter to the Pope referred to later on, mentions Valeriano's conduct on this occasion as worthy of record in the annals of the Church. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 194.

Poland to take the matter in hand, but Valeriano's opponents at the Papal Court obtained that he should have no part in the projected scheme. The nuncio's efforts came to nothing.

In 1635 King Vladislas after his coronation petitioned the Pope to create Valeriano a cardinal. The petition was refused on the ground that the Capuchin was not a subject of the king. Vladislas' dignified reply is Valeriano's apologia; it is a record of his work for the rehabilitation of the Faith in Germany, and yet more a testimony to the simplicity of his character and purpose.⁶⁵

But Valeriano was a man who knew not discouragement for the reason that his one thought was to do good as it came to him and to fulfil the duty at his hand. Whether it was applause or hostility that he met with, he continued his way preaching and writing incessantly and ever ready to take up another's burden when duty called. He traversed Poland as he had traversed Bohemia, holding conferences with the foremost of the Protestant ministers, until his Catholic opponents obtained an order from Rome silencing him for awhile. Then he returned to his friar's cell and wrote works that gained him fame in his day. But he could not long be silenced; his silence left a gap in the Catholic defence and he was set free to come forth again in public. One of his notable converts in 1652 was the Landgrave Ernst of Hesse.⁶⁶ In the meantime the Pope had confided to Valeriano and the Capuchins, missions in Saxony and Hesse and a mission at Dantzic.⁶⁷ But the conversion of Ernst of Hesse let loose a flood of controversy and a fresh attack was made by the Lutheran theologians upon the Church and the Papacy. Valeriano took up the challenge and met it with lectures and writings. The controversy thus enkindled went on for several years. But whilst Valeriano was defending the Church against the Protestants, his opponents on the Catholic side launched a new attack against him. Anonymous accusations concerning his orthodoxy were sent to Rome. Valeriano, usually unheeding of opposition and slander, could not remain passive when his loyalty to the Church and

⁶⁵ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, pp. 193-194.

⁶⁶ See Valeriano's own account of this conversion in *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, pp. 196-198.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 185.

the Faith was impugned, the less so as his Capuchin brethren were included in the insinuations made against himself. He sent his published treatises to Rome and wrote his *Apologia Valeriani*.⁶⁸ He was assured by the cardinals of the Propaganda Fide, to whom as an apostolic missionary he had addressed himself, that his innocence of the anonymous charges was proved. But the attacks dragged on. It is said that his opponents sent to Rome an edition of one of his treatises on the Papacy, with the negatives omitted; so that he was made to uphold the opposite doctrine to what he really taught. That may be mere hearsay in the tumult of feeling in which the affair ended.

On the evening of 1 February, 1661, an imperial official armed with letters from the Holy Office, called at the Capuchin friary in Vienna and summarily arrested Valeriano and conducted him to the common jail. The arrest was made under cover of dark. No sooner, however, did the news spread than the city was in commotion. People paraded the streets crying: "Long live Valeriano! Long live the Capuchins!" The Papal nuncio went immediately to the Emperor to ask explanations; protests came from far and wide. The Capuchin Provincial hurried to Vienna and demanded that Valeriano should be tried before being condemned: "We ask no favour but only justice," he declared: "if Valeriano is guilty let him be condemned; but before he is condemned let him be tried." Leopold, the Emperor, protested he was acting under orders from the Holy Office: but to calm the commotion he eventually released Valeriano on parole and confided him to the custody of the Archbishop of Salzburg; and as a mark of his personal esteem sent him to Salzburg in an imperial carriage. The carriage was needed; Valeriano, now seventy-five years of age and broken by his labours, was

⁶⁸ *Apologia Valeriani Magni contra imposituras Jesuitarum. Ad majorem gloriam Dei. Cui accessit ejusdem Epistola ad P. Ludovicum a Salice ejusdem Ordinis.* The title page bears no date, but in the foreword it is stated that the book was written in Vienna in 1655. Ernst of Hesse published a friendly reply, in which he sought to vindicate the Jesuits against Valeriano's charge that he himself had in a particular instance acted under their influence; he evidently considered that Valeriano was unduly sensitive. The anonymous charges against him, which Valeriano attributed to a Jesuit preacher, concerned Valeriano's statement that the Roman primacy, as distinct from the personal primacy of St. Peter, could not be proved from Scripture *alone*, but from Scripture and Tradition. This was held by his anonymous adversary to "give away" the Catholic position!

unable to walk. At Salzburg the Archbishop and citizens came forth to meet him outside the city and conduct him with honour to the Capuchin friary where he was to abide pending a settlement of the case. The case was never settled on earth; for six months later, on July 25, Valeriano went to his eternal rest. During the months he lay sick in the friary, the citizens vied in doing him honour; and when he died they buried him with the pageantry he had refused during life. Then they must erect a statue to his honour and the Archbishop and nuncio must each contribute a lengthy epitaph celebrating his services to the Church and his high qualities. Valeriano's last words, as we have said, were that in his life he had hated no man but had loved all men. And those who knew him, knew he spoke the truth.

(v)

The Capuchins in Germany suffered much in common with the people during the Thirty Years War. The simple brevity of the Bavarian chronicle tells of these sufferings more eloquently than would many pages. Thus: "Father Leopold of the barons of Gunpenburg was murdered by the soldiers of Gustavus in 1631; Father Simon was put to death by the soldiery at the same time as Father Leopold. After that Gustavus took the Capuchins under his protection; but many friaries were plundered by the Swedes." "When the Swedes entered Dinkelspil, Sperrenter their leader ordered that the Capuchins should not be disturbed; but after his departure the Lutherans persecuted the friars, stoned them and violated their cemetery and killed Father Dominic." "At the taking of Straubingen by the Swedes, Duke Bernard vowed to put the inhabitants to the sword; but at the prayers of the Capuchins he relented. To save the town from tribute the Father Guardian gave the ciboria and reliquaries."⁶⁹ "In 1638 the French under Turenne took Neckersulm. The Capuchins opened their cloister to the

⁶⁹ According to Pellegrino da Forli (*Annali dei Cappuccini*, I, pp. 539-540), it was the Capuchin Thomas von Buchenstein whose pleading saved Straubingen. Later when the plague broke out, he laboured heroically on behalf of the sick. He died in 1643, and the people of Straubingen "mourned for him as for their father and benefactor."

women to save them from outrage. "For a time the province was almost disbanded; no novices, no students. Many friars went to Italy. In 1634, eleven preachers, nine confessors, six clerics and seventeen lay-brothers died of the plague."⁷⁰

Nevertheless at the close of the war, there were no less than one hundred and thirty friaries in Germany⁷¹ not counting the mission stations from which the friars evangelised the countryside.

Meanwhile from the Tyrol and Switzerland, as well as from Brescia on the Italian side, Capuchins were again at work in the Valtellina and the Grisons, braving the tempestuous passions of the time. Their renewed missionary labours in these districts had been consecrated in 1622 by the martyrdom of the heroic Fidelis von Sigmaringen who whilst on a preaching tour was set upon by a band of the Grison soldiers and clubbed to death.⁷² He was a doctor of law of Friburg, and had been a travelling tutor before he joined the Capuchins. The manifest innocence of his life and his simple eloquence made him a persuasive preacher. There was in him nothing of the fanatic as some ignorantly have asserted. His was a gentle spirit. He had but one passion—to win souls to Christ, for the love he had for them. His martyr's death did but crown a life of unobtrusive yet heroic saintliness.

Of many others too who worked selflessly and strenuously out of the limelight of publicity during those dread days of war and passion, much might be written. They were an army worthy of their great leaders.

⁷⁰ *Chron. Bavar. Cap. Prov.*, op. cit., *passim*.

⁷¹ cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 366, *seq.*

⁷² Fidelis was canonised by Benedict XIV in 1746. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, VII, p. 359, *seq.* The story of his life and martyrdom, drawn from contemporary documents, and the Acts of his beatification, was published by P. Lucianus Montifontanes at Constanz, in 1674, under the title: *Probatica Sacra Cisarulana*. He was the first missionary of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide to suffer martyrdom.

CHAPTER XI

MORE MISSIONARY PROVINCES

(i)

WE have already seen how in 1585 a colony of Capuchins was sent from Paris to Belgium at the request of the Spanish Governor General, Alessandro Farnese. There as elsewhere they made rapid progress ; within forty years they had established over thirty friaries within the comparatively small area of Flanders, Brabant and the Walloon country.¹ They were brought into the country by Farnese to strengthen the Catholic cause and stem the advance of Protestantism ; and of the first band of Capuchins was one, a Hollander, Johannes van Landen, who earlier had barely escaped the crown of martyrdom. For he was of the community of the Observant friars who were put to death at Gorcum ; but because of his youth he was reprieved and banished the country. Then he had gone to France and had become a Capuchin. Of such mettle were many of the friars who helped to build up the Belgian province in its earliest days ; men who had already suffered for the faith they held and were willing to suffer yet more. Amongst them were two Scots allied by birth with the royal Stuarts, whose story was often recounted in those days when men held their faith at a price.² They were William and John Forbes, both named

¹ cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 368, *seq.* In 1615 the friaries were constituted into two provinces. Flanders and Walloon. *ibid.*, p. 103.

² cf. *Alter Alexius, natione Scotus, nobile familia oriundus, nuper in Belgium felici S. Spiritus afflatu delatus et in familiam seraphici Patris S. Francisci capuccinorum adscriptus sub nomine F. Archangel . . . opera V. P. F. Faustini Diestensis ejusdem ordinis* (Coloniæ Agrippinæ, 1620). A French translation by M. Jacques Brousse was published in Paris in 1621 under the title : *Récit historique du R. P. Archange Ecossois*. An English translation by John Forbes was published at Douai in 1623. A MS. *Vita del P. F. Arcangelo di Forbes Scozzese* is in the Bibliotheca Ducale of Modena : *Rocco da Cesinale*, op. cit., I, p. 370, note 1 ; cf. Boverius, *Annales*, 1606, 38, *seq.* ; *The Scots' Peerage*, ed. by Sir James Balfour, Paul (Edinburgh, 1907), vol. iv, pp. 57-60 ; Archangel Forbes is not to

in the Capuchin Order, Brother Archangel ; for John became a Capuchin a year after the death of his brother, and was given the same religious name. Their father who became the eighth Lord Forbes in the peerage of Scotland in 1593, married in 1558 Margaret Gordon, eldest daughter of the fourth Earl of Huntly. It was an unhappy marriage, embittered by a feud between the Forbes and the Huntly-Gordons over church lands which both claimed, and by divergence in religious faith ; for Forbes embraced "the new teaching," and Margaret Gordon was a staunch Catholic. The estrangement between husband and wife ended in a divorce in 1573 on the alleged ground of Margaret Gordon's light conduct ; but of that there were two opinions amongst those who knew the case. Certain it is that Forbes himself was no matrimonial saint ;³ and the two sons as they grew into manhood sided with their mother and like her were staunch in the Faith in which they had been baptised. William, the elder son, in disgust at his father's conduct, went abroad and entered upon the profession of arms under Alessandro Farnese in the Low Countries, but in a short while he abandoned the army and became a novice in the Capuchin friary at Brussels. He lived but three years after that and died in the friary of Ghent in 1592.

It was in the following year that John, now heir to his father's property and title, made his escape from Scotland and followed in his brother's footsteps. From the time that William had become a Capuchin, the father had set himself to win over the younger son to the Calvinist faith by soft means and harsh, and finally had forced him into an engagement of marriage. John had temporised until the marriage contract was signed, waiting against the opportunity to escape the parental bonds. Now it would seem the bride to be was his willing accomplice in his escape. They mutually agreed that they were too young for the responsibilities of marriage, and that John should go abroad for a time till both should know their own minds, and that both should be free were either to make another choice in life. Thereupon

be confused with the Scottish Capuchin of romance, Archangel Leslie, concerning whom, see *infra*, p. 331.

³ He had two natural children.

John secretly and in disguise made his way to Belgium. He landed at Noorda, and incontinently was arrested as a spy and cast into prison at Antwerp. The intervention of some Scottish friends gave him his freedom, and he was about to offer his services to the Spanish viceroy when he came upon some Capuchins and recognised in the form of their habit the figures of a dream he had had some time before, which had left an indelible impression on his mind. That meeting changed the current of his thoughts, and shortly afterwards he entered the friary at Tournay, receiving with the habit the name of Archangel, which his brother had borne. The following year came trouble from his Scottish friends in the service of Spain, who clamoured for his return to the world ; urging that his services as a soldier were required in his native country ; it was the year of a disastrous campaign. Brother Archangel was now heir to the barony to which his father had just succeeded. The case of Ange de Joyeuse, who two years before had been called from the cloister to fight for the Catholic cause in Languedoc, was alleged as indicating the duty of the future Lord Forbes. But Brother Archangel gauged the situation in Scotland more accurately than his friends ; and he was no trained soldier as was Ange de Joyeuse. Nor, perhaps, could he bring himself to fight against his father, who was a king's man. He remained a Capuchin. But the issue of the civil war brought disaster to his mother's family who fought for the queen. Margaret Gordon, reduced to beggary, joined her son in Belgium, and was granted a pension by the Spanish Court ; and for the remainder of their lives mother and son were united, Margaret dwelling near the friary in which her son resided.

In time Archangel became a preacher of some repute, but his most earnest work was among his own countrymen in the Low Countries. At Dixmude he brought back to the Church three hundred Scots soldiers in the pay of the Spanish viceroy ; at Menin he reconciled a number of Scots Calvinists. In his death, too, he was a worthy Capuchin. He was guardian of the friary of Termonde, when the plague broke out in the neighbouring town of Waastmunster. Archangel at once went there to attend to the sick ; and was himself struck down by the plague. They carried him back

to Termonde ; but solicitous for others, he ordered them to lay him in a hut in the friary garden and there he breathed out his soul into the hands of God on 2 August, 1606. His mother had died in the preceding January. Six weeks before his death Archangel had succeeded to his father's title ; at least for that time he was *de jure* the ninth Lord Forbes. He was buried with his mother and elder brother in the friary church at Ghent ; and at the urgent prayers of the bishop of Termonde and of the magistrates of Antwerp his story was written for the comfort of many who like Margaret Gordon and her sons were exiles for the Faith they held.

The Capuchin province of Belgium was, in fact, the refuge of many exiles driven from their native lands by the Protestant persecutions ; in its turn it became the nursery whence missionary friars were sent to establish the Capuchin order in territories where for many years to come the struggle for religion was to be fierce and persistent. Thus from Belgium came the Capuchin provinces in Lower Germany and the British Isles, and the mission in Holland, as we shall now relate.

(ii)

The beginnings of the Capuchin province in Lower Germany and of the missions in Great Britain and Ireland are connected with the name of that remarkable Irishman, Father Francis Nugent. It was indeed by the accident of his well-known abilities that Francis Nugent was chosen to be the leader of a new expedition into Germany ; but it was his life's ambition which made him, in spite of many difficulties, the founder of the missionary " province of Ireland " with its filiations in England and Scotland.⁴

⁴ For the history of the Capuchins in Great Britain and Ireland, see Nicholas Archbold, *The Historie of the Irish Capuchins* MS. in Bibliothèque de Troyes, Cabinet des MSS., No. 1103 ; the same author's *Evangelicall Fruct of the Seraphicall Franciscan Order*, MS. in British Museum, Harl 122, d. 2, No. 3888 ; Robert Connelly : *Historia seu Annales missiones Hibernicae*, MS. in Bibl. Troyes, Cabinet des MSS. No. 706. Concerning the English mission see the interesting *Little Notes for to helpe my memory*, by Father Bernardine O'Ferall (1656-1660) MS. in Archives de l'Aulie. Transcripts of all these MSS., together with transcripts of letters concerning the mission in the Vatican archives and the Archives of Propaganda, exist in the Provincial Archives of the Capuchins in

Francis Nugent was the son of Sir Thomas Nugent of Moyrath Castle in County Meath. Forced by the penal laws to seek his education abroad, he graduated with brilliant success both at Paris and at Louvain; yet he was but twenty-two years of age when, in 1591, he took the Capuchin habit in the friary at Brussels. Before entering the friary he had resolved, God willing, to establish the Capuchins in his native land; and one of his last acts as a layman was to put his valuable library in trust for "the future Capuchin province of Ireland." No sooner was he ordained priest in 1594 than his learning and administrative abilities made him a marked man; he was sent to teach theology in Paris; two years later he was called to attend the General Chapter of the Order in Rome and was appointed Commissary General for the province of Venice; a year later he is back in Flanders and is instrumental in founding a college at Lille for exiled Irish students. He is still but twenty-eight years of age. But now begin his difficulties, difficulties which were to harass him and his chosen work throughout the greater part of his life. The cause was largely temperamental as between the Walloon Capuchins and the Irishman; nevertheless it touched upon a matter of principle which at this period was perturbing the minds of not a few of the friars elsewhere, as well as in Flanders; namely, as to whether the Capuchin might lawfully depart from the letter of the constitutions of the Order for the sake of a wider apostolical activity—a delicate question when it comes to practice, as the history of religious Orders has constantly proved.⁵ Francis Nugent was no laxist; rather was he inclined to rigorism, as we shall see, in all that concerned the austere life of a Capuchin. On the other hand, where apostolic charity demanded a wider interpretation of the constitutions he did not hesitate to put what he considered an evangelical duty before a mere external observance. Yet, curiously enough, or perhaps not curiously, his first trouble with the intransigent Walloons arose over his defence of the German mystic, Johannes Tauler. For this defence Francis

Dublin. The Rinuccini MSS. afford valuable information concerning the Irish Mission.

⁵ F. Robert Connelly, in his *Historia*, fol. 17, *seq.*, says there were two parties amongst the Walloon Capuchins, one for "the internal life," another for "the external life," and that Fr. Francis' troubles arose out of this.

Nugent was held suspect of heresy and was ordered to Rome to purge his heresy. He went to Rome, and in a public Consistory before the Pope and cardinals vindicated both Tauler and himself amidst the applause of his august audience.⁶ He returned to Flanders and was elected a definitor of the province.⁷ In 1608 he again attended the General Chapter of the Order in Rome; and now came the opportunity for which he had long waited. The Duke of Lorraine, at the instance of the Scotch Capuchin, John Chrysostom—he whom we have already met in the company of the Englishman, Benet Canfield—had petitioned the Pope to send Capuchin missionaries to England. The question, it would seem, had been discussed at the Chapter, but without any decision being arrived at⁸; whereupon Francis Nugent went direct to Paul V and laid before His Holiness the scheme of a missionary province to comprise England, Ireland and Scotland. His eloquent pleading won the Pope's assent, and on May 29 a brief was issued instituting a Capuchin mission for "England, Scotland and Ireland and all adjacent islands"; at the same time granting the missionaries all apostolic faculties enjoyed by other religious missionaries and seminary priests in those lands. A clause was added dispensing missionaries from wearing the habit of the Order whilst engaged on their missionary labours.⁹

Francis Nugent was now commissioned by the Chapter to organise the mission, and for this purpose was offered a friary at Friburg in Switzerland to be the nursery and training camp of the missionaries; but this he refused as being at too great a distance from the Irish colleges in the Low Countries, from which he hoped to raise recruits. He returned to Flanders to prepare the way for the work appointed him, and in 1611 we find him guardian of the friary at Douai, and with his first recruits ready to be received to the Capuchin habit for work on the new mission: though the task of recruiting from the colleges had not been

⁶ According to Robert Connelly, the dispute concerned Tauler's sermon, "*De paupertate spiritus*." So also Nicholas Archbold: *Historie of the Irish Capucins*. Vide Joh. Thauleri *Cantica in Opera Omnia* (ed. Laurentius Surius—Coloniae, 1548); Cant. VI, *De vera paupertate et nuditate spiritus*, p. xcviij.

⁷ In the Capuchin Order, the definitors, together with the Provincial, are the governing council of the province.

⁸ Nicholas Archbold, *Histoire*, fol. 1, and *Evangelicall Fruct*, fol. 49.

⁹ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, V, p. 278.

easy, owing to the opposition of other religious orders who were already in the field.¹⁰

At that moment it was that Francis Nugent was commissioned by the General of the Order to choose a company of friars and with them to found a Capuchin settlement on the Rhine. It is evident that the mission in Great Britain and Ireland was not yet taken very seriously by the higher authorities. There was in fact a distinct prejudice against undertaking missions which involved such departures from the common life as the wearing of the secular dress and the handling of money.

Francis Nugent went to Germany, and at Cologne laid the foundation of what were to become two flourishing provinces on the Rhine ; but he had no thought of allowing the German mission to interfere with his project of an Anglo-Irish mission. Rather it would seem that in undertaking his new commission he proposed to himself to transfer the training ground of the Irish, English and Scotch missionaries from Douai to Cologne ; and in fact it was at Cologne that the first Irish recruits were received into the Capuchin Order. But again difficulties arose. The Roman superiors did not see eye to eye with him in regard to certain innovations which he considered the religious condition of the country demanded ; and the Germans accused him of thinking more of the Anglo-Irish mission than of the interests of religion in Germany. So after two years he was relieved of his superiorship in Germany, and with his Irish recruits returned to Belgium. There he was given as a seminary of the Anglo-Irish mission a newly-built friary at Charleville ; and at Charleville he remained until his death in 1635, directing the work of the mission and training the missionaries. This mission was the one earthly thing he lived for. When in 1624 on the death of Peter Lombard, Archbishop of Armagh, it was proposed that he should succeed to that see, he persistently refused the honour, saying that "his little mission of the Capuchins into Ireland was more choice unto him than the primacy of all Ireland."¹¹ True, owing in a measure to the continued opposition of the Walloon Capuchins, perhaps, too, to a certain lack of personal magnetism,¹² he was unable to carry

¹⁰ Nicholas Archbold : *Historie*, fol. 30.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 7.

¹² He seems to have lacked the sympathetic understanding of character needful to the born leader. cf. N. Archbold : *Historie*, fol. 4, and fol. 28, *seq.*

out his full scheme of establishing three distinct seminary-friaries for the missions in England, Ireland, and Scotland.¹³ Moreover, as we shall see, his plan for a native Capuchin mission in England was crossed by the diplomacy of that masterful French Capuchin, Père Joseph. Nevertheless it was mainly due to the indomitable courage of Francis Nugent that the Capuchins took their place in Great Britain and Ireland amongst the religious Orders who laboured, suffered and endured for the sake of the Catholic Faith during the penal days.

(iii)

Although the Capuchin mission for Great Britain and Ireland was decreed by Paul V in 1608, it was not until 1615 that Francis Nugent sent out his first missionaries. This was partly due to the circumstances already related, but in part also to Francis Nugent's determined policy that no missionary should be sent to the mission field until he had been especially trained for the work before him and well moulded in the life of a Capuchin friar. So thorough was the theological training that Francis Nugent employed the Jew Abraham to teach Hebrew so that the missionaries should be the better grounded in the knowledge of the Scriptures; he himself was not only a theologian of wide repute but also a Greek classicist. Yet more severe was the ascetical and religious training; too severe some thought, but the Charleville missionaries were to be trained to endure any hardship the hunted life of a missionary should entail and to be prepared for the special temptations which the missionary must face. Theirs was not to be the sheltered life of the cloister.

Not all who came to the Charleville friary were allowed to pass on to the mission-field.¹⁴ But in 1615 five friars were sent to Ireland under the leadership of Father Stephen Daly, a man of singular prudence as was attested by David Rothe, Bishop of Ossory, who during Stephen Daly's brief

¹³ *Arch. Prop. Fide, I, Anglia*, vol. 347, fol. 151.

¹⁴ So says Nicholas Archbold in his *Historie*, fol. 3. Stephen Daly went first to prepare the way; four others followed somewhat later. In his *Evangelicall Fruct*, fol. 86, Archbold gives the date of the arrival in Ireland of the first Capuchins as 1616.

missionary career (he died in 1620) would attempt nothing without his counsel.¹⁵ At first the missionaries lived as best they might, scattered throughout the country ; but in 1524 Francis Nugent, during a visitation of the mission, obtained for them a friary in Dublin ; and in Dublin the Capuchins have kept a continuous settlement from that day to this. There were times when they were hunted out or cast into gaol, when the anti-Papal policy of the Irish government demanded a demonstration ; yet they returned when the immediate trouble was over. Father Nugent lived to see Capuchin friaries established in Slane, Limerick, Molingar, and Drogheda : before the end of the century there were fourteen friaries in Ireland.¹⁶ We speak of " friaries " ; they were small insignificant dwellings, tucked away mostly in some inconspicuous street or lane. From them the friars went forth on apostolic journeys to minister, secretly or publicly according to circumstances, to the suffering Catholics. Writing of Father Columb Glin—one of the first missionaries—the old chronicler, his fellow labourer, relates : " he preached often and that ordinarily in mountains, woods, thickets and valleys partly for greater security, partly to be less burdensome to the people. He preached two or three times a day on Sundays and festivals and the people came flocking to him. When visiting a house he would catechise the domestics whilst they prepared supper : oftentimes he spent the whole day hearing confessions until midnight."¹⁷ For many years the Capuchin mission in Ireland was hampered by the opposition of certain of the religious Orders and the regular bishops ; the Capuchins' most ardent friends were to be found amongst the secular clergy and the laity.¹⁸ In Ireland, too, as elsewhere the

¹⁵ Nicholas Archbold : *Evangelicall Fruct*, fol. 87.

¹⁶ cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, V, p. 412.

¹⁷ Nicholas Archbold, *Evangelicall Fruct*, fol. 249-250.

¹⁸ e.g. in 1644 Scarampi wrote to Cardinal Barbarini, advising that the Capuchins in Ireland be gathered into two convents with regular observance owing to the hostility towards them of certain prelates and religious orders.—Bibl. Vaticana, MSS., Barbarini, No. 8626, fol. 45. Archbishop Fleming, a Recollect Franciscan, at first strenuously opposed the introduction of the Capuchins into Dublin. Later he became more favourable to them (cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.* V, p. 273). On the other hand, Thomas Dease, Bishop of Meath, and David Rothe, Bishop of Ossory, were their fast friends (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 272-274). Dease, when professor in the Irish college at Paris in 1618, had written pleading letters to Francis Nugent, begging that Capuchins be sent

Capuchins seem to have met with less hostility from the Protestants than did other religious orders. During the Parliamentary War in 1642, Father Anthony Nugent went freely between Dublin and Drogheda "being in favour with Catholics and Protestants" and in Drogheda he lodged in the house of the brother of Lord Moore of Mellifont, who though a Protestant kept a Capuchin habit by him to put on in case the Catholics took Drogheda.¹⁹ Nevertheless the story of the Irish Capuchins throughout the seventeenth century is a story of hardship and suffering for the Faith they loved; a story of quiet persistent endurance and of the daily task. They shared the life of the people whom they served, both for sorrow and for joy; though their sorrows were of this world and their joys in the Faith which neither political tyranny nor religious persecution could subdue. Theirs was not the opportunity to figure in the larger problems which mould the world at large. Their heart and their service was with the people of their own land and their glory is the common glory of their people's Faith which the direst oppression could not quench.

So too, the missionary labours of the Capuchins in Scotland might have passed unrecognised save by the people amongst whom they worked, had it not been for a literary romance which made the name of Archangel Leslie "the Scotch Capuchin" known throughout Europe. Gian-Battista Rinuccini, Archbishop of Fermo and at one time Papal delegate in Ireland, the original author of the legend, professed to tell "a true story"; and believed that he was telling it. He gathered the material of his book from personal interviews with Archangel Leslie, from the archives of the Capuchin Order, and from stories he had heard from the Capuchins of Monte-Giorgio in the diocese of Fermo with whom Archangel Leslie had sojourned during a stay in Italy. The book, therefore, at first sight seems well authenticated; which in fact it is not. The most probable explanation is that both Rinuccini and the Italian Capuchins

to the Highlands of Scotland to minister to the Catholics. (*Vide* Connelly: *Historia Missionis Hiberniae*, fol. 182-191. Dease's letters are illuminating as to the condition of the Highland Catholics). See also the letter of O'Neill to Fr. Nugent, offering to supply the Capuchin missionaries to Ireland with vestments and other necessaries. Connelly: *Historia*, fol. 192.

¹⁹ Nicholas Archbold: *Historie*, fol. 9.

confused with the story Archangel Leslie told them of his own life the stories he related of other Scotch Capuchins, notably of that other Father Archangel, juridically the ninth Baron Forbes. Rinuccini made "the Scotch Capuchin" a hero of romance in many countries—much to the chagrin of some of Archangel Leslie's own compatriots.²⁰

Archangel Leslie's story as we read it in authentic documents is indeed not without heroic quality : but his was the heroism common to many who in those days became exiles from their own land for the Faith they held, and then eventually returned as missionaries at the peril of their lives to serve their people.

George Leslie (he assumed the name of Archangel when he became a Capuchin) was the son of James Leslie of Peterstone and his wife Jean Wood, and was a native of Aberdeen.²¹ Having become reconciled to the Catholic Church, he went abroad and was entered as a student in the Scots' college in Rome ; but shortly afterwards sought admission amongst the Capuchins and was sent to make his novitiate in the Marches of Ancona. We next hear of him at Bologna in 1617 when he wrote to Cardinal Maffeo Barbarini requesting faculties to hear the confessions of the English, Irish and Scot residents in that city and to absolve

²⁰ G. B. Rinuccini : *Il Cappuccini Scozzese* (Fermo, 1644). The Italian original went through nine editions in thirty years. In 1659 it was translated into Spanish, and into Portuguese in 1667. In 1664 appeared *Le Capucin Escossois : Histoire merveilleuse et très véritable arrivée de notre temps*, by P. Francois Barrault. It was published at Rouen professedly as a translation of the original Italian of Rinuccini, but Barrault in fact amplified the narrative and made confusion worse confounded. In the eighteenth century Rinuccini's work was again published by Timoteo da Brescia (Brescia, 1736) with additions taken from Barrault and the Portuguese version ; and went through several editions. A Flemish version of Barrault's translation was published at Bruges in 1687 and went through several editions. A German translation appeared at Constanz (Switzerland) in 1677 and again at Bregenz in 1711. *Vide* P. Frédégand Callaey : *Essai Critique sur la Vie du P. Archange Leslie* (Paris-Couvain, 1914). The author makes scholarly use of the letters of Archangel Leslie to Card. Maffeo Barbarini preserved in the Vatican Library, *fonds Barbarini latin*, 8628. Even in recent years the book has evoked much unfavourable criticism ; but the charge suggested by T. G. Law in *The Scottish Review*, July, 1891, that Archangel was a vain boaster, is manifestly unjust. As P. Frédégand Callaey points out (*op. cit.*, p. 34), Rinuccini expressly declares that he did not scrupulously report Father Archangel's own words ; and there are Father Archangel's own letters to prove what manner of man he was : " *un homme de sacrifice, franc et loyal.*"

²¹ In the Student's Register of the Scots' College, Rome (ad annum 1608), his name is entered as *Georgius Lesly Aberdonensis*.

converts from heresy. It is evident from his letters to the Cardinal both now and later, that Father Archangel was much concerned about the position in which the exiled Catholics in Italy found themselves. Outside Rome and Loretto no provision was made for the English-speaking peoples to receive instruction and go to confession. Difficulties too, were put in the way of English-speaking Protestants who wished to be reconciled to the Church. Father Archangel asks for ample faculties to deal with such cases. Moreover, he complains that his efforts to be of use to his fellow countrymen and the English and Irish living in Bologna, have brought him under a suspicion of heresy on the part of his Capuchin brethren, who evidently regarded all English-speaking people as heretics at heart if not by profession! Nor was it only the Italian Capuchins who took that view. In a letter written to the cardinal in 1618 from Monte La Verna he indignantly complains of the unhappy experience of his cousin, Thomas Dempster, the historian of the Scottish Church.²² "Driven from England as a papist, he finds himself treated as a heretic in Italy."

Having received the requested faculties, Archangel seems to have spent the next five years in Bologna, ministering to his suffering compatriots.

In 1623 he was granted permission by the Minister General to go as a missionary to Scotland. He crossed to London in the suite of the Marquis de la Hinojasa, Ambassador-Extraordinary to the Court of James I.²³ Thence he wrote to Cardinal Maffeo Barbarini announcing his arrival. He informs the cardinal that the king and the English Council have agreed to grant toleration to Catholics on the occasion of the marriage of the Prince of Wales to the Spanish Infanta; but that the toleration will not apply to Scotland. Those who are negotiating the marriage, he says, either do not realise the state of affairs in Scotland or have not the will to urge a remedy. He has sought in vain to find succour in men; now he can but trust in the goodness of

²² He was the author of *Historia ecclesiastica Gentis Scotorum* published at Bologna in 1627. cf. *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* (New York, 1908), vol. iv., p. 717.

²³ According to the Rinuccini-Barrault story, Archangel spent some time in Paris and preached before the Court. Is there some confusion here with the famous preacher, Father Archangel de Pembroke of the Paris Capuchin community?

God. He is about to go to Scotland where he will be the guest of Baron Herries and the house of Maxwell.²⁴ For six years Archangel Leslie laboured zealously in the Lowlands of Scotland, mainly it would seem in Aberdeenshire. He not only ministered to the Catholics ; he was ardent to make converts amongst the Protestants. A pamphlet he published in 1624, entitled : *Where was your church before Luther*, evoked a spirited reply from Andrew Logie, Archdeacon of Aberdeen.²⁵ That his labours met with some success is evident from the list of names, well known in Scottish history, of those reconciled to the Catholic Faith, which appears in a letter he wrote in 1630 to his relative Colonel Semphill, then living in Spain.²⁶

It was doubtless the reaction in favour of Catholicism which became apparent amongst the Scottish gentry at this time which brought about a recrudescence of ferocious hostility towards the Catholics on the part of the ministers and led to a more severe application of the penal laws. On December 2, 1628, the privy council ordered the arrest "of the Capuchin Leslie, commonly called Archangel."²⁷ He escaped by going into hiding : for more than a year he could only minister to the spiritual needs of the Catholics in secret.

Then in 1630 happened one of those occurrences which brought bitterness into the life of not a few of the missionaries of those days. Archangel Leslie was cited by the Congregation of Propaganda to answer charges made against him by some of his fellow clergy. Protests in his favour were at once sent to the Congregation both by many of the laity and by his superiors. His examination before the cardinals ended in an honourable acquittal and in a letter from Propaganda to the General of the Order lauding his work and probity of life, and recommending that he should be sent back to continue his work in Scotland.²⁸ But for some reason Archangel lingered on in Italy and was appointed guardian of the friary

²⁴ cf. P. Frédégand Callaey, op. cit., pp. 35-36, where the letter is given in full.

²⁵ Andrew Logie : *Cum Deo bono. Rane from the clouds upon a choicke Angel, or a returned answer to that common quaeritur of our adversaries : Where was your church before Luther* (Aberdeen 1624).

²⁶ cf. P. Frédégand Callaey, op. cit., p. 28.

²⁷ *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, ed. Hume Brown, 2 series, vol. ii, p. 497 (Edinburgh, 1900).

²⁸ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, VII, p. 331.

of Monte-Giorgio in the Marches of Ancona. It was at this period that he made the acquaintance of Archbishop Rinuccini. He returned to Scotland in 1634, armed with new privileges for the Capuchin missionaries in Scotland.²⁹ All we know of his further career is that he lived in great poverty and that he died, probably in 1637, in his mother's house "near the mill of Aboyne" by the river Dee. He was buried in a ruined church between the mill and Kanakyle or Hunthall.³⁰

Archangel Leslie's fame was posthumous; he had been dead about seven years when Rinuccini wrote his book.

But other Capuchins had preceded Archangel Leslie on the Scottish mission. In 1618 a Scottish laird, James Maitland³¹ and MacDonal, head of the clan Ranald, wrote to Father Francis Nugent, pleading that Capuchin missionaries should be sent to minister to the needs of the Catholics in Scotland.³² Several Capuchins were consequently sent, amongst them Father Epiphanius Lindsay who arrived in 1620.³³ Epiphanius Lindsay is perhaps the most venerable

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ So says Fr. W. Christie, S.J., in his letter written in 1653 to Fr. Gordon, rector of the Scots' College in Rome. The letter was written as a protest against the Rinuccini story. Fr. Christie's indignation at the dissemination of this book probably accounts for what P. Frédégand Callaey considers his ungenerous references to a fellow missionary (*op. cit.*, p. 33).

³¹ He was the son of William Maitland, "Secretary Lethington." He married Agnes Maxwell, daughter of the fifth Lord Herries. In 1613 James Maitland was forced to migrate to the Low Countries on account of his religion. cf. Sir J. Balfour, par. 1, *The Scots' Peerage*, vol. v, pp. 295-296.

³² *Vide* R. Connelly: *Historia*, fol. 193-196, where the letters are given in full. Maitland urges that Gaelic-speaking Irishmen should be sent to the Highlands. MacDonal mentions amongst other reasons for the suggested mission, that the Capuchins are held in esteem at the court of James I. "Ipse etiam rex Jacobus et qui Regi sunt a sanctoribus consiliis Capucinatorum Ordinem in maximo pretio constituunt."

It will be remembered that Fra Giacinto da Casale had relations with James I concerning the affair of the Elector-Palatine (*supra*, p. 303). About the same time Father Francis Nugent discussed the affair with the agent of the King in Brussels. Nugent's proposal was that the Elector-Palatine's children should be educated as Catholics and succeed to the electorate; but this was rejected. The King, however, gave Nugent a safe conduct to come to England. (N. Archbold: *Historie*, fol. 38. Archbold speaks of a Father Alexandre de Ligny as a friend of Nugent in connexion with this affair. Is he the Alexander d'Ales mentioned in the correspondence of Giacinto da Casale and who visited the English court?) According to Archbold: *Evangelicall Fruct*, fol. 7, Charles I, when Prince of Wales, gave the Capuchin Zaccaria Boverio leave to visit England whenever he pleased and to remain there without disturbance.

³³ *Vide* P. Cyprien de Gamaches: *Mémoires de la Mission des Capucins . . . près la Reine d'Angleterre* edit. Paris, 1881, p. 347, when he says: *Quo tempore*

figure in the story of the Scotch Capuchins.³⁴ His French biographer says "he was of the most noble and ancient family of Lindsay."³⁵ Having finished his studies at the Jesuit college of Louvain, he entered the priesthood and spent some years as a secular priest in Scotland until he was arrested and expelled the country. He returned to Flanders ; made the acquaintance of the Capuchins, joined their Order and eventually received permission to go back to the Scottish mission. On his return to Scotland he was first employed as chaplain to one of the Catholic families : but that life seemed too easy to him ; he yearned to go forth and work amongst the scattered poor. So forth he went disguised as a shepherd ; and for thirty years he spent his life traversing all parts of Scotland to search out and minister to the poor Catholics. As a true friar he shared their life of poverty ; for many years he fasted rigorously all the year round, taking but one meal daily and that in the evening, till his Jesuit confessor Father Clerc warned him to moderate his austerity ; but to the end his food was the food of the poor amongst whom he lived. Usually he dwelt alone and apart, lest in case of arrest he should draw others into trouble. On his journeys he carried a bagpipe which he played at fairs and other gatherings where he was likely to become acquainted with poor Catholics. Three times he was betrayed by false friends ; but each time escaped. The first time (as he relates in a letter to a French Capuchin)³⁶ he was sold to the Earl of Dunbar for a suit of clothes and a hundred

tres tantum sacerdotes in toto regno mihi noti erant. Francis Nugent in his report to Propaganda in 1622 writes that he had sent two missionaries to Scotland : Epiphanius Lindsay seems to have been sent by the General and not from Charleville. His name is not found amongst the friars of that house. Not improbably Fr. John Chrysostom, mentioned in MacDonald's letter to Nugent, was already in Scotland. For an account of Father John Chrysostom *vide* Cyprien de Gamaches, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-329.

³⁴ See the account of his life and death given by Cyprien de Gamaches, *op. cit.* pp. 332-354.

³⁵ Père Cyprien adds : *Il était comte de Maine et sa mere fille d' autre comte.* The details of Epiphanius' life were supplied to him by the Jesuit Fr. Clerc, who had been the Friar's confessor and friend for many years. But Scotch titles and family connexions were always a puzzle to foreigners. Father Epiphanius was probably of the Lindsays of Vain or Vayne. Alexander Lindsay of Vayne, who died in 1527, was the second son of Sir David Lindsay of Edzell, the "founder" of the Balcarres house. cf. Lord Lindsay : *Lives of the Lindsays* (Wigan, 1840), vol. i, p. 318.

³⁶ Cyprien de Gamaches, cf. *Mémoires*, p. 350.

Scots marks ; but a Catholic nobleman warned him of his danger. The second time he was sold for one hundred marks to Thomas Ramsay, a minister, who went with his agents to arrest him whilst he was saying mass in the house of a Catholic. But Epiphanius, warned, had anticipated the hour at which mass should have been said. He was pursued to the hills, where he lay hiding in a bush, whilst the baffled minister within earshot discussed further plans for his capture. The third time he was sold to one of his own blood-relations but again was warned and escaped. He was in his eighty-fourth year when his end came. At the last he was attended by his friend Father Clerc, into whose hands he delivered his books and the few things he had, that he might die in utter poverty after the manner of St. Francis. Epiphanius Lindsay was of the breed of missionary who dares all and sacrifices all for pure love of his neighbour.

Meanwhile the Capuchins had spread to England. The first who came, were sent from Paris, not from Charleville. They were Benet Canfield and John Chrysostom the Scot—they whom we met in the Paris friary with Ange de Joyeuse. Their adventure into England we have related elsewhere.³⁷ That was in 1599. In 1618 an English Capuchin, Father Angelus Pamel of the Capuchin province of Paris, was thrown into gaol in London in the uprising against the Catholics which followed the gunpowder plot. Angelus Pamel was of a family that had suffered for the Faith. His widowed mother had been reduced to poverty by fines inflicted on her for harbouring priests.³⁸ He remained in prison until the death of James I, when he was released at the petition of the French king and expelled the kingdom. But he returned to England after a six months sojourn in Paris, together with Père Archange de Pembroke, one of the notable English Capuchins of the Paris province, and worked as a missionary in London until the coming of the French Capuchins as chaplains to Henrietta, Queen of Charles I. About the same time that Angelus Pamel was first working on the English mission, two French Capuchins attached as chaplains to the French embassy,

³⁷ *Supra.*

³⁸ See the biographical notice : *Père Ange de Londres*, in *Eloges historiques des Capucins de la province de Paris*, op. cit.

had made a number of converts, amongst them the Duchess of Lennox, and were in favour with the king; they were Père Ange de Raconis, himself a converted Huguenot, and Père Archange de Luynes a relative of the duc de Luynes.³⁹ It may have been due to this that in 1617 Lord Montague of Cowdray wrote to Archange de Pembroke urging that more Capuchin missionaries be sent to England.⁴⁰ Père Archange sent the letter to Francis Nugent, and three missionaries from Flanders shortly afterwards arrived in London. Their arrival was too much for the Protestant party and a broadsheet was published and circulated with the title: "A Newe Secte of Friars called Capichine." It ran:

These newe freshecome Friars being sprong up of late,
 doe nowe within Andwarpe keepe their abidinge :
 Seducinge muche people to their damned estate
 by their new false founde doctrine the Gospel deridinge.
 Sayinge and affirminge, which is no newe false tidinge:
 That all suche as doe the Pope's doctrine despise,
 As damned soules to hell must be ridinge.
 For they doe condemne them with their newe found lie,
 these be the children of the worlde counted wise,
 whose wisdome is folly to God and his elect.
 But let Sathan worke all that he can devise,
 God it is alone which the Gospel doeth protect.⁴¹

From that time the Capuchins were definitely established in England, and remained there until the continental nurseries of the Anglo-Irish province were suppressed at the time of the French Revolution.⁴²

In 1630, however, occurred an event which retarded the development of the English Capuchin mission, and for a time caused no little confusion amongst the missionaries. That was the establishment of French Capuchins at Somerset

³⁹ Cyprien de Gamaches, op. cit., pp. 317-318.

⁴⁰ In this letter Lord Montague speaks of the devotedness and zeal of the Capuchins and of the effect of their austere life on the people. See the letter in R. Connelly, *Historia*, fol. 170-173.

⁴¹ *Vide* British Museum collection of ballads, Huth, 50 (1-76). The broadsheet is erroneously dated "circa 1580" in the Catalogue.

⁴² They returned to England in 1850.

House as official chaplains to the queen. Viewed from the standpoint of the spiritual interests of the English Catholics, it was one of the diplomatic blunders of Père Joseph du Tremblay. Had he been content to regard the royal chaplaincy merely as a royal chaplaincy, no harm would have been done ; but the imagination of Père Joseph was fired with a wider scheme ; the royal chaplaincy was to be the beginning of "a mission" for the conversion of England ; and England and Scotland were annexed to the world-wide mission-field over which the Commissary of the French missions, in virtue of faculties granted by the Congregation of Propaganda, had direct authority independent of the Minister General of the Order. That meant the breaking up of the Capuchin mission of Great Britain and Ireland as instituted by Paul V. Moreover, to facilitate the work of the chaplains, it had been agreed between Père Joseph and the French Court that all friars, "natives of the kingdom," should be withdrawn from England and Scotland ; and an order to that effect was issued. The order created consternation amongst the Capuchins working in Great Britain. The Irish Capuchins in the country refused to leave, on the ground that they were not "natives of the kingdom" ; the English and Scotch Capuchins, with the exception of the venerable Epiphanius Lindsay, were forced to return to their friaries on the Continent. Archangel Leslie probably voiced the general feeling of the "native" Capuchins in his pungent reference to Père Joseph du Tremblay on this occasion.⁴³ An appeal to Propaganda enabled some of the "natives" to return.⁴⁴ But the restrictions imposed by the presence of the chaplains at the Court undoubtedly arrested the progress of the mission. Numbers of English Capuchins were to be found abroad who under other circumstances would have swelled the ranks of the missionaries.⁴⁵

Of the zeal and energy of the French chaplains, within the limited sphere in which they were free to work, there can

⁴³ See his letter to Colonel Semphill in P. Frédégand Callaey, op. cit., p. 30.

⁴⁴ Thus in January, 1634, Fathers Anselm and Richard, both Englishmen, received permission to return first to Scotland and then to England. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, VII, p. 332. Archangel Leslie himself returned to Scotland the same year.

⁴⁵ *Vide* Cyprian de Gamaches, op. cit., where many interesting details are given. Père Cyprian was a member of the chaplaincy and for a time the superior.

be no question. They effected a number of conversions in court circles ; and during the bitter persecution of the Catholics in the Puritan uprising which accompanied the civil war, many of them at the peril of their own lives succoured the imprisoned Catholics and ministered to those condemned to death. At the outbreak of the civil war, when the queen went to Holland to seek supplies for the royal cause, the chapel at Somerset House was closed by order of Parliament, and the Capuchins imprisoned in their own lodging. On several occasions the agents of the Parliament broke into the house and the intervention of the French ambassador was needed to save them from personal violence. They returned to Somerset House at the restoration of Charles II. During the Plague of London, two of them died at their post of duty. The chaplaincy ceased with the death of Queen Henriette Marie.

With the withdrawal of the French chaplaincy the number of Capuchin missionaries in England increased ; in the eighteenth century they were grouped into district communities under local guardians, and the mission was governed by a Vicar Provincial appointed by the Definitory of the newly-erected Irish province. But with that later development this book is not concerned.⁴⁶

(iv)

We return now to the formation of Capuchin settlements in Lower Germany.⁴⁷

The mission and eventual formation of a Capuchin province on the Rhine was due to the initiative of Sweikard, Archbishop and Elector of Mainz. In 1608 he wrote to the

⁴⁶ In 1656 the Capuchins of Normandy petitioned Propaganda to allow them to form "a mission" in England, but the petition was refused. cf. Bernardine O'Ferall, MS., cit., pp. 2-3.

⁴⁷ For the history of the Capuchins in the Rhine provinces, see Hierotheus Confluentinus : *Historia Provinciae Rhenanae*. Mainz, 1735-1750. P. Hierotheus does less than justice to Francis Nugent's work in Cologne. cf. Vol. I, p. 247 seq. But it would seem that many of the Germans resented Nugent's proposal to make Cologne the nursery of the Anglo-Irish mission. They considered evidently that the Capuchins had been invited to Lower Germany to serve the Catholic interests in those parts and not to establish a "foreign mission." *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 27^B, seq.

General of the Order, Girolamo da Castel-Ferretti, asking that four or five friars, priests and lay-brothers, be sent to Mainz to assist him in the work of the sacred ministry. They must be Germans, and "able to stand both the climate and the men."⁴⁸

For reasons which are not clear, no immediate reply was sent to this request; and when eventually in 1611, after reiterated appeals from the Archbishop Elector, a company of Capuchins was sent to establish a house in Mainz, they were mainly a mixed body of Irish and Belgians under the leadership of the Irishman, Francis Nugent. Here they met with difficulties on the part of the Chapter of the diocese; for in the meantime the Archbishop had installed in the city a body of Observant Franciscans and the Chapter was not in favour of another community. News of this opposition was brought to Francis Nugent on his arrival at Cologne, and in consequence the Papal nuncio, Albergati, advised him to make a settlement in that city. Here too, the Chapter at first objected; already, they urged, the city possessed too many religious houses. However, after awhile one of the leading citizens was won over to their side by the poverty and austerity of their life, and himself provided a house for them, with the temporary use of the church of St. Maternus. Very soon the citizens came flocking to the church to hear the sermons, attracted as much by the life of the friars as by their words. Francis Nugent himself preached in French, yet the church was crowded whenever he preached, "because of his personality."⁴⁹ And then there was Constantine de Barbançon, a master-mystic and wonderful director of souls, whose sanctity was to cast a halo around the Cologne friary.⁵⁰ As we have said, Francis Nugent remained in Cologne but two years: yet the confraternity of our Lord's Passion which he instituted with the co-operation of the nuncio, Albergati, remained for many years a testimony to his zeal and sagacity. The confraternity was in some sort a Converts' Aid Society whilst at the same time it filled the function of a medieval Third Order in that its members were bound by statutes which regulated their own lives with a

⁴⁸ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, loc. cit., p. 325-6.

⁴⁹ Nicholas Archbold, *Evangelicall Fruct*, fol. 77, seq.

⁵⁰ cf. *infra*, chapter xiv.

view to personal sanctification. Thus they must hear mass daily, and on certain days meet in the church of the Capuchins for spiritual conferences and religious exercises. They must live purely, avoid blasphemous oaths and gaming, and abstain from drunken bouts ; they must exercise the spiritual and corporal works of mercy ; they must, too, be zealous for the dignity of divine worship. In a word they were to be examples of the Faith they purposed to teach to others according to the adage, "it is a disgrace to the teacher when his own fault accuses him." For the particular purpose of the confraternity was to assist those who were desirous of being reconciled to the Catholic Church, spiritually as well as temporarily.

The nuncio in an open letter declared the need of such a confraternity. Many there werè, especially amongst the lesser nobility and public officials and the predicants, who were convinced of the truth of the Catholic Faith and anxious to be reconciled to the Church, but were held back by the certainty that if they became Catholics they would lose the position they held by favour of the Protestant princes and others in authority, and whose wives and children would in consequence be brought to starvation. To assist these was an obligation of Christian charity. It would be urged, he wrote, that the confraternity might be an inducement for some to become Catholics for the sake of the loaves and fishes ; but if one were to be held back from doing a good work on the ground that some might abuse it, no good work would ever be done.⁵¹

The confraternity was established, and numbered amongst its members many of the higher nobility and leading citizens. Before long many of the Catholic princes and bishops became affiliated to it. In 1616 Paul V gave it his solemn approval and promulgated the statutes by which it was to be governed. Already in 1612 the General of the Capuchins had blessed the project and had admitted the members to a participation in the spiritual benefits of the Order. By the statutes the confraternity was formally placed under the spiritual direction of the Capuchins, though it was to be governed by its own provost and his counsellors. The rules laid down in regard to the converts showed a large wisdom. Those who

⁵¹ cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, pp. 283-284.

expressed a desire to be reconciled to the Church were to be carefully examined as to their motive and reasons: no one was to be admitted of whose sincerity there was any doubt, nor to be given any pecuniary assistance. After their reception into the Church the confraternity must above all assist them spiritually by religious instruction and encouragement. It must in fact fulfil the part of the god-parents in watching over the religious advancement of the neophyte. Any convert who, after his reception into the Church, showed himself indifferent in the practice of religion, or whose life was a scandal to the Faith, was to be deprived of temporal assistance. The alms given for the aid of the converts were to be scrupulously administered for that purpose; and it was forbidden under pain of excommunication to use the funds of the confraternity for the purpose of providing dinners or social feasts for the members of the confraternity; even if gifts were offered for this purpose they must be refused. In giving assistance to the converts, regard must be had for their station in life.⁵² Those converts who show capacity are to be allowed to work for the conversion of souls "by preaching, catechising or writing books, each according to his vocation and the grace given him by God."

The confraternity rapidly obtained general approval: popes, emperors and kings came to regard it as a distinction to be admitted honorary members.⁵³ Many of the converts, through the assistance given by the confraternity, were within a few years from its inception to be found employed in the public service and in the learned professions; not a few entered the clerical and religious orders. It evidently met a need.⁵⁴

The year following the arrival of the Capuchins in Cologne, they were invited to settle in Paderborn. In 1614 they were received at Aachen, Essen and at Münster in Westphalia, and the next year in Trier.⁵⁵ The nuncio,

⁵² Vide brief of Paul V, *Pias Christi fidelium*, in *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, pp. 293-307.

⁵³ Vide *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 291.

⁵⁴ The registers of the confraternity from the year 1641 to 1745 show that eleven thousand seven hundred and five converts had been provided for; and thirty-eight apostate religious had by its means returned to their Orders: *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 292.

⁵⁵ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 329. cf. p. 383.

Albergati, was active in recommending them to the bishops. By 1618 they were established in Dusseldorf and Bonn and that same year the Chapter of Mainz consented to receive them. Before the end of the century there were fifty-four friaries in Lower Germany divided into two provinces—the province of Cologne and the province of the Rhine with its centre at Mainz. Besides the friaries there were a number of missionary residences set in the midst of Protestant districts, particularly in Hanover. From these residences the friars went out to evangelise the countryside, tramping the country to succour the scattered Catholics.

In the Rhine province, as elsewhere in Germany, the Capuchins won the respect of many Protestants, as well as of the Catholics ; and during the Thirty Years' War were frequently protected by the Protestant leaders. When in 1626 the Bishop of Halberstadt took Paderborn after a stubborn defence led by a Capuchin lay-brother, he not only allowed the friars to say mass and to preach publicly, but gave them a generous alms. "If all monks were like these," he is reported to have said, "we might well be with them."⁵⁶

Later, when the Swedes overran Germany, both at Mainz and Frankfort the Duke of Oxenstern took the Capuchins under his special protection and allowed them to remain in their friaries, though they had refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Swedish crown.⁵⁷

(v)

In the meantime in Belgium the Capuchins had continued to increase in numbers and in influence. They were popular with the people and they were allied with the governing class by the number of recruits who came to them from the nobility. The most notable of these was Prince Antoine d'Arenberg, of one of the proudest houses in Europe as it was said, who became a Capuchin in 1616 and was henceforth

⁵⁶cf. N. Archbold, *Evangelicall Fruct*, MS. cit., fol 163-166. Archbold had been received into the Capuchin Order at Cologne.

⁵⁷Hierotheus Confluentinus, op. cit., I, pp. 304-305.

known as Frère Charles.⁵⁸ He was followed by his younger brother Eugène and several of his relatives. In whatever position in life an d'Aremberg would find himself, if he had any distinction of character at all, he must have played a notable part in Belgium at that period. And Frère Charles was a man of decision and versatility, though withal a sincere and humble religious. He needed decision to become a Capuchin in spite of the opposition of his mother, the masterful Anne de Croy. Anne with her husband, Prince Charles, had founded a friary of Capuchins at Enghien. Having founded the friary, she wished to rule it; that and the flight of her two sons to the Order, against her will, created a situation which for some time engaged the Papal diplomats in Rome and Brussels. But in Frère Charles she had to deal with a character as masterful as her own; and in the end she capitulated with a good grace. Charles d'Aremberg was above all things a man of affairs, energetic and tactful; and in the various offices he held, as guardian, provincial and Definitor General he contributed much to the building up of the Belgian province. He wielded, too, a ready pen which he used at times to defend the interests of the Order; it was a period when every body of men of any influence had need to stand on the defensive as much against their natural allies as against their professed enemies; and Charles d'Aremberg had a gift for incisive retort.⁵⁹ Of his deep and sincere piety there can be no question; of this he has left a witness in his compilation of the "lives" of the early Capuchins, written for the edification of his religious brethren;⁶⁰ and his personal life was marked by a sweet humility and thoughtfulness for others which won him a general affection. But his family connexions brought him much into the public eye. In the conspiracy of the Nobles against the repressive rule of Roose, the governor-general, in 1633, the d'Arembergs were singled out by the Spanish court—unjustly it was later proved—as the instigators of a conspi-

⁵⁸ cf. P. Frédégand d'Anvers: *Etude sur le Père Charles d'Aremberg* (Paris, Rome, 1919).

⁵⁹ These polemical writings, however, were never published. cf. P. Frédégand d'Anvers, op. cit., p. 337, seq.

⁶⁰ *Flores Seraphici*, in two volumes, published at Cologne; vol. i, in 1640; vol. ii in 1642. P. Charles was also a genealogical artist. In 1650 he produced a genealogical tree of the Franciscan order: *Epilogus totius ordinis Seraphici P. N. S. Francisci*. It was printed at Antwerp.

racy against the Crown. Philippe duc d'Arschot, the head of the family, was made a prisoner at Madrid, whither he had gone to represent the case of the nobles against Roose ; he died in prison seven years later. Père Charles was banished the country and only allowed to return in 1643 ; and it was mainly through his energy and sagacity that the fortunes of the house of Aremburg were restored.⁶¹ He died in 1669. It has been well said of him that he had three loves—his country, his order and the Church :⁶² for these three loves he spent his life.

In Belgium, as we have said, the Capuchins were favoured by the great families as well as loved by the people ; their more heroic work in the Low Countries was in the States held by the Calvinists. There in company with other religious orders they laboured valiantly to save what they might of the losses sustained by the Church. In the Dutch provinces it was much the same story as elsewhere on the continent where Protestantism had established its sway ; a story in which political motives united with the spiritual devastation wrought by a negligent and worldly clergy, to the undoing of the Faith of the people.

In 1625 the Vicar Apostolic of Utrecht sent to Rome an appalling account of the spiritual desolation of the Dutch provinces ; and in consequence the religious orders were called upon to send missionaries to his aid.⁶³ A band of Belgian Capuchins was sent under Juvenal de Bergues and missions were established in Frisia and Gueldres. Another missionary centre was established at Bois-le-duc when the Dutch, after capturing the town in 1629, took over the parishes and gave them to Calvinist ministers. In this mission worked Père Basile de Bruges, an heroic figure, who driven from one place established himself in another, travelling the countryside to bring spiritual consolation to the harassed Catholics. So the missions were carried on under the difficulties inherent in the situation ; until at the General

⁶¹ Besides his active intervention as counsellor to his family in the restoration of their property, he wrote a well documented history of the house of Aremburg for the information of the family : *Marques des Grandeurs et Splendeurs de la Maison Souveraine des ducs d'Aremburg*. cf. P. Frédégand d'Anvers, op. cit., p. 316, *seq.*

⁶² P. Frédégand d'Anvers, op. cit., p. 352.

⁶³ cf. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., II, p. 474, *seq.* Frédégand d'Anvers, op. cit., p. 293, *seq.*

Chapter of the Order in 1643 a question arose as to the propriety of the friars engaging in missionary work which demanded a complete break with the ordinary life of a Capuchin, particularly in the matter of wearing secular dress, the use of money and the hearing of the confessions of seculars. From the beginning the Roman superiors had scrupled about granting dispensations in these matters. It was a delicate question concerning which much could be said for and against. On the one hand it was urged that the salvation of souls was of more importance than the wearing of the habit and the other precepts of the constitutions which were in question ; even the use of money, though ordinarily forbidden to a Capuchin, should not stand in the way of the demand for missionaries when the faith of the people was in peril. As against that, it was argued that no man can do ultimate good if he loses his own proper spiritual character and vocation.

That there were individual missionaries who suffered no loss by the dispensations, was allowed ; but the continuance of the dispensations would be to the injury of the weaker individuals themselves and to the specific vocation of the Order generally. At the General Chapter of 1643 the majority of the capitulars decided that for the maintenance of the Capuchin vocation in its purity it was desirable to withdraw missionaries from those countries where the conditions made it necessary to wear the secular dress and to use money ; and a decree to that effect was obtained from the Congregation of Propaganda. Had the decree been put into effect it would have meant the abandonment of the missions in Holland, Great Britain and Ireland, in all which countries the religious habit could not be worn. It never was put into effect except in an attenuated measure because of the protests and appeals to Propaganda from those who would have suffered by the withdrawal of the missionaries. In Holland the majority of the missionaries were recalled to their communities ; but experienced missionaries such as Père Basile de Bruges were allowed to remain at their posts ; nor in fact were the missions altogether evacuated until the French Revolution. In Great Britain and Ireland the decree seems never to have been promulgated.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ P. Frédégand d'Anvers, loc. cit. ; Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., p. 486. cf. Apollinaire de Valence, *Histoire des Capucins*, op. cit., I, p. 181, seq.

CHAPTER XII

FRA CRISTOFORO AND OTHERS

(i)

WHILST the events described in the last chapter were taking place beyond the Alps, in Italy the Capuchins had arrived at the hey-day of their influence as preachers and workers. It would be difficult to exaggerate their influence at this period over the minds and imaginations of all classes of the Italian people from the prince to the peasant. Their broad humanity made them the confidants of all who were in trouble or distress ; their fearless courage frequently stood between the oppressed and the tyrant. As preachers they swayed the crowds, whether of the educated or the uneducated, who flocked to their sermons. In times of public calamity, and these were frequent enough, the Capuchins were always amongst the first to volunteer for public service. Manzoni in his immortal novel *I Promessi Sposi* has left us in his Fra Cristoforo a life-drawn picture of the typical Italian Capuchin of the period. Fra Cristoforo was not one man but many. He was to be found not only in Milan, but wherever there was a Capuchin friary in the peninsula. Under various names he was worshipped with affectionate reverence from Lombardy to Apulia and across the straits in Sicily. In Apulia he was known as Giacomo da Molfetta ; in Sicily as Arcangelo dei Sacci ; in Florence as Pier-Francesco Mainardi ; in Parma as Romaaldo dei Conti Castellina ; in Lucca as Giuseppe di Fulvio Dondori ; in Milan as Felice Casati. But he had innumerable other names, as you would learn if you wandered through the cities and country parts.

Many of these Frati Cristofori were men who could deal with a Don Rodrigo, or a truculent *conte*, or a court official on the footing of men of their own class in society, with the

added advantage of being of a religious profession constrained to no class ; for the Capuchin habit cloaked men of every social class in a simple consecrated community. The lay-brother who answered the door might be a Visconti,¹ whilst his companion in the kitchen was a peasant ; amongst the priests you could be sure to find sons of the nobility, of learned professions and of the mercantile class—men who had made the sacrifice when they donned the coarse garb of the Lady Poverty—together with those who had consecrated to God the poverty to which they were born. Out of such an intermingling of natural aptitudes and characters was produced the Fra Cristoforo of the people's trustful reverence.

A philosophical enquirer might not find it easy to explain in a phrase the peculiar attractions of these Capuchin frati in the fluid social world of the time. It was not merely their simple humanity and ready sympathy. Some knew them mainly as stern monitors or wrathful prophets, and yet revered them. Perhaps the most potent element in the attraction lay in the manifest disinterestedness both of their austere self-discipline and of their social activities. None could say they were seeking themselves whether as individuals or in their corporate capacity. The tradition of rigid poverty was still strong amongst them. In fact one reason alleged for their popularity was that in their rigid poverty they made fewer demands upon the charity of the people than did other religious. When in 1656, Donna Barbara Medici left a substantial legacy to the Ospedale Maggiore in Milan on condition that the hospital should contribute to the building of a new friary for the Capuchins who served the hospital, the friars refused to accept any part of the legacy on the ground that the hospital needed the whole of it.³

This disinterestedness was the more marked because of the incessant labours of the friars, not only as preachers but

¹ Fra Bernardo de' duchi Visconti was a lay-brother. He had refused the bishopric of Brescia on the death of Cardinal Duranti in 1558. Bernardo died in 1565. cf. Valdimiro da Bergamo : *I Cappuccini della Prov. Milanese*, parte 2a, vol. i, pp. 72-73. A Fra Ippolito de' Visconti died in the friary of Milan in 1614 (*ibid.*, p. 322). Another Capuchin of the same family was Fra Simpliciano, who became General of the Order in 1656, and died in 1663 (*ibid.*, p. 377, *seq.*).

³ Antonio Sala, *Biografia di S. Carlo*, op. cit., p. 306.

as what to-day we call, social workers. Yet not all the Frati Cristofori were popular preachers or even social workers in the ordinary sense.

Not infrequently it was an unlettered lay-brother who was the Fra Cristoforo to gentlefolk and peasants alike in the city or district in which he happened to reside. For instance, there was Fra Serafino da Montegranaro, the questing brother in the Marches of Ancona, to whom the world and his wife went with their troubles of soul or body. A guileless simple soul was Serafino, whose austerity towards himself was made beautiful by his never-failing thoughtfulness for the ordinary needs of less heroic mortals. He would starve himself but would never let another go hungry if he could help it. He would break his accustomed fasts if by eating he could induce an ailing brother to eat with him. He spent his nights in prayer, but by day was at the service of those who needed him. At times these came in crowds to the friary gate ; everyone who had a trouble must bring it to Fra Serafino ; and he, all unconscious of himself, would dispense the comforting word or the needed rebuke as might a trusty almoner dispense his lord's alms. No confessor had more trustful penitents. But it was for the sick poor that he had an ever wistful compassion. He begged for them and worked for them. To satisfy his charity the friars allowed him to cultivate part of the friary garden for their benefit ; and though Serafino was no trained gardener, his labour of love produced far choicer fruits than were to be found in other gardens. Serafino thanked God for His bounty as he distributed the gifts, just as he thanked God for His mercy when the sick recovered at his touch. So Serafino passed through life, God's almoner and the confidant of troubled souls.⁴ Others saw in Serafino's life a path of miracles testifying to the lay-brother's sanctity ; he himself was only conscious that God was good. But to those whom he comforted, he was himself the witness to God's loving-kindness.

Serafino was of the elect whom God chooses to compel a dim-eyed world to acknowledge His presence amongst His

⁴ He was canonised in 1767. cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, VIII, p. 369, *seq.* Boverius, *Annales, anno 1604*, 20, *seq.* ; d'Areberg, *op. cit.*, II, p. 722, *seq.*

creatures ; yet he was of the type which made the Capuchin a beneficent power in the earlier half of the seventeenth century wherever a friary was to be found.

(ii)

In estimating the work and influence of the Capuchins, these friars of merely local fame are not to be lost sight of ; it was their influence perhaps which took deepest root in the hearts of the Italian people. There were others—and they were not a few—whose fame spread throughout the whole peninsula and even beyond. Of such were the great preachers of whom some account will now be given.

Since almost the beginning of the Reform, the Capuchin congregation had given to Italy a long line of preachers whose powerful eloquence had contributed largely to the great spiritual change which had come over the face of the country and sunk into the heart of the nation. The days were long past when an Italian crowd was willing to accept as a preacher of the Gospel the exquisite classicist or the entertaining buffoon or the schoolman proud of his dialectical skill. As the old Capuchin chronicler had reminiscently remarked : “ after the Capuchins had begun to preach, the people would no longer listen to those who did not preach the Holy Scripture.” That in itself was indicative of the spirit which created the Catholic Reformation. The marvellous success of the Capuchins as preachers—a success which they shared with the Jesuits, Oratorians and Barnabites—lay in the fact that they voiced the new religious spirit and gave it the food it needed. But whilst the Jesuits exerted their influence chiefly through their schools, the Capuchins, more particularly in Italy, were pre-eminently the popular preachers.

The well-authenticated accounts left us of the preaching tours in Italy of San Lorenzo da Brindisi and Giacinto da Casale, whom we have already met with in Germany, read almost like romance : they tell of the vast crowds awaiting the arrival of the preachers in the city or district in which they were due to preach ; of the invasion of the friaries in

which they sojourned by multitudes anxious to obtain their blessing ; of the smuggling away of the preachers by night to some other town, before the peace of the friary could be regained ; of the tense emotion of the vast congregations assembled in the public squares because no church would hold them ; of the numerous conversions of public and private sinners which followed the sermons. The accounts recall the triumph of San Bernardino's eloquence ; only here we are not in the Italy of the Renaissance but in the Italy of the Seicento, humbled yet proud, dreaming of deliverance from the foreigner and meanwhile turning to religion, with a chastened spirit but a new and more virile faith.

Lorenzo da Brindisi and Giacinto da Casale were but two amongst many Capuchins who swayed the mind and heart of Italy by their magic personality and eloquence in this later period of the spiritual awakening ; but they may be taken as two distinct types of the Capuchin preachers of the period : the purely oratorical and the dramatic. They had indeed common traits ; in both there was a sincerity born of spiritual experience, a sincerity which forbade mere rhetoric and made use of book knowledge only as it had passed into the religious experience of their own lives : both, too, addressed their audience with an intimate knowledge of the actual struggles and temptations and aspirations of the men before them, and with the knowledge born of sympathy. They spoke to the heart of the people as only men can who know the struggle and pain, the strength and weakness, of the people they address. And what was of not less importance at the time, the preachers of both types were scholars in the matter appertaining to their ministry. The Capuchin preacher was not lightly chosen for his work ; as their constitutions ordained, only those might be selected for the office of preaching who were at once more than ordinarily proficient in sacred studies and in prayer ; and this constitution was rigorously enforced.

As one reads to-day the sermons of these popular preachers whom the crowds flocked to hear, one realises the strength and vitality of the religious revival which had transformed the soul of the Italian people during the sixteenth century ; for the popular preacher reflects the depth or the shallowness

of his worshippers. One needs to read the sermons themselves to appreciate the significance of the stories of their effect upon the multitude.

Take Lorenzo da Brindisi. His preaching tours in Italy, often to his own chagrin, became a triumphant progress. Men and women of all classes, the clergy as well as the laity, flocked to his sermons ; and, be it noted, the labourers of the surrounding country would leave their work in the fields to be present at his sermons. His presence in the pulpit would put a stop to the ordinary labours of the city and district, so keen were the people to listen to him. Then take the sermons themselves as he has left them in many volumes. Not a word of mere rhetoric, but compact of thought—the thought of the student-saint. Reading the sermons in cold print, it is not easy to understand the enthusiasm of the crowds. They are full of instruction and arresting thought ; but their meditative leisureliness, the almost meticulous endeavour at times to elicit the exact significance of a particular phrase of Scripture, not infrequently by a reference to the original Hebrew or Greek text, would seem to militate against popular success. Delivered by an ordinary preacher they would undoubtedly be adjudged interesting by the thoughtful listener, but they would hardly be stimulating to the multitude. One feels the emotion blending with the thought even in the written word ; but there the emotion is as a smouldering fire. At the preacher's contact with his audience it became a flaming fire ; under the spell of the preacher the purport of his words was burned into the intelligence and heart of his audience. That was Lorenzo's power.

As light to fire—but a warming, stimulating light—one might compare Mattia da Salò with San Lorenzo. There is penetrating thought in Mattia's sermons, but it is borne on the wings of a fine imagery, and there is melodiousness in his words. He visualises his subject and imparts to you something of his own vision. And there is a palpable tenderness underlying his sternest rebuke. In reading his sermons one realises the significance of San Felice's greeting when Mattia visited the saint on his deathbed : " I know you well, my flowering May." For sheer, lyrical beauty few sermons can compare with Mattia's sermons on the Passion

of our Lord ;⁵ yet it is a beauty not so much of diction as of the whole visualised thought. But Mattia's most marvellous gift was his use of Sacred Scripture, whose language he blends with his own as though it were the very woof of his own thought ; and whose imagery is as the natural medium of his thought. He would clothe the mystical teaching of the Pauline epistles in the imagery of Isaias or the Cantic of Canticles as without any effort. There were others amongst the Capuchin preachers who used Scriptural imagery with effect, yet none so felicitously, and as it were naturally, as Mattia da Salo.

Another outstanding orator at this period was Mattia's disciple, Fra Girolamo da Narni, perhaps in pure oratory the greatest of all the Capuchin preachers. Girolamo came of a family of lawyers in high repute in Umbria, and was destined by his father to carry further the family's good fortune. But at sixteen years of age⁶ in spite of the angry opposition of his family and friends he entered the novitiate of the Capuchins, and took his vows the following year, 1579. As a religious, Girolamo walked faithfully in the footsteps of the early Capuchins, notwithstanding that his health was at all times delicate. He fasted rigorously and was much given to prayer ; he shunned honours and was ever as the humblest of the brethren ; even when he was Vicar General of the Congregation he would take his share in the most menial labours of the community. Yet he was an indefatigable student, and his brilliant intellectual qualities and his marvellous eloquence quickly made his name a household word throughout Italy. As a theological student before his ordination to the priesthood, he was suddenly called to preach a Lenten course at Terni, owing to the illness of the appointed preacher ; and he was at once marked down as a preacher of extraordinary power. When he preached the Lent at Todi in 1602, men came from the

⁵ *Delli Dolori di Gesu Cristo*, preached in the Duomo of Milan in 1597 and published at Brescia in 1598. cf. *infra*. Appendix II.

⁶ Marcellinus de Pise says "fifteen years," but the register of his profession gives his age as "seventeen and a half years." cf. *L'Italia Francescana*, Aprile—Giugno, 1926 (Roma), p. 122. For the biography of Girolamo da Narni, see Marcellinus de Pise : *Vita et Gesta P. F. Hieronymi Narniensis* (Roma, 1647) and the same author's long biographical notice of Girolamo in *Annales Ord. Cap.*, t. III, pp. 904-940.

neighbouring towns and cities to listen to him. His fame reached Rome and he was called by Paul V to preach in San Luigi dei Francesi and afterwards at San Lorenzo in Damaso. Cardinals and bishops vied with the populace to obtain places in the overcrowded churches and a regular attendant was Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, who is reported to have said that if St. Paul were again on earth, he would alternately go to hear the apostle one evening and Girolamo the next.⁷ In 1606 he was appointed by Paul V to be Apostolic Preacher to the Papal Court, and it was said that never before had so many prelates flocked to hear the preacher. Gregory XV, who frequently consulted him on the affairs of the Church, would have created him cardinal, but Girolamo with tears pleaded to be allowed to remain a simple friar. Yet he was forced to accept the highest offices in the Order. The keenest intellects of Rome were to be found in Girolamo's cell in the friary near the Quirinal and later in the friary built by the Barberini.⁸ At his death in 1632 all Rome mourned his loss. His obsequies took place in the Church of the Gesù; the Master of the Sacred Palace pronounced the panegyric; the General of the Jesuits officiated at the function, and moreover ordered every priest in the Society to say a mass for Girolamo's soul.⁹

There is a superb simplicity in Girolamo's sermons both in his thought and diction. The music of his words holds you; the flight of his thought not infrequently astounds you; yet what he says is what every right-thinking Christian might have thought, only did not. His mind dwells in the large open spaces, his eyes scan both earth and heaven as one to the manner born. He is well read in the Fathers of the Church

⁷ De Pise: *Vita et Gesta*, p. 176. But a more authentic statement would seem to be that of Cardinal Ludovisi in his preface to a collection of Girolamo's sermons—*Prediche recitate al Palazzo Apostolico*, published at Rome in 1632-1633. Card. Ludovisi writes: *Certe Robertus Card. Bellarminus, nostri temporis Augustinus, Augustini votum positum se dicebat, quoniam dum Narniensem audiret, audire sibi videbatur Paulum apud Petri Cathedram concionantem.*

⁸ cf. Wadding: *Scriptores Ord. Min.*, pp. 117-118. Luke Wadding was an intimate friend of Girolamo.

⁹ Later historians have attributed the institution of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide to the initiative of Girolamo. His biographer, Marcellinus de Pise, does not mention this, either in his biography of Girolamo or in the account in the *Annales*. On the other hand, see Girolamo's stirring appeals to the Pope and cardinals in *Prediche, ut supra*, to arouse themselves and send missionaries to save and propagate the Faith in all parts of the world.

and the philosophers, yet bears his learning easily. He is impassioned but with a restrained passion ; and he knows no fear. As a preacher it is for him to tell the truth as he sees it without respect of persons ; yet in his denunciation of wrongdoing, in his protest against sloth or tepidity there is an appeal in his voice which only a brute could ignore. One can well understand the action of the bishops who listened to his sermon against the evils of non-residence, and when the sermon was concluded, returned without delay to their dioceses. He had the rare gift of conveying to his audience the sense of the beauty of right-doing. Even to read his sermons is to feel the beauty of the ways of God and of religion. And his thought is all so unlaboured as though his knowledge came to him in vision.¹⁰ And yet this preacher who could make his audience sense the eternal beauty of the Christian life was seldom free from physical pain. His life was itself a veritable triumph of spirit over matter.

Yet it is Giacinto da Casale who represents in a superlative degree the more common type of the Capuchin " revivalist " preacher of the period. The account written by an eye-witness of Giacinto's mission in Piacenza in 1617 has its counterpart in many similar records of the time. Giacinto's eloquence, as we have said, was the eloquence of the drama, yet not the less sincere and spiritually effective.

Thus writes the astonished Francesco Marchetti to his Eminence, Cardinal Farnese, in the summer of 1617:¹¹ " There came to Piacenza to preach the Lent, Padre Giacinto da Casale, a Capuchin, a preacher of singular character, of wonderful goodness of life and of rare courage. . . He began his course of sermons on Ash Wednesday, and the great concourse of people prove the expectancy and thirst for the saving water of the divine word. The great Duomo was dangerously packed ; people came from far and from near, both men and women, to hear the preacher. The commotion and the fruitfulness began from the be-

¹⁰ cf. *infra*, Appendix II.

¹¹ *La Transformatione di Piacenza operata da Dio col mezze delle prediche Quaresimali e sermoni della settimana santa all' Oratione delle Quarant' Hore, fatti nel duomo s' anno 1617 dal R. P. F. Giacinto da Casale, predicatore capuccino* (In Brescia). The dedication to Card. Farnese is dated 5 August, 1617, and signed " Francesco Marchetti." A rare copy is in the Capuchin Library of San Lorenzo, Rome.

ginning ; and every day was as a Good Friday, what with tears and striking of the breast and the voices of contrition. Frequently too, during the sermons were heard the voices of the demons in the unhappy obsessed, mingling with the words of the preacher, so that the church seemed veritably as a day of judgment. These rebellious spirits even set themselves to preach ; and the father giving way they confirmed all he had said, crying aloud to the confusion of us poor sinners that now was their final ruin. And truly to my thinking he were more demon than man who would not be moved at seeing in the pulpit that face so uplifted with devotion, so emaciated as though he were one of the ancient anchorites who had come from his cell in the wood ; or one who would not change his mind at seeing that countenance as pitiful in softening hearts as it was terrible in its detestation of sin, in reprehending vice and in threatening the dire chastisements of God ; or finally one who could remain stolid listening to that voice, clear, sonorous and penetrating, and to such burning arguments, clothed with the zeal of God, and afire with the ardour of the Holy Ghost. . . . Before he entered the pulpit, a confused murmur of voices, because of the multitude, filled the great church ; at the first word intoned by the father, the noise suddenly subsided and there could be heard a silence as great as the silence in a well-regulated cloister of mortified religious." The narrator then sums up the results of the sermons : " such restitution of goods, such confessions of those who had been unconfessed for many years, such giving up of dishonest practices and promises of amendment on the part of the notaries and lawyers ; so many youths, in particular those of the nobility, asking to be received into the father's order (the which could not be because the number was too great for all to be received) ; so many conversions of women of the streets that the homes were too small to accommodate them all and the father appealed for funds to buy another house, and out of the funds many were given dowries and found husbands ; so many feuds were settled and so many enemies embraced each other, in the course of the sermons. In the shops, the piazza and the houses, nothing was talked of but the preacher and his sermons, and amendment of life and the doing of penance for past sins. " Whence there has happened so

real and solid a change in the Piacentini that not only have they made a beginning of true and hard penance towards themselves but have given tokens of Christian piety and liberality towards others ; so that, as the bishop attests, more alms have been given in this one Lent than were given in twenty years before."

As in Capuchin missions generally at this period, the mission concluded with the Forty Hours' devotion. It began in the evening of Palm Sunday. The preacher had exhorted everyone to prepare himself for this devotion by confessing his sins and receiving the sacrament of the Holy Communion.

"At last," writes the bewildered reporter, "the destined day arrived, Palm Sunday, on which we must render to the Divine Majesty the peaceful possession of our hearts and once for all drive forth from Piacenza the great enemy against whom the father had declared war at the beginning of Lent. I speak of sin." The bishop had published a plenary indulgence to be gained by all who took part worthily in the devotion ; a spacious oratory had been erected near the great door of the Duomo for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament ; twenty noblemen of the city had been enrolled to marshal the processions. The oratory was arranged to represent a panorama of the Holy Land ; Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, the Holy City, were all there. Above in the empyrean heaven was a representation of the King of Heaven amidst a choir of angels. Below this representation was Mount Thabor, the hill of the Transfiguration, upon which was erected the altar of the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. It was hastily constructed, says the reporter, for the devotion was unexpected ; but he dwells upon its varied detail, particularly upon the choirs of angels in the empyrean who sang the chants. It was nine o'clock in the evening when the bishop carried the Blessed Sacrament from the Sacrament Chapel to the altar of the Exposition.¹² Before him walked the preacher, barefooted, a rope

¹² It seems to have been a common custom to begin the devotion at 9 o'clock on Palm Sunday evening. In an account of the Quarant' Ore preached in Lorenzo in Damaso, Rome, in 1608, by Fra Fedele da San Germano, the order is thus set forth : "The most opportune hour" to begin the Devotion is at 9 o'clock on Sunday evening. The Procession takes place at 7 o'clock ; at 9 o'clock the confraternity of Our Lady enters and begins the adoration. The exercises go on till 1 o'clock on Monday morning. The next entry is at

round his neck, a crown of thorns upon his head, and a large cross in his hands—a living picture of penitence. With them walked “the twenty cavaliers of Christ,” then the more venerable seignors. At the Oratory were gathered the canons of the cathedral and the magistrates, and the Duomo was filled with men, the women being excluded. “As the Blessed Sacrament was placed on the altar, from the right came the sound of sweet and devout singing, and when this was ended, from a grotto of broken rocks came forth the father, carrying a crucifix in his hand. He faced the people with a countenance more angelic than human, and with a piteous voice which penetrated to the heart, even the hardest, he intoned the words of the prophet Jeremias: ‘Return thou rebellious Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not turn away my face from you; and I will not be angry for ever.’¹³ This was always the theme of his sermons though the discourses were all different; and with incredible discrimination he accommodated his sermons to the quality of the people who came.¹⁴ And throughout the evening, until the last hour, so great were the numbers that the Duomo could not contain them; and amongst them were the flower of the city. It seemed more a miracle from heaven than a human thing.”

Yet the set sermons did not exhaust the preacher’s labours during the mission. Three nights in each week, as the reporter tells us, Giacinto had an informal gathering of the city youth who assembled in the great hall of the bishop’s palace, sometimes to the number of two hundred and fifty, nearly all “nobili e titolati.” He would give them a short instruction and then they would pray together. Besides this, his own room was besieged by callers anxious for spiritual direction. And yet throughout the six weeks’ mission Giacinto fasted three days in the week, taking no food except a

11 o’clock on Monday morning and the Devotion continues till 1 o’clock at night. The third day begins at 11 o’clock on Tuesday morning and continues till midnight. On Wednesday devotion begins at 11 a.m., and continues till 4 p.m., when the the Procession of Reposition takes place. See *Essercitio d’Amorosi Sforzi per ridurre il peccatore a Dio . . .* dal P. F. Fedele da San Germano (In Como, no date). The book was edited and published in 1614 by Bartholomeo Mainone.

¹³ Jer. III, 12.

¹⁴ The sermons went on throughout the Devotion as the different bands of people arrived to take the watches.

little bread and wine ; but we read the same of most of the successful preachers. They must have been men of iron constitution or of that vital spirituality which can sometimes take the place of physical strength.

But whatever the style of the preacher, behind the emotional appeal there was always the background of solid instruction. Much as the astonished reporter was struck by the tense atmosphere, the dramatic representation and the marvellous results of Giacinto's mission, it was the substance of the preacher's sermons which left the most vivid impression — *quei ragiamenti in particolare tanto efficaci e singolari*.

As we have more than once remarked, the devotion of the Quarant 'Ore, or Forty Hours' adoration, was a special feature of the Capuchin mission. It had been revived by Mattia da Salo in 1568, after the fashion in which it was preached by Fra Giuseppe da Ferno ; and from that time it seems to have taken an increasing importance in the revivalist missions of the Capuchins. As propagated in Italy by Giuseppe da Ferno, it was a public act on the part of the city or commune, for which the ecclesiastical and civic authorities made themselves responsible and in which they officially took part ; an act at once of social penitence and of the recognition of the kingship of Christ in public as in private life.¹⁵ It is as such that it plays its part in the Capuchin missions in Italy in the first half of the seventeenth century.

We have seen it preached by Giacinto at Piacenza ; nine years later, in 1626, a similar preaching and celebration at Carpi calls forth an enthusiastic description from another eye witness.¹⁶ The preacher on this occasion was Fra

¹⁵ This appears, for instance, from the detailed account of the Quarant' Ore held at Borgo San Sepolcro in 1538. The City Council, urged by Giuseppe da Ferno, unanimously voted for it and decreed that it should be held in perpetuity on the last Sunday of June and the two days following. For fifteen days before the Devotion began, the city bells were to call the people to prayer, and peacemakers appointed by the Council were to take measures to heal discords and enmities. The civic officials and the soldiers were to assist at the Devotion, together with the bishop and chapter, and the city was divided into "watches." See the official act of the Council (from the communal archives of Borgo San Sepolcro) in *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, XXXIX, p. 48, *seq.*

¹⁶ *La Instituzione della Quarant' Ore in Carpi : Relazione inedita di Anonimo contemporaneo, pubblicata con note de L. M.* (Luigi Marini) (Modena, 1888). See also the account of the Quarant' Ore at Castro Villarum (?) in 1629. *Anal. Ord. Cap.* XXI, p. 362, *seq.*

Giovanni da Sestola—he who made a Capuchin of a duke of Modena.

The devotion began on Palm Sunday at the close of the Lenten course ; and was preceded by exhortations on the part of the preacher that the people prepare themselves to celebrate the devotion worthily. A confraternity was formed to superintend the carrying out of the ceremonies. There were penitential processions to the altar of the Exposition, in which emblems of our Lord's Passion were carried by members of the confraternity clothed in the Capuchin habit. The city was divided into watches ; each group of watchers proceeding to the church processionally led by a " fratello " in his habit and carrying a cross ; a rope was round his neck, the sign of the penitential character of the pilgrimage. Men and women took turns in the watches ; the governor of the town led one group of men-watchers ; his lady-wife led a group of women-watchers ; other notable citizens and their wives led other groups. At each hour there was a short sermon and a hymn, followed by silent adoration.

The public procession, usually in memory of our Lord's Passion, played a large part in the apostolate of the Capuchins in whatever country they were ; it was a public profession of faith and not a mere ecclesiastical pageant ; and the procession always ended with a sermon. It was seldom that the Quarant 'Ore did not give occasion for the establishment of some confraternity to bind together the more zealous citizens, or members of a parish, in some act of piety and active work of mercy. The Capuchin preachers had from the beginning been zealous promoters of such confraternities ; they understood the value of the corporate sense.

Very easily might the pageantry of the Quarant 'Ore and the procession have become a mere emotional display or empty external rite, such as the Capuchins in their origin had reacted against, were it not for the austere purpose and intense spirituality of their own life which in these missions they shared with their audience. These processions had their place as a public profession of faith, but it was the aim of the preacher to vivify that faith and render it fruitful in conduct. And chief amongst the means they employed to that purpose was their instruction of mental prayer, by which they led even the simplest folk to pray with mind and heart, not

merely with the lips ; to pray intelligently and with the uplift of their affections towards God.

For instance, there was Fra Cristoforo Verucchino, who won the hearts of the people wherever he went and was well known in many of the cities of Italy. For years it was his custom, when giving missions, to assemble the people after vespers and " simply and without oratory " instruct them how to pray. He began with the vocal prayers in common use—the *Pater, Ave* and *Credo* ; the penitential psalms and the rosary. These prayers he would explain and paraphrase, unveiling with a wealth of illustration, but in the simplest language, the meaning of the words and phrases. Next he would take his audience through the mass and assist them to prepare themselves for confession and holy communion. Having thus taught them the intelligent and devout use of their accustomed prayers and devotions, he further proceeded to initiate them into the practice of meditation, teaching them how to meditate upon the mysteries of our Lord's life and passion. When he was too old and broken any longer to give missions, some who had listened to his instructions begged him to allow his notes to be published that his work might continue.¹⁷ This habit of the preachers of instructing the people to meditate on the life and passion of our Lord, led to the publication of no small number of popular books of meditation, adapted to the simplest minds ; some of them of unaffected beauty of thought. Many of them reproduce the meditations on the Passion preached during the devotion of the Quarant' Ore :¹⁸ for the Quarant' Ore, as preached by the Capuchins, was itself an exercise in mental prayer ; the outward pageantry was but the pre-

¹⁷ *Essercitii d'anima : raccolti da S. S. Padri : in diverse città d'Italia predicati dal R. P. F. Cristoforo Verucchino del ordine de Frati Minori Cappuccini* (In Venetia, 1605). The work was edited by Battista Rosa, canon of the cathedral of Venice. See also as an example of the same method of instruction : *Devota meditatione sopra la Salutatione Angelica fatta dal R. P. Silvestro di Franco da Rossano dell' ordine de' Cappuccini nell' anno del Signore, 1578, mentre egli predicava nella Chiesa Cathedrali di Fermo* (a Fermo, 1578), in *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, XIII, p. 252, seq.

¹⁸ One such which deserves publication is the meditation-addresses of Fra Bernardino da Nocera : *Pro Oratione Quadragesima Horarum, F. Bernardini de Nucera*, MS. in the Provincial Archives of the Capuchins at Assisi. There are forty sermons or meditations in all, beginning with the Agony in the Garden. They are written in Italian, except the headings. Fra Bernardino died at Perugia in 1635 ; cf. P. Francesco da Vicenza : *Gli Scrittori Cappuccini della Provincia Serafica* (Foligno, 1922).

disposing means to the more spiritual exercise of mind and heart.

They were very human, these preachers ; and they knew their people. As we recall their work and the method of their apostolate, the words of the Gospel come back to us : “ He had compassion on the multitude.”

(iii)

Yet great as was the fame of the Capuchin preachers throughout the whole of the Italian peninsula and almost incredible the enthusiasm which was aroused by their preaching during the first half of the seventeenth century, it is not the preachers of whom the Italians of a later generation retained the most vivid memory. Fra Cristoforo, under his many aliases, may have been a powerful preacher and by his preaching have cast a wholesome spell over the imagination and heart of the people of his generation, yet it was not for his preaching that his memory passed into the cherished possession of the generations which came after him ; but for the broad, disinterested charity which made him the ever-ready helper and friend of those in need.

The constant services of Christ-like charity, which linked the life of the friar with the more intimate life of the suffering world in which he moved, were more luminously in evidence in times of public calamity—and these were frequent enough in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As a recurring refrain amidst their manifold activities comes their reiterated service in times of plague or pestilence. It was perhaps this service which won them a people's most enduring gratitude.

Already we have spoken of the bubonic plague which swept over Europe in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. As we have seen, it appeared in Languedoc in 1627 ; three years later northern and central Italy was in its grip.

It came to Italy, it is said, in the wake of the army which the Emperor had sent to make good his claim on the duchy of Mantua in 1629 ; for a few months it teased the population of Lombardy with inconsiderable outbreaks here and

there, but in the Lent of the following year it suddenly burst upon Milan with a shattering blow and then rapidly swept through the provinces ; Modena, Parma and Florence with their territories reeled under the dread visitation, and from Leghorn to Venice could be heard the wail of death. No such vast calamity was remembered by men, though dire calamities crowded the memory of the oldest amongst them. In two years over one hundred thousand of the plague-stricken passed into the lazaretto of San Gregorio outside the city of Milan, besides the thousands who died in the city itself.¹⁹ In the same period in and around Lucca it is estimated that twenty-five thousand died.

Many of the religious orders can tell a tale of heroic daring and selfless devotion on the part of those they sent out to minister to the sick and dying during that dread terror. Here in brief is the tale of the Capuchins.

In the province of Brescia, of the two hundred friars who went forth to minister to the sick, forty-seven died ; in Tuscany of ninety-two who enlisted, fifty-one died. In the lazaretto of Milan, twelve friars died on service ; in Parma, twelve ; in Piacenza, eighteen ; and so the tale goes on.²⁰ Not only priests, but young students and lay-brothers were amongst the workers and victims. In some of the crowded lazaretti when the friars were stricken down, they were taken back to their friaries to be nursed, that they might not fill beds needed for other victims ; and thus whole communities became infected, as in the friary of Milan where nineteen of the community died. It was a heroic course deliberately accepted that others might be saved. In many of the cities the Capuchins were called upon to take charge of the lazaretto and organise the service, as formerly in the plague which devastated Milan in 1576.²¹ Many are the names of these heroes of charity which still, three centuries

¹⁹ See the attestation of the health " conservators " of the city in Valdimiro da Bergamo : *I Cappuccini della Provincia Milanese*, parte ii, vol. ii, appendice 1a, pp. xiii-xiv.

²⁰ cf. Valdimiro da Bergamo, op. cit., vol. ii, append. 1a, p. ii, seq. : *I Conventi ed I Cappuccini Bresciani* (Milano, 1891), p. 548, seq. ; Cirillo da Bagna : *Umili Eroi nella Peste Bubbonica*, 1629-31 (Parma, 1912) ; Sisto da Pisa : *Storia dei Cappuccini Toscani*, vol. i (Firenze, 1906), p. 328, seq. ; Lodovico Biagetti da Livorno : *Alcune Notize : Storiche e Biografiche sulla Peste degli anni 1630-31-33 in Toscana*.

²¹ See *supra*, vol. I., chapter vi.

after the event, wake a grateful reverence amongst the Italian people. Chief amongst them in Milan is Fra Felice Casati as all are aware who know that city and its people.

He was of the conti Casati who for several centuries played an honourable part in the life of Milan. In 1605, at the age of twenty-two, he had renounced wealth and social position to become a Capuchin. Generous and fearless in character, he was a born leader; one upon whom men leaned in face of difficulty. Throughout his long life—he died in 1665—he bore the burdens of others, either in official or unofficial offices of trust. He was preaching the Lent in Santa Maria del Castello in Milan when the rapid course of the plague filled the hearts of the Milanese with dread. Daily the mortality was leaping up and in the lazaretto di San Gregorio outside the city the daily toll had risen to one hundred lives; and the speedy death of a heroic physician, Felice Appiano, who had volunteered to take charge of the lazaretto, spread consternation throughout the city, so that none other would venture to take his place. In this dilemma, the Tribunale della Sanita appealed to the Commissary Provincial of the Capuchins; and Fra Felice was appointed to take charge of the lazaretto, with full powers of administration both civil and ecclesiastical. The lazaretto was a city in itself; throughout Fra Felice's administration it numbered from fifteen thousand to sixteen thousand patients, besides servants and attendants. The lazaretto was totally unorganised when Fra Felice took charge; even bread and medicines were lacking; the children born in the lazaretto and orphaned at birth by the death of the mothers were without proper care, and daily the death-rate increased. Fra Felice's resource and indomitable will brought order into this city of misery; and also such consolation of soul and body as a tireless watchful sympathy could give. One of his first cares was to organise a separate camp for the convalescents; these he would himself lead out of the lazaretto as a mother might lead her children with comforting hope; then he would return to meet the new crowd of incoming patients to attend to their immediate need and comfort. Soon his personality towered above the stricken city; men looked to him as to their one hope; his very presence gave courage and comfort. And

as though the care of the lazaretto were not enough for one man's burden, he was next called upon by the city magistrates to organise further relief in the matter of burying the dead in the city ; for fear had entered into the people's souls and the dead were cast into the streets and left there, none daring to bury them. For twenty months Fra Felice fought the plague. Twice he himself was stricken down. Once he was given up for dead, but when the weeping friars and servants were moaning his loss, he raised himself and bade them dry their tears : " he was not going to die yet." When other friars fell sick, he sent them to the friary to be nursed ; but he himself would not leave the lazaretto, conscious as he must have been of the need of his presence to keep the heart in that fearful multitude.

When at last the plague died down and the lazaretto was closed, the Tribunale della Sanita drew up and signed an attestation of his heroic labours, as a memorial for coming generations.²²

In like manner did Fra Gianantonio da Bergamo take charge of the lazaretto of Verona at the request of the government of Venice. When the plague ceased, he alone of the Capuchins who had served in the lazaretto, remained alive ; and he was so broken with sickness that he could not raise himself to leave. Four noblemen of the city consequently carried him on his bed to the friary.²³

In Parma the lazaretto was put in charge of Fra Romualdo dei Conti Castellina, noted for his gentle courtesy and love of peace. Twelve of his companions died in their service of the sick. Fra Romualdo survived, and when the plague ceased in Parma, he set out for the neighbouring towns where the plague still lingered, and went from place to place serving the stricken people wherever they were to be found.²⁴

In Florence, during the terrible outbreak of 1630-1632, the Capuchins did service in all the hospitals and lazaretti ; in the city alone thirty-eight friars were told off to attend the

²² The attestation is given in *I Cappuccini della Provincia Milanese*, loc. cit., p. 13, note. In 1644 Felice Casati was sent as envoy of the citizens of Milan to Philip IV of Spain to represent to the king the grievances under which the city was suffering. As a result of his outspoken protest he was for a time exiled to Corsica. *ibid.*, p. 13, seq.

²³ *I Cappuccini della Prov. Milan.*, loc. cit., p. 3.

²⁴ *Umili Eroi*, op. cit., p. 18, seq.

sick, and of this number sixteen died in service. The first to die was Fra Romolo a lay-brother who was serving in the lazaretto of Badia : he died on 22 November, 1630. The following day in the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova died Padre Gian Francesco of the Belanti of Siena. He had been serving in the hospital but two months when he was stricken down. When they told him that his end was approaching, he raised himself on his bed and intoned the *Te Deum Laudamus*, and singing gave up his soul to God. But it was Fra Pier Francesco Mainardi whose name was for long uttered in Florence with a wondering reverence. Pier Francesco Mainardi was a hero with a past ; and men love the converted sinner whose sins even they must forgive for the ultimate humility of a great saving love. There had been a day when the Florentines had crossed themselves when his name was mentioned and prayed : “ From two clever rogues, Pier Strozzi and doctor Mainardi, may God deliver us ! ” Mainardi was a doctor of law and an advocate as unscrupulous as he was brilliant. Men said he had no conscience as he had no morals ; the law was the net with which he unblushingly caught the victims of his greed and lawless pleasures. An affair with the wife of a prominent citizen, whom he seduced under threat of ruining her husband, proved his ultimate crime and the cause of his conversion. The poor woman sickened and died. On her deathbed she sent for her betrayer and implored him to do penance for his sin. A period of remorse followed ; then suddenly Mainardi disappeared from Florence and as a penitent sought refuge in the Capuchin friary at Cortona. That was in December 1625. A year later he was admitted as a novice into the Order. His utter humility and exquisite gentleness—in sharp contrast to his former bearing—now won the hearts of all who came in contact with him. He lived, it seemed, but to abase himself and to do acts of selfless kindness to others. When the plague broke out he was among the first to volunteer for service. But it was at the second outbreak in 1633 that his great opportunity came. He was sick in Florence when the call came ; but he pleaded to be amongst the chosen company. From the first he had hoped to make the final atonement by giving his life in the service of the plague-stricken ; and knowing that, the superiors numbered him

amongst those who were to serve. The call gave him new life and he was quickly at his post. Duke Ferdinand II, who had stood manfully by his people all through the terror, placed Mainardi in supreme charge of all the hospitals and lazaretti in the city ; and it was in large measure due to his tireless energy and masterly organisation that the second outbreak was subdued within a few months. He would have welcomed death had it come to him as it came to others of his fellow friars ; but again he survived. Yet he lived but a year longer. When his work amongst the sick was finished, he obtained leave to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land that he might thank God for His great mercies in the place where our redemption was wrought. On his return journey he fell sick at Cagli in the Marches of Ancona, and died there on 7 September, 1634. He was forty-five years of age.

When the pestilence again filled Italy with mourning some twenty years later, the same story of heroic service was again repeated ; and though much that the Capuchins achieved in the seventeenth century has been generally forgotten, their services in those dread years of suffering have not been forgotten.

(iv)

Penitents such as Pier Francesco Mainardi were not unknown in the Capuchin friaries elsewhere than in Florence. The austerity of the life attracted them ; its Christ-like pity admitted them ; conversion of heart was the one thing demanded of them. Nor did their admission scandalise the people ; rather were these transformed sinners another link of sympathy between the friary and the outside world. At the tribunal of the people—such was the Catholic instinct—as at the tribunal of God, much was forgiven them because they loved much. Not only in personal austerity and self-discipline but in a consuming service of self-forgetful charity did these penitents make good their wasted years.

A more common type of penitent was Fra Giambattista d'Este, for a brief while Alfonso III, Duke of Modena, the successor of that duke Cesare to whom the Pope refused the succession to the duchy of Ferrara. Alfonso's sin had been a lapse from the piety of his first youth. As he grew into man-

hood he developed traits of character which caused the people to dread the day when he would succeed to the sovereignty ; they might tolerate his continuous absorption in pleasure to the neglect of the duties of his position, but his overweening haughtiness and vindictiveness of temper boded ill for the future. Perhaps it was the remembrance of the treachery of the counsellors who delivered Ferrara into the hands of the Pope; perhaps a strain in the blood of the d'Este: however that may be, men prayed that Duke Cesare might live long. The death of his wife, Isabella of Savoy, in 1626 brought about a change in Alfonso's character. The remembrance of her unaffected piety and of her frequent appeals to his own better self, struck him with remorse ; and he determined then and there to abandon the world and become a Capuchin. That could not be until his eldest son, Francesco, was of an age to take up the reins of government at Duke Cesare's death ; but Alfonso began at once to school himself to a humble gentleness and a practical piety. Duke Cesare died in 1628 and for awhile Alfonso reigned ; the following year he abdicated in favour of his son. In company with his confessor, Fra Giovanni da Sestola, he left Modena and made his way to Meran in the Tyrol, and there was admitted into the Capuchin Order. He begged to be received as a lay-brother ; obedience to his superiors compelled him to accept the priesthood. After his ordination his thoughts turned to the mission fields in Germany or in England. He would thus atone for the apostasy from the Faith of princes of the house of Este, such as the Duke of Brunswick and the prince-bishop of Halberstadt ; but neither the Pope nor the Emperor would allow the adventure. Eventually he returned to Modena. There and in the neighbouring territories he laboured with no little success as a preacher, evangelising the cities and the countryside. But his special choice was to serve the sick both within the friary and outside. He died in 1644.²⁵

It was men such as these who made the *Cappuccini* loved in Italy.

²⁵ *Del Cappuccino d'Este che fu nel secol il Ser Alfonso III Duca di Modan adal P. F. Gio. da Sestola, Predic. Cappuccino* (Modana, 1646). cf. Pellegrino da Forli, op. cit., I, p. 573, seq. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, II, p. 265, seq.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FOREIGN MISSIONS

(i)

FROM what has been recorded in this history it will be clear to the reader that the strength of the Capuchins lay in the simplicity of their great faith and not in any elaborate organisation or calculated programme of external activities. Their success depended upon the personality of the labourer; and this was necessarily so in an Order whose rigid poverty banned the means by which highly organised activities are made possible. The system—if system it can be called—has its dangers, as every system has; it can flourish only as it produces men in whom the personal sense of responsibility is strong and in whom the guiding faith of the whole body is vivid and fresh; as we have already pointed out. For that reason the Capuchin worker has always been at his best when labouring as a pioneer or free-lance or when acting in a capacity in which the personal equation is of more value than impersonal means or programme; a knight-errant of St. Francis' ideal fraternity, rather than a soldier in organised battalions of an army.

In nothing has this trait shown itself more conspicuously than in the adventures of the Capuchin missionaries who went forth to sow the seed of the Gospel in lands where the name of Christ was unknown or rejected.¹

It was not until 1587 that the Capuchin congregation officially assumed responsibility for "missions amongst the infidels"; but long before that individual friars had been allowed to make the great adventure.

The first of these were Juan Zuaze de Medina and Gio-

¹ For the history of the Capuchin Missions, see Rocco da Cesinale: *Storia delle Missioni dei Cappuccini*, op. cit.; P. Clemente da Terzorio: *Le Missioni dei Minori Cappuccini: Santo Storico*, 7 vol. (Roma, 1913-1925).

vanni da Troia ;² the one a Spaniard, the other a Neapolitan who had spent some years in Spain. Missionaries they were, inasmuch as they went forth to bear witness to their faith ; yet rather would I term them simply “ heralds of the great King ”—for theirs was the simple faith which made St. Francis on the morrow of his disinheritance chant the song of his new-born vocation to the incredulous footpads of the hills. Yet they deserve remembrance in the annals of the Capuchin missions, for theirs was the mystic flow without which no religious missionary ever yet has achieved a spiritual conquest.

Both had begun their lives with a view to the profession of arms and then had become Franciscans amongst the Observant friars in Spain ; and both eventually found their way to Italy and there joined the Capuchins ; Giovanni da Troia in 1530, Juan Zuaze nine years later. Not until 1550 did they come to know each other. Giovanni da Troia was learning the secrets of the mystic way in the fastnesses of Apulia whilst Juan Zuaze was learning the same wisdom in a solitary's cell attached to the friary of Montepulciano in Tuscany. In that solitary's cell, Fray Juan had marvellous spiritual experiences, when his spirit seemed to pass beyond the limitations of time and dip into the sea of eternity, when the future was as the present to him in matters of the earth which concerned him, or when his soul was abashed with a knowledge of God he could not utter in words. Yet he was the most lovable and approachable of men. Here is his portrait ; of small stature with the face of a child, his face half encircled with a short black beard ; his eyes at once serious and laughing ; his countenance radiating light. All who looked on him thought him another St. Francis. In the dark days which followed Ochino's apostasy, his unflinching prophecy of the resurrection and glory awaiting the Capuchin Reform did much to steady the suffering fraternity.

Yet deep down in the heart of Juan Zuaze was a longing to bear witness to the love of Christ for man to those who knew Him not, to give his life in that witness to Christ's love, as Christ had given his life in love for us. And away in

² Concerning Juan Zuaze see Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, MS. cit., pp. 552-575 ; 932-946 ; and the same chronicle, for Giovanni da Troia, pp. 1081-1101. cf. Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1551, III, seq.

far-off Apulia, Giovanni da Troia was longing to give a like witness and make the same sacrifice.

On the festival of the Porziuncola in 1550, both came to Assisi to gain the Great Pardon. Thus they met for the first time. They regarded each other silently, and to each the soul of the other cried out in glad recognition of spiritual kinship, and without a spoken word they ran to each other and embraced. Afterwards they spoke of the secret longing they shared with each other. Finally together they went to the Vicar General of the Reform, Bernardino d'Asti, and begged permission to go to the East to preach the Gospel to the Turks. The following year, with licence from Pope Julius III, they took boat at Venice for Constantinople. There they preached in the public streets ; their message was the simple confession of their own faith ; Christ was the true God and Redeemer of men ; and Mahomet no true prophet. There followed arrest and imprisonment and scourging, until some Catholic merchants intervened. Their lives were saved, but they were expelled the city and put on a boat going to Palestine. Here at the holy places they deepened their souls in love of the crucified Redeemer, and then passed on to Egypt to fulfil their purpose as heralds of Christ's Gospel. At Alexandria some Catholics would have constrained them to keep silence or return home, but they escaped and found their way to Cairo, and there sought an audience of the governor that they might announce to him and his court the Gospel of Christ. At first the governor seems to have regarded them with contemptuous annoyance as men rendered foolish by overmuch fasting. Eventually they were scourged and cast into an underground dungeon to be left to die of starvation. They heard the sentence with a joyous contentment. Eight days later the French ambassador arrived in Cairo and obtained an order for their release ; but when the door of the dungeon was opened the two friars were dead. Call it, if you like, an adventure of folly ; but it is in such adventures of folly, in which men give their all for a simple profession of the faith that is in them, that all the greatest of the world's achievements have begun. From their graves these pioneer martyrs call with insistent call to the kindred spirits who will follow them—follow them perhaps with a larger equipment of knowledge or a more worldly

wisdom and with a more palpable achievement. Yet if these lack the capacity for folly of a simple faith, they are assuredly the lesser men.

Juan Zuaze and Giovanni da Troia, in achieving nothing but their own death for Christ and achieving that with a happy contentment, achieved the fundamental glory of any man, the glory of a steadfast loyalty to the faith which is his life. With these pioneer missionaries of the Capuchins, their faith was a faith in the love of Christ the Redeemer, to whom they would give love for love.

From such foundation does the story of the Capuchin missions "amongst the infidels" spring. That others followed in the footsteps of the first two we know, and that the following was generous may be gathered from a passage inserted in the revised Constitutions of 1575 which admonishes the superiors not to withhold the necessary permissions on the ground that the friars are yet few in number.³ But of these early missionaries few memories remain. Not until thirty years later does the record begin of a continuous and ever widening missionary activity of the congregation beyond the borders of Christendom. In 1584 two Capuchins, Pietro da Piacenza and Filippo da Roccacontrada, were appointed by the Pope to accompany an expedition sent by the Archconfraternity of the Gonfalone to Algiers for the redemption of Christian captives. They were commissioned to bring spiritual help and comfort to the Christians held in captivity, and to reconcile apostates from the faith.⁴ Both died within a year, victims to the plague; but for some years a succession of Capuchins seem to have ministered to the captives in Algiers; amongst them Fra Ambrogio, known to the world as the marchese Stampa da Soncino, senator of Milan.⁵ At the age of forty-nine he renounced his titles and estates in favour of his sons, his wife being already dead, and took the habit of a Capuchin. Then must he take his place amongst the young students to learn theology. When any of these, remembering his years and what he had been, would relieve him of some menial task, he would insist that he was

³ Cap., XII.

⁴ Bullar. Ord. Cap., II, p. 258; Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1585, VIII.

⁵ Valdimiro da Bergamo: *I Conventi ed I Cappuccini Bresciani*, p. 137, seq.; *I Cappuccini della Prov. Milanese*, parte 2a, vol. i, p. 95, seq.; Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1601, XI, seq.

now a Capuchin and must not be defrauded of his share in the common duties. But hardly was he ordained priest when he begged Pope Clement VIII to allow him to go and preach to the infidels. Thereupon the Pope sent him with Fra Ignazio da Bologna to Algiers to proclaim the Jubilee of 1600 to the Christian captives; granting the same privileges and pardons as might be gained by the pilgrims to Rome.⁶ In Algiers Fra Ambrogio was well received by the Dey, a renegade Christian, and between the two there grew up a close friendship, and many a night did they spend in converse about religion; but by day Ambrogio worked freely amongst the captives until one day the appearance of a Spanish war vessel off Algiers spread consternation in the city, and the populace demanded the death of the two Capuchins whom they now suspected to be spies in the service of Spain. The Dey, to save their lives, cast them into prison, sending them word that no harm would befall them; then, as soon as he might, he arranged to transport them to Spain with two hundred of the Christian captives for whose deliverance Ambrogio promised to raise a ransom. But before the arrangements were completed Ambrogio was struck down by mortal illness. The Dey called in his most noted physicians and himself watched by the bed of the dying friar; and when after a few days Fra Ambrogio died he was given an honourable burial in the Christian cemetery. So ended Fra Ambrogio's short career of five years as a Capuchin friar. Four years later his body was taken from its grave and carried back to Milan; and when the coffin was opened it was as when he lay upon his deathbed. But Fra Ignazio remained in Algiers to minister to the Christian captives. A few years later he was done to death in an uprising of the people at the threat of a Spanish attack on the city. For many years that was the history of successive Capuchin missions in the dominions of the Moors.

As we have said, it was in 1587 that the Capuchins formally embarked on "foreign-missionary" activities. In that year the General Chapter of the Order commissioned four friars to undertake missionary work in Constantinople; they were Pietro della Croce, superior of the mission, Dionigi da Roma and Giuseppe da Leonessa, all three priests,

⁶ cf. Rocco da Cesinale, *op. cit.*, I, p. 505; *Bull. Ord. Cap.*, VII, p. 268.

and a lay-brother Gregorio da Leonessa. This missionary adventure, however, had a brief existence. Pietro della Croce and Dionigi da Roma, after little more than a year's work, died in attending the sick during an outbreak of the plague; and Giuseppe da Leonessa shortly afterwards was cast into prison and tortured, and finally, with his companion Gregorio, expelled the country. The mission is chiefly notable as an episode in the apostolic career of Fra Giuseppe, whose main work was afterwards the evangelisation of the country districts of Southern Italy. A saint as well as a preacher, he was canonised by the Church in 1746.⁷

Not until a quarter of a century had passed was another official foreign mission undertaken, though individual friars continued to receive permission to go and minister to Christian captives and incidentally preach to the unbeliever. Moreover in 1603 four Capuchins were sent by the Archduke Maximilian of Austria to Persia to preach the Gospel there; but this seems to have been a brief adventure. Austrians and Spaniards were in bad repute in the Eastern kingdoms.⁸

On 20 April, 1611 the Queen-Regent, Marie de Medicis, wrote to Père Léonard, Provincial of Paris, requesting that four "capable and devout" Capuchins should be attached to the colonising expedition about to be sent by France to the West Indies; and on 5 July the General of the Order acceded to the request and authorised Père Léonard to nominate the missionaries. The majority of the friars in Paris volunteered for the enterprise; the four chosen were Yves d'Evreux who was appointed superior, Claude d'Abbeville, Arsène de Paris and Ambroise d'Amiens, picked men who had already proved their worth as missionaries in France.⁹

⁷ *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, V, pp. 106-108. cf. Rocco da Cesinale, *op. cit.*, I, p. 474. Giuseppe and Gregorio da Leonessa were substituted for Egidio di Santa Maria who was first mentioned in the letters of obedience dated June 20, 1587. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, VII, p. 284. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, VIII, p. 99, *seq.* cf. Boverius, *Annales*, anno 1612, 44, *seq.*

⁸ cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, IV, p. 235.

⁹ For the story of this mission see Claude d'Abbeville: *Histoire de la Mission des Pères Capucins en l'Isle de Maragnan et terres circonvoisines* (Paris, 1614); *Voyage dans le Nord du Brésil fait durant les années 1613 et 1614 par le Père Yves d'Evreux; publié d'après l'exemplaire unique conservé à la Bibliothèque Impériale de Paris avec une introduction et des notes par M. Ferdinand Denis* (in series: *Bibliotheca Americana*, Leipzig and Paris, 1864) (but a more complete manuscript exists in the General Archives of the Capuchins in Rome). Rocco da Cesinale, *op. cit.*, I, p. 439, *seq.*

The expedition left France on 19 March, 1612 and arrived at Maranhao to the north of Brazil about the end of July, when the seigneur de Razilly took possession in the name of France and Père Yves, in the name "of Jesus Christ the King of Kings and the world's Redeemer." It was, says Claude d'Abbeville, with tears of joy that they sang the *Te Deum*, at being the first to take possession of this infidel land for Christ.¹⁰ The place where the cross was set up was named Saint-Louis to be the future capital of the new colony; and here the native chiefs from the neighbouring districts assembled to pledge their loyalty to the King of France as soon as they were assured that the French had come as "friends" and not to take their people into slavery. They moreover professed themselves ready to be instructed in the Christian faith, and at once assisted the missionaries to erect a church. Yves d'Evreux and Ambroise d'Amiens settled at Saint-Louis, whilst their companions went further afield. Two months later Père Yves was left to carry on his work at Saint-Louis alone, for on 9 October, Ambroise d'Amiens died of pleurisy. By December all the chiefs of the territory had accepted France and the missionaries, and Razilly, accompanied by Père Claude and six natives, returned to France to give an account of the new colony. Their arrival in Paris was one of the sensations of the year. Crowds met them in the suburb Saint-Honoré and accompanied them to the church of the Capuchins, where a little later the six natives were baptised, the Archbishop of Paris officiating, and the king and queen standing sponsors at the baptism. The following year, twelve Capuchins under the leadership of Père Archange de Pembroke were sent to reinforce the mission; but they found Yves d'Evreux struck down with paralysis. With the aid of the natives baptised in Paris, the new missionaries established centres for instructing the people in the Catholic faith; by the end of 1615, about six hundred and fifty of them were baptised. And then came the end of the mission. The French were forcibly evacuated from the colony by the Portuguese under Albuquerque, and the natives, who loyally stood by France, were butchered and enslaved. It was a tragic ending to a promising beginning.

¹⁰ cf. Semelaigne (Dr.), *Yves d'Evreux: un Essai de colonisation au Brésil chez les Tapinambos* (Paris, 1887). Claude d'Abbeville, op. cit., X, p. 62.

(ii)

Meanwhile, in France, Père Joseph le Clerc du Tremblay dreaming his dream of a Catholic France which should be the heart of Christendom, and the dynamic centre of activities for the renovation and extension of the Catholic Church, was planning his vast schemes for the realisation of his dream. At the very moment when the news of the disaster of Maranhao was brought to France, he was setting out for Rome to obtain the Pope's approval for the "Apostolic Missions" in the Huguenot centres of France and for his projected crusade against Islam. For the next few years the organisation of these two schemes occupied his immediate attention; these and the foundation of the congregation of the *Filles du Calvaire*, itself a subsidiary means to the great end. But the missionary expedition of Maranhao was not without its effect on his mind. For the moment the foreign missionary adventure of the French Capuchins had been checked; but only for the moment in the mind of Père Joseph; with the Crusade would come the opportunity for a yet wider missionary enterprise. The crusade however, hung fire, and as we have seen, was eventually abandoned. But Père Joseph by that time had already planned and begun to give effect to a missionary crusade of the vast proportions in which alone his tireless brain could scheme—a crusade to cover three continents in a practically simultaneous offensive.

The reader will at once surmise that this vast missionary adventure was not to be an adventure of simple faith such as had impelled the missionary zeal of Fray Juan Zuaze or Fra Giuseppe da Leonessa. Simple faith was to be found in abundance in many of the missionaries Père Joseph would send forth; but it was his part to harness this simple faith to something of this world's prudence. Not otherwise indeed could the results have been achieved which we are now to chronicle.

In January 1622, Père Pacifique de Provins, of the Paris Capuchins, set sail from Marseilles, having been commissioned to visit Constantinople, Asia Minor and Egypt with a view to the establishment of Capuchin missions. Pacifique, as you will learn, was a man of remarkable energy and with a keen faculty of observation; a man of ideas, too impatient,

perhaps, to be altogether wise. All this is evident from the reports he published of his travels.¹¹ Having made his tour of inspection he went to Rome, where he saw Pope Gregory XV and the heads of the newly-established Congregation of Propaganda Fide. The result of this visit was that Père Léonard, Provincial of Paris, and Père Joseph le Clerc were appointed commissaries in charge of the Capuchin missions in the East, and Pacifique himself was commissioned to undertake missionary work in Constantinople and the neighbouring districts of Greece and Thrace. Thereupon Pacifique returns to Paris to report to the two commissaries of the missions, and then learns of Père Joseph's vast scheme to establish Capuchin missions throughout the land of Islam. The following year Père Joseph went to Rome and obtained the approval of Urban VIII for his projected missions, and was empowered to choose the best religious and send them wherever they were needed in the countries approved by the Holy See; only one exception was made as regarded the Holy Land, where the Capuchins were excluded from the Holy Places committed to the charge of the Observant Franciscans.

Straightway four friars under the leadership of Père Archange des Fosses were sent to Constantinople (Pacifique was destined for Palestine), and armed with letters of recommendation from the Propaganda Fide to the French ambassador and the Latin Patriarchal Vicar. The church of St. George in Galata was assigned them. A little later they were given another church in Pera. Their mission was twofold—to propagate the faith amongst the Mahommedans and the schismatics, and to minister to the subjects of the King of France and the Christians under his protection. As French-

¹¹ *Relation du Voyage de Perse fait par le R. P. Pacifique de Provins, Prédicateur Capucin : ou vous verrez les remarques particulières de la Terre sainte. . . . Aussi le commandement du Grand Seigneur Sultan Murat pour établir des Couvents de Capucins par tous les lieux de son Empire. Ensemble le bon traitement que le roy de Perse fit au R. P. Pacifique, etc.* (Paris, 1631). P. Pacifique gives a detailed description of the country, customs and legal administration of the Persians.

See also his account of his missionary journeys in the Antilles: *Relation ou description des Îles Saint-Christophe et de la Guadeloupe* (Paris, 1648). In the Arch. di Stati, Milan (Busta, X.—*dei Cappuccini*) there is a MS. by P. Pacifique: *Relation succinte et fidelle des missions des Capucins en toute les parties du monde.*

cf. Apollinaire de Valence: *Trois lettres du P. Pacifique de Provins* (Rome, 1890); Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit. III, cap. IV; Clemente da Terzorio, op. cit., vol. vi.

men they were cordially received by the Turkish authorities, who a few years previously had expelled the Jesuits because, so it was asserted, of their sympathy with Spain. France, be it remembered, had for many years been the one European ally of the Turk. Yet though their nationality opened the door to them, it was the life of the Capuchins and their austere poverty which gained them respect both amongst the schismatics and the Mahommedans. The Capuchin mode of life, remarks Pacifique, had an attraction for the Eastern mind. Even the English and Dutch ambassadors favoured them, each undertaking to supply the friars with food for one day in the week. One rule Père Joseph insisted on—the friars must live their religious life in the mission as far as possible as they lived it in their friaries at home. The example of the religious life, he held, would be their chief weapon in making conversions. The letter, addressed to the superior of the Capuchins at Schio in 1628 by the two commissaries in Paris, gives some idea of the working of the missions. The missionaries were to learn the language or languages of the natives amongst whom they were to work, so as to be able to preach and hear confessions in the native tongues; they were to take special care to instruct the young. They were not to expect quick results nor grow weary and lazy if conversions were slow in coming, but they must be patient and unwearying in their work. Where possible they shall form confraternities based on the rule of the Third Order of St. Francis but adapted to local needs, to assist them in their work.^{1 2}

Within a short while, the missionaries in Constantinople were preaching and hearing confessions in Turkish, Greek and Armenian. The missions grew rapidly. New centres were established in Schio, Naxos, Smyrna, Syros and Andros, as fresh contingents of friars were sent out.

Almost simultaneously missions were established in Palestine, particularly amongst the Druses of Lebanon, and in Egypt. In 1626 Pacifique de Provins began his journey to Persia to open out new missionary fields in that country and Mesopotamia. He left Sidon in the summer of 1626 and went by way of Damascus to Aleppo, where he remained for about two years, whilst his associate, Père Gabriel, returned

^{1 2} See the letter in Rocco da Cesinale, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 69-71.

to France for further instructions. At Aleppo the Capuchins were received by the Venetian consul and taken under the protection of the Cade. A school was opened and a Capuchin was appointed by the Maronite Patriarch to act as his Vicar General. A few years later the Capuchins of Aleppo published a new version of the Bible in Arabic, translated from the Greek and Latin ; and Père Justinien de Tours wrote a Catechism in Armenian, Arabic, Turkish and Kurdish. The mission at Aleppo was particularly successful in winning over schismatics to the Church ; amongst the converts were the Sorian Patriarch of Antioch, Ignatius Simeon XXIII, the Greek Patriarch Macarius and the Armenian Patriarch Cachadour.

Having received the desired instructions from Paris, Pacifique with two companions left Aleppo on June 20, 1628. He traversed the desert and in fifty-two days arrived at Bagdad. Here they were received by the Khan and their French nationality was a passport to his favour. An oratory was opened, and on the feast of the Assumption of our Lady mass was said and a *Te Deum* sung, " since for eight hundred years no mass had been said there." At Bagdad Pacifique left Père Just, and after another twenty-five days of travel arrived at Ispahan. Here he found Carmelite and Augustinian friars already at work. These received him cordially, as did also the Armenian Patriarch who took the two Capuchins into his monastery, washed their feet and entertained them with all brotherly charity. The only people to show any hostility were the English and Dutch merchants who suspected an attempt on the part of France to capture trade. At the invitation of the Shah, Pacifique next proceeded to Kazbin, where he was received with honour as a subject of Persia's friend, the King of France. Amongst his credentials Pacifique had brought portraits of the French King and Queen as presents for the Shah ; and the presentation was made the occasion of a great banquet given by the Shah in honour of the missionary envoys. The ceremonies concluded, Pacifique came to business and requested permission to establish mission-hospices at Ispahan and Bagdad. Not only was this permission granted but the Shah presented Pacifique with a house in Ispahan. And here Pacifique would have been willing to labour for the rest of his days : Persia

appealed to his imagination as well as to his apostolic charity. In his description of the country he finds himself in the garden of Eden and the courtesy of the people was of a piece with the gracious character of the land. But for once he had bargained without his host. The Shah, in his satisfaction at the courtesy of France in sending the portraits of the King and Queen, would return the compliment by despatching Pacifique to the French Court with letters of friendship and costly gifts. Pacifique had no mind to return to France thus summarily, but wisely he judged that "it is an ill thing to contradict princes"; and, first taking over the mission-hospice for future work, he accepted the embassy and set out for France. As a result a contingent of Capuchins was sent to Persia, but Pacifique was retained in France. For some reason—I know not what—he had forfeited the confidence of Père Joseph.¹³ In Persia the Capuchins conducted their mission as in the Turkish dominions; within a few years they had translated parts of the Bible into the Persian tongue and had published a Persian-Latin dictionary.¹⁴ From Persia they extended their missionary labours to Georgia¹⁵ where they worked side by side with the Theatines; and a few years later to India:

The first Capuchin mission in India¹⁶ was established in 1639 by Père Ephrem de Nevers, one of the pioneers of the Persian missions, and Père Zeno de Baugé. Two years later we find Père Ephrem traversing India on his way to Pegu in Southern Burma. It was an adventurous journey which ended at Madras. After travelling fifty days Ephrem came to Bagnazar, the capital of Golconda, where he was welcomed and entertained by a cousin of the king, whose joy in life was the study of mathematics. He was urgent that Ephrem should settle in this kingdom, offering as an inducement to give him the rank and dignity of a learned professor; and it was with some difficulty that Ephrem, pleading the orders of his superiors, was at length allowed to proceed further. He

¹³ cf. P. Candide de Nant : *Pages Glorieuses de l'Épopée Canadienne* (Paris, 1927), p. 207, note 2.

¹⁴ cf. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., III, p. 273, notes 1 and 2.

¹⁵ cf. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., III, cap. VI; Clemente da Terzorio, op. cit., vol. vii.

¹⁶ cf. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., III, cap. V; Norbert de Bar-le-Duc : *Mémoires utiles et nécessaires sur les missions des Indes orientales* (Lucques, 1742).

arrived at length at Madras, hoping to find a boat to take him to Pegu. But at Madras he was detained by the prayers of the Catholics, who were without a priest to minister to them. Most of these were Goanese Christians ; but there was also a colony of English and Irish Catholics whose simple faith appealed to the heart of Père Ephrem. The English Company added their request to that of the Catholics and offered to build a church if he would remain. Ephrem, struck by the spiritual desolation of the district, applied for instructions to his superiors and was told to remain there. Very soon, however, difficulties arose with the neighbouring Goanese clergy, who resented the presence of the Capuchin. By this time the Goanese had become sunk in superstition ; and the clergy were as ignorant as their people. Ephrem, in setting his face against some superstitious practices, at once aroused the wrath of the clergy, and was summoned to appear before the Holy Inquisition at Meliapur. At his trial, as he related afterwards, he was astonished to find that the Inquisitors not only knew no theology but had never read the Scriptures.¹⁷ He was condemned as a heretic and cast into prison. As soon as the news reached the ears of Père Zeno at Surat, he appealed to the Archbishop of Goa and the governor of the Portuguese dominions to obtain Ephrem's release ; but without avail. The matter was then referred to the French King and the Pope. The French made representations to Portugal ; the Pope ordered the Inquisitors of Meliapur to release the friar under pain of excommunication ; but the Inquisitors remained obdurate. Eventually the King of Golconda took a hand in the affair and threatened to send an army and raze Meliapur to the ground unless the Capuchin were set free. Then only did the Inquisition order the release. Père Ephrem returned to Madras and was shortly afterwards joined by other Capuchins. A few years later Capuchins were working in Pondicherry and along the Malibar coast.

¹⁷ cf. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., III, p. 313, note 4. Boullaye-le-Gouz (*Les Voyages et Observations* (Paris, 1653), p. 223, says P. Ephrem was imprisoned "pour avoir presché à Madraspatan que les Catholiques qui fouloient et trampoient dans des puis les images de Saint Anthoine et de la Vierge Marie estoient impies . . . Cette doctrine déplue aux Religieux Portugais." It was probably a superstitious custom similar to the Neapolitan custom of dragging their favourite saints in effigy through the streets when invocations were fruitless.

Eight years before the Capuchins arrived in India Père Joseph sent missionaries to Egypt, under the leadership of Père Gilles de Loches who had already won his spurs in Persia. Another band was sent in 1633 and amongst these was Père Agathange de Vendôme, a missionary in Syria.¹⁸ Agathange de Vendôme was one of those men who apart from their actual achievement remain in the memories of others as an inspiring personality. He had begun his missionary career on the "Apostolic Mission" in Poitou. When Père Joseph's projected missions amongst the infidels became known, Agathange ardently desired to be one of the missionaries, but in his humility he deemed himself unworthy of a possible martyr's crown, and remained silent when others were offering their service. Then in 1628 came the command from his superiors and he went to Syria. Here he worked chiefly in the Lebanon, and by his successful labours came to be styled "the apostle of the Lebanon." In Egypt his chief attraction was to the Copts and more especially to the Coptic monks in the solitudes of Nitria, not a few of whom he reconciled to the Catholic Church. He had great hopes of reconciling the aged Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria, who, it is said, actually wrote to Pope Urban VIII, offering his submission.¹⁹

At the same time that Agathange joined the mission in Egypt, there arrived Père Cassien de Nantes, a Portuguese by blood, whose parents had settled in Nantes. Cassien was a linguist who could speak Arabic and Greek. He, too, worked for the reconciliation of the Coptic monks of Nitria to the Catholic Church. The mission seems to have been particularly fruitful amongst the schismatics of different allegiances; Nestorians, Sorians, Armenians, Greeks and Copts were brought into the Catholic Church in some numbers.

Then, in 1636, came orders that six Capuchins should be sent to Abyssinia, to stem the falling away of the Catholics in that country, owing to the persecuting policy of the new Emperor, who had been raised to power in an uprising

¹⁸ cf. Emmanuel de Rennes : *Abregé de la vie et du martyre des Reverends Pères Agathange de Vendôme et Cassien de Nantes Capucins Prestres. Extrait de plusieurs manuscrits contemporains*, 2 edit. (Paris, 1882) ; *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, VI, p. 308, seq.

¹⁹ The relations between the Coptic monks and the Capuchins remained cordial. In 1651 Propaganda allowed the Capuchins to reside in Coptic monasteries. Rocco da Cesinale, *op. cit.*, pp. 412-413.

against the Portuguese. Agathange de Vendôme and Cassien de Nantes were amongst the six chosen for this mission. Two years were spent in learning the language, and making the necessary preparations. Cassien with his unusual facility, sufficiently mastered the language to produce several books in the Abyssian tongue, explanatory of the Catholic Faith.

The six Capuchins set out from Cairo in 1638. They went in three parties by different routes. Agathange and Cassien sought to make their way to Gondar, but were arrested on 5 August, when they had hardly crossed the frontier. They were brought before Tetros, the governor of the province, and Mark, the recently appointed Coptic bishop of Abyssinia. Mark had known the two Capuchins when he was abbot of a monastery in Nitria ; and as a result of conversations with Agathange had made his submission to the Roman See. He still professed himself in unity with Rome when he was consecrated by the Patriarch as bishop of the Abyssinian Copts. On his arrival in Abyssinia, however, he fell in with the policy of the emperor and became bitterly anti-Roman. It was he, now, who was the chief accuser of the two Capuchins. Offered their lives if they would abjure the Roman See, Agathange replied that that was impossible as they had come hither to win the people of this kingdom to the Catholic Faith and obedience to the See of Rome. Two days after their arrest Agathange and Cassien were done to death by hanging. When he heard the sentence Agathange took the cord he wore round his waist and smilingly offered it to the executioners ; it was a good rope, he said, to swing them to Paradise.²⁰ In the same spirit had Sir Thomas More gone to the block. Of the other four Capuchins, two died of the plague on their journey ; the other two reached their destination. The martyrdom of Agathange and Cassien only stimulated the missionary zeal of their brethren ; others followed ; three of these ten years later were also put to death. Still others followed. In the meantime other Capuchin missionaries had penetrated into Morocco. Strictly speaking the mission to Morocco was the beginning of Père Joseph's attempt to

²⁰ See the attestations forwarded to Rome in Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., III, p. 749, seq. The two martyrs were beatified by Leo XIII in 1905. For an instructive account of the missions in the East see *Brevis ac vera relatio visitationis factae a P. F. Ambrosio de Rennes . . . in Aegypto, Syria, Caldea et India Orientali in anno 1644*, 45, 46, 47, in *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, vol. xlii, p. 250, seq.

convert Islam; for the first Capuchin missionaries arrived in Morocco in 1624.²¹ They were Pierre d'Alençon, Michel de Vezins, priests, and Frère Rudolphe d'Angers a lay-brother. They were attached to the expedition of the seigneur de Razilly who was sent by France to negotiate a trade-treaty between that kingdom and the King of Morocco. The purpose of the missionaries was to minister to the Christian slaves and to the Andalusian Moors who had carried with them their Christian faith—or some semblance of it—when expelled from Spain; but a further purpose was to preach Christ to the Moslem. Razilly, who had been well received in Morocco five years previously, anticipated no difficulties. To his indignant surprise, on landing at Safi he and his company, including the Capuchins, were made prisoners and held to ransom. Razilly himself and Frère Rudolphe were, however, allowed to return to France to raise the required ransom; the others were thrown into prison. It was not until six years later that Razilly returned with the ransom and a new contingent of Capuchins; but by that time Pierre d'Alençon and Michel de Vezins were dead, victims of the plague. Yet during those six years the two Capuchins had not lain idle, but had been allowed to exercise their ministry amongst the Christian prisoners, of whom there were many languishing in captivity.²² A lovable character was Pierre d'Alençon; as his letters, written from his prison to Père Joseph, testify. In them there was no complaint; rather is the note one of joyous gratitude that in his imprisonment he is enabled to serve and comfort his fellow prisoners. When at length the plague broke out, he and Père Michel were given great freedom that they might nurse and minister to the sick and dying amongst the Christian prisoners and slaves. Pierre himself fell a victim whilst ministering to the others; and such was the impression made upon the Moors by his selfless charity that the king ordered him an honourable burial. Before long Père Michel followed him to the grave. A few weeks later Razilly arrived with the ransom, and a

²¹ François d'Angers: *Histoire de la Mission des PP. Capucins au royaume de Maroque* (Nyort, 1644). Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., III, p. 453, *seq.*; Pellegrino da Forli, op. cit., I, p. 123, *seq.*

²² According to the *Acta* of Propaganda, there were three thousand Christian captives and some Moorish Christians. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., III, p. 466, note 1.

treaty was concluded whereby French consuls were to reside in the trading towns and the Capuchins, as chaplains to the consuls, were to be free to minister to the Christians.²³ The French mission, however, did not long survive, owing to political troubles between Morocco and France ; but in 1644 Spanish Capuchins were at work in several of the coast towns under the protection of Spain. Morocco did not welcome Christians except as slaves or redeemable captives.

About the same time that the second missionary contingent was sent to Morocco, two Norman Capuchins were sent to explore the coast of Africa in those parts, generally known as Nigritia or Guinea, lying between Cape Verde and Benin. Their report,²⁴ as to the docile character of the natives, induced Propaganda in 1634 to commission the Capuchin Provincial of Brittany to send missionaries to those parts. In 1637 four Capuchins arrived at Besné and were well received by the king of the district and the chiefs, who professed themselves willing to receive instruction in the Christian Faith. A rustic oratory was built and the natives attended mass and in course of time many of the notable men received baptism. The mission flourished, notwithstanding trouble caused by the Dutch traders. Later, the Spanish Capuchins came to the aid of their French brethren whose resources were overtaxed by the vast missionary enterprises upon which they had embarked. In 1644 the mission was committed to the care of the Capuchins of Andalusia.

From the Nigritia mission sprang yet another mission, not in Africa but in Brazil. The trade route usually followed between Europe and Central Africa, went across the seas to Brazil and back to the African coast. That was the route generally taken by the missionaries. Some Breton Capuchins on their way to Guinea in 1534 were captured by the Dutch and held as prisoners in Brazil. There they carried on the

²³ Père Joseph's instructions to the missionaries sent to Morocco in 1630 are interesting. The missionaries were not to meddle in the internal politics of Morocco nor in political affairs between Morocco and foreign countries ; moreover, they were not to irritate the Moors by invective against the Koran. Francois d'Angers, *op. cit.*, p. 167, *seq.*

²⁴ Rocco da Cesinale, *op. cit.*, III, p. 487, *seq.* cf. *Relation du voyage du Cap, Vert, fait par le pere Alexis de S. Lo et le pere Bernardin de Renouard, Capucins* (Rouen, 1637).

work of their ministry amongst the Catholics. From that enforced residence grew up a mission station and in 1642 Propaganda formally created a Capuchin mission with its centre at Pernambuco, to be attached to the French province of Brittany. From Pernambuco the mission within a few years stretched out to Bahia and Rio de Janeiro.

In the meantime a new and vast mission was undertaken south of the missions in Nigritia, but of this we shall speak later. It did not come within the scheme of missions planned by Père Joseph. For the moment we will follow the French Capuchins in their new missions in North America.²⁵

In 1630, Père Joseph was commissioned by the Congregation of Propaganda to send French and English Capuchins to New England, "to aid the Catholics and impede the progress of the Puritans."²⁶ The need of sending missions to the new British colonies in North America had been vehemently urged on Propaganda since 1625 by the Carmelite Simon Stock; and the matter was taken up by the nuncio in Belgium who urged that suitable missionaries might be found amongst the English exiles in the Low Countries. Propaganda first approached the Jesuits on the subject and then the Capuchins. In fact, however, the first Capuchins sent out by Père Joseph in 1632 were sent to New France, the French possessions, and not to New England. They were destined to open a mission in Quebec; but on arriving there, they found the Jesuits in possession and amicably relinquished their claim. They were then sent with the approval of Propaganda to Acadie where they replaced the Recollect Franciscans.²⁷ Their first hospice was at Port Royal, from which they went forth to minister to the French Catholics and to the native Indians. Schools were established where the Indian children were cared for and instructed; mission stations spread rapidly, the missionaries dwelling amongst the natives. At the same time churches were served in the towns of the French colonists. Acadie became a model missionary province. Everything went well until in 1654 the English burst in upon the province and wrought desolation.

²⁵ *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, VII, p. 223, *seq.* Rocco de Cesinale, III, p. 693, *seq.*

²⁶ *Acta S. C. de Prop. Fide*, Nov. 22, 1630, in Rocco da Cesinale, *op. cit.*, III, p. 675. Candide de Nant: *Pages glorieuses de l'Épopée Canadienne*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

²⁷ Concerning the Capuchin mission in Acadie see the scholarly work, already referred to, of Père Candide de Nant.

The churches were destroyed, the colonists massacred, and the missionaries banished together with a large part of the French population. The Capuchin superior of the mission, Léonard de Chartres, who had refused to leave his post at Port Royal when the English advanced, was murdered. That destruction of the peaceful colony of Acadie is one of the black pages in the history of English Puritanism. Capuchin missionaries, however, were yet to be found amongst the native Indians.²⁸

From Canada the Capuchins in 1642 had extended their labours to Maine and Maryland; thirty years later they were working in Florida.

Meanwhile, in 1636, six Capuchins from Normandy had been sent with that bluff adventurer on the seas, Pierre Belain d'Esnameux, to evangelise the new French colony in the Antilles, where they were to work side by side with the Jesuits and Dominicans. The headquarters of this mission was in the isle of Saint-Christophe. From there the mission extended to Guadaloupe, Granada, Martinique and San Domingo.

It is in this mission that we again meet with Père Pacifique de Provins. In 1642, four years after the death of Père Joseph, Pacifique was appointed prefect of the Capuchin missions in Canada. He does not seem ever to have gone to Canada. He was in Rome in 1643 and the following year, on business connected with the mission. In 1645 he was in the Antilles which were included in his prefecture. The fact is that Père Pacifique had his dreams, even as Père Joseph had; and it was these dreams that took him to Rome. For one thing, he wished to establish a missionary seminary in Paris for the training of missionaries, and in this project he was promised the aid of the duc de Vendôme. Then too he was anxious to found a "milice chrétienne" for the aid of missions in all parts of the world, a dream realised two centuries later by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Neither of these projects came to anything so far as Père Pacifique was concerned. When at length he arrived in the Antilles, he did in fact contribute to the foundation of an Indian school at Port Royal; but his pet wish was to

²⁸ See the report of the mission sent to Propaganda in 1656 by P. Ignace de Paris, in *Candide de Nant*, op. cit., Appendice I, p. 305, *seq.*

found a seminary for native missionaries in the Ile des Saints. His own companion was a native Capuchin who had been ordained priest in France. One can understand something of Père Joseph's refusal to employ Pacifique on the missions after his return from Persia. One dreamer of dreams is not usually tolerant of another in the active affairs of life, at least not when their paths cross. Notwithstanding his ambitious projects, Pacifique was a good practical missionary in the ordinary affairs of a missionary's life. He was fearless of danger. His last adventure was an attempt to convert the cannibal Caribbeans ; and it was in this adventure that he lost his life. He had received warning of the treachery of these natives in the fate of others who had ventured amongst them. But no warning of danger would deter Pacifique. How he died no one knows. He just disappeared.²⁹ He had been three years in the Antilles. Like his *Voyage en Perse* his book on the Antilles is the work of a keen and joyous observer.³⁰ Pacifique loved the souls of his fellow-men; but he had, too, a Franciscan love of the earth he lived on and a naïve enjoyment of the beautiful ; a sturdy man with the heart and generous impulse of the child.

(iii)

The creation and organisation of the French Capuchin missions was undoubtedly the noblest effort of Père Joseph's genius; it was the work of a master-mind and of an indomitable will. Nor was the achievement in any way ephemeral ; it developed and gathered force during the century that followed his death, and was checked only by the great revolution.

Yet simultaneously with the development of foreign-missionary activity amongst the French friars there was a similar development in other provinces of the Order, particularly in Italy and Spain. In fact the missionary spirit in Spain and in some of the Italian provinces almost rivalled

²⁹ It is generally stated that he died in 1653 ; but in 1649 Propaganda was considering the appointment of a new prefect of the mission, "owing to the death of Père Pacifique." cf. Candide de Nant, op. cit., p. 218.

³⁰ *Relation ou description des îles Saint Christophe, etc.*, (see *supra*, p. 378).

that in France. Before the middle of the century Italian Capuchins were working in Tunis, Algiers, in the Caucasus and together with their Spanish brethren, in Central Africa; whilst purely Spanish missions were to be found in Morocco and in South America.

No finer story of persistent effort and heroic labour is to be found in the annals of the foreign missions than that of the Spanish-Italian missions in that vast region of Central Africa which stretches behind the coast line from Benin to Angola, and is known in Capuchin history as the Congo mission.³¹ This mission was first planned and committed to the Capuchins by Paul V in 1620. The creation of the mission was the Pope's response to a petition for missionaries sent by Alvarez II, King of the Congo. Some time before this Catholic missionaries had visited the Kingdom; Alvarez himself was a professed Catholic; and here and there churches had been erected but were now derelict. Paul V died before the commission could be executed; but it was renewed by Gregory XV immediately after his election. Then had come news of the death of Alvarez and political events intervened to prevent the mission being sent. Not until nineteen years later, and at the renewed entreaties of Alvarez's successor, did Urban VIII actually despatch four Capuchins under the leadership of Fra Bonaventura d'Alesano. Their first objective was Lisbon, where they must obtain the consent of the Spanish King, within whose sphere of influence as sovereign of Portugal the Congo lay. They arrived to find themselves in the midst of the revolution which was to make Portugal again independent of the crown of Spain; and the Portuguese, suspicious of some political design in favour of Spain, refused to allow the missionaries to proceed; and these had no other course but to return to

³¹ For the Congo Mission see *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, 193-218. Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi da Montecuccolo: *Istoria descritta de' tre regni, Congo, Matamba et Angola*; Dionigi Carli da Piacenza: *Il Moro Transportato in Venezia: ovvero Racconto dei Costumi . . . dei popoli dell' Africa, America, Asia ed Europe* (Bassano, 1687). Girolamo Merolla da Sorrento: *Relatione del viaggio nel regno di Congo Napoli*, 1692). (An English translation of Carli and Merolla appeared in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels . . . in 4 volumes*. London. Printed for Awnsham and John Churchill at the Black Swan, in Paternoster Row, 1704; vol. i, pp. 611-766.)

Giovanni Francesco da Roma: *Breve Relazione del successo della Missione dei Cappuccini al Regno del Congo* (Roma, 1648). cf. Rocco da Cesinale, op. cit., III. pp. 517-672.

Rome. There followed a further delay of six years during which affairs between Spain and Portugal had come to a settlement. In 1644 the Pope again took the matter of the mission in hand and committed the charge of it to the Procurator-General of the Order.³² Again political difficulties arose—the Catholic powers, however zealous they might be for the propagation of the Faith, were nevertheless more anxious that the Faith should not be propagated except to their own political advantage. Fortunately for the mission, one of their company, a lay brother, Fray Francisco de Pampelona—for the missionaries now were a mixed company of Italians and Spaniards—intervened with the Spanish and Portuguese powers. Fray Francisco de Pampelona had once been a captain in the army of Spain and was a man of good family. His influence and address won the consent of the King of Spain, and at the beginning of 1645 the missionaries set sail for the Congo, taking the usual route by the Canaries and Brazil—a journey of some months. They arrived in the Congo in May. In reciting the history of the Congo mission one would hesitate to put down the details of the successes gained were it not that the story is so well documented by the reports of eye-witnesses at various times and in various parts. Within one week of landing the Capuchins baptised one thousand five hundred natives who had been waiting for baptism. Yet that number pales before the numbers baptised as the missionaries spread themselves abroad. One missionary alone, Bonaventura da Sorrento, in the course of a missionary tour, baptised twelve thousand persons, adults and children.

At one moment, shortly after the arrival of the mission, it seemed as though it were once again doomed, owing to sickness. All the missionaries fell grievously sick ; one of them died, and Fra Bonaventura d'Alessano, the superior, was the only one of the company able to rise from his bed to administer the viaticum to the dying friar. Hardly were they recovered, when those who were able to travel set out on the journey to San Salvador, the capital, to visit the King, Garcia II. For six days they journeyed without seeing a single human habitation. Garcia received them graciously and gave them the derelict church dedicated to our Lady of

³² cf. Rocco da Cesinale, *op. cit.*, III, p. 527, note 2.

Victory. The following year a fresh contingent joined the missionaries ; though not without trouble from the Dutch traders at Loanda, who for a time imprisoned them and endeavoured to raise the natives against them by spreading the rumour that the missionaries were Spanish soldiers in disguise. Two years later a further contingent of fourteen Spanish and Italian friars arrived.

The missionaries spread themselves over the country, instructing and baptising. Mingled with the prevalent idolatry and superstition were recollections of the Catholic Faith as taught by former missionaries. The greatest difficulty encountered was the custom of polygamy ; and no little embarrassment occurred when the baptised native must determine which of his former wives he would marry ; nor was it easy to prevent lapses in favour of the larger domestic establishment. At times whole districts were baptised. At Sundi, when the missionary arrived, people from all the neighbouring country came begging for baptism. One of the notable conversions was that of the vassal reigning-princess, Queen Singa. She was of Ethiopian origin and had become a Christian in her youth, but out of hatred of the Portuguese had lapsed into idolatry. That notable missionary, Fra Antonio da Gaeta, reconciled her to the Church, and baptised over eight thousand of her people, not including infants.³³

But the success attending the labours of the Capuchins in the Congo and its adjoining territories was paid for at a great price. The long journeys over vast tracts of country, the tropical heat, the native food and climatic conditions took a large toll of life amongst the missionaries ; and their sufferings were added to by their persistent endeavour to observe the Rule and Constitutions of their Reform in all its severity. The wearing of their coarse habit, as one of the chroniclers says, was a continual martyrdom under the

³³ See *La meravigliosa conversione alla santa fede di Cristo della Regina Singa e del suo regno di Matamba nell' Africa meridionale : descritta con historico stile da P. F. Francesco Maria Gioia da Napoli detto da Posilipo . . . E cavata da una Relatione della mandata dal P. F. Antonio da Gaeta . . . missionario apostolico e Prefetto Generale della Missione ne' Regni dell' Africa, e di detta Regina da lui convertata* (In Napoli, 1669).

Incidentally P. Gioia gives a vivid description of the manners and customs of the country.

cf. *Bull. Ord. Cap.*, VII, pp. 201-203.

conditions of their life in the Congo ; yet in their spirit of austerity they would not change it for a lighter garb.³⁴ One may criticise their decision, yet it was the indomitable spirit which refused to accept ease of any sort which contributed to the success of the missionaries. And always the places of those who succumbed were taken by others in increasing numbers.

Almost in the same year that the Spanish and Italian missionaries first went to the Congo, the Propaganda called upon the Papal nuncio at Madrid to send four Capuchin priests with the lay-brother, Fray Francisco de Pampelona, to establish a mission at Darien in the West Indies. The nuncio was to negotiate with the Spanish Court not to put hindrances in the way of the mission, and to point out that as the country was rich in gold it was becoming to send religious there who were strangers to the love of riches.³⁵ The Fray Francisco mentioned in the decree was he who had so valiantly cleared the way for the mission to the Congo. He was to play no small part in the development of the new mission in Central America. The missionaries actually reached Panama in 1648, and then they were six in number, not five. The country was wild and desolate, the Indians living scattered in the mountains and forests. It was at first literally a going forth into the highways and byways to find their flock ; and a patient campaign of winning kindness to dispel the native fear of the European. But in a few months the missionaries were able to form a village with a church in the centre as the symbol of the law of the Gospel by which the life of the village was to be ruled ; this village was named San Buenventura. Shortly afterwards a second village was formed ; and these became the centres of missionary activity. The following year Fray Francisco went back to Spain to enlist a new band of missionaries. Whilst he was away, war broke out between the tribes ; the villages were destroyed and the Capuchins taken prisoners. When peace was restored, the work had to be begun over again. Then the superior, Antonio de Oviedo, taking with him three or four converted natives, set out to evangelise the Bogoti Indians in what is now Columbia. But the native Christians on nearing

³⁴ Dionigi Carli, *op. cit.*, I, p. 81.

³⁵ *Bull. Ord. Cap.*, VII, pp. 337-8.

the territory of the Bogoti, turned back and fled. Antonio proceeded alone, carrying his crucifix in his hand. At his first encounter with the Bogoti, he was set upon and slain. Such was the beginning of what was known as the Orinoco mission which shortly extended over what is now known as the Isthmus of Panama, Venezuela and Columbia. Fray Francisco on his return to Darien in 1650 with another band of missionaries, went to evangelise the islands and coast south of the Orinoco. Villages were formed and churches erected ; it was a veritable Christian colonisation that these missionaries attempted. Then suddenly, in 1652, came messages from Madrid, condemning the work and recalling the missionaries. The Indian converts were thunderstruck and loudly petitioned that their Fathers should not be taken from them. The superior of the mission chose Fray Francisco to go to Madrid to make a true report of the work the missionaries were doing. He set out again on the long journey, but at Guayra off Caraccas, he fell sick and died. He died as he would have wished, as a soldier on active duty. Then Propaganda took the matter up. The Capuchins were bidden to remain at their post, and a further band of missionaries were sent to their aid. And amongst these missionaries was one whose name was long to be cherished in Spain, particularly amongst the people of Andalusia, Fray Josè de Carabantes.

Fray Josè was one of the elect who are not to be judged according to the limitations which dim the spiritual sight of the ordinary man. From his childhood he had that perception of the spiritual mysteries which lie beyond our earthly vision, such as is given only to the purest souls ; a mystic, yet a mystic whose book lies in the service of his fellow men. Some there are to whom the mystical life reveals itself in solitude : Fray Josè found heaven revealed in active service. Not that he made a heaven of active service as is not uncommon amongst men ; but active service with him was swathed in the light that comes from beyond. And this same spiritual light shone forth from him, as sometimes the inner purity of a man irradiates his countenance. At times men looked on him and were abashed by the radiant spirituality that they saw in him. He was not long at Darien when he was drawn to those fiercest and wildest tribes, the

Caribbeans—those who had done to death Père Pacifique de Provins. And if he hated all white men, the Caribbean hated most of all the Spaniard. Yet Fray Josè tamed them, and in his ten years work amongst them, baptised over ten thousand of them. His achievement was crystallised into a phrase : “ the war between the Caribbean and the Spaniard is ended.” It was his luminous spirituality which tamed them. At times when he preached to them, it seemed as though horns of light radiated from his countenance ; his very words seemed streams of stars. His great charity alone would have failed before their suspicion and distrust ; but charity from this almost superhuman being as they regarded him, conquered them. So they gathered into his villages and welcomed him in their habitations in the wild, as a servant of God ; and for his sake accepted the Spanish padres, his confrères, and looked with a new sight upon Spaniards generally, because they were his countrymen. Five of the tribes became wholly Catholic. In (1566) he was commissioned by the five chiefs to go to Rome to present to the Pope an address of loyalty and of gratitude for the Catholic Faith they had received through their Capuchin Fathers, “ God’s ministers, who are poor even as we are poor.”³⁶ The Pope received Fray Josè with the honours given a royal ambassador ; it was his benediction on the work this wonderful friar had accomplished. Fray Josè did not return to his Indians. On his way back he fell sick in Spain, and was detained there by his superiors. He lived for another twenty-five years and by his evangelistic work gained the appellation of “the apostle of Galicia.” There, too, as amongst the Indians, it was his radiating spirituality which compelled the rebellious wills to bow before the Gospel he preached. Even before his death he was acclaimed “ the Saint.”³⁷

Thus by the middle of the seventeenth century were Capuchin missionaries scattered wide from Constantinople to India, from Egypt to Morocco, and from Guinea to Angola, from the Saint Lawrence in Canada to the wilds of Southern Brazil ; and this widespread enterprise had been

³⁶ cf. *Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, VII, p. 339.

³⁷ cf. Silvestro da Milano : *Vita del Venerabile Padre Giuseppe da Carabantes, missionario apostolico* (Milano, 1737) ; Rocco de Cesinale, *op. cit.*, III, p. 719, *seq.*

achieved within twenty-five years, and at a time when in almost every country in Europe Capuchin missionaries were carrying out an intensive campaign for the restoration of the Catholic Faith. The story of those early foreign missions is the story of an infectious heroic enthusiasm. Here we have but touched lightly upon it, giving but a mere indication of what was accomplished and but a fleeting glance at the characters of a few of the leaders in the enterprise. And, as we have said, their work was only the foundation of a yet more widespread and intensive missionary campaign in the years that followed.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CAPUCHINS MAKE LITERATURE

(i)

AN observer with the gift of vision, taking note of the Capuchin Reform in the days of its early struggles, would probably have concluded that the new congregation must either develop on wider lines than those it immediately mapped out for itself in its infancy, or quickly fall back into the very ineptitude against which it was a reaction. The question was : would the ideal of a spiritual renovation with which the Reform undoubtedly began, degenerate into that of a mere moral reformation supported by an external law, as happens to so many reforms ? Were this to happen the Capuchin Reform would be doomed, for no man long endures an austere code when the spirit is quenched.

But a spiritual renovation necessarily embarks on a long quest, the experiences of which no man can foretell. It cannot say to itself : thus far will I go and no further ; for if it does, it at once denies the sovereignty of the spirit and becomes the slave of the letter that kills. So it is that every spiritual renovation, if it is to maintain itself, must be an ever expanding activity of the spirit seeking new conquests.

With the Capuchins it was the spirit of evangelical poverty as captured by St. Francis which was the thing that mattered : so long as that spirit remained intact as the spring of their activity and enthusiasm they had a purpose to live for and a distinctive character which would give them a place in the world. They might live in wattle huts and eat the bread of the poorest of the poor, they might go barefoot and wear the coarsest garb ; but were they to idolise these external conditions whilst they let the spirit within them languish for lack of its proper food, theirs would be no true poverty as St. Francis visioned it. Behind the material poverty must be

the freedom of the spirit to capture the world for Christ the Redeemer, the divine Exemplar of the gospel of Franciscan poverty.

Hence it was to be expected that the Capuchin congregation, if it developed at all, would hold surprises for those who could see nothing beyond the mountain hermitage of Albacina, and the service of the sick in the Spedale San Giacomo. Perhaps the biggest surprise would be—could it have been foreseen—not the development of the preaching missions and the evangelisation of the infidels—some foreshadowing of that was Matteo da Bascio himself; but the intellectual and literary development within the congregation.

Here I need not pause to argue with the contention of some that the Franciscan life, as designed by St. Francis, had no place for learning or acquired knowledge.¹ This only need be said here, that if the life of poverty had no benediction for the activity of the mind and the beauty of thought, it were no true gospel of life. Any creed which kills thought, or atrophies the mind, is self-condemned. It may ban existing systems or schools, but only to set the mind free; and in proportion as it holds the secret of life it will itself become the spring of a new and vigorous intellectual activity. In fact in banning "the curiosities of knowledge," as he well termed it, St. Francis more or less unconsciously gave the specific principle which later governed the vigorous thinking of the Franciscan School.

Nevertheless, to the superficial observer, seeing that the Capuchins in their first reaction to gain the primitive Franciscan spirit, banned the scholastic training in vogue at the time, the emergence of a well-defined intellectual activity may well have been amongst the surprises of Capuchin developments. Yet hardly had the Reform taken root when it became apparent that vigorous thinking went with the rigorous austerity of the Capuchin friary. And this may have been noticed—how largely the Reform was recruited from amongst those of trained intellect and scholastic attainments; and how it was amongst these that the Reform found its pillars of support and its leaders, from the beginning

¹ cf. my *Life of Saint Francis of Assisi*, Book III, chap. vii, and *The Romanticism of Saint Francis*, VII.

and throughout the period of the Counter-Reformation. To these the simplicity and sincerity of the Capuchin life brought their thought into touch with reality. When Franciscus Titelmann, the brilliant opponent of Erasmus, was nursing the sick in the hospital of San Giacomo, being then a Capuchin novice, a friend of his earlier days remarked that he would be better employed with his books. Franciscus pointed to the patients he was nursing and replied ; " here are my books : I desire none better." He was but one of the many who have found stronger food for thought in the hard facts of life than in the theorising of the schools. To keep close to the realities, that was the prime principle which underlay the Capuchin ban on scholastic studies in the first days of the Reform. Yet that very principle held in itself the seed of an intellectual development which must come about if there were real life in the new congregation. No man can live vigorously without ordered thought, and as that thought is built up by experience it must expand and find expression—or the life itself will die. So are men made.

It would indeed have been an almost inconceivable thing, seeing that these Capuchins were men at once of a contemplative and of an active cast of mind, had they not been concerned with the problems of the mind to which their intense life and broad sympathies must eventually lead them ; unless, indeed, they lost their hold on the life itself. That their hold on their visioned life was strong and vigorous during the period of which we are treating, will not be denied by those who have read these pages.

Their first essays in speculation dealt with what was to them the fundamental problem of practical religion—the way of the mystical union between God and man. They began where most speculation ends, if ever it gets so far. The first book written by a Capuchin was the *Operetta devotissima* of Fra Giovanni da Fano wherein he sets forth a method by which man's soul may become united with God.² Fra

² *Operetta devotissima* : chiamata Arte de la Unione laquale insegna unire l'anima con Dio (Bressa, 1536). A unique copy of the first edition is in the British Museum. A second edition was published in 1548. In 1622 the work was re-edited by Fra Dionisio da Montefaleo with the title : *L'Arte d'unirsi con Dio del R. P. F. Giovanni da Fano Predicator Capuccino* (Roma, 1622). Fra Dionisio exercised his editorial authority with great freedom. He largely re-wrote the text to invest

Giovanni on joining the Capuchins in 1534 was sent to the friary of Scandriglia where "he dwelt in a small cell in a wood apart." Whilst there he wrote his book.³ Giovanni's treatise is eminently practical ; it is not a book to read unless you yourself are seeking actual guidance in the way of prayer. The style, as Fra Dionisio remarks, is not attractive. Giovanni draws much from masters who had preceded him, but he takes what he considers of direct practical utility for the beginner ; his is a book such as one might expect from a practical director of souls ; only it is evident that in his solitary's cell Giovanni was mapping out anew the path he himself would follow with a reborn fervour. Two years later, when he was on a preaching tour in Northern Italy, he put the treatise into the hands of a publisher, deeming that it might be helpful "not only to religious but even to spiritual and devout seculars." And that was the beginning of the Capuchin apostolate of teaching the world to pray. Other and greater masters in the art of contemplation, more persuasive teachers, were to come later ; but none perhaps more clearly and simply marked out the common way. For the next century and a half the Capuchins were amongst the foremost teachers of the art of contemplative prayer ; the greater number of their published books were either treatises on the art itself, or devotional works dealing with the mysteries of our Lord's life and passion, or with the articles of the Catholic Faith in meditative form. Most of these books, as we have elsewhere remarked, were written by the preachers, and embodied the instructions or meditations given as part of the regular mission course. Of similar origin were many of their polemical books dealing with the heretical teachings of the day. One of the earliest of these popular polemical treatises was that of Fra Bernardino da Balbano—a famous preacher in his day, who died about 1560—on the subject of predestination and free-will.⁴

it with a more elegant style, and interlarded the text with quotations from the Fathers and Scripture in the approved style of earlier medieval writers. Dionisio had been a cardinal's secretary before he became a Capuchin. See the excellent analysis of the work *De Arte Unionis cum Deo . . . breviter disserit P. Fredigandus ab Antuerpia* (Romae, 1924).

³ Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, op. cit., II, p. 695.

⁴ cf. *Bibliot. Script. Ord. Cap.*, op. cit., p. 43 ; Salvatore da Valenzano : *I Cappuccini nelle Puglie*, op. cit., pp. 66 and 282. Giovanni da Fano wrote against the teaching of Luther, but before he joined the Capuchins.

Another Italian preacher, Fra Girolamo da Dinami, published in 1566 a volume of sermons on the same subject preached the year before in the church of Santi Apostoli, Venice.⁵ Evidently the doctrine of Luther and Calvin was still a matter to be dealt with in parts of Italy. It was, however, not until the Capuchins crossed the Alps that they developed a large polemical and controversial literature, the result of their closer contact with militant Protestantism.

Meanwhile the decrees of the Council of Trent, and in fact the very necessity of the case, had forced the Capuchins to establish formal courses of study for those destined to the priesthood and the office of preaching. At first the need for formal studies had not been felt, notwithstanding the widespread evangelistic activities to which the congregation was committed. A large number of those who joined the Reform in the earlier days, perhaps the majority, were already priests; many were theologians of distinction; and there was no lack of men capable of giving individual tuition to those who had not yet made their theological studies. But gradually, it would seem, informal classes were formed in certain friaries in each province under the direction of an expert theologian. Thus Mattia da Salò, who became a Capuchin in 1551, studied at Naples under Fra Girolamo da Pistoia and afterwards at Foligno under Fra Girolamo da Montefiore. Mattia himself after his ordination was successively lector in the provinces of Umbria, Naples and Brescia.⁶ There was a class of theological students in the friary of Gravina in Apulia in 1553 when the Minister Provincial inculcated upon the students the duty of advancing in the love of virtue and of knowledge.⁷ The method of teaching would seem to have been tutorial; no general system was followed; much depended upon the particular scholastic training of the lector. Girolamo da Montefiore before he became a Capuchin was a Scotist theologian of repute. But it is evident from the writings of the men who were thus educated, that their theological training was chiefly based upon the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church; and it

⁵ *Bibliot. Script. Ord. Cap.*, op. cit., p. 118.

⁶ Valdimiro da Bergamo: *Biografia e Bibliografia del P. Mattia da Salò in Miscellanea Franc.*, anno III, fasc. 1, p. 22; *I Cappuccini Bresciani*, p. 214.

⁷ Salvatore da Valenzano, op. cit., p. 278.

is further evident even in those earlier days, that a certain proficiency was required in the knowledge of Hebrew, Syriac and Greek, to enable the student to study the Scriptures in their original texts.⁸ The "profane" sciences were not studied in the Order as part of the priest's training; but no small number of the future priests had been educated in the higher schools and universities; and from the time of the General Chapter of 1549 no novice might be received as a cleric unless he were sufficiently educated to proceed to the study of theology.⁹ There is evidence, too, that these previous studies were not altogether laid aside after the novice had entered the Order, but were brought into the study of theology and used as in the best days of medieval learning, as ancillary aids to the study of the Scriptures. Mattia da Salò for instance, certainly did not forget his classical training. Fra Matteo da Leonessa, who was a doctor of medicine, with a physician's appreciation of physical suffering wrote a treatise upon the sufferings of Christ.¹⁰ Fra Lodovico da Filicaia told the story of the Gospels in verse after the style of Petrarch.¹¹ Fra Alessandro da Bologna wrote on mathematics and natural science.¹²

But the decrees of the Council of Trent at length compelled the Capuchins to organise their studies upon more formal lines; and in 1567 the General Chapter decreed the establishment of what seems to have been a higher seminary for the more efficient training of lectors. The scholarly Fra Girolamo da Pistoia was appointed lector-general to direct the school.¹³ It was first established in Rome; a few years later it was removed to Genoa.¹⁴ The es-

⁸ Mattia da Salò was sent to Rome to study and acquire proficiency in these languages. cf. Valdimiro da Bergamo, loc. cit., Fra Ignazio d'Apiro, died 1569, wrote fluently in Hebrew and Greek. *Bibliot. Script. Ord. Cap.*, p. 188.

⁹ *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, V, pp. 74-75.

¹⁰ *Bibliot. Script. Ord. Cap.*, p. 188. According to P. Claude de Bourges in his *chronologicum*, Bernardino d'Asti wished to establish a *studium generale* at Milan under the direction of Franciscus Titelmann; but this is very doubtful in view of Bernardino's known attitude as related by his secretary, Bernardino da Colpetrazzo. cf. Hilarinus Felder, *Die studien in Ersten Jahrhundert des Kapuzinerordens in Liber Memorialis Ord. Min. Cap.* (Roma, 1928), pp. 92-94.

¹¹ cf. Sisto da Pisa: *Storia dei Cappuccini Toscani*, I, p. 126-127.

¹² *Bibliot. Script. Ord. Cap.*, p. 3. His treatises were published posthumously at Venice in 1586.

¹³ cf. *supra*, vol. I, chap. vi.

¹⁴ cf. Boverius, *Annales, anno 1567*; *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, V, p. 81.

establishment of this school was of prime importance to the next half-century ; for Fra Girolamo, as we have already pointed out, based his teaching upon the long neglected doctrine of St. Bonaventura and inculcated the Bonaventuran method, thus definitely parting company with the Scotists and the later scholastics. It meant a reversion to the earlier Franciscan tradition and to the purer Franciscan thought. The Bonaventuran influence at once made itself felt ; it gave the Capuchins a natural medium of thought and a direction wholly in harmony with the fundamental idealism of the congregation, and thus undoubtedly contributed to the more intense intellectual development which now set in. For no man can work freely and with a sure touch, no man can work creatively and with perfect sincerity, within any system which is not intimately expressive of his own life-purpose. It was, therefore, of momentous importance to the Capuchins that their speculative thought should seek direction at the purest fount of Franciscan speculation if they were to escape that discord between intellectual and practical life which eventually leads both to moral and intellectual weakness. Even before the establishment of the *studium generale* certain Capuchin leaders had begun to base their teaching on the doctrine of St. Bonaventura ; for instance in the friary of Genoa, Maurice de Chambéry, in 1565, had lectured on the four books of the Sentences of the Seraphic doctor.¹⁵ Moreover, there is evidence that the Capuchins generally were enthusiastic students of the works of the first Franciscan master.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Fra Girolamo da Pistoia deserved well of the Capuchin Reform when, as first lector-general, he set before his students the method and teaching of the Seraphic doctor as the foundation of their scholastic training. If the Capuchins must have schools it was well that their thought should

¹⁵ *Bibliot. Script. Ord. Cap.*, op. cit., p. 189.

¹⁶ Thus, P. Antonio Pozzi, O. M. Convent, in the preface to his edition of St. Bonaventura's commentaries on the sentences of Peter Lombard, published at Rome in 1569, states that he was enabled to bring out his work owing to the munificence of Pius V, and the assistance given him by the Capuchins, particularly Girolamo da Pistoia. "*Munificentia et liberalitate S. D. N. Pii V, necnon solertia congregationis Fratrum Capucinatorum praesertim Fratris Hieronymi Pistoriensis.*" Again he refers to the Capuchins : "*Patres ordinis Capucinatorum D. Francisci Patris nostri, sancti Bonaventurae doctrinae ac morum alumni.*"

be directed in conformity with the underlying principles of their practical life.

(ii)

Hardly do I venture to speak of a Capuchin School ; for the more remarkable of the Capuchin thinkers, whilst bearing a kinship of character and mental outlook, were yet each of too individual a quality to form a school, at least in the narrower sense of the word. The Bonaventuran tradition was to the Capuchins what neo-platonism was to the Fathers of the Church, a mental atmosphere and mode of expression ; it never became a system in the sense in which one speaks of the Thomist or Scotist systems. But that, perhaps, was as much due to the Bonaventuran method itself as to the particular quality of the Capuchin mind. Bonaventura's thought always ends in a wistful acknowledgment of mystery beyond the attempted topical explanation, for the simple reason that it searches for vision and experience rather than the logical truth ; its quest is the satisfying good in life. In such a quest one may be given direction, but the results of the quest will mainly depend on the individual thinker's character and thirst for experience. The Bonaventuran mind is perhaps more a nursery of individual thinkers rather than of a logical system of thought.

It was precisely as individual thinkers under the influence of the Bonaventuran tradition, and not as the exponents of a system, that the Capuchins in the Counter-Reformation period did their best work and in not a few instances attained to undeniable authority in the intellectual life of the time. And this is the more noticeable since the attempt on the part of some of their theological teachers to create a Bonaventuran school on the conventional scholastic lines proved a failure and (notwithstanding the continual injunctions of General Chapters) eventually led to the practical elimination of the Bonaventuran method from the curriculum of formal studies in the Capuchin congregation, with disastrous consequences to its intellectual life.

Of the rise and ultimate failure of this attempted School

I can but give the briefest outline ; nor can I do more than tentatively surmise the causes of its failure.¹⁷

Towards the end of the sixteenth century a Spanish Capuchin, Pedro de Calatjud, commonly known as Petrus Trigosius, attempted a complete synthesis of the dogmatic theology of the Seraphic doctor. Pedro de Calatjud had been a Jesuit before he joined the Capuchins and was already a theologian of some repute. His synthesis, which he did not live to bring to completion, would have been a voluminous work. Of the four parts which he had already prepared, only the first part was published in 1593, the year of his death.¹⁸

The example set by Pedro de Calatjud was followed by a number of Capuchin lecturers. But a quarter of a century later a new note appears in these Bonaventuran expositors. They are—most of them—no longer whole-hearted disciples of the early Franciscan tradition. The logical clarity of St. Thomas has made them somewhat restive as against the heart-groping of St. Bonaventura. They still teach the Bonaventuran doctrine but are at pains to assimilate it with that of the great Dominican. With this purpose, Francesco Longo da Coregliano in 1622 published his *Summa theologica*¹⁹ and Teodoro Foresti da Bergamo in 1633 a treatise on the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity.²⁰

But perhaps the most ambitious and successful attempt to reduce St. Bonaventura to a logical system was that of Teodoro's gifted disciple, Marcantonio Galizio da Carpenedolo, a versatile genius and one of the most lovable and generous of men.²¹ To know Marcantonio Galizio one

¹⁷ A definitive judgment would require a far more intimate study of the works of the Capuchin expositors of the doctrine of St. Bonaventura than I have been able to undertake. Perhaps some day a competent scholar will give attention to Bonaventuran studies in the Capuchin congregation. I believe the study would repay patient investigation.

¹⁸ cf. *Biblioth. Script. Ord. Cap.*, p. 214. Boverius, *Annales, anno 1593*, 83. It is curious that the Capuchin chroniclers record practically nothing of Trigosius beyond his writings. d'Aremberg (*Flores Seraphici*, II, p. 416) devotes four lines to him, Boverius little more.

¹⁹ *Sancti Bonaventurae summa theologica ad instar summae Divi Thomae Aquinatis* (Romae, 1622). cf. *Annales, Cap.*, Appendix ad t. III, anno 1625 ; *Bibl. Script. Ord. Cap.*, p. 94.

²⁰ *De Almae ac sanctissimae Trinitatis mysterio juxta mentem S. Bonaventurae conciliatam ubique cum S. Thomae sententia* (Romae, 1633).

²¹ cf. Valdimiro da Bergamo, *I Cappuccini Bresciani*, pp. 190-208.

must not fail to read his delightful prose song, *La Filomela*²² written when he was still a young student ; and it will be well to read the narration of his " life, actions and death," compiled from records left by the two faithful companions of his later years²³. There you have the man in his outlook on life and as he unconsciously revealed himself to those who knew him most intimately ; and the two documents are in harmony. To Marcantonio, as he reveals himself in *La Filomena*, life is a song, and the spiritual life a song of joy of the children of God, and this treatise on spiritual perfection and the means to attain to it (for such is *La Filomena*) is written with a lyrical feeling which proves its sincerity. Marcantonio was a precocious youth, and at heart never lost his youth. He was appointed to teach theology as soon as he had finished his own scholastic studies, and it was whilst teaching that he conceived the scheme of an entire course of theology based upon the teaching of St. Bonaventura. To the preparation of this work he brought a wide reading of the acknowledged masters of various schools, Thomist, Scotist, Averroist and Nominalist, also the works of Roger Bacon and the recent works of the Jesuits.²⁴ Also, and this was characteristic of the man, he trained his mind by daily manual work in the garden of the friary that he might not lose touch with the common life of the community. In 1532, when he was but thirty-three years of age, he was elected Minister Provincial and from that time he successively filled offices in the administration of the Order until he became Minister General in 1562. This continuous occupation in administrative affairs prevented him from carrying out his theological scheme in its entirety ; but in 1534 appeared his treatise on Dialectics; and in rapid succession during 1535 and 1536 he published four other volumes

²² *La Filomela ovvero del Canto Spiritale ; libri quattro : ne' quale sotto metaforo di canto si da il modo di riuscire perfetto virtuoso e santo in ogni genere di virtu* (Milano, 1694).

²³ *Breve e succinta narratione della vita attioni e morte del M. R. P. Marc' Antonio Gallicio da Carpenedolo . . . estratta fedelmente da manuscritti e memorie lasciate dalli PP. Francesco da Dizenzano et Angelico da Carpenedolo che furono suwi compagni*, published together with *La Filomela* in 1694 and edited by Fra Andrea da Visano.

²⁴ *Summa totius Dialecticae : Litterae praeviae ad Ministrum Generale* (Roma, 1634).

treating of Physics, the Soul, and of Metaphysic.²⁵ We find him nearly thirty years later pleading with the Pope that he might be freed from all administrative offices, to allow him to finish the work which he had thus planned in early life ; but his pleading was in vain. At his death he left behind him a voluminous commentary on the four books of Sentences, probably written when he was still lecturing. Marcantonio's treatment of his subjects is vigorous and fresh ; had he been left free to guide the Capuchin schools he might have done much to develop the Bonaventuran teaching amongst the Capuchins in a manner which would have been at once free from exclusiveness and yet true to Bonaventuran principles. Thoroughly Bonaventuran in his own cast of mind, he could assimilate thought wherever he found it, and yet remain true to himself. It was not so with the lesser men.

But undoubtedly the greatest and most vigorous of the Capuchin scholastic thinkers formed in the Bonaventuran tradition²⁶ was Valeriano Magno—he whom we have already met in the hurly-burly of the religious struggle in Germany.²⁷ Valeriano Magno as a thinker stands apart from even the more gifted of the Capuchin scholastic teachers in the originality and penetration of his thought. Had he lived four centuries earlier he would have found his place amongst the foremost masters of the earlier Franciscan school with Adam Marsh and Roger Bacon. His mind was at one with theirs. But he was an early Franciscan schoolman born into the daybreak of the modern period ; and in his masterly development of early Franciscan teaching taking his place amongst the pioneers of modern philosophic thought. His metaphysical works and in particular his treatise *De luce mentium* form a bridge between the philosophic teaching of the Augustinian school as continued by St. Bonaventura and the beginnings of modern transcendental philosophy.²⁸ Like the early Franciscans, too, he devoted

²⁵ *Biblioth. Script. Ord. Cap.*, p. 179. For a complete list of Marcantonio's works see Valdimiro da Bergamo, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-207.

²⁶ He says of himself : *Nos Capucini hunc doctorem (S. Bonaventuram) ad hibemus in instituendis junioribus ad pietatem et iisdem promovendis ad theologiam sapientiam (De Luce mentium (Vienna, 1645), Cap. 24.* He constantly refers to St. Augustine and St. Bonaventura as his masters. (cf. *ibid.*, cap. 23.)

²⁷ *Vide supra.*

²⁸ Christian Wolf : *Psychologia Empirica*, p. 1, sect. 2, cap. 2.

much thought to Natural Science ; he is said to have anticipated Herschell's theory of light.²⁹ As a polemical writer in defence of the Catholic Faith he was at once critical and appreciative. He never slurred over a difficulty in order to score a point.

He is a modern yet formed in medieval tradition. The wide range of his mental vision was that of the early scholastics ; with him as with them it might be said that all science was theology ; and as with the earlier Franciscan schoolmen, the base of his speculation was positive and experimental knowledge.³⁰ But Valeriano Magno had the magic gift of assimilating the wisdom of the past, of making it one with his own mind and endowing it with the note of his own personality—the gift of the original thinker who carries forward the world's thought. The marvel is that in his busy life as a preacher and man of affairs, he found time to produce and send forth such an amazing volume of philosophic work of a quality to compel attention. He must have been a prodigious worker as well as a man of overpowering personality. The sad thing is that he had no successor amongst those of his own religious Faith. Had it been otherwise, the gulf which has so long existed between Catholic philosophy and what is commonly known as modern thought might not have been so wide as it has been. Valeriano Magno points to what might have been had the Bonaventuran tradition been developed on broad lines in harmony with its own genius.

One might say that in Valeriano Magno the Capuchins had a unique opportunity of reinstating Bonaventuran teaching as a dynamic force in the intellectual world. That they did not seize the opportunity was due to many reasons. One honourable reason was that as a congregation their special genius turned more to practical thought than to purely speculative ; and but few men at any time can perceive the intimate relation of pure thought to practical life, or in dealing with pure thought retain their hold on the

²⁹ cf. Rocco da Casinale, op. cit., II, p. 670. The work referred to is a series of treatises under the title *Demonstratio ocularis loci sine locato*, published at Warsaw between 1647 and 1651.

³⁰ For a complete list of the works of Valeriano Magno cf. Valdimiro da Bergamo *I Cappuccini Milanesi*, parte 2a, vol. i, pp. 213-217. cf. *Bibl. Script. Ord. Cap.*, p. 241.

practical problems of life. As a body the Capuchins drew their more fruitful inspiration directly from the mystical teaching of St. Bonaventura in its application to practical life. Yet this must not blind us to the fact that the eventual failure of the Capuchin schools to re-establish the Bonaventuran tradition as a dynamic element in Catholic thought was also due to less defensible reasons, notably to that fateful attraction to the Dominican system which has so often deflected the Franciscan genius from its own proper path. Now it was the logical clarity of St. Thomas which drew the Capuchin lectors away from the Seraphic doctor to sit at the feet of St. Thomas. The right thing would have been to assimilate into Bonaventuran thought whatever is of helpful value in the Thomistic or any other school of thought; as in fact was the intention of Teodoro Foresti and Marcantonio Galizio,³¹ and as Valeriano Magno in fact did draw upon Thomistic doctrine. But amongst the lectors of lesser mental calibre there came a growing tendency to study St. Bonaventura in the light of St. Thomas, and to seek a justification of the Franciscan master in his real or supposed identity of doctrine with that of the great Dominican, until in the teaching of some of the expositors the distinction between Bonaventuran thought and Thomistic thought reached the vanishing point.³² It was, of course, a futile conclusion in the face of history, and could only have been arrived at by a disregard of the fundamental character and mental processes of the Franciscan mind as interpreted by the Seraphic doctor. Bonaventuran theology in the hands of these expositors had degenerated from a study of the mind and thought of St. Bonaventura into a cataloguing of his conclusions and an attempt to explain them without regard to the source from which they came. From this to the practical elimination of Bonaventuran doctrine from the scholastic course was but another

³¹ Galizio's fundamental sympathy with Valeriano Magno found expression in his defence of his confrere: *Responsio apologetica pro P. Valeriano Magno et sociis ejus cappuccinis*. cf. Valdimiro da Bergamo, *I Cappuccini Bresciani*, pp. 206-207.

³² e.g. Bonaventura Lingonensis, the author of *Bonaventura Bonaventurae, scilicet Bonaventura et Thomas: sive summa theologica ex omnibus fere SS. Bonaventurae et Thomae placitis concinnata; inter quos si aliquando videatur esse dissensio aut benigna explicatione componitur aut problematica disputatione ventilatur*. (Lyon, 1655).

step.³³ But throughout the greater part of the seventeenth century, though the downward tendency had begun to show itself, the doctrine and even the method of St. Bonaventura was nevertheless the basis of Capuchin theological training and it may be noted, the mark of all their best intellectual work.

(iii)

Writing about 1634, Marcantonio Galizio puts the question : " Since at all times there have been found in the little flock of Capuchins, men of subtle genius and tenacious memory, of acute reasoning power and of great learning, capable of writing all manner of books—why have so few been found to write them?" He answers, quoting St. Thomas Aquinas, that though it is not at all unbecoming to expound the teaching of Christ by writing, the preaching of the Gospel is the nobler way. The Capuchins, therefore, have chosen to follow the nobler way. Why, then, he concludes, has he himself taken to writing instead of preaching, if preaching be the nobler way? The reason, he confesses, is that he does not possess the divine art of preaching; unhappily therefore, he is forced, though not without anguish of heart, to turn to writing.³⁴

At the time Marcantonio penned that passage, France was being flooded with books written by Capuchins. Italy certainly could not complain of neglect, and elsewhere, as in Flanders and Germany, Capuchin writers were not unknown. Yet it remains true that the intellectual vigour of the Capuchins turned instinctively more towards preaching and the practical work of their apostolate than to leisurely literary work. Very few were set apart for the writing of books.

³³ cf. Prosper de Martigne : *La Scholastique et les Traditions Franciscains*, p. 36, *seq.* The more extreme "harmonisers" seem to have been the French scholastics. In Italy Bartolomeo Barberio made a gallant attempt to return to the purer tradition. His commentaries are of first rate importance to the student of St. Bonaventura. cf. *Biblioth. Script. Ord. Cap.*, p. 36; Prosper de Martigne, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

As late as 1758 a *Decretum Generale*, confirmed by Benedict XIV, ordered the lectors of philosophy to return to the teaching of St. Bonaventura, or if because of the lack of books this were not possible, to expound the teaching of Scotus (*Bullar. Ord. Cap.*, VIII, p. 272).

³⁴ *Summa totius Dialecticæ* : foreword *ad religiosum lectorum*. His reference to St. Thomas is to the *Summa*, part III, art. 4, quaest. 4, 2.

Their writers were with few exceptions at the same time active workers whose writing was subsidiary to the "nobler work" of preaching and the practical services of the Capuchin apostolate. Without question, the mere writer amongst the Capuchins held himself in low estimation as compared with the missionary preacher. Even Yves de Paris, the greatest literary genius of the Capuchins, as Valeriano Magno was their greatest philosopher, in his literary retreat thought wistfully of his brother preachers conducting their missions amongst the countryfolk of France :³⁵ an attitude of mind not unknown, I believe, in ancient Greece. Perhaps it was this persistent thirst to express themselves in active service which gave to their literary work its note of actuality ; what they wrote was an answer to some immediate need in the world around them ; and what is more, they wrote as men who understand the world they address. That note gives a certain distinction even to the large number of their minor writers : at least in these modest books you can learn something of the character of the world of their day ; from their greater writers you can learn much. The works of Yves de Paris and Zacharie de Lisieux, for instance, bring you into intimate acquaintance with the mind of seventeenth century France ; the sermons of Mattia da Salo palpitate with the religious idealism which renovated the spiritual life of Italy during the last half of the sixteenth century ; the eloquence of Girolamo da Narni is the eloquence of the orator of vision surveying the actual world around him. One realises that with these men—I am speaking of the Capuchin writers of the Counter-Reformation period—the world in which they lived was their book ; they were not mere students of the school nor thinkers wrapt up in their own individual emotions and experience. This, as one might expect, is more readily discerned in their apologetic writers and in their orators ; but it is also an underlying note of their greater mystical writers. Of that master-mystic, Benet Canfield—English by birth, French by adoption—his first biographer tells us that he was accustomed to contemplate the passion of Christ as taking place not on Calvary but in our very flesh and in the world about us. "Here in our humanity is the true cross on which Christ cries His 'sitis' ; in the world

³⁵ cf. *Les heureux succès*, edit. 1633, p. 655, seq.

of men Benet saw the passion being ever re-enacted ; the priest who celebrates for lucre is the apostle who sells his Lord ; when the Blessed Sacrament is received by obstinate sinners, Christ is delivered into the hands of His enemies ; He is mocked when men pray only with their lips ; those who oppress the poor, place the cross upon His shoulders ; those who sin grievously crucify Him in themselves.³⁶ With the Capuchin writers this cosmic view of life is ever in evidence. In the renunciation of self proper to their vocation they found the larger mystic self of Christian charity. We have seen it in the manifold service of their fellow-men which these Capuchins gave unflinchingly ; but it permeated all their mental outlook. It is the basis of that buoyant optimism which strikes one in their attitude towards human nature and the world generally ; a genuine Franciscan trait.

Take, for instance, the sermon by Girolamo da Narni which he preached at Perugia in 1601, from the text : " A certain man made a great supper and invited many."³⁷ As an example of pulpit oratory it has perhaps seldom been surpassed in its felicitous language, in impassioned but restrained emotion, and in the rhythm of its period ; and every word tells. But it is the sweep of the thought which arrests and compels attention. As Girolamo plays upon the text, the world as he sees it springs to life and reveals its God-given richness and beauty. He unfolds the drama of creation ; subtly and with a deft touch he makes you feel how good is this world which the Creator made in all its varied loveliness ; he makes you wonder at its richness. Then, whilst you are held in wonder, comes the refrain of the text. He passes by stages through the revelation of God's bounty in the history of men until he comes to the new revelation in the life of our Lord with its appeal of love and pity. He has run the gamut of life as it comes from the will of God ; each stage offers a new banquet to which many are invited until it comes to the banquet eternal " where star differs from star " and " there is no sameness." The conception of life as a banquet rich and lovely in its bounteous

³⁶Jacques Brousse, op. cit., pp. 580-583. cf. *Rule of Perfection*.

³⁷Luke XIV. The sermon entitled *De convivio supernae gloriae* and dedicated to Taddeo Perugino of the Order of Augustinian hermits, was published at Rome in 1602. *Vide* Appendix II.

variety, to which men are invited by the act of creation and again in the act of redemption, is surely the quintessence of the Franciscan gospel of joy. We have already referred to Marcantonio Galizio's *La Filomella* with its lyric note of song. In the sermons of Mattia da Salo *Delli Dolori di Gesù Cristo*,³⁸ the majesty of the sufferings of our Lord—and by consequence the nobility of Christlike suffering—is the dominant note. To Mattia da Salo the passion of our Lord is the revelation of the beauty that lies in suffering nobly borne: he has the tender worshipful vision which lends enchantment to the figure of the suffering Redeemer in the book of Isaias.

The same optimistic view of life is found in the master-writers of the congregation in France. In Italy it was as orators that the Capuchins reached their highest level in literature. I am unacquainted with the sermon-literature of the French Capuchins, but among them they counted apologetic writers of uncommon literary excellence and two at least who stand in the very forefront of the religious humanists of the period. In 1637 Zacharie de Lisieux published *La Philosophie Chrestienne*,³⁹ directed against the libertinism which rubbed shoulders with the new piety in the society of the time. In simple but vivacious language he exposes the arguments of the libertins, but the value of the book lies in his own argument that the true joy and nobility of human life is to be found only when the body is under the influence of a pure spirit. In the last chapter there are arresting passages in which he describes the spiritualising effect of a pure soul on the body, and how the body comes to share in the spirituality of the soul. It is the setting of a higher ideal of the pleasure of life as against the low ideal of the libertine. Human life, he says in effect, holds higher and more satisfying possibilities than the libertine has yet dreamt of. His later satires upon the religious foibles of French society and upon the Jansenists, deftly hit the religious busy bodies and self-conscious Puritans in their most vulnerable spot; yet it is the healthy satire of a spirit in fundamental charity with

³⁸ cf. *supra*, p. 46.

³⁹ *La Philosophie Chrestienne ou Persuasions puissant au mespris de la vie*: par le P. Zacharie de Lysieux, *Predicateur Capucin* (Paris, 1637). The book is dedicated to Henrietta, consort of Charles I. Père Zacharie was for a time one of the Queen's chaplains.

all men, but hating self-complacency and morbidity.⁴⁰ Zacharie was a gentleman-at-arms before he entered the Capuchin Order in 1612. He knew his countrymen, both in their strength and weakness ; if in his satires he attacked the social evils to which the fashionable *dévots* blinded themselves and mercilessly unveiled the insincerities of the theological coteries, he appealed to the latent idealism of the French character in his *Philosophie Chrestienne* and again in *De la Monarchie du Verbe incarné* in which he set forth the ideal of a Christian state governed according to the law of the Gospel.⁴¹ Zacharie de Lisieux is a healthy optimist : he loves his countrymen, and has a fundamental faith in them even when his satire bites into their foibles and lashes the oppressors of the poor.

We find the same spirit in the sunlit pages of a yet greater contemporary. Of Yves de Paris I hardly dare venture a judgment, for I have not yet lost the astonishment at his profundity of thought and sheer beauty of style, which held me the day I first opened a book of this almost forgotten writer. It was *La Théologie naturelle*. With a sense of rebellion I wondered how such a writer could have been allowed to pass into oblivion.^{42a} My first feeling was that here was another John Henry Newman, born into the period when

⁴⁰ The satires were published under the assumed names of Pierre Firmian and the Sieur de Marcel ; the three satires under the name of Pierre Firmian are : *Saeculi Genius* (Paris, 1653), directed against the Jansenists and the feminine coteries where the discussion of theology was the fashion ; *Gyges Gallus* (Paris, 1658), in which by an ingenious allegory Firmian satirises the growing social abuses under the minority of Louis XIV ; *Somnia Sapientis* (Paris, 1658), an analysis of the French temperament. These three satires were written in Latin. A fourth satire written in French : *Relation du Pays de Jansenie . . . par Louis Fontaines Sieur de Saint Marcel* was published at Paris in 1660. It is a clever analysis of the physiognomy of the Jansenists of the time.

cf. *Bibliothèque Universelles des Romans*, 1779, décembre, p. 1, seq.

Abbé Ch. Guery : *Les œuvres satiriques du P. Zacharie de Lisieux in Etudes Franciscaines*, t. xxvii, p. 296, seq. cf. *Bibl. Script. Ord. Cap.*, p. 250.

⁴¹ Two volumes of this work were published at Paris respectively in 1639 and 1649. The first volume was entitled : *De la monarchie du Verbe incarné ou del l'immense pouvoir du plus grand des rois, des hautes maximes politiques, et de merveilleux ordre qu'il observe dans le gouvernement de son estat ;* the second volume : *De la monarchie . . . ou il est traité de la bouté et de la justice du Prince.*

^{42a} It was not until I had "discovered" Yves de Paris that I read H. Bremond's illuminating essays. I felt less ashamed of my own ignorance when I read the author's confession : "*Lorsque je commençais le présent travail et même, lorsque je pensais toucher au terme de mes recherches, j'ignorais encore tout d'Yves de Paris et jusqu'à son nom*" (I, p. 421). For a list of the works of Yves de Paris cf. *ibid.*, pp. 541-2. *Bibl. Script. Ord. Cap.*, p. 162.



LE PERE YVES DE PARIS

(*etat.* 78)

libertinism and Jansenism together were threatening the purity of Catholic life in France ; there is the same combination of penetrating analysis with marvellous diction, the same broad human outlook with scholarly precision, the same magisterial marshalling of the facts that really matter ; the same anxiety to convince rather than to rebut ; the same ultimate appeal to the moral consciousness as the arbiter of reason.⁴² To Yves de Paris the beauty of life is its ultimate vindication ; just as with Newman it was the vision beautiful towards which his mind ever tended.

La Théologie naturelle is directed at once against libertinism and Jansenism ; to Yves de Paris both systems stand condemned by Nature itself and by the divine law of which Nature is a revelation. But if libertinism is bad, Jansenism is worse, since its low estimate of human nature kills the hope without which no man can raise himself to higher things. If human nature were wholly bad what would there be but despair ? To recognise the true excellence of man's nature is with Yves de Paris the first condition of moral progress. "No man lifts himself up towards God unless he believes himself more powerful than all the world, stronger than the passions and the allurements of sensual pleasure and the depressions of sorrow ; if he does not rise above time and is not an eternity ; if he is not united to the First Cause by some sort of resemblance." "Let us away," he exclaims, "with these cowardly thoughts of the misery of man ; let us look to the excellences of his nature that we may show ourselves grateful to God, do justice to ourselves and not fall into despair of all virtue." And surely no man can read Yves de Paris and not be humbly thankful for that "mysterious alliance (of soul and body) which is our life" ; which witnesses to the inseparable union of the Divine Word with the Nature of His creation. To Yves de Paris Nature is a sacred thing ; nor will he tolerate without protest the blasphemy of those who see in human nature nothing but

⁴²" 'Coeur, instinct, principes' ; 'le cœur a ses raisons que le raison ne connaît point' ; 'tu ne me chercherais pas, si tu ne me possédais' ; 'je dis que le cœur aime l'être universel naturellement' ; 'c'est le cœur qui sent Dieu et non la raison. Voilà ce que c'est que la foi Dieu sensible au cœur, non à la raison,' cette bien-heureuse doctrine, le, P. Yves l'a soutenue, développée, orchestrée magnifiquement."—H. Bremond, *Histoire Littéraire du Sentiment Religieux*, I, p. 487. See Appendix II.

inconstancy, infidelity and moral misery. Such blaspheming is not a confession of human misery, but a calumny against our excellence ; for man's miseries are his weaknesses, not his settled portion ; they are the eclipse of the sun, not the sun itself. Yves brings the blasphemy to book at the court of facts ; he searches the city and finds there more fidelity than infidelity, more virtue than vice. If human nature has strayed from the high estate in which it was formed by the Creator, its heart yet turns yearningly towards its rightful nobleness and finds happiness in the yearning hope. Such is the philosophy of Yves de Paris, developed with consummate conviction and a wealth of arresting thought in *La Théologie naturelle* and succeeding works. We may call it the philosophy of Christian Humanism ;⁴³ but it is surely the humanism of the saint of Assisi uttered in the clear trenchant language of this seventeenth-century scholar.

Thirty years before Yves de Paris burst into the intellectual life of France, another Capuchin, Laurent de Paris, had sung of the nobility of human nature in a litany of man "contemplated as honourable in his own nature" : man "in whom the divine intellect is allied with things terrestrial" ; who is "the assemblage of all perfections" ; "the perfection of the universe, of unplumbed capacity (*abîme de capacité*) in his intellect, his discernment and his will" ; "who can be no vile slave since God has chosen him to be the property of His Son (*pour son peculium*)."⁴⁴ To Laurent de Paris, human nature is the beloved of God, as to Girolamo da Narni, life is the rich and varied banquet to which man is the invited guest.

(iv)

It was all in keeping with this view of life that we find the Capuchin writers stressing the way of love as the most direct means to attain to the goal of life, and to the real knowledge of life. Not by the reasoning of the brain, but by the reasons known only to the heart, do we get any intimate knowledge

⁴³ " *La dernière génération de l'humanisme dévot . . . celle dont le P. Yves de Paris nous paraît le représentant le plus achevé.*"—H. Bremond, *op. cit.*, I, p. 345.

⁴⁴*Le Palais de l'amour divin entre Jésus.*

of God and the spiritual life, says Yves de Paris. "For love is unitive. An emotion of the heart weds the whole soul and with it all the world, to its First Cause."⁴⁵ But the knowledge gained in the schools he holds by comparison to be like the regions around the pole where the longest days leave the air charged with mists and the land is an eternal sterility⁴⁶—and Yves de Paris had an unusually wide experience of the schools; nor indeed did he despise the knowledge thus gained (as is evident from his works) but only its pretension to dominate life. A simple lay-brother, he contends, who lives by the law of love, has a knowledge of the reality of life wanting to many a learned schoolman;⁴⁷ in which he echoes a well-known saying of St. Bonaventura.

This way of love is the burden of the ascetical and mystical writings which loom largely in the literary output of the Capuchins during the Counter-Reformation period. Their mystical writings exceeded their purely ascetical works. The mystical life and asceticism with them went hand in hand; the one was but a necessary preparation for the other. Not all were mystics in the more technical sense of the word; but broadly speaking it was the mystical way which the Capuchin followed, and his spiritual guides were masters in the mystical life. The mystical view of life permeates almost all their literature. It runs like a golden thread through the works of Yves de Paris; it was a source of power to their great preachers. At least, if by mysticism we mean the endeavour to come into touch with the underlying realities of life and with the substance of the faith we hold, then were these Capuchins of the race of mystics: that endeavour was the common note of their practical service and intellectual speculation; it was above all the object of their prayer. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the exposition of the mystical life and treatises designed for guiding the novice in the way that leads to it, should fill a large place in the literature of the Capuchins. These latter treatises may perhaps be conveniently said to deal with the art of prayer, to distinguish them from the more intimate

⁴⁵ *La Théologie naturelle*, III, p. 134; "Un élan du coeur rejoint toute l'âme et avec elle tout le monde à son principe."

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 41.

⁴⁷ *Les heureux succès*, p. 174.

expositions of the mystical state itself. Such a treatise was that of Giovanni da Fano already referred to—the first of the known books written by a Capuchin. Another such, a masterpiece of its kind, was *Practica dell' orazione mentale, ovvero contemplativa*, by Mattia da Salo. In the opening chapter Mattia declares his purpose. Many books, he says, have been written on the utility and advantage of prayer, but mostly they lay down such general principles as to be of little use to the beginner. He therefore proposes to set forth a certain art or method of prayer by means of certain exercises. And first he devotes six chapters to an explanation of the Lord's Prayer ; for, he says, whoever rightly understands the Lord's Prayer knows all the reasons and motives of prayer. The Lord's Prayer in fact is the sum of all prayer. Having thus prepared the mind of the learner, he discusses the two sorts of prayer, vocal and mental ; and then proceeds to the rules and method by which the art of contemplation is acquired.

Mental prayer, he teaches, falls into three stages : preparation, meditation and action (i.e. acts of the will). Preparation is twofold : there is the general preparation, which consists in avoiding sin and cultivating the desire for prayer. Without this desire no one will readily come to prayer nor with the affection for it which renders it fruitful. And this desire for prayer is the best antidote to worldliness of mind and to the wasting of our time in useless occupations. Thus at the beginning love comes into play. Then there is the immediate or particular preparation which consists in the humility of heart which will dispose us to pray and keep our mind on prayer ; and in sorrow for our sins. No one, says Mattia da Salo, can rightly pray unless he comes to prayer thus prepared.

Next comes meditation—and for the beginner Mattia considers that this should take up the greater part of the exercise. The meditation should proceed from point to point so that the mind may “ more easily digest ” the matter meditated upon. Meditation, he says, teaches us to delight in God : it is the wood to enkindle the fire of desire and to inflame the affections. When the affections are thus moved, comes “ action ” ; for “ affections ordinarily generate acts ” ; and it is in acts of the will that the soul grasps God.

For beginners, acts of fear, of sorrow for sin and of the desire of amendment are the more appropriate. When they have made progress in prayer, they properly proceed to acts of hope and desire and of the purpose of doing good works, but the more perfect most usefully make acts of the love of God and of ardent desire of increasing in His love.

Finally he speaks of the operations which follow upon the acts of the will ; the purpose of amendment and of progressing in love ; of the giving of oneself to God ; of praise and thanksgiving and love. These operations within the soul begin during prayer ; outside of prayer they continue and give effect to prayer.

Such in brief outline is the method. Mattia then sets forth certain exercises for the learner in his various stages of progress but with the warning that these exercises are mere aids till the learner can fly with his own wings.

The general outline is, of course, common to many teachers in the art of prayer : what differentiates Mattia da Salò from not a few of these teachers is the simplicity with which he expounds his method, and his evident anxiety whilst giving direction not to impose a rigid regulation which might hamper liberty of spirit. He would train the novice to use his own wings. There is, too, a notable insistence that the object of meditation is to give fuel to the affections of the heart from which proceeds the " action " of the will and the subsequent operations of the soul. As prayer must begin in a preparation dictated by love, it must end in the operation of love. Mattia da Salò wrote many books, some of more insistent beauty of thought ; but none of more practical value to the religious soul than this " art of prayer."⁴⁸

But it is with their mystical writers, properly so-called, that we enter into the inner chamber of the Capuchin soul.

Francesco da Jesi, the mentor of the congregation in the days of its first youth, defined the true poverty of the Francis-

⁴⁸ Similar works deserving attention are : *Introduction à la vie spirituelle par une facile méthode d'oraison* by Père Joseph du Tremblay (Paris, 1616) (on Père Joseph as a spiritual writer see H. Bremond, op. cit., II, chap. III, *La Tradition Seraphique*, pp. 168-192) ; *L'Exercice méthodique de l'oraison mentale en faveur des âmes qui se retrouvent dans l'état de vie contemplative*, by Père Paul de Lagny (Paris, 1658) ; *Méthode Facile pour apprendre l'Oraison Mentale*, by P. Daniel d'Anvers (Lille, 1668).

can life as consisting in loving no earthly thing, but only the Divine Majesty and the perfect fulfilment of His will.⁴⁹ That is the basic principle of Capuchin mysticism ; the ultimate reality to which it tends. It was certainly in keeping with the bent of the Franciscan mind as revealed in St. Francis, and all pure Franciscan teaching, that Francesco da Jesi in his definition of poverty speaks of God as the Divine Majesty. In St. Francis' "Praises of Creatures," commonly known as "The Canticle of the Sun," the burden of the song is the majesty of the Creator as revealed in the visible creation ; conversely, worshipful wonder at the divine perfection revealed to us is the formative habit of the Franciscan mind. It accounts for the almost childlike spontaneous emotion and the trust in the spontaneous affections aroused in the contemplation of the spiritual world which has been noted as a mark of Franciscan spirituality.⁵⁰ The purpose of the mystical writers to whose works we now refer was to teach the way by which a man may come to realise in himself in a more perfect fashion this worshipful reverence, and through it come to a more intimate experience of the divine life revealed to us. The path they set forth was the way of the will purified and elevated by divine love ; or in other words a union of the human will, effected by love, with the Divine will. For the effecting of this union, the Capuchin mystics, continuing the Franciscan tradition, relied more on the instructive "reasoning of the heart," quickened by the action of divine grace, than on the action of the reasoning mind. "The heart has its own reasons which reason cannot comprehend" might be written over all their speculation.

Upon this principle Constantine de Barbaçon, a friar of Flanders and later of Cologne, based his exposition of the

⁴⁹ "Diceva il venerabile Fra Francesco da Jesi : La vera povertà consiste in non amare cosa nissuna terrena ma solo la Divina Maestà et di fare perfettamenteamente la volontà Sua." Bernardino da Colpetrazzo : *Della sancta Poverta*, MS., cit., p. 1233.

⁵⁰ e.g. Henri Bremond thus contrasts Franciscan spirituality with that of the Jesuits : "La spiritualité Franciscaine parait plus affective, celle des jésuites plus volontaire et spéculative ; la première est peut-être plus libre, plus épanouissante, la seconde plus rigide, entourée de plus de contraintes : l'une enfin s'ouvre plus naïvement au don mystique, l'autre, plus timide, plus en garde contre illusion, plus résignée au silence de Dieu, vise moins aux douceurs de la contemplation qu'au dépouillement du vieil homme" (op. cit., II, p. 137-138).

mystical life.⁵¹ "Do not be anxious for many rules," he says, "provided thou canst love much." "Where the heart is, there at once are all the other powers; and if the heart be not set aright, well may we break our heads but all to no purpose." Constantine de Barbançon recognises that this direct way of love is not best suited for all men. Different men, he urges, are made in different moulds, and not all can profitably follow the same road. With a perfect sanity it refuses to decry the method of those who teach that rational understanding must precede the activity of love; the method these set forth is suitable for some. On the other hand he claims that this is not the only method or way; that the activity of love can and does precede a rational understanding; and that for some this is the better way. He will not be drawn into scholastic controversy; he rests his argument upon experience. But he gives this warning: "Note this well, that I do not speak of any childish love full of sweetness, but of a generous and strong love which leads a soul to despise all earthly things and itself also and unites it to God with a resolute fidelity and sincere affection." The whole method resolves itself into a purification of the will by love, to the end that the human will become perfectly united with and responsive to the Divine will operating within the human soul; so that eventually the Divine and human wills act together as one in a perfect mutual love. But the distinctive feature of *The Secret Paths* as of all Capuchin mysticism, and of the Bonaventuran tradition itself, is the insistence on the direct operation of love itself as the means to this mystical union.

More subtly and as moving in a rarer atmosphere, does Benet Canfield expound the same doctrine in *The Rule of Perfection*⁵² where he sums up the whole of Christian perfec-

⁵¹ *Amoris Divini Occultae Semitae in quibus vera calistis sapientia et Regnum Dei quod intra nos est, absconditum latet Auctore R. P. F. Constantine de Brabanson, Predicatore Capucino et conventus coloniensis guardiano.* (Cologne, 1626.)

It appears from the imperial licence to print the work in Latin and German that it was first published in French. An English version by Dom Anselm Touchet, O.S.B., made before 1657 has recently been re-edited with some abridgment by Dom Justin McCamm, O.S.B., under the title: *The Secret Paths of Divine Love* in the *Orchard Books* series (London, 1928).

⁵² *The Rule of Perfection* was published by the author in Latin, French and English. Its Latin title is: *Regula Perfectionis: seu breve totius vitae spiritualis compendium* (Cologne, 1610).

The English title is: *The Rule of Perfection contayning a brief and perspicuous*

tion as consisting in a conformity of the will of man with the will of God. But the word conformity, as commonly understood, hardly expresses his doctrine ; neither does he speak of a moral union between the two wills, Divine and human, effected by love. But the will of God with which the human will thus become morally united, is the will of God, not in its incomprehensible infinitude but as the Divine will is made known to man either as an external law by way of reason and the Divine commandments or as it indwells by Divine grace in man himself.⁵³ As it is revealed in external law Benet Canfield designates it the exterior will of God ; as it indwells in man, he terms it the interior will of God.⁵⁴ There is yet a third manner in which the Divine will is

abridgment of all the wholle spirituall life reduced to this only point of the will of GOD ; divided into three Partes : the first treating of the exterior will of GOD contayning the active life ; the second, the interior essentiall will concerning the life super eminent : composed by the R. F. Benet, Capucin . . . heretofore called W. Fitch of Canfield in Essex, Roan (Rouen), 1609. As a matter of fact, the English version omits the third part as being too difficult, the author says, to be understood except by those who have experienced this highest state.

The work was translated into Italian. The Italian translator seems to have taken liberties with the text, and this led to the *Rule of Perfection* being placed upon the Index in 1689, during the Quietist scare (cf. *Anal. Ord. Cap.*, vol. xlii, p. 28), just as the work of Père Surin, S. J., was placed on the Index in the same circumstances. In consequence some modern writers have placed Benet Canfield amongst "Quietist authors," probably without taking the trouble to read his work—a not uncommon habit. Neither Père Surin nor Benet Canfield was a Quietist. The very essence of Benet Canfield's teaching is the active co-operation of the human will with the Divine. True, in the perfect stage of the union the human will has become so intimately at one with the Divine will, so entirely conformed, that it has no will of its own other than the Divine will, yet even so it is not purely passive but eminently active in its pure expression of the will of God ; the union, in fact, is maintained in the free activity of the will of God in the human soul on the one hand, and the free activity of the human will, which in its perfect abandonment of itself to the Divine will acquires a new life—the life supereminent, in which the two wills become one without loss of separate identity, by the act of perfect love. In attempting to explain the process of this supreme union of love, Benet Canfield, in the third part of his treatise, is not free from obscurity—as one who would not be even in attempting to explain the intimate action of the life of purely human love. "*Nec lingua valet dicere nec littera exprimere, expertus potest credere.*" Hence, in his Latin version, Canfield warned the reader not to embark on the third part of his treatise without expert guidance ; and in his English version omitted the third part altogether.

It may be well to warn the reader that a work purporting to be the *Rule of Perfection* by Benet Canfield entitled : *The Holy Will of God : a short Rule of Perfection by Father Benedict Canfield . . . translated by Henry Collins* (London, Art and Book Company—without date) is not Benet's *Rule of Perfection*, but only an adaptation from it.

⁵³ cf. *Rule of Perfection*, I, Chapter v, and II, Chapter i.

⁵⁴ These are the English terms he uses in his own translation.

revealed to us, and that he terms the essential will of which man has an experimental knowledge only in the highest degree of mystical union. The exterior will of God is realised by man in his active life of service; the interior in the life of contemplation: in the highest "supereminent" life of mystical union the active and the contemplative states become subtly intermingled: the active becomes contemplative, the contemplative active. In this union of wills man attains to the most intimate possible union with God, short of the hypostatic union. Let us hear Benet himself: "Although the will of God be incomprehensible in itself yet being in our soule it is made comprehensible; and though in itself it be hidden, yet being joined to ours it is made knowne: for as God which was incomprehensible being in our fleash was made comprehensible, and which was invisible by joyning himself with our humanitie was made visible: so it is of his will which is his spirit and himselfe; for before it be in our will it is hidden and unknown, but being joined therewith it is seene and manifestly known to the soule; and as before the Incarnation hee was only God but after the union with our humanitie was God and man, so the will of God which was only Divine, after the union with ours is divine and humaine: and as that man by that union might say, I am God, so the will of man by such an union may say, I ame the will of God, according to the saying of Saint Gregory Nazian, saying, *Deus humanatus est, homo autem Deificatus*, God is made humaine and man is made divine: and Saint Augustine saying; *Talis erat illa susceptio quae Deum hominem faceret et hominum Deum*. . . Yet not that this union of wills is hypostaticall as was that of the two natures, but is made by a linke of love and light of grace."⁵⁵ In his own time Benet Canfield was regarded by such acknowledged masters of the science of the mystical life as the Carthusian, Dom Beaucousin and Madame Acarie's director, André Duval, as an outstanding authority. Père Joseph du Tremblay, that lynx-eyed enemy of the Quietists, confessed himself a disciple of Benet Canfield, though he thought him not sufficiently "practical" for the ordinary run of men. St. Francis de Sales acknowledged his authority, though like Benet Canfield himself he considered that the third part

⁵⁵ *The Rule of Perfection*, I, chap. ii, pp. 18-19.

of the treatise was liable to be misunderstood by those inexpert in the higher stages of the mystical life.⁵⁶ “*The Rule of Perfection*” is not easy reading; hardly a book for the novice in the spiritual life. Nor I think can it be thoroughly appreciated at its real value without some knowledge of the writer. Few perhaps knowing Benet Canfield only by his master work would be aware that he was sensitive to the beauty of things; one who could be ravished out of himself by the symbolism of the liturgy and by “the sweet melody, the incomparable divine harmony of the organ and the blending of the sweetest voices chanting in the church.”⁵⁷ To know the man helps us to understand his ravishment when he contemplates the beauty of the life in God.

Of an easier style and finer literary quality is the work of Joannes Evangelista van Hertogenbosch, the Flemish mystic, *Het Rijk Gods in U*;⁵⁸ of which an English translation was published in 1657 by the Benedictine, Dom Peter Salvin, under the title, *The Kingdome of God in the Soule*. The argument is the same as that of Benet Canfield, and the author manifestly writes with the knowledge of personal experience; but there is a certain breeziness of style as of the open sea which Johannes Evangelista evidently loved, and of which he shows a seaman’s knowledge. There is in him a vast simplicity of mind which enables him to speak of the deepest mysteries of the mystical life in homely fashion such as one seldom finds in the mystical works of the period. He had evidently been a keen observer of nature before he began to peer into the mysteries of the human soul. Listen to the opening chapter of his book in Dom Salvin’s English:

⁵⁶ cf. the preface to his English version.

⁵⁷ Brousse, op. cit., p. 517, seq.; cf. Henri Bremond’s appreciation of Benet Canfield, op. cit., II, chap. III: *La Tradition Séraphique*, pp. 152-168 et passim.

⁵⁸ The author is described as Father John Evangelist of Balduke (Bois-le-Duc). A rare copy of this translation is kept at the Benedictine Abbey of Stanbrook, and I have to thank the Lady Abbess for so courteously lending it to me. The work, *Het Rijk Gods in U*, was published at Antwerp in 1639. It has recently been re-edited by P. Paschasius van Meerveldhoven (Bruges, 1921).

Concerning John Evangelist, cf. P. Frédégand d’Anvers: *Etudes sur le Père Charles d’Aremberg*, op. cit., p. 161. It may be noted here that the three mystical writers already referred to in the text were favourite authors with the English Benedictines. We have elsewhere seen the intimate relations between the Capuchins and the reformed Benedictines in France.

“ There is noe Ignorance soe unbeseeing or hurtfull, as for a Man to doe a Thing, and not to know the end for which Hee doth itt. For it is the first Thing he ought to know, and for want thereof Hee can do nothing that is fitting, or profitable but by chance. Therefore, if any undertake a Trade or Office, Hee first of all endeavours to learne what is required to the due performance of the same. And it is yet much more unbeseeing not to know the end for which Hee is and for what Hee is Created and lives. For thither ought to be directed the workes and endeavours of all Men : like as the arrow of the Archer to the white, or Marke . . . All creatures from the least to the greatest as well, reasonable as unreasonable, know the end of their living and being, their proper place to which they belong and thither do they always tend, and incline themselves to that quarter of the world soever they be, exactly performing that for which nature ordained them. . . And it is soe firmly imprinted into each one by Nature that they never fayle to fulfill that for which they are created. Man only is ignorant of the end for which Hee is and why Hee hath received this present life and is placed in this world. . . By reason of this Ignorance the world is still full of Errors and Disorders. If wee could from some High Towre behold the occupation of most Men in the world and had likewise before our eyes the end for which one and altogether were created: we should not be able sufficiently to wonder at the Blyndnesse of the children of Adam, as though we should see the Fishes leape out of the water to flye in the Ayre as the Byrds ; and on the contrary, Byrds cast themselves into the water to swimme and live there as Fishes; it would not seeme more strange and wonderfull to us than to behold men to work so contrary to the end for which they were created by God.”

One of the causes of this ignorance of God, he points out, is that men do not seek Him with the same carefulness of observation as to the right means as they use when seeking any other thing they would gladly obtain. They are frequently like to those “who look for herons in the midst of the cornfield in the heat of summer, and hunt for with dogs as they do the hare.” Others rely too much on their own powers, not committing themselves sufficiently to God: but “our own powers like dogs run along the ground apprehending, tasting and feeling inferior and created things ; they are no more fitted to apprehend, taste and enjoy God than the dogs to catch the heron.” And describing the

various ways in which men fail to attain unto a true union with God he says :

“ others being free from all Externall things and from themselves also, think this is sufficient and therefore do no more ; believing that they so remaining shall more and more be united unto God. But these are like unto Him that being now in the sea and from all Lands, thinks Hee is to do no more, and neither puts up mast or hoysts up sayl ; deeming that the fludd of the sea will carry Him into the Haven ; and in the meantime lyeth floating upon the water driven now hyther, now thyther without profiting. Lo, thus many are deemed of this last sort of Men that seeke God, who may well be very neere the right way to find God but yet really are not in itt. . . They remayn as straying ships in the midst of the Ocean which know not the right way to the Haven ; and sometimes runn on a shelve or driven through tempests into some strange Country ; yea it happens sometimes to be splitt and be cast away.”

Johannes Evangelista is no less profound than Benet Canfield, but his breezy homeliness helps one over many a steep stile.

Benet Canfield was the first of a long line of exponents of the mystical life amongst the French Capuchins. Honoré de Champigny, Martial d'Etampes, Sebastien de Senlis,⁶⁰ were amongst the earlier exponents ; Joseph de Dreux,⁶¹ Paul de Lagny,⁶² Alexandrin de la Ciotat,⁶³ were amongst those who continued the tradition. Speculative mysticism seems to have found a larger body of disciples amongst the Capuchins in France than elsewhere. In other provinces and even in France, the mysticism of the Capuchins must also be studied, as in its fruits, in the “books of devotion,” and the ascetical works which emanated from their pen. But a point to be noted before we leave these expositors of the mystical life is this—they all hold that the highest spirituality lies in

⁶⁰ *Philosophie des contemplatifs contenant toutes les leçons fondamentales de la vie active, contemplative et suréminente* (Paris, 1621).

⁶¹ cf. Ubald d'Alençon : *La Spiritualité Franciscaine*, in *Etudes in Franciscas*, Tome XXXIX, pp. 464-465.

⁶² *Le chemin abrégé de la perfection chrétienne dans l'Exercice de la volonté de Dieu* (P., 1673).

⁶³ *Le parfait Dénouement de l'âme contemplative* (Paris, 1680). cf. P. Ubald d'Alençon : *La Spiritualité Franciscaine*, loc. cit. p. 466, seq.

the union of the contemplative with the active life ; some of them stress the duty of the contemplative to abandon the consolations of " the hidden life with God " when duty calls him to the external services of charity towards God and his neighbours. Only they give the warning that the true spiritual man even in his active life of service will carry with him the contemplative habit and find his most intimate union with God even in the service of his neighbour and the duties common to all. Thus for instance Sébastien de Senlis declares : " If the duty of charity or of obedience calls us to any external activity at a time when ecstasy would lift us up into the third heaven, we must leave all and quickly descend. If the moon were always in conjunction with the sun there would be here below nothing but confusion and disorder. . . So too, if the soul would be always abstracted in the contemplation of the things above and refuse to fall in with the common duties of human life, there is nothing more sure than that she would let everything perish and be lost, yea and be lost herself."⁶⁴ The same principle had been laid down by the first Capuchin writer, Giovanni da Fano. Always must the service one owes to God and to one's neighbour come before any mere personal gain or pleasure, however holy in itself : never would they allow that the highest spirituality is antisocial. Such was the lesson they learned from the life of the Divine Redeemer.

As we have suggested it is not easy always to segregate their ascetical works from the mystical, since usually the asceticism taught by the writers is an introduction to the mystical life. Such, for instance, is the character of the works of Jean-François de Reims,⁶⁵ of Alessio de Salo⁶⁶ and of many other writers whose asceticism is illumined with the mystical glow. A review of Capuchin literature of the Counter-Reformation period leads persistently to the conclusion that the temperament of the Capuchin was the mystical temperament. All his best work was done under its

⁶⁴ *Philosophie des contemplatifs*, quoted by Ubald d'Alençon, loc. cit., p. 460.

⁶⁵ See *supra*. *La vraie perfection de cette vie dans l'exercice de la présence de Dieu* (Paris, 1635) ; *Le Directeur Pacifique* (Paris, 1632).

⁶⁶ *Via sicura del Paradiso in segnatichi da Gesu Cristo* (Brescia, 1622). A French translation was published at Lyon in the same year : *Le Chemin assuré de Paradis*. Nor may one omit mention of *Practique Intérieure des principaux exercices de la vie chrestienne* by Joseph du Tremblay.

impulse. And that is true not only of Capuchin literature but of all Capuchin activities. In the pulpit, the mission-field and the plague-ridden city, it was the mystic quest which drew him forth and inspired his service. In the temporal they touched the eternal.

EPILOGUE

The middle of the seventeenth century saw the Capuchins at the height of their influence in the religious life of the Catholic Church. True, the congregation continued to increase in numbers and to extend its missionary activities until the political upheavals towards the close of the eighteenth century brought about the destruction of its fairest provinces. But it was in the spiritually re-creative atmosphere of the Catholic Reformation that their idealism had full play and their distinctive purpose was unfolded with amazing vigour. During that period their activity and influence is comparable only with that of the Jesuits. Both bodies were singularly representative of the new age, spiritually and mentally ; and in that in large measure lay the secret of their success. With the Jesuits this is not astonishing; they were an entirely new institution. But the Capuchins are a rare instance of an old institution reborn into a new time, and becoming one spiritually and mentally with the time.

In the course of our review of their history during the long struggle of the Catholic Reformation, we have seen them issue from their primitive hermitages and cover Europe and far outlying lands with their multifarious activities. But the seed of their wide-spreading activities was already sown in their first hermitages. Little as they knew it, those first Capuchins who assembled in Chapter in the mountainous retreat of Albacina were an embodiment of the spirit which was to revivify the Catholic people and recover for the Catholic Church its spiritual dominion over at least its professed subjects. Not without reason were the most convinced friends and upholders of the nascent Reform found amongst the devout humanists of the time. It was in fact the imperious religious instinct of the Catholic humanist movement which

moulded and gave character to the Capuchin Reform from the days of Vittoria Colonna till the time of Yves de Paris. That is the outstanding feature in their history ; and for that the history of the Capuchins deserves more attention than has hitherto been given it in the study of the Catholic Reformation.

APPENDIX I

OF THE SOURCES OF EARLY CAPUCHIN HISTORY

I°.—THE OFFICIAL ANNALISTS.

It has been unfortunate for the early history of the Capuchins that later historians have relied almost exclusively upon the *Annales* of Boverius¹ when relating the origin and early progress of the Capuchin Reform. Fra Zaccaria Boverio da Saluzzo seems to have been a delightfully vivacious person, loyal to his friends and of a fundamental good will towards all men. He was, too, an optimist of roseate visions. Did he not believe that Charles I of England (with whom he had many conversations on religion when that prince was visiting the Spanish Court) needed only to be taught the true faith to become reconciled to the Catholic Church, and did he not write a really learned work especially to effect his conversion?² He worked, also, as a zealous missionary amongst the Waldenses in the Sub-Alpine valleys; but his great desire was to be allowed to undertake missionary work in England; for the English somehow appealed to him. But as a historian he was hopeless. He could tell a good story; he had the dramatic instinct; he was an untiring worker. Had he possessed a critical judgment, his "Annals of the Capuchins" might have been a work beyond the average, combining authentic history with literary skill; and moreover he might have written a convincing "Apologia pro vita sua" on behalf of the Capuchins. He undoubtedly had skill as an apologist. It was his critical judgment which was at fault; and his too

¹ *Annalium seu Sacrarum Historiarum Ordinis Minorum S. Francisci qui Capucini nuncupantur, Tomus primus* (Lugduni, 1632), *Tomus Secundus* (Lugduni, 1639).

² *Orthodoxa Consiliatio de Ratione verae fidei agnoscendae et amplectendae . . . auctore R. P. Zacharia Boverio Salutiensi, Ord. Min. S. Francisci qui Capucini nuncupantur* (Romae, 1635). In the introduction Boverius says he began to write the book ten years previously for the instruction of Charles I of England, at that time Prince of Wales.

great readiness to put faith in the reports that told in favour of his thesis. The result has been succinctly put by the cautious scholarly Père Edouard d'Alençon in his prologue to *De Primordiis Ordinis FF. Min. Cappuccinorum*.[†] Referring to the *Annales*, he writes : "*Ponderoso de hoc opere judicium ferre non intendo ; absque illius ope hanc historiam describere conatus sum : raro illum confutare curabo, nec ejus testimonium requiram, nisi quando omni alio me destitutum inveniam.*" (p.6). In other words, it is unsafe to use the *Annales* unless you have independent confirmatory evidence to support the annalist. Still, Boverius is not altogether to be neglected; at least not by the patient student. Amid the medley of truth and fiction which too often disfigures his pages, one may come upon clues not easily found elsewhere.

One result of the publication of the first two volumes of the *Annales* was to revive the ancient controversy between the Observants and the Capuchins and to import into it an unreasoning bitterness which redounded neither to the good sense of the protagonists on either side nor to the edification of the world at large ; a result which was deplored by the saner minds on both sides. The early Capuchin chronicler, Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, would undoubtedly have denounced it as "una scandalosa disputatione." But it must be remembered that the seventeenth century was not remarkable for a pacific temper nor for impartial criticism. The Irish annalist of the Franciscan Order, Luke Wadding, was one of the few exceptions to the general rule amongst historical writers of the century.

Boverius carried the *Annales* to the year 1611 ; a third volume by Marcellin de Pise was published at Lyon in 1676. An Appendix to the Third Volume by Silvestro da Milano appeared at Milan in 1737 ; which brought the *Annales* down to the year 1639.

Both these writers were free from the polemical spirit of Boverius ; but from the point of view of modern scholarship they both leave much to be desired.

No further attempt to continue the *Annales* was made until the latter part of the last century when the *Annali dell'Ordine dei Frati Minori Cappuccini* by P. Pellegrino da Forli was published at Milan, the first volume in 1882 and the three succeeding volumes in 1883, 1884 and 1885. Pele-

grino da Forli's *Annali* make edifying reading. The work, drawn from manuscripts supplied to the author by the various provinces of the Order, is without critical apparatus or documentation.

Attention must, however, be called to the Italian translation of the two volumes by Boverius, published at Turin in 1641 by Benedetto Sanbenedetti da Milano. The translator made additions from independent sources.

2°.—THE EARLY CHRONICLES.

The first chronicler of the Reform was Fra *MARIO DA MERCATO-SARACENO*, who left three separate accounts of the origin and first developments of the congregation. Fra Mario became a Capuchin in 1536. In his boyhood he knew Matteo da Bascio who was frequently entertained by Mario's father. Later, in 1543, Matteo was a guest of the Capuchins in their friary at Camerino where Mario was guardian and on that occasion Matteo related to Mario a detailed account of the origin of the Reform. Giuseppe da Colleamato, one of the first band of Capuchins, and Frae Eusebio d'Ancona who joined the Reform in 1534, were also among Mario's informants (see *Descrizione* ut infra, ed. Giuseppe da Fermo, p. 4; *Narratione* ut infra, MS. cart. 56). Mario was therefore well equipped to write his accounts of the origin of the Reform.

His first account took the form of a letter addressed in 1569 to Honorio da Montegranaro, Vicar Provincial of Tuscany, and was written at the request of Cosmo di Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany. It was published by P. Edouard d'Alençon in *Analecta. Ord. Cap.* vol. xxiii, p. 273, seq. In the MS. it is entitled: *Breve dichiarazione dell'origine della nostra congregazione*. His second account was written in 1575 at the request of Cardinal Sanseverina: it is entitled *Descrizione nella quale fedelmente si ragiona et narra, come, quando et dove cominciò la reforma de Frati Capuccini di S. Francesco*. It has recently been edited from a manuscript in the Capuchin friary at Cingoli by P. Giuseppe da Fermo and published at Ancona in 1927. The third and by far the fullest account was written about 1580, and is entitled *Narratione dell'origine della congregazione de Frati Capuccini cioe come, quando, dove e da ché ella hebbe il suo principio*. Three codices of this work

are known to exist : one in the provincial archives of the Capuchins at Venice ; another in the Bibliotheca Nazionale at Naples and a third in the municipal library of Lyon. A transcript of the Venice codex is in the General Archives of the Capuchins in Rome. It is to this transcription that I refer in the text. The Venetian codex is dated 1582. The *Narratione* relates the history of the congregation down to and including the generalate of Eusebio d'Ancona (A.D. 1555) Mario da Mercato-Saraceno died in 1581 leaving his manuscript unrevised. The task of revising the *Narratione* was committed to Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, who in 1575 had been commissioned by the Vicar General, Girolamo da Montefiore, to write the lives of some of the ancient brethren of the congregation, noted for their sanctity. Bernardino, moreover, in 1580, had been requested to write his memoirs of the first days of the Reform with special reference to the lives of the holier brethren. Thus it was that he came to write his valuable chronicle.

Of the *CHRONICLE OF BERNARDINO DA COLPETRAZZO* three codices exist, one in the provincial archives of the Capuchins at Assisi ; another in the Bibliotheca Casanatense in Rome ; a third (together with a transcript recently made) in the General Archives of the Capuchins in Rome. It is to this third codex that we refer in the text. The foreword to this codex is dated : *nel 1585 a di 15 Fbre nel luogo nostro di Spoleti* ; but this work was not completed until 1592 : “ *nel luogo nostro sto Pietro d'Acquasparte il di 2 di Settembre nel 1592.*”

Bernardino passed to the Capuchins from the Observants in 1536. He tells us that he knew Matteo da Bascio, and Lodovico da Fossombrone ; and that Bernardino d'Asti, Francisco da Jesi and Bernardino da Monte del'Olmo were his “ ministers.” He was moreover, secretary to Bernardino d'Asti and Francesco da Jesi when these were Vicars-General. Consequently he had special facilities for gaining knowledge of the developments of the Reform. Writing in his old age he is not always correct as to dates ; but he retained a vivid memory of the events he relates and of the personalities of the men he writes about.

His chronicle and that of Mario da Mercato-Saraceno are in the main the most reliable sources of our knowledge of the

origin and early growth of the Capuchin Reform. In the relation of the early struggles of the Reform one notes the difference of tone in regard to the Observants, between Boverius on the one hand, and Bernardino da Colpetrazzo and Mario da Mercato-Saraceno on the other hand. There is in these earlier chronicles none of the impassioned controversial spirit which mars the *Annales* of Boverius. To them the Observants are brethren of the same Order though of a separate congregation and the spirit of fraternity is never wanting.

It soon became evident to the General Superiors of the Reform that Bernardino da Colpetrazzo was too old to carry on the historical work begun by Mario da Mercato-Saraceno, however admirable he might be as a writer of memoirs : so about 1587, the exact date is unknown, Mattia da Salò was commissioned to write afresh the "history" of the Reform. The choice was unfortunate from the point of view of pure history. Mattia da Salò was a brilliant writer and a deep thinker of an original cast of mind. What he really wrote was an "Apologia pro vita sua" on behalf of the Capuchins: an admirable piece of work of its own kind though weakened by "théorie tendancieuse"; at least as regards the earlier portion of his work. The title of *THE CHRONICLE OF MATTIA DA SALO* fitly describes the purpose he had in view: *Historia Capuccina che tratta dell'ultima e perfetta riforma della Religione de So. Francesco di frati minori osservanti detti Cappuccini*. It is written in two books or volumes; and the first book is divided into two treatises. The first of these treatises deals with the origin of the Reform; the second with the reform movements in the Franciscan Order from its beginning until the Capuchin Reform. The second book begins with the election of Bernardino d'Asti as Vicar-General; but it is a curious medley of biographies of saintly persons, some not connected with the Reform, and of events in the history of the Reform. It is not unlikely that the second volume was written in collaboration with his "socius" and fellow townsman, Giacomo da Salò. It is to be noted that Boverius frequently refers to the *Historia Capuccina* and accepted its authority as against the two earlier and reliable chroniclers. The "théorie tendancieuse" of Mattia da Salò was that the capuchin reforms the final and ultimate

reform long desired by the more zealous friars since the day of John of Parma. It is the same theory as was held by Francesco da Jesi and many if not all of the early Capuchins; but Mattia da Salò works out the long contest between the "frati buoni" and the "frati cattivi" systematically and in great detail, tracing the history of Franciscan reforms and emphasising the progressive character of the Reform movement towards the final realisation of its desire in the Capuchins. The intention of the argument is not without merit, but as a piece of historical writing it is spoiled by the special pleader's handling of the subject. It is not without extravagance; and Père Frédégand Callaey rightly attributes to the *Historia Capuccina* the later development of the partisan temper which marred the work of Boverius.³ But with Mattia da Salò the partisan temper is unconscious. For the Observants he has no personal ill-will. He reminds the Capuchins that though the Conventuals were the nurse of the Reform in its infancy, the Observants were the mother of the Reform (Lib. I, pp. 331-332); and with Mattia as with the earlier chroniclers there is a strong sense and clear recognition of the fraternal bond that properly unites all the congregations or families or the Franciscan Order.

Two codices of the *Historia Capuccina* exist: one in the General Archives of the Capuchins in Rome, to which we refer in the text, and another—an earlier version—in the Vatican Archives. A copy of a French translation made at the beginning of the seventeenth century by Philippe de Cambrai is in the municipal library at Douai (MS. no. 872, fol. 202 *seq.*).

Mattia da Salò died in 1611, leaving his chronicle unfinished and unrevised; and the writing of the definitive history of the Reform was again begun at the command of the General Superiors, by Paolo da Foligno, assisted by Giacomo da Salò.

The *CHRONICLE OF PAOLO DA FOLIGNO*, written in Italian, of which the original manuscript is kept in the Capuchin General Archives in Rome, treats of the events in the history of the Reform down to the middle of the sixteenth century and adds some notices of the lives of saintly

³*L'infiltration des idées franciscaines spirituelles* op. cit. (infra, Appendix II), pp. 402-403.

brethren after that period. Paolo did not live to complete his work. It is divided into two volumes. The first volume consists of five treatises or books : the first tells the story of Matteo da Bascio until his death ; the second tells of Ludovico da Fossombrone and the progress of the Reform under his government ; the third of the history of the Reform under Bernardino d'Asti ; the fourth relates the story of Ochino ; and the fifth, the story of the Capuchins in Calabria. The second volume deals with the lives of notable brethren. Paolo da Foligno relates several incidents not found in the earlier chronicles and gives the primitive Constitutions of Albacina (I, fol. 38-46). Boverius frequently quotes this chronicle under the caption : *Salodiensis*. Giacomo da Salo certainly annotated the manuscript and may have been part-composer.⁴

It was after the death of Paolo da Foligno that the writing of the *Annales* was committed to Boverius.

Mention must be made of the *CHRONICA FR. JOANNIS ROMAEI DE TERRANOVA*. Giovannello da Terranuova was one of the Calabrian Recollets who joined the Capuchins in 1532. No copy of his original chronicle is known to exist ; but what purports to be an account of the origin of the Capuchins taken from his chronicle appeared in a book published at Messina in 1613 by Silvestro Maruli or Maurolico and entitled : *Historia Sagra intitolato Mare Oceano de tutte le Religioni del Mondo*. The extract translated from the original Italian into Latin was published in *Acta Sanctorum* (Mensis Maii, Tom. IV, pp. 281-289). The Italian and Latin versions were republished with critical notes by P. Edouard d'Alençon in 1907 in *Analecta Ord. Cap.*, Vol. xxiii, p. 9, *seq.* The chronicle mainly concerns the history of the first Capuchins in Calabria. The question is : Does the extract faithfully represent Giovannello's text ? Paolo Gualteri da Terranova in his *Legendario di SS. Martiri di Calabria* (Napoli, 1630) quotes Fra Girolamo da Dinami as asserting that Giovannello's chronicle had been twice adulterated (pp. 322, 349). Girolamo da Dinami's chronicle from which Gualtieri quotes is now lost. It was written about the middle of the sixteenth century and related the story of the Capuchins in Calabria.⁵

⁴ cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon : *De Primordiis*, p. 5.

⁵ cf. *Bibl. Script. Ord. Cap.*, op. cit. p. 118.

Of *MINOR CHRONICLES* attention should be called to an account of the origin of the Capuchin Reform and its development in the province of Brescia published at Brescia in 1622 : *Breve Ragguaglio del Tempo in cui vennero a Bergamo i Cappuccini . . . raccolta per F. Celestino Sacerd. Capuccino*. Celestino Colleoni da Bergamo wrote a long history of Bergamo, *Storia Quadripartita de Bergamo* : of which his account of the coming of the Capuchins to Bergamo originally formed part. The *Breve Ragguaglio* is a delightful chronicle worthy almost to stand beside the *Fioretti di San Francesco* ; at least so far as it relates to the Bergamaschi Capuchins. A long defence of the Capuchin habit is less interesting.

Then there is the chronicle recently edited by P. Sisto da Pisa in *L'Italia Francescana* (Roma, 1926, p. 31, *seq.*) under the title : *I Frati Minori Cappuccini nel primo secolo dell'origine* and ascribed to Fra Ruffino da Siena.⁶ This chronicle should rather be styled a compilation drawn from the chronicles of Mario da Mercato-Saraceno and Bernardino da Colpetrazzo. It was composed about the end of the sixteenth century. In style it is limpid and of a distinct literary quality. Of all the Capuchin chronicles it is the one that would best lend itself to popularisation. It is referred to by Boverius.

The compilation, *Vite di alcuni Cappuccini*, as it is sometimes named, by Girolamo da Montefiore is mainly drawn from Bernardino da Colpetrazzo ; not improbably from this chronicler's first account of the lives of saintly brethren which he wrote in 1575 at the command of Girolamo da Montefiore, then Vicar General.⁷ Many manuscripts of this work exist in the Capuchin General Archives and elsewhere.

3°.—OTHER WRITERS NOT OF THE CAPUCHIN CONGREGATION.

In 1579 there was published in Venice : *Informatione del Reverendo M. Gioseppe Zarlino da Chioggia, Maestro di Capella della Serenissima Sig. di Venetia. Intorno la Origine della Congregazione de i Reverendi Frati Capuccini*. Zarlino's thesis was that the Capuchin Reform was initiated not by Matteo da Bascio but by Paolo da Chioggia. The book is of little historical value ; but it gained a certain importance,

⁶ See also Sista da Pisa : *Storia dei Capp. Toscani*, I, p. 16.

⁷ cf. *Analecta Ord. Cap.*, XXIV, pp. 25-27.

inasmuch as it stimulated the Capuchin chroniclers to write of the origin of the Reform in reply to Zarlino's argument.

Valuable references to the origin and progress of the Capuchin Reform will be found in Luke Wadding's *Annales Ord. Frat. Minorum*. Wadding, though not always correct as to facts, was of a generous and impartial temper. References to the Capuchins are also to be found in Tossignani's *Historiarum Seraphicae Religionis Libri tres*, fol. 158, where he rebuts Zarlino's argument and ascribes the initiative of the Reform to Matteo da Bascio; and in Francesco Gonzaga's *De Origine Seraphicae Religionis* (cf. p. 61). But, earlier than these three historians, Mark of Lisbon wrote an account of the origin of the Capuchins in his well-known *Chronicas de la orden de los frayles menores*, part III, published at Salamanca in 1570. An Italian version of this work was published at Venice in 1591: *Delle Croniche de Frati Minori del P.S. Francesco. Parte Terza*. In this translation the account given of the Capuchin Reform was largely amplified by extracts from the third chronicle of Mario da Mercato-Saraceno. Boverius was castigated by Luke Wadding for claiming the authority of Mark of Lisbon for these interpolated passages.⁸

4°.—OTHER DOCUMENTS.

A mass of official and private documents concerning the Capuchins in the Archives of the Vatican, in State Archives and public and private libraries, has yet to be brought to light and studied before a definitive history of the Capuchins can be written. A certain number of Pontifical Bulls and letters and other documents have been published in the *BULLARIUM ORD. FF. MIN. CAP.*; but the recent researches of P. Edouard d'Alençon have shown the necessity of an independent and more critical study of the original texts of the Pontifical documents for a true reading of Capuchin history. I can but refer the student in proof of this statement to the results of the patient scholarly research of the former Archivist General of the Capuchins, as published in *Tribulationes Ord. FF. Min. Capuccinorum primis annis*

⁸ cf. Wadding *Annales*, anno 1525, XVI. But Wadding himself was in error in asserting that the interpolations were not in the first edition of the Italian version.

Pontificatus Paul III (Romae, 1914) and *De Primordiis Ordinis Fratrum Minorum Capuccinorum* (Romae, 1921).

Of first importance for a knowledge of the early days of the Reform are the *LETTERS OF VITTORIA COLONNA*, referred to in the text; and the documents relating to the *VENETIAN CHAPTERS* of the Observants published by P. Edouard d'Alençon under the title: *Gian Pietro Caraffa . . . e la Riforma nell' Ordine dei Minori dell' Osservanza* (Foligno, 1912).

The publication by P. Edouard d'Alençon of the documents relating to the mission of San Lorenzo da Brindisi in connection with the Catholic League of Germany, throws much light upon a period of European history which is yet in need of fuller investigation. (Cf. *Analecta Ord. Cap.*, vol. xxv—*De Sancto Laurentio Brindusino documenta inedita*, p. 79, *eq.*; and vol. xxvi, p. 133, *seq.*)

Much valuable information can be obtained from the histories of various Capuchin Provinces published in recent years and referred to in the text. Not all these "histories" fulfil the requirements of modern scholarship; but some are of distinct value. The works of Padre Valdimiro da Bergamo concerning the Capuchins of the provinces of Milan and Brescia are a mine of information well documented and selected with critical judgment. The studies of Père Apollinaire de Valence concerning the French Capuchins, particularly those of Languedoc, are of the first rank in scholarship. Padre Sisto da Pisa, the historian of the Tuscan Capuchins, if lacking somewhat in critical judgment, is nevertheless a patient investigator and has the gift of presenting the results of his investigations in a pleasing literary form. The same may be said of Padre Bonaventura da Sorrento, the historian of the Neapolitan Province. Other more recent writers of provincial history have shown a distinct aptitude for original research.

Some valuable studies, too, have been published in various magazines, such as *Etudes Franciscaines*, *L'Italia Franciscana*, *Miscellanea Franciscana*, etc.

Nevertheless it must be said that the scholarly research study of Capuchin history is still in its infancy.

One branch of it—and in some ways the most important of all—the study of the works of the Capuchin writers, has

hardly yet been seriously attempted. No adequate authentic history of the Capuchins can be written until the works of their greater writers have been rescued from the oblivion into which they have been allowed to fall. You cannot know a people until you know their literature. The republication of the works of the Capuchin masters in thought is a necessary preliminary to a true knowledge of Capuchin history

APPENDIX II

LETTER OF VITTORIA COLONNA TO
PAUL III

“Dieci anni sono che se comenzò questa sancta congregatione per vivere austeramente nella propria regola de San Francesco, et sempre con tutta la possibile repugnantia humana, causata da alcuni che han preso a destrugerla, e cressuta in fervore, numero et ordine, si che se vede el chiarissimo miracolo, ne se nega, ne se po negare, et van cercando se e facto in Sabbatho.

“La religione ditta de la Observantia, non nega el R.do Generale et più gli altri frati, nei proprij brevi da loro expediti, che hanno necessità de reformarse, et che lo vogliono fare, et ha molto tempo che durano queste dilationi et promesse. Hor queste due propositioni: de la optima vita et observantia de questi reformati, et la necessità hanno quelli de reformarsi.¹ sono cose chiare, palpabili et certe, che solo quelli non le vedono che non le vogliono veder. Hor come e possibile dunque che se parli de meter questi, per longo spacio sperimentati in si rigorosa vita, a la obedientia de quelli, che essi medesimi confessano che non la possono fare. El pastore deve in lume, virtù, spirito et sanctità excedere le sue pecorelle, andarli con lo exempio vanti et condurle sempre a Dio piu vicine. Dunque ogni

¹*Questi* everywhere in the letter signifies Capuchins, *Quelli* Observants.

pecorella di questa seria in merito, in perfectione de vita et in streteza de Regola superiore ad soj pastori ; et tante fatighe che X anni, con tanta gratia di Dio conservate, serian subito perdute, et la obedientia, ordinata per osservare la Regola, seria casion de alargarla. Et per dirlo piu chiaro dico cosi :

“La Regola non e facta per la obedientia, ma la obedientia per la Regola, però se caminano per la via de Dio, con maxima observantia de la Regola, con obedire lo optimo Pontefice Paulo, non so che nove obedientie bisognino ; ultra che recognoscono el Generale de San Francesco de Conventuali, non per che sia meglio de l'altro, ma per che li lassa nella loro observantia et pace, non li prosequet, non se li monstra inimico, non calumnia el ben fare, non va informando el mondo contra di loro. Et per che dicto Generale de Conventuali recognosce el Generale de li Observanti, questi vengono ad esserli subiecti mediate, se non immediate. Si che non esta el pensiero de costoro, non esserli subiecti, ma in conservar loro austera vita et vera observantia, como per experientia se é visto che questa sola se conserva, che non é in lor mano, et tutte le altre principiate da loro se sono alargate. Et essi medesimi dicono che trenta milia frati et non piu, che sono, é quasi impossibile reformarli. Dunche non so perché tanto esti encresce de questi pochi, che chiaramente monstraño posserlo fare. El cercare questo primato con tanta anxietà, precipitatione, é offesa de Dio, é etiam loro infamia, et un dare ad intendere che non fanno per zelo, ma per che perdono el credito et le elemosine, vedendo si che questa vita vera de San Francesco se pò fare ad ogni tempo.

“El ministro San Francesco hora lo chiama ministro, hora custode. La perfection de la seraphica et evangelica Regola non consiste in sillabe o dictione, ma importa bene che siano in verità ministri, et che, ad exempio de Christo, *MINISTRENT SPIRITUM ET VITAM*. Et cosi facendo stare questi ad altra obedientia, quale se vede essere più larga, farrìa el Ministro el contrario del officio suo, per che li mitigaria el spirito et le togleria la radice de la vera Regola.

“El dire : volemo recognoscere el Generale, ma che non se gli impedisca la vita loro ; dunche questa seria vera ambitione et perfidia, et non servitio de Dio, metendoli in

periculo, dubio et fastidio, senza cambiare altro che la apparentia. Et per che anderiano primo per le selve, come son andati et come San Francesco prophetiza, che comportarlo. In questo non dirò altro.

“Reformensi quelli, attendano, mo che Christo esta al deserto, consideralo li et non impedire quelli che lo vanno imitando ; pensino che la quaresma viene, che devono attendere che si gran Religione pasca el christiano grege. Comensino non dico a lassare cose de quali non se deve parlare, per che non é Capucino che non mettesse la vita per honor de la Religione, ma dico le cose chiare contra la Regola ; mettansi un poco nella vera austerità, povertà et umil vita, come San Francesco comanda, lasseno tante pompe, sumptuose fabriche, canti figurati et superfluità. Vedasse un poco de fervente spirito fra questi che li governano, sian veri pastori, entrenno per la porta de la charità, non per la fenestra de la ambitione ; sian veri frati, guideno ben le anime che li son date in cura ; non voglian credere che non si possa quel che se vede si pò, et quel fece con piu austerità San Francesco et quaranta anni poi. Facian per opera cognoscere che li mena zelo optimo, et come seran reformati et li monstrarano bona voluntà, li obedirano, anzi el minor homo del mondo, per che vivan come loro. Tanto più che questi hanno optima, sincerissima, sancta, evangelica obedientia et mirabile ordine come ogni homo pò vedere. Et mandino pur Commissarij per li lochi, et li troverano come li primi compagni de San Francesco et la Regola in summa observantia. Et quando quelli et loro conventi serano tali, alhora potran dire FIAT UNUM OVILE ET UNUS PASTOR ; et il ministro sancto alhora (potrà dire) quel che precede al evangelio, EGO SUM PASTOR BONUS ; che stando le cose così, con lo ovile differente, non pò essere un solo ministro. Et però San Francesco vole che la sua Regola se observe, et questa é la importantia. Et sempre che se é tropo alargata ha mandato nove reforme. Et per che questa é la più perfecta et la più simile al suo principio, et trova el mondo più deteriorato, però ha più repugnantia et più difficultà de tutte le altre, si che veramente repugna a ogni christianità el tanto molestarli, che pare tutti quelli militano. Siano sancti et in pacifica observantia de la Regola, et ad questi soli se faccia tanta et sì continua guerra.

Immo sono obligati Sua Sanctità, li R. mi Cardinali, tutti principi et più il loro Protectore adiutarli et favorerli, come sola luce nelle nostre tenebre, et come quelli che soli in sì licentioso seculo osservano la evangelica et divina doctrina de Christo et de San Francesco. Tanto più che tutti quelli che lassano li respecti humani et le complacentie terrene, et miran solo Dio vedeno la sua gratia in costoro, et le contrarietà nascere da pensieri né recti, né sinceri. Venuti ad tanto inganno che non curano calumniare il glorioso sancto, con dire che non fé habito, ma pigliò un panno, come se nella Regola non si distinguesse l'abito, o non se ne vedessero conservati per reliquie, et sigilli, et picture, et mille modi. Ma per che l'habito non fa la via bona lassarò stare queste impertinentie, ma solo pregarò Dio che li inspire ad reformarse, acciò che poj possino parlare con qualche fundamento. Ultra che senza le tante ragioni in fructo, se sono ancor de quelle che usano loro, cioè hanno la Bolla de Clemente, Brevi, approbation delli pontifici, et supra tutta la cognitione del optimo Papa Paulo, che Cardinale li defese, et però credo Dio lo sublimò, et mo Pontifice ama la verità ; ma va con tanti respecti che prevalgano contro lo intento sancto suo quelli che oppugnano, et per esserci Cardinali che la pigliano a denti, et l'un mal volentieri contradice al'altro in consistorio et a la presentia de molti Cardinali, che sono apena auditi, non che intesi. Ma Dio ispirerà i boni ad sì chiara intelligenza.

“Hor veniamo al prohibire che non vengano quei fratri ad questa reforma, per che se causa scandalo. Dunche lassi ogni uno de far ben per che causa scandalo ad chi non lo fa. Non si comporti più che i figlioli lassano i padri ed intreno in religione, per che a le loro case causa scandalo. Non se sofra più che da le religion de San Benedeto, de San Dominico et le altre vadino ad quella de San Francesco, per che ad quelli altri causa scandalo. Guastensi le lege tutte, non si consideri le parole de Paulo et de tanti sancti, che se deve tendere a la perfectione et eligere la vita più sicura, et che la Regola de San Francesco é tale, immo de Christo, che bisognerebbe conversare con li angeli per pienamente osservarla ; et costoro vogliono impedire lo andare a la perfectione, non recordandose che CUM SANCTO

SANCTUS ERIS, etc. Anzi é offitio de boni togliere tuti li impedimenti al santo vivere di questa reforma, la quale edifica et non da scandalo alli veri observanti. Anzi é certo che a la piú parte de la religione dispiace questa prohibitione, legami, brevi et streteza. Et solo da molestia ad octo o X persone che governano, quali vogliono che per auctorità se li creda. Et se vede chiaro el poco motivo che fa la costor vita in quelli, che in tre mesi hor maj che sta la porta aperta non se ne sono venuti XX. Non sono oggi sî ferventi li spiriti che questa austerità piaccia ad molti; si che in chiuderla si fa grandissimo deservitio a Dio, per che si chiude la miglior vita a 3,000 anime,¹ quali tutti credeno che possano venire; et de quanti, per essere impediti, nor sanno se ha de dar conto a Dio; et in lassarla aperta ultra che se evade tanto periculo de offendere la divina voluntà et si observe ogni bona lege et costume. Se vede che non se fa danno alcuno per che qui se acceptano con tutte le cautele et consideratione del mondo, come Vostra Sanctità per alcune lettere ha visto che non son vere le falsità che li oppongano.

“Lassarò stare che li Observanti se separarono da Conventuali, et non hebbero tanta repugnantia, et fò ottimamente facto; che ha molti anni tutti seriano stati conventuali, che fra il molto fango non po'stare bianca la neve.

“Lassarò stare che non se deve ragionevolmente prohibire. Lassarò stare le cose humane cerca la informatione data ad Sua Magestà et molti altri, quali poj se ammirano con intendere il vero. Lassarò stare che costoro humilmente non ardiscono dire la verità, et quelli si audacemente et non veramente gli oppugnano. Lassarò stare che questi non domandano niente, se non che se lasseno in la pace de Christo et che viva la evangelica libertà de receive et osservare QUI VENIT AD ME NON EICIAM FORAS. Et quelli demandano prohibitioni, legami, impedimenti et scomuniche, che par proprio contenda la legge de Moyse con la gratia de Christo, la carità con la ambitione, et la humiltà con la grandeza. Et veramente non me dole de questi che ponno ben dire QUI ME SEPARABIT A CHARITATE CHRISTI, ma me dole de quelli che in tanta luce son cechi, et che

¹Supra: “trenta milia frati.”

tante volte habiano hauta invidia a quelli che servirono Christo in terra ; et ogni di diciamo : fortunati pastori, beati Magi, felice ab Arimathia, gloriosa Magdalena et Marta ; et poj habiamo le cose de Christo in terra chiare et vive, et la observantia de la sua evangelica vita, et le perseguitano. Et se vede questa povera congregatione ogni giorno abbassare la testa et humilmente dire *CUR ME CAEDIS*. Per amor de Dio non se metano tante nube intorno che adombrano la vera luce a la sancta bontà del Pontifice, che questo seria più presto pena a chi lo ama et più scandalo a tutta la christianità che cosa potesse succedere.

“Oyme ! come non tremeno quelli che le son contrarij ? Come ponno mai dormire, che non temano la justicia de Dio ? Como el verme de la conscientia non li rode tanto che ormaj desistano ? Che merito rendeno a Dio de la gratia che li fa ? O che conto gli darano che per loro non é restato de guastar un opera de reformare migliaa de persone, sapendo che per un anima sola Christo tornaria in terra de novo !

“Io non so che move questa cosa, si non tentatione. Tanti frati incogniti, tante religioni infructuose, che non se sa che nome habiano, tanti de San Joanne, tanti de San Francesco, che ogni di escono de la Observantia per farsi seculari preti, confessori, abbatì, episcopi et cardinali, et nisciuna cosa offende, nisciuno dà scandalo et nisciuno importa, si non questa per che é la meglio de tutte. Sempre le cose de Christo et de soi servi han dato admiratione, conturbato gli respecti humani ; et desso medesimo dice *NON VENI MITTERE PACEM*. Dunche se deve lassare la austera, optima vita, divina reforma, per non causare scandalo a persone che governano ?

“O cum quanta certeza poteria monstrare che questo impugnare non é con la volonta de la religione de la Observantia ; e quanti monasterij fan fede che staban et de l'altra parte se dogliano che non stano. Anzi del prohibire nasce infinito scandalo ; provino per uno anno lassare la porta aperta, poj tante volte han provato el contrario, et vederano che maj dal bene nasce scandalo. Anzi ne nascerà vera reforma in quella, et optima confirmation in questa, et se parlerà al hora con più proposito.

“Certo non se po' admetere adesso nisciuna lor ragione ;

et dicono non ponno castigare li frati per che se ne saltano i qui.¹ Dunche may l'altre religione han possuto castigare li frati loro, perche ponno andarsene ad San Francesco, che é più streta. Volessè Dio che movesse zelo de castigare et reformare, che attenderiano ad altro che a ruinar li reformati !

“Dio per sua bontà conservi la bona volontà ai boni et la conceda a quelli che non l'hanno. Le cose del mondo sempre IN PRIMA FACIE APPARENT BONE, ma non restano al martello. Così le vision delectano in principio, più le false che le vere. Però, per amor de Dio, non se ne stian a relatione, gustino, intendano, pensino questa verità, che son certa l'intrarà nel core.

“Et perche, intendo, dicono adesso una nova cosa, cioè che son tutti reformati et che han ben visto et non han bisogno, et che se penteno de haverlo ditto ne i brevi ; et il General ad me et in mille lochi. Dico che Dio il faccia et che dico son tutti sancti. Io che ho vera noticia de tutti i loro monasterij del Regno et de Campagnia ne son chiara, et tutti el sanno se han bisogno de reforma. Ma sia come lor dicono, non negarano, o per dir meglio non ponno negare che la vita 'de Capuccini non si a austera, più stretta, et tale che chi non ha occhio nol vede, siché questa basta a negar la obedientia per le ragion sopra dicte et a far tocar con mano che é maximo errore dirlo et così chiuder la porta al venir a la più stretta vita.”

THE CAPUCHINS AND THE SPIRITUALIST TRADITION

In 1924 P. Frédégand Callaey, the learned Archivist General of the Capuchin congregation, published in *Miscellanea Fr. Ehrle* an article entitled : “L' infiltration des idées franciscaines spirituelles chez le frères-mineurs capucins au xvi^e siècle.” The title is misleading. One might almost as well speak of infiltrations of Anglo-Saxonism among the English. For if the primitive chronicles of the

¹Thus the reading in the MS. in Capuchin General Archives. Père Edouard d'Alençon suggests the reading “in questa.”

Reform prove anything, it is that the Capuchins regarded themselves as the inheritors of the Spiritualist tradition. Not that they approved of all the spirituals in all their ways and deeds. Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, for instance, denounces the controversy carried on by the extreme rigorists in the fourteenth century as scandalous—“*la longa et scandalosa disputatione.*” Nevertheless, the early chroniclers all derived the Reform from St. Francis through the Spiritualist movement.

What the Spirituals hoped for, that the Capuchin Reform has accomplished—is their argument. It is to be noticed that just as the Spirituals relied for their justification upon the writings of the Saint’s companions, so too do the Capuchins. Not only is this the case with the chroniclers; the Constitutions of the Reform equally do so (cf. *Le Prime Costituzioni*, Roma, 1913, p. 41). It is quite true, as Père Frédégand has well pointed out, that the ultimate argument upon which the Capuchins rested the justification of the Reform was the actual conformity of the Capuchin life with the letter of the Rule, in other words, their actual strict observance. That is the argument of Vittoria Colonna, already cited; and of Bernardino d’Asti in his memorial to a certain cardinal (*supra*). Still the documents prove that the Capuchins considered that the purer Franciscan tradition had been conveyed through the Spirituals and not through “the friars of the community.”

The following document is given as illustrating the mentality of the Reform in the crisis which threatened its existence under Paul III (cf. *supra*). Incidentally, the document reveals that the relations between the Capuchins and Observants, even when they differed as to the justification of the Reform, were not always lacking a true and cordial fraternal regard. The document here given is taken from the chronicle of Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, the secretary and companion of Francesco da Jesi.

The argument of Francesco da Jesi is worked out with fuller detail in the *Historia Cappucina* of Mattia da Salo.

QUI SI RAGIONA COME IL VENERABILE PADRE F. FRANCESCO DA
 JESI DICHIARÒ AL PADRE FRATE FRANCESCO VENETIANO
 ZOCCOLANTE LA NOSTRA RIFORMA ESSER LA VERA RIFORMA
 SECONDO LE PROFETIE

Fu in quel principio gran contrasto nel corpo della Religione se la Congragatione de' Capuccini era la vera riforma o no conforme alle profetiche de' Santi Huomini che di quanto nella Religione hanno profetizzato ; in questo contrasto fu il Venerabile Padre Francesco Venetiano custode della riforma de' Padri zoccolanti, il quale essendo per prima molto famigliare, e amorevole del Padre Fra Francesco da Jesi e per la gran sicurtà che con esso lui haveva essendo il Padre Frate Francesco da Iesi generale di tutta la nostra congragatione gli scrisse una lettera stando egli nel luogo di Monte Luco di Spoleti nella quale molto l'esortava che unir dovesse la congregatione de' Capuccini con la riforma de' Padri zoccolanti ; Io fui quello che gli mandai la detta lettera, cioè la risposta che gli diede il nostro Generale che questo era impossibile che la congregatione de' Capuccini si fosse mai unita con quella de' zoccolanti con molte altre parole efficacissime, ma non contento questo Padre di questa risposta venendo il perdono d'Ascesi nel quale si ritrovava il nostro generale si trasferì insino alla fraternita di Santo Lorenzo dentro in Ascesi dove si raccoglievano i Padri Capuccini io fui a quel perdono, e per sua gratia il Padre Generale che sempre mi portò grande amore, mi riferì ogni qualunque cosa riducendosi dunque a ragionare in una stanza dove dormiva il nostro Padre Generale, di nuovo quel buon Padre Frate Francesco Venetiano gli propose strettamente pregandolo che volesse far la detta unione aggiungendo che secondo la profetica, questa non era la vera riforma ne' per andare inanti, di piu disse : Egli : Noi abbiám cavata una bolla da SS della riforma più ampla che sia stata cavata mai. Il Padre generale nostro gli respose alle dette obietioni, e prima alla bolla così ampla : Sappiate Padre Fra Francesco che voi mai farete riforma tra zoccolanti e se voi aveste una bolla che la venisse dal Cielo e tutti i favori possibili humani, non sete mai per far riforma perfetta.¹

Alla seconda della profetia che voi dite vi rispondo che vo vi ingannate in grosso, anzi, secondo la profetia questa nostra è

¹*Se voj haveste . . .* queste parole non si verificano perchè infatti si trova la riforma tra zoccolo : onde si ha da intendere di far riforma inclusive tantum : cioè senza che havesse à durar la Capuccina. O' che la fatta non è perfetta ha comparatione della Capuccina admettendo l' uso largo nella suppellettile Sacra : et forse nell' habitatione.

vera riforma e accioche voi restiate capace tre profetie son famose nella franceschina che all' aperta dimostrano doversi far la riforma.

N.B.—Giovanni da Parma—la prima è questa : che dice che tre volte si toccheranno i ciuffoli e ciaramelle delle dottrine ne' mai si farà riforma ma di poi per spatio di qualche tempo la si farà e accioche voi intendiate, questa profetia si adempi al tempo d'Ubertino da casale del Beato Fre Gio ; Parma, di fra Adamo ; e di Fra Cesario, huomini letteratissimi e santissimi tre volte al tempo di questi Padri fu disputata la riforma, e mostrato il gran valore e le gran lettere di questi Padri ch' eran de' più zelanti, dotti, e santi huomini che fosse in tutta la Religione e comandò Sua Santità sotto pena di scomunicazione per Santa obedientia, che lor dovesser mettere in carta tutti quei passi della regola, che dalla Comunità de' fri non si osservavano e così facero e quantunque disputando fossero superiori a gli altri e facesse toccar con mano a Sua Santità e agli altri che la riforma era necessaria, nondimeno non se ne potè venire al fine ma restorono quei Ven. Pdri in grandissima persecutione e odio fattagli da frati larghi e non poterono ottener cosa nessuna, poscia Frate Angelo chiarino, fre Liberale per gratia di Iddio, fecero la riforma e durante parecchi anni in gran santità. Eccoti dunque la profetia adempiuta e parendo a quei ven. Padri zelanti che per le gravi persecuzioni quella riforma desse al basso, permesse il Signore Iddio, e volse che il P. Fra. Paoluccio da Foligno, desse principio alla vostra riforma de Pdri Zoccolanti e questa fu la più ampla che sia stata mai.

Ci è un' altra profetia che dice : insino al B. Bernardo settimo grado cascherà la religione sempre da male in peggio nel settimo grado si farà la riforma nello spirito del fondatore e questa tal riforma sarà fatta da Frati semplici e idioti talmente che non si saprà che l'habbi fatta ; dopo la dispersione sarà la Congregation de' Frati Poveri nel terzo luoco, e apparirà in loro il segno della vera riforma, e saran certificati di tutto quello che han da fare. E qui ferma e dimostra, che questa sia l'ultima riforma la più vera e più perfetta. Nota ben tutte le parole e discorri bene i gradi della religione che in tutti questi gradi han fatto qualche mutazione e voi troverete che ora noi siamo nel settimo grado, e questo ci favorisce la visione che ebbe il nostro Padre San Francesco della statua ; non racconterò ogni cosa perchè mi rendo certo che tutte queste cose le sapete, pigliate la parola dalla profetia che dice, negli ultimi giorni si farà la riforma nello spirito del fondatore, che vuol dire nello spirito di San Francesco e considerate bene, che ne' Zoccolanti, ne' mai nessuno altro che habbi fatta riforma si sia così ben con-

formato in tutto e per tutto con la vera osservanza della regola, come han fatto i Capuccini ripigliando miracolosamente il proprio habito del Padre San Francesco conforme nel colore nella vita nell' asprezza e nella forma dell' habito non variando un pelo. I luochi de' Capuccini conforme a quei primi luochi che al tempo del Padre San Francesco furono fabbricati. Non fù mai in nessuna riforma osservata cosi stretta e alta povertà universalmente come hora si osserva per gratia di Dio tra Capuccini. Eccovi dunque che lè fondata nello spirito del fondatore. Che sia stata fatta da huomini semplici voi ne siate informato benissimo chi sia Frate Matteo da Basci, Frate Lodovico e gli altri. Quel che dice dopo la dispersione, si è adempiuto tre luochi havevan preso i poveri Capuccini il luoco di Camerino, il luoco di Monte Campano che edificò la Duchessa di Camerino Catarina Cibbò e madre amorevolissima della nostra Congregatione, il terzo fu preso a un Castello posto nel dominio di Fabriano chiamato Alvaccina. Nota dunque bene Frate Francesco mio caro. I Cappuccini furono tutti dispersi per le gravi persecuzioni che non se ne trovava un coll' altro, e loro stessi ingenuamente confessano che mai si pensorono che la congregatione andasse inanti e sempre furono dubbi, ma quando fu cavata la bolla di Frate Lodovico gli raccolse tutti nella capanna d'Albaccina e loro terzo luoco e quivi celebrorono il lor prime capitolo generale, e come dicono tutti quei che ci si ritrovorono, sopravvenne miracolosamente in loro un lume soprannaturale che quella era la vera riforma e illuminati da Dio conobbero chiaramente che quella era opera di Iddio e che miracolosamente in tante persecuzioni erano stati conservati da Dio e gli crebbe un animo tanto grande della vera perseveranza che da quello in poi parve che sopra di loro venesse lo Spirito Santo. Diedero forma di Religione alla picciola Congregationcella de' Capuccini, la divisero nei luochi coi loro guardiano e incominciorono alla scoperta a comparir per tutto. Eccoti che nel terzo luoco furon certificati; fecero le loro constitutioni, e fu ordinatoil modo di vivere. Dice la profetia che sarà differente dal principio della religione in questo che alla Religione gli fu dato in principio il Capo Santo che fu San Francesco, ma à questa riforma l' harà in ultimo. E se voi ben considerate tutta quella profetia si è adempiuta nei Capuccini: la onde tenete per cosa certa che questa è la vera riforma e non si farà altra riforma. Però intendete bene quel che dice il Beato Frate Giacomo (Giacobo di Masa) che fu cosi altamente da Dio illuminato e particolarmente in quel fatto che egli ebbe, dove vedde tutta la religione mostratagli da Dio sotto forma d'un arbore grandissimo ove parla della contentione che nacque per santo zelo

fra quei doi Santi; il P. Frate Giovanni Parma e S. Bonaventura che dovendosi levare una gran tempesta e sbarbicar del tutto l'arbore vedde il beato Giovanni che stava nella cima perchè era generale partirsi da quel luoco sublime, e mettersi al basso e in luoco sicuro : e San Bonaventura fu posto nel suo luoco e questo ci dimostra che essendo il Padre Giovanni generale, rinuntìò l'offitio e fu assunto nel luogo suo il serafico San Bonaventura e levandosi una gran tempesta, del tutto sberbicò l'arbore, senza rimaner ne pure una brusca, e poscia vedde questo Santo huomo che delle radice del arbore nacque un germollo d'oro fino ; che altro vi dimostra esser sbarbicato l'arbore se non la persecutione valente che dagli heretici e male genti doveva esser fatta contro i religiosi e che dal tutto la religione sarà tolta dal pubblico e come revelò il N. S. Jesu Christo al P. Nostro San Francesco dietro alla tribuna di Santa Maria degli Angeli che Dio sarà tanto provocato ad ira dalla Religione, che darà piena potestà a i demoni che la perseguitino, e questa sarà quella persecutione che ivi dice il N. Signor che non si potrà portar l'habbito della Religione se non nei boschi o in terra d'infedeli. Passata questa gran persecutione quei pochi che restaranno saran tanto affinati, tanto contemplativi e tanto santi che di nuovo germoglieranno la perfetta e ultima riforma e questa ha da uscire da quei buoni Frati che saran ritrovati in vera osservanza della Regola : e si daran parimenti da Dio in quella riforma di perfetta osservanza della regola, e lo spirito della Santa Contemplazione e avvertite che ci è un' altra profetia che dice che in questa persecutione tutte le religioni saranno svolte eccetto la religione di San Francesco che ne resterà la terza parte dei buoni per la Santità del fondatore ; però non vi meravigliate se non vi par di vederci ancora un gran spirito, perchè dice il Padre Santo Francesco che questa riforma grandemente piacerà à Dio e sebbene non vi si vedranno opre di molta importanza, è questo dic' egli perchè sarà raffreddata la carità la qual fece operare i Santi ferventemente ma perchè patiranno persecuzioni dagli huomini cattivi e dai demoni, e molto saran combattuti di dentro e di fuori si come voi vedete esser stata la povera Congregatione de' Capuccini. Non di meno dice il P. S. Francesco quei che perseveraranno non saran privi de' meriti da' primi Santi e sappiate che non è dato ancor lo spirito che se darà doppo la persecutione, quando che ancor la Chiesa Santa si riformarà perfettamente allora si darà con ogni gradi di perfettione. A noi dunque poveri Capuccini ci basta pure assai a viver nella perfetta osservanza della regola e in tante tribolazioni perseverare insino alla morte in questa Santa Congregatione. Andate dunque Padre mio carissimo e riposatevi

totalmente nel animo vostro che voi non vedrete mai questa Congregatione unirsi collo vostra riforma, ma dall' altro lato vi dico che per un Santo Huomo che habbiamo nella nostra Congregatione il N. S. Jesu Cristo ci ha fatto intendere a tutti che per spatio di alcuni mesi quasi ogni di è apparito a questo Santo huomo che questa è la vera riforma e che non ci è stato nella Chiesa di Dio nel qual più si sia compiaciuta la Maesta sua quanto nella Congregatione de' Capuccini. E di più ci ha rivelato, che tutti quei che vivono in questa Congregatione dissolutamente e che non vanno in verità, se non si emendano in breve tempo, Sua Maestà gli scaccerà dalla Congregatione ; e questo noi lo vediamo adempirsi a tutte l'ore che il Nostro Signore Iddio non ha rispetto ne ha lettere, ne ha nobiltà, ne' ha grandezze ma quei che non si fondano in unità e non si sforzano d'andar in verità nella vera osservanza della regola, tutti glie ne manda via e io non ho altra paura se non che Dio mi scacci per i miei peccati di questa Santa Riforma. Restate dunque chiaro fratello carissimo e sgombrate dal vostro intelletto tutte le tenebre che ne fan giudicare questa Santa Riforma non essere la vera riforma perchè noi ne' siamo certificati della profetia dalle revelationi, e quel che assai importa perchè l' è in tutto e per tutto conforme alla vera osservanza della regola. E di più che essendo così debole habbi fatto resistenza à contrarij così gagliardi che con tutto il lor potere mai l' han potuta buttar per terra, che segno è questo se non nella potente e valida man di Dio che contra l'opinion d'ognuno l'habbi così miracolosamente conservata : e vi dico che guai a quelli che cercheranno d'allargarla perchè sarann gravemente puniti ; Si partì questo Venerabile Padre tutto soddisfatto e con molte lacrime baciò le mani del Nostro Padre Generale.

Extract from a Sermon of Fra Girolamo da Narni on the text "Homo quidam fecit coenam."

CONCIO HABITA PERUSIAE IN ECCL. S. LAURENTII DE CONVIVIO SUPERNAE GLORIAE SUPER LUCAE EVANG. (Romae, MDCII).

"*Homo quidam fecit coenam magnam et vocavit multos. Luc. 14.*"

"Postquam sapientissimus rerum omnium Opifex Deus, hominem a mundi principio, de limo terrae eductum, produxit in lucem, eundem primo alloquens, de duobus potissimum secum disseruit; nimirum ut ingentem hominum multitudinem convocaret, atque ut advocatae ab eo multitudini, convivium pararet jucundissimis epulis exornatum:

Gen. 1, 28

Crescite (inquit) et multiplicamini, et replete terram et subjicite eam: et dominamini piscibus maris et volatilibus coeli, et universis animantibus, quae moventur super terram. Hoc est primum. Dixitque Deus, Ecce dedi vobis omnem herbam afferentem semen super terram et universa ligna, quae habent in semetipsis sementem generis sui, ut sint vobis in escam.

Gen. 1, 29

"Ecce secundum. Quamvis autem paratae hae dapes herbarum atque lignorum extrinsecus appareant viles ac minimi momenti; erant tamen (divinae ipsius Scripturae testimonio) exquisitissimae: quaeque non solum justum jucundissimorum saporum suavitate reficiebat sed ipsum etiam visum, eximia earum pulchritudine, mirum in modum delectabant. Sic enim Scriptura dicit:

Gen. 2, 9

"Produxit Dominus Deus de humo, omne lignum pulchrum visu et ad vescendum suave. Verum enim vero, si iis in rebus, latentibus quoque mysteriis animum admoveamus, longe amplius jucundiora atque praestantiora fuisse intelligemus siquidem, antiqua illa divinae sapientiae opera, foecundissima quaedam principia extiterunt, ac veluti seminaria earum postea rerum, quae Deus in hominum gratiam, praestare in fine temporum

decrevisset ; ut nimirum insignia illa beneficia, quibus humanum genus ornandum, honestandumque erat, eximiis quibusdam typis insculperentur. Quamobrem copiosam a mundi exordio multitudinem advocavit ; eique opiparum illud, lautumque convivium indixit : scilicet, ut intelligeremus illa majora pocula, pabulumque gloriae suavissimum, quibus veluti nectaris ambrosiaeque, deorum alimentis, uitrac postrema aurea aetate, felicissimaque qua degimus, servator ipse omnes munifice erat invitaturus. Venite (inquit) ad me omnes et ego reficiamvos.

Mat. xi, 28

“ Angelus clamavit voce magna dicens omnibus avibus quae volebant per medium coeli : Venite, et congregamini ad coenam magnam Dei, ut manducetis carnes Regum. Homo quidam fecit cenam magnam et vocavit multos.

“ O Vere inaestimabilem coenam, atque desiderabile convivium ; ubi non corruptibiles epulae proponuntur quae nativi caloris corrumpuntur igniculo : sed suavissimo divinae essentiae ferculo vesci licet, quae omnium delicatissimarum dapium iucundissima est, dum ineffabili modo in sempiternis subsistit divinis hypostasibus Patre nimirum, et Filio, ac Spiritu sancto. Qui omnes liberalissimi convivatores, felicibus illius gloriae conviviis veluti procincti, concordissime in illa mensa ministrant. Non ulla (mihi credite) lingua explicare valeret, neque mens ulla penitus comprehendere (sicut ait Gregorius) quanta supernae felicitatis illa sint gaudia : gloriae conditoris semper assistere : incircumscriptionem Dei lumen cernere : nullo mortis metu affici : et incorruptionis perpetuae munere laetari.

“ Illud igitur in primis constituendum est, videlicet, Deum optimum maximum, fontem esse perennem, et inexhaustum, omnia continentem quae in aliis cunctis creatis rebus dispersa, ac veluti profusa inveniuntur. Quidquid enim in creaturis reperitur, quibus aliquid deest, simul in Creatore esse necesse est, cui nihil deest, aut

deesse potest. Quamobrem, cum nemini, alteri dare liceat quod ipse in se primo non habet, consequens est, Creatorem omnium Deum, qui omnibus rebus aliis modum, speciem et ordinem, numerum, pondus, atque mensuram ; unitatem veritatem ac bonitatem ; essentiam, virtutem operationem ; causam subsistendi, intelligendi rationem, ordinemque vivendi est elargitus ; in sese omnia, praestantissimo modo scilicet eminenter colligere ac comprehendere. Sicut enim fulgentissimum solis iubar, licet reliquis astris, quae sunt in firmamento, lunae etiam, ac ceteris planetis communicetur, in ipso tamen sole, opulentioribus radiorum thesauris, quam simul in omnibus coelorum orbibus habitat : sic Deus, qui caput est, fons et origo cunctarum creaturarum rerum, in se uno bonis omnibus, universisque, creaturarum excellentiis manet cumulatissimus. Itaque in ipso est omnis herbarum ac foliorum species ; florum item venustas et elegantia ; pulchritudo colorum atque gemmarum ; argenti et auri micantissimus splendor ; fluminum ac fontium formosa claritudo ; solis ac lunae, ceterorumque astrorum incredibilis fulgor ; avium suavissimi concentus ; silvarum delectabilis amoenitas ; ac bellitudo camporum universa. Unde in psalmo ipse idem dicit : Pulchritudo agni mecum est. Hoc igitur in primis fundamentum, subsequentibus gradibus jaciendum.

Ps. 49

“ His igitur omnibus gradibus constitutis, alacriter usque ad Dei vultum ascendamus ; summum quidem illius pulchritudinem contemplaturi ; ac suavissimum ferculum divinae illius faciei, omnium aliarum dapium pretiosissimarum jucundissimum, perpetuo comesturi. Atqui ab infirmis rebus sumamus exordium, quae nullum alium in natura nobilitatis gradum, praeterquam ipsum esse sunt consecutae. Huius modi sunt coeli, et elementa, ac universa mista inanimata ; sive ligna illa sint sive lapides sive cuiusvis generis metalla. His omnibus superiora sunt illa omnia quae vegetandi virtute praedita sunt : Et rursus, vegetantibus

sensibilia ipsa antecellunt, quae sensum ac motum prioribus superaddunt. Quibus tamen omnibus homines praeferuntur qui suas actiones industria et ratione moderantur. Etenim homo cunctarum est epitome creaturarum rerum ; qui in se uno complectitur coelorum esse, apudum atque gemmarum, virentium herbarum et arborum vegetationem ; sentiendi virtutem animalium : ac denique intelligendi vim, quae homini proxima est, ac eum separet a cunctis aliis rebus, quibus non est communis humana natura. Sed quid in iis demoramur explicandis minutiis infirmarum ac sublunarium rerum ; quo minus mundana omnia praetergressi, ad caelestium usque sedes contemplatione eveci, ingentem illum exercitum fereque innumerabilem beatarum mentium consideremus ? Quandoquidem vel una tantum, eademque inter ceteras minima, tam mire et excellenter superat cunctas naturas corporeas, ut in se omnem sublunarium perfectionem eminenter contineat ; ac insuper illam forman, illud decus illamque elegantem pulchritudinem, quam sua ipsius natura sibi ipsi determinat.

“ Qualis igitur (auditores) erit haec coena Sanctorum ?

“ Porro si unius forma mulieris atque venustas, tam mira virtute viget ad rapiendos animos, ut saepe homines vel insanire faciat, vel marcescere. Si itidem Trojani principes (referente Fabio) Proceresque Graecorum, non indigne tulerunt, tot mala sustinere longissimi temporis, tot mortes, tot pericula, tot clades immanissimi belli, ne sola unius Helenae forma privarentur. Quin etiam rex ipse Priamus decennio bello propemodum exhaustus, amissis tot liberis, ac summo imminente discrimine Regni totius et vitae, cui faciem illam (ex qua tot lacrymarum origo defluxisset) invisam, atque abominandam esse oportebat ; audit haec, suisque ipsius oculis intuetur. Ac nihilominus presens Helenae forma ita animum illi demulcet, gratiamque conciliat, ut omni subducta rabie, qua

poterat crebrescentibus cladibus excandescere, iuxta se tam placide collocaret, blandisque verbis compelleret ut filiam, ac excusationem afferet, quo minus eorum malorum ipsa se esse causam arbitraretur. . . .

“ Quid vero de corporeis sensibus deque eorum praestantia vel delectatione referam ? Qua lingua, quibusque verbis explicari valerent inaestimabiles deliciae quibus afficientur ? Enimvero, Beatorum faucibus dulcis ac perjucundus humor continue inerit : Aures vero musicis semper numeris, ac suavissimis Angelorum concentibus replebuntur : Oculi eorum, splendentia gloriae corpora perpetuo intuebuntur. Olfactus pergratissimus fruetur odoribus ; non qui ex floribus, vel aliis pigmentarii suffimentis emitti solent, sed iis, qui ex intima beatorum corporum missione egredientur. Quamvis enim nullus ibi extraneus possit esse odor, qualis est apud nos fructuum vel pigmentorum, ipsa tamen gloriosa corpora, ob temperatissimam primarum qualitatum complexionem ; summo odore fragrant : erit enim stomachus plenus odorifera substantia, ac reliqui omnes humores suavissimum odorem redolebunt. . . .

“ Nec illi deest formosissimi loci delectabilis amoenitas ; quippe quae in superno coelorum vividario est exornata. Adest propterea benignissimus hospes videlicet Deus, qui eos incredibili comitae ad Convivium excipit. Adsunt dapes et pocula, tam pretiosa quam varia, qui sunt distincti gradus coelestium gaudiorum, qui singulis beatarum mentium, pro dignitate vel meritis retribuntur . . . ministri quoque illius sacrae mensae innumerabiles sunt, ac ingenti decore, cum affabilitate cohonestati, de quibus Daniel ait: Millia millium ministrabant ei et decies millies centena millia assistebant ei. Ibi convivantium aures suavissimis cantibus demulcentur, uti Joannes in Apocalypsi : Vocem quam audivi, etc. . . .

Dan. 7

Apoc. 14

Paratus denique est pincerna, Christus praecinget se et faciet illos discumbere, et transiens minis-

trabit illis. Nil amplius certe superest quam manus abluere. Extergite jam sordes actium impiorum, et expurgate poenitentiae lacrymis, ut tandem discumbatis in mensa Sanctorum. Nam secundum puritatem manuum mearum retribuet mihi.

“ Tu qui cuncta scis et vales,
Qui non pascis his mortales :
Tuos ibi commensales,
Coheredes et sodales
Fac sanctorum civium. Amen.”

EXTRACT FROM THE SERMONS OF FRA MATTIA DA SALO

Delli Dolori Di Gesù Cristo

PREDICA III, PARTE II

... Perché ne il Diavolo in lui haveva alcuna potestà, ne il Giudice in lui trovò cosa degna di morte. Et nondimeno egli sopportò la persecutione, et riceve la morte ; per far conoscere al mondo la sua carità, et la sua obediencia verso il Padre. Così l'amore, che porta a noi, lo spinge a patir per noi : l'amor che porta al Padre, lo spinge a patir per noi, per obediencia sua. Di maniera, che la carità verso noi et verso il Padre, e il fonte della passione : il quale per cagione del Padre scorre, qual abundante fiume, per lo vaso della obediencia : cosa che fa richissima et ornatissima di celeste eccellenze questa santa passione. Pondera ben Milano, questa obediencia. Quando nell' horto il Signor nostro pieno di tristitia, pregava, "Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me Calix iste" ; pienamente et distintamente tutto quello egli vide, che a patire havea ; et però cotal patire a lui, quasi presente, veduto, egli chiamò : "Questo calice ; cioè quello che innanzi all'occhio della sua mente si rapresentava. Hora pregando prima, che così fatto patire levato gli fosse ; et poi accetando per fare non la sua, ma la volontà del Padre ; pruova manifesta egli fa, che la paterna volontà del Padre ; pruova manifesta egli fa, che la paterna obediencia, alla passione et alla morte, non si stese solo in commune ; come se il Padre havessegli solamento comandato, che morisse in Croce ; ma tutti gli atti ella espressa della passione, tutti i successi, tutti gli accidenti ; et così tutti i dolori ad uno, ad uno distinti, et specificati. Di maniera che così come con tanti chiodi gli comando, che fosse crocifisso ; così che tante spine gli havessero a trasfiger il capo, et con tanti colpi di flagelli havessi il suo corpo ad esser ferito et lacerato, ne gli assegnati luoghi del corpo : ove haveano le spine ad esser fitte nel capo, et i flagelli a percotere il corpo con tanta grandezza di colpo, di ferita, et di dolore. Cadde sotto la medesima obediencia, il numero, la qualita, la gravezza delle ingurie, che gli furono

dette e fatte : col tempo, col luogo, con la determinata assignatione delle persone, che intervenir vi dovevano : ò ad esserne autori, ò ad approvarle, ò farle maggiori con la presentia. Conteneva quella parimente tutto quello, che esso figlio di Dio havea in queste occorrenze da fare, e da dire : e la quantita e la qualita della pena e cordoglio che n'havesse a pigliare e dentro all'animo e fuori nel corpo. Et tutto in somma quel che in fatti intravenne, che appor- tasse dolore a Christo ; era a lui comandato dal Padre, e tutto da lui fù, con volontà e effetto obediente, abbracciato. No vi avertite, che egli stesso l'accennò dicendo. Et sicut mandatum dedit mihi Pater sic facio ? Se ei fece in quella stessa maniera, che gli havea il Padre comandato ; adunque tutte le cose, col modo di quelle che egli patendo operò, caddero sotto l'obedientia. Una che ve ne fosse mancata, non havrebbe egli compitamente fatto come il precetto paterno conteneva, ne havrebbe potuto dire con verità ; *Opus consummavi, quod dedisti mihi ut faciam*. Et però sul fine liberamente disse. Consummatum est. O eccellenza rarissima della Passione di Christo, ò nobilissima santita de suoi dolori. L'obedientia tutti li adorna, tutti li arricchisse tutti li fa di virtù mirabile oltra mondo. Aggiunge l'apostolo all'obedientia l'humiltà, perche questa obedientia si distese a d'una humilissima operatione. Che quantunque l'obedire non sia mai senza humiltà, perche chi altrui obedisce, a lui si humilia ; allhora nondimeno più l'humiltà risplende, quando in atti humilissimi e in vilissime operationi si ubbidisce. E humiltà di obedientia anco il ricevere un' honore, e una dignità, o in fare operatione honorata e gloriosa ; come di predicare, di orare, di combattere, di fare una eccelletissima pittura, cose che apportano honore. Ma possi per obedientia una persona grande, e nobilissima, a servire all'Hospedale, ne i piu vili esercitii, che vi s facciano ; sopportare di esser un santo e virtuoso, tenuto per un gran scelerato, e per un infame ; morire l'innocente per mano di giustitia, ingiustissimamente ; della piu vergognosa morte, che s dia a i maggiori ribaldi ; con riputatione e stima di tutti, che quella codannagione sia giusta ; Questo è grandissima humiltà, e perche é obedientia, e perche l'opra per se è bassissima ignominiosa, e tutta dishonore. Tale, e molto più di quello si puo dire, e pensare, e stata

la Passion di Christo ; e però illustrissima di infinita oscurità di bassezza, e di humiltà. Hor ecco quelle sacratissime parole di S. Paolo ! *Cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est, esse se aequalem Deo ; sed semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens. Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.* Apparisce pur l'humiltà etiandio nel modo del patire, il quale è tutto vile, mansueto, benigno, humile. Non si mostra il mansueto. Agnello ansioso di manifestar la sua innocenza, sol fà, quanto il Padre gli comanda, per ammonire i persecutori e far accorti gli altri. Aspetta di essere da altri giustificato. Così giusto lo confessano, ciuda che l'ha tradito, Pilato che'l condanna, e la moglie del Giudice : la quale gli manda a dire, *Nihil tibi et iusto illi.* Et all'ultimo il Centurione che dice a pié della Croce ; *Vere hic homo justus erat.* Non s lamenta de'torti, che gli son fatti ; ma o tace, o parla humilissimamente. Quello adempiedosi, ch'egli prima nel Salmo havea predetto ; *Ego autem tamquam surdus non audiebam, e sicut mutus non aperiens os sum, e non habens in ore suo redargutiones.* Non minaccia, *Qui cum male diceretur no maledicebat ; cum pateretur, non comminabitur.* Et tutti i gesti' i costumi, i garbi, le parole, li sguardi, tutto di humiltà risplende, O nobile virtù, molto a questi santi dolori convenevole. Questa fa singolare l'obedientia, la quale obedientia illustra la carità, e tutte tre santificano i dolori di Christo. De quali la carità è la fonte onde nascono ; l'obedientia, è canale, per dove scorrono : e vaso e l'humiltà, ove son ricevuti. L'altra virtù, che a queste s'aggiungne, per far il quadro perfetto è la patientia e fermezza, la quale ogni avversità costantissimamete sopporta. Onde e all'Agnello, e alla pietra, e il buon Gesu rassomigliato. All'Agnello, che non s'accende ad ira, contra chi lo so fa e porta al macello : onde e da Isaia Profeta, e da Gio. Battista, e chiamato Agnello ; e Geremia in figura di lui già disse : *Ego quasi Agnus mansuetus, qui portatur ad victimam.* Alla pietra è rassomigliato, per la invicibile e inconcussa fortezza sua : Uditelo in Isaia. *Dominus Deus aperuit mihi aurem, ego autem non contradico : Retrorsum non abii ; corpus meum dedi percutientibus, et genas meas vellentibus : faciem meam non averti ab increpantibus, et conspuentibus in me : Dominus Deus auxiliator meus, ideo non sum confusus, ideo posui faciem*

meam, ut petram durissimam, et scio, quoniam non confundar. Vedete, come la patientia ancora viene dall'obedientia? Dominus Deus aperuit mihi aurem: ego autem non contradicere retrorsum non abii. Ne hò dice egli, all'obedientia replicato ne punto mi son ritirato di farla: havendomi Iddio stesso aperto l'orecchio ad ogni suo precetto, per lo quale hò alle percosse offerto il mio corpo, le guancie alle guanciate il volto a'sputi, la barba a chi me la pela: e confortato dal Divino aiuto, a guisa di durissima pietra, ho posta la faccia mia. O invittissima patientia, o insuperabile fortezza. Ecco i quattro cantoni, e le quattro corna dell'Altare, ove si è fatto questo gratissimo sacrificio dell'Agnello immacolato: la carità, la obedientia, la humiltà, la patientia. Le due prime sono come cause, le ultime come effetti, o come circostanze, e modi del patire. La Carità e la Obedientia hanno lo mosso a pigliare i dolori: Con Humiltà e con Patientia li ha presi, portati, e sopportati. La Carità nel cuore, l'Obedientia nell'opera: Humilta in se, la Patientia congli altri. Infinite sono le virtù, compagne e ornamenti di questi santissimi dolori: perche l'effetto loro e la distruttione di tutti quanti peccati, contra la cui caterva combattono le sante virtu. Ne è virtu Christiana e vera, che a noi non derivi da questo sacro fonte de i dolori di Gesù Signor nostro. Adunque in lui primiera e nobilissimamente sono le celesti virtù.

Ma le quattro nominate sono le basi della Passione, e di tutte le altre perfettione di quella. I fonti di quella non potevano essere ne piu nobili, ne più eccelsi, ne più generali, ne più potenti, ne più santi di questi due, che sono la carità e l'obedienza. . . .

EXTRACTS FROM P. YVES DE PARIS :

La Théologie Naturelle

I

DISCOURSE APOLOGETIQUE

La raison naturelle est le dernier effort de nostre puissance, qui attend sa perfection de celle de Dieu, et une disposition

que nous devons apporter pour recevoir la faveur de ses lumiers : Parce que soit en la grace ou en la nature, Dieu n'assemble pas ordinairement les choses extremes, sans les faire venir aux aproches dans un milieu qui en appaise la contrariété. Or la raison est moyenne entre la premiere Verité divine et l'ignorance du mode materiel : C'est donc par son entremise que les creatures dont elle fait l'horison, se reünissent à leur origine, et l'homme à Dieu. Voicy l'explication de ce mystere. Le Verbe eternelle, cette source inepuisable de lumiers, se communique premierement aux esprits bienheureux, et leur donne une tranquille etendue de toutes les connoissances qui seruent a leur felicité ; puis il repand son rayon, et met son portraict dessus les corps ; il esclate dans les Astres ; il eclaire dans le feu ; il brille dans les pierreries ; il se rend adorable dans les beautez ; il commande dans les instincts des brutes et des plantes ; et termine enfin son abaissement en l'ordre du monde, qui est l'image de la raison, en la transparence de l'air et de l'eau, et en la diversite des couleurs qui nous rendent les objets visibles. De là ce rayon divin voulant remonter à son principe, il gagne nos sens par les delices de tous ces objets ; qui donne de l'amour à la raison, et l'oblige à la recherche de la veritable beauté, dont le monde n'est que le tableau. Et comme la volonté soupire apres ce souverain bien, comme l'entendement cherche son repos dans la premiere verité, l'ame deja relevee au dessus des choses mortelles, n'a plus besoin que d'un petit rayon de la Foy divine, qui l'unisse à Dieu, et luy donne le moyen de clorre ce beau cercle de lumiere par son retour dans le Verbe.

De cette union naist la ressemblance ; parce que, comme le soleil enuoyant son rayon sur la glace d'un miroir qui a déjà d'elle-mesme quelque éclat, y fait un nouveau ciel où il peint sa face ; ainsi quand la Foy survient à la raison naturelle, elle perfectionne l'image de Dieu dans l'ame, et l'éleue à une condition qui raporte au principe de la verité. Toutes choses sont une dans l'idee de Dieu ; et l'ame eclairee de cette double lumiere, decouvre une mesme raison dans les mysteres de la Foy, et la conduite du monde ; si bien que faisant en elle-mesme le rapport de ces choses

qui paroissent si differentes, elle s'approprie la Religion, et consacre la Philosophie.

Si nous pouvions atteindre ce point, de montrer que la Foy n'a rien de directement contraire à la raison, qu'elle est d'une mesme intelligence, pour nous porter à l'adoration de Dieu ; nous attirerions tout le monde à l'Eglise, parce que la raison naturelle est une en tous ; et en faisant le mariage avec la Foy, nous metons tous les hommes qui tiennent de ces deux parties, dans une mesme alliance. Au contraire, si la Foy declare une guerre ouverte à la raison, que d'un empire absolu elle fasse passer ses loix sans gagner le consentement par quelque sorte de deference ; elle irrite les esprits et reueille la passion, où les hommes s'emportent pour la deffence de leur liberté. Les Roys ne diminuent rien du droit de leurs Sceptres quand ils font verifier leurs Edits aux Parlements, afin de les faire recevoir avec moins de contradiction du peuple, luy faisant paroistre qu'ils ne se seruent de leurs puissances qu'avec toutes les considerations de la Justice.

Je croy que nous voyons un grand nombre de Libertins, parce que le malheur de nostre siecle condamne une profonde science comme des reveries de Philosophe, et veut reduire toute la doctrine aux premieres apprehensions qu'on a d'un sujet. Peut-estre que les esprits qui ne peuvent porter le travail necessaire à la recherche de la verité, donnent cours à ces opinions pour se flater dans leur impuissance ; ou que l'interest du corps, pour lequel se traitent toutes les affaires du monde, partage trop avantageusement le temps, et n'en laisse pas assez à une estude, qui trauerferoit ses plaisirs, par la retraite, et par les reproches dont elle persecute les consciences coupables ; ou bien parce que les hommes ayant commencé leurs connoissances par les sens, ils se treuvent engagez par une mauvaise coutume a suivre toujours leur conduite, sans prendre conseil de la raison. Enfin parce qu'ils se laissent tellement emporter à la violence de leurs passions, que leur course qui devance le vol du temps, et precipite leur vie, ne leur permet en passant qu'une veue confuse de ce que les choses naturelles

monstrent au dehors, sans s'informer de leurs qualitez, de leurs sympathies, quel est leur principe, et quelle est la fin generale et particuliere où elles pretendent.

C'est pourquoy, pour donner quelque remede à ces grands abus, j'ai dessein d'arrester les esprits sur l'exacte consideration des merveilles de la Nature, d'entrer dedans ses conseils, d'examiner ses conduites, et ne laisser point de partie au monde, dont nous n'apprenions les qualitez et les sympathies. Cette contemplation nous fera voir les choses sensibles d'un autre œil qu'elles ne paroissent au commun des hommes. Par tout nous admirerons une secrete puissance qui soutient leurs vies, qui perfectionne leurs estres, qui anime leurs actions : nous nous trouverons enuironnes d'une lumiere infinie, et parmy les ravissemens de nostre esprit, nostre cœur ne pourra refuser de profondes adorations à la Majesté divine.

Je scay bien que plusieurs ont raporté sur cete matiere les raisons dispersees dans les Liures des anciens, et entassees dans les thresors de la Theologie ; mais parce qu'ils ne les expliquent qu'avec des termes qui tiennent beaucoup de l'Escole, elles sont comme ces gros diamans bruts, et qui n'ont pas encore receu le poly ; de grand prix et de peu d'eclat. Come il n'y a que les maistres des sciences qui reconnoissent la beauté de ces discours, les esprits communs demeurent confus dans la generalité des propositions, et prennent les consequences particulieres qu'on en tire pour un ieu de paroles dont ils se gaussent, et pour un artifice qu'ils pensent vaincre en luy opposant une negative sciences.

C'est pourquoy nous deguiseons ce que la Philosophie a de rude, afin de gagner les esprits rebelles autant par condescence que par la necessité du raisonnement, et terminer le combat par une victoire, qui seroit moins glorieuse pour nous, si elle n'estoit agreable à nos ennemis.

La curiosité naturelle que nous avons de scavoir une grande diversité de choses, n'est pas satisfaite du rapport que nous font les sens des objets exterieurs, si la raison n'en concoit les causes, et ne va reconnoistre les effects iusques dans les intentions de leurs principes. Cette passion de

scavoir la raison de tout, est si forte dans les grands esprits, que l'estude qui la contente leur tient lieu de toutes les delices du monde ; et au contraire, son ignorance leur est une gehenne insupportable. C'est pourquoy un Philosophe se precipita dedans l'Euripe, par un desespoir de ne pas entendre la cause de ces reflux si reglez en leurs inconstances ; et l'autre aima mieux mourir en se laissant consommer aux flammes du mont Ethna, que de viure et ne pas scavoir comment cet embrasement se pouvoit entretenir sans consommer sa matiere. Mais apres que nostre esprit a fait ses courses dans l'ordre du monde, qu'il a decouvert les artifices de la Nature, et la dependance de ses parties ; il doit arriver iusques à une premiere cause, qui serue de port à ses penibles recherches, comme elle est le principe et la fin de tous les estres. Autrment de s'arrester à une cause finie sans passer plus autre, ce seroit admettre le vuide dans le monde, et dans nostre connoissance ; terminer le long chemin des estudes par un precipice ; et n'avoir beaucoup appris, que pour moins scavoir.

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DE LA BEAUTE ET DE L'AMOUR (*Chapitre xxvii*)

Comme les perfections de l'unité divine, dont nous avons parlé, ne se peuvent concevoir, parce qu'elles font dans l'infiny ; ainsi de l'union des choses corporelles qui en est l'image, il naist un certain lustre que nous appellons beauté, si ravissante entre les objets sensibles, que nostre raison a trop peu de force pour expliquer sa nature, et pour se defendre de ses charmes. Elle paroist premierement sur les choses, dans l'union desquelles la diversité se rend remarquable, comme en l'email des pres, dans les bigarures de l'iris, aux plumes changeantes des oyseaux, aux taches des pantheres, aux jaspes, les differences des proprietes, des mouvemens, des effets qui font les coloris du tableau de la Nature. C'est ce qui fait que nous recevons de la complaisance au recontre des lieux champestres, des solitudes sauvages, des jardins irreguliers, des voyages en plusieurs pais, des sciences melées ; et c'est pourquoy l'inconstance se

nourrit du flux et reflux de ses opinions, qu'elle fait son plaisir de sa misere, en agreant des defauts qui luy montrent des nouveautéz.

Mais la beauté est dans un degré de plus haute perfection, et elle enuoye des attraits bien plus penetrans, quand les qualitez des corps forment une union si estroite, et un mélange si accomply, que du rencontre de ce qu'elles ont de rare, il en rejalt un lustre qui ne monstre point de diversité. Un fin diamant qui n'eclaire pas seulement de la fade et blesme lumiere du crystal, mais dont les esclats sont vifs, et qui bluete d'un feu vigoureux, satisfait beaucoup plus la veuë que les changeantes couleurs des opales, et la marqueterie des porphires. Les contentemens de l'estude ne sont point solides, et ses emplois ont moins de travail que de plaisir, si l'on ne void dans des principes generaux ceux des diverses sciences, ou s'embarassent les esprits vulgaires. Ainsi les lis et les roses mignardement meslées sur le poly d'un visage bien compasse par les mains de la Nature, donnent jour a cette douce beauté, dont les hommes se sont fait un impitoyable idole, qu'ils croyent ne pouvoir estre seruie que par le sacrifice de leurs libertez et de leur cœurs.

Toutes les autres passions naturelles ne se piquent que pour des objets qui soustiennent l'estre, qui flattent les sens de qualitez rapportantes au temperament de leurs organes, et pour des actions importantes à leur conservation : la beauté n'a rien de ces appas mercenaires : ses attraits sont purs ; elle n'est aymee que pour elle-mesme, et si elle gagne les cœurs sans leur promettre de l'utilité, c'est parce qu'elle est une image du bonheur ou nous devons posseder toutes les delices sans indigence. On ne seroit pas prodigue de ses biens, de sa vie, de sa reputation pour ce seul respect, si elle n'estoit une image, et si elle n'auoit quelques traits du souverain bien.

Il ne nous est pas possible d'euiten ces impertinences, et iustifier les desseins de la Nature aux mouvemens qu'elle nous imprime, si nous n'adorons une souveraine Beauté,

sans composition, sans défaut, éternelle, immuable, toute acte, toute vertu, toute perfection ; qui dans une Unité infinie, comprenne toutes les excellences, et tous les charmes dont les choses matérielles monstrent les assais : c'est elle qui par une complaisance éternelle, est tout ensemble à elle-mesme le principe et l'objet de son amour. C'est elle, qui par sa fécondité fait couler les Estres dans la Nature, et qui les rappelle par sa bonté, en estant et le principe et la fin, par un cercle de lumière qu'elle continue sans interruption. Si les beautéz mortelles ont des attraits, c'est parce qu'elles sont l'image de ce principe. Nos ames qui tiennent le degré supérieur de la Nature, et qui ne doivent avoir de l'amour que pour ce dont elles peuvent tirer de la perfection, ne se monsteroient pas si passionées pour ces objets périssables, si ce n'estoit que leur lustre rapporte à l'idée qu'elles ont d'une beauté originaire, et qu'en son absence elles tirent de la consolation de voir son image.

De là vient que les premières flammes de l'amour paroissent innocentes, et que ses premiers feux portent les courages à de généreuses entreprises. Elles reveillent l'ame des langueurs de l'oisiueté, luy donnent l'invention des sciences, des arts, la politesse des moeurs, et y produisent les mesmes effets qu'on dit avoir esté repandus par la lumière sur l'ancien chaos. En ce commencement l'amour se contente de luy mesme : sa fin, c'est d'aymer, et ses mouvemens n'eschappent jamais à la raison, que quand ils la passent par des excez qui luy font voir quelque chose de divin dans l'objet aymé, et qui la tiennent dans une suspension de puissance, comme si elle estoit en possession du souverain bien. Mais cette pureté s'altre bien tost par les secondes affections qui touchent les sens et les appetits dont la Nature assortit les animaux pour la conservation de l'espece. Néanmoins de quelques artifices que cette passion devenue brutale, couvre ses ardeurs ; de quelques charmes et de quelques voluptéz qu'elle les anime, les amans reconnoissent leur servitude, si ce n'est par le libre discours de la raison, au moins par la gesne de ses sentimens : Ils arrousent leurs plaisirs de larmes, les gemissemens et les inquietudes troublent leur repos ; ils palissent comme des coupables, et leur ioye n'est qu'un symptome de leur phrenesie. Car

comme le corps animé souffre continuellement une secrète douleur sous la violence des contraires qui le composent : ainsi l'ame endure d'estranges convulsions par ces amours illegitimes, qui combattent ses naturelles inclinations.

Il n'est pas possible que le courage de l'amour ne croisse à la veue continuelle de son objet, estant animé par tant d'attraits et tant de faveurs : aussi la force surmonte toutes les difficultez, et gagne autant de victoires qu'elle a d'entreprises. La premiere et la plus signalee, c'est d'appaiser les revoltes des passions, de mettre la paix dedans l'ame, et d'y faire recevoir les ordonnances du Ciel sans contredit. C'est, peut-estre, ce que signifie la Planete de Venus, qui paroissant de moins forte complexion et n'ayant en propre qu'une humidité obeissante, arreste néanmoins les fougues de Mars, et corrige l'impetuositè de ses influences. On se plaint ordinairement que les passions troublent l'ame, qu'elles ostent le conseil à la raison, qu'elles desarment la vertu, et luy font perdre la poursuite de ses desseins: Et on ne void pas que ce desordre procede du defect de l'amour de Dieu, comme les langveurs arrivent en la Nature par l'eclipse du Soleil, et les seditions dedans les Estats par l'absence de ceux qui les gouvernoient. Que l'homme ayme Dieu, admirant les merveilles de ses oeuvres dans la Nature, voyant tous les jours les traits de sa Providence en l'oeconomie du monde, se laissant conduire aux lumieres interieures, aux attraits de graces, et aux sentimens de pieté qu'il imprime au coeur, il iouyra d'une paix qui passe tout ce que nostre imagination se peut figurer d'heureux. Le monde luy paroist tout autre qu'à l'ordinaire : il respire un air plus doux, comme au sortir d'une maladie, et à l'entrèe du Printemps ; il luy semble qu'il se soit fait un renouvellement general de la Nature, et il le figure dedans les choses le changement qui s'est fait en luy. Rien ne le choque, mais tout flate ses sentimens, tout s'accorde à son humeur ; à cause de l'extreme deference qu'il rend à la Sagesse qui l'ordonne, ou qui le permet ainsi : et vous diriez qu'il iouysse du privilege de la Nature superieure exempte de contrarieté.

INDEX

- Acaric, Madame, II, 266
 Agathange et Cassien, B., II, 384
 Albacina, I, 53 ; Constitutions of, 94
 Alcantarines, I, 167, 214
 Alfieri, Minister General, I, 28
 Ancona, Marches of, I, 19, 27, 28
 Angelico Fra, wandering preacher, I, 35, 43
 Angelus Pamel, Father, in English prison, II, 337
 Anselmo da Pietramolara, I, 189, 207
 Antonio Zaccaria, San, I, 162
 Apennines, I, 26
 Apostolic Missions, in Germany, II, 290 ; in Poitou, 263 ; in France, 257
 Apostolic Syndics, I, 87
 Archange de Lyon, Père, I, 241
 Archange de Pembroke, Father, labours in England, II, 337
 Archangel Forbes, a Calvinist, II, 323 ; friar in Belgium, 324f.
 Archangel Leslie, "the Scotch Capuchin," II, 331f. ; in Italy, 333 ; in Scotland, 334
 d'Aremberg, Antoine (Frère Charles), II, 344f.
 Augsburg, II, 294
 Barnabites, I, 160f. ; II, 351
 Belgian Province, foundation of, I, 207f. ; II, 322, 344
 Benedictines, relation to Franciscans, I, 24
 Benedictine Nuns, reform of, II, 267
 Bernardino, San of Siena, I, 28f. ; 86, 88
 Bernardino d'Asti, I, 77, 80, 93, 99, 102f., 108, 112, 116f., 141, 149, 165
 Bernardino da Colpetrazzo, I, 164 ; II, 434
 Bernardino da Reggio, I, 60f.
 Blessed Sacrament, Confraternity of, I, 206
 Bonaventura, St., study of by Capuchins, I, 187f. ; II, 403f.
 Boncompagni, Ugo, I, 158
Bottega di Cristo, I, 159
 Boverius, annalist, undue influence of, II, 431
 Brief, *Dudum siquidem*, I, 114 ; of Julius III, I, 165 ; of Gregory XIII, I, 201
 Bull, *Religionis zelus*, I, 50, 65ff., 102 ; *In Suprema*, 78 ; *Exponi vobis*, 111, 114 ; *Regimini Universalis*, 113 ; *Pastoralis officii cura*, 168
 Calabria, I, 61, 96 ; Recollets, 68
 Calatjnd, Pedro de, II, 405
 Calvinists, I, 215 ; II, 274f., 257, 265, 284, 346
 Camaldolese, I, 40ff., 105, 181
 Camerino, Bishop of, I, 42, 51 ; Caterina, Duchess of, I, 33, 37, 41, 83, 126 ; plague of, I, 118, 147
 Canfield, Benet, I, 221, 234, 240 ; II, 266ff., 337, 411, 421ff.
 Canons Regular, I, 25, 83
 Capuchin, name, I, 56 ; manner of life, 57, 152f. ; spirit, II, 397 ; austerity, I, 196 ; habit, 21, 49 ; cloak, 180 ; Constitutions, I, 53, 182 ; expansion, 120, 196f. ; II, 284 ; attraction of, II, 349, 370 ; first Chapter, 92 ; application for suppression of, 72 ; parochial duties, 154 ; studies, 154 ; II, 401 ; influence in Catholic Reformation, 220 ; French politics, 227f. ; relation to Observants, 73, 89f. ; study of St. Bonaventura, II, 405 ; preaching I, 54, 157 ; II, 351, 362 ; diplomats, II, 286, 297, 315 ; expansion in Belgium, 207 ; II, 322, 344 ; in France, 198 ; in England, II, 337f. ; in

- Germany, 285f. ; Holland, 346 ; in Ireland, 329 ; in Italy, 60, 118, 123f. ; Scotland, II, 331 ; Spain, 212 ; Switzerland, 214, cf. Foreign Missions ; mystical piety, II, 399, 417f.
- Capuchinesses, foundation of, I, 124
- Caraffa, Card. Vincenzo, I, 66, 68 ; and fra Bonaventura, I, 76 ; family, I, 127
- Caraffa, Gian Pietro, I, 74, 109 ; and Ochino, 129f.
- Carlo Borromeo, San, I, 176, 191
- Carnesecchi, Pietro, I, 128, 131
- Cassien et Agathange, Martyrs, II, 384
- Chablais, labours in, II, 274f.
- Chapter, of Reform, I, 52 ; General (1532), I, 69 ; of 1541, I, 125
- Charles V, I, 98
- Cherubin de Maurienne, Apostle of Chablais, II, 276f.
- "Christ's Shop," I, 159
- Chronologie historique*, II, 256
- Cibo Catarina, Duchess of Camerino, I, 18, 37, 130
- Cingoli, Conventual Friars at, I, 39
- Clement V, I, 71, 94 ; Clement VII, I, 17, 31 ; brief of suppression, I, 64, 81, 84, 91, 96f., 110
- Clement VIII, II, 278
- Colmenzone, beginning of Reform at, I, 51
- Colonna, Vittoria, I, 83, 92, 99f, 100, 107ff., 113 ; letter to Paul III, 126
- Commission of Cardinals, on relation of Observants and Capuchins, I, 99
- Compagnia dei Servi dei Puttini, I, 161
- Confraternity of Blessed Sacrament, I, 206
- Constantine de Barbançon, II, 420
- Constitutions of Albacina, I, 53, 94
- Contarini, I, 99, 109
- Conventuals, I, 28f., 49 ; Reformed, I, 73, 87, 123 ; separate from Observants, 28, 167, 189
- Converts' Aid Society, II, 341ff.
- Corsica, I, 123
- Council of Trent, I, 168
- Cupis, di, Card., I, 103
- Daly, Stephen, missionary in Ireland, II, 329
- Deschamps, Pierre, I, 198f.
- Diplomats, Capuchin, Lawrence of Brindisi, II, 286-296 ; Giacinto da Casale, II, 297-306 ; Valeriano Magno, II, 315f.
- Discalceati, I, 65, 67 ; Spanish, I, 88, 166, 197, 220
- Dominican, influence on Br. Elias, I, 24
- Donauworth, II, 293
- Dudum siquidem*, Brief, I, 114
- Edict of Nantes, I, 238
- Edict of Paul III, I, 201
- Edict of Restitution (1667), II, 314 ; revocation of, 316f.
- Egidio da Orvieto, I, 155
- Elia, Sant' in Galatri, I, 170
- Elias, Brother, I, 24, 26, 62, 150
- England, Capuchins in, II, 337 ; Gunpowder plot, 337 ; at court of Charles I, 337f. ; at Somerset House, 339 ; effect of policy of Joseph du Tremblay, 339
- Eusebio d'Ancona, I, 152 ; warning to young preachers, I, 165 ; his generalate, I, 167
- Exponi vobis*, Bull of Paul III, I, 111, 114
- Fabriano, I, 44
- Fano, Giovanni da, I, 19, 35f., 81 ; II, 399
- Felice da Cantalicio, San, I, 173ff.
- Fidelis of Sigmaringen, S., II, 321
- Filles du Calvaire*, II, 377
- "Flying Squadrons" missionary, II, 282
- Foreign Missions, I, 186 ; II, 370 ; Algiers, II, 374 ; Constantinople, 374 ; Maranhao, 376 ; Palestine, 379 ; Bagdad, 380 ; India, 381 ; Abyssinia, 383 ; Morocco, 385 ; Guinea, 386 ; New England, 387 ; Central Africa, 390 ; West Indies, 393 ; general extent of in seventeenth century, 395
- Foresti, Theodoro, II, 405
- Forty Hours' Devotion, I, 162, 205 ; II, 260, 264, 275f., 290, 358, 360
- Fossombrone, I, 52
- France, Capuchins in, I, 198 ; religious indifference of, II, 260
- Francesco da Bormeo, I, 215
- Francesco da Cartoceto, fra., I, 38

- Francesco da Jesi, I, 77, 80, 142ff.; II, 419
 Francis St., Testament of, I, 184
 Franciscan, ideal, I, 25, 29; organisation, 25; primitive life, 25; prophecies, 145; mysticism 185
 François de Sales, St., II, 275ff.
- Galizio, Marcantonio, II, 405f., 410
 Gallicanism, I, 226
 Germany, Capuchins and Counter-Reformation, II, 285ff.
- Giacinto da Casale, in Germany, II, 298; at diet of Ratisbon, 298; supports Catholic League, 299; sent by Gregory XV to Germany, 301; at court of Madrid, 302; meets Prince of Wales (later Charles I), 302; at Brussels, 303; sends Alexander d'Ales to English court, 303; in Paris encounters Joseph du Tremblay, 304; returns to Germany, 305; his preaching, 351, 356
- Giacomo da Molfetta, I, 158
 Giberti, Bp. of Verona, I, 120
 Giovanni da Stroncone, I, 28
 Girolamo da Narni, preacher, II, 345f.; sermon of 442f.
- Girolamo da Pistoia, I, 187; II, 402
 Girolamo Recalco, fra, I, 74
 Giuseppe da Ferno, I, 160
 Giuseppe da Leonissa, San, II, 375
 Glin, Fr. Columb, II, 330ff.
- Gonzaga, Card., Abp. of Mantua, I, 120
- Grain Shops, I, 164
 "Great Abbesses" of France, 266ff.
- Gregory XIII, I, 159; brief of, I, 201
 Guardian, meaning of, I, 69, note
- Habit, Franciscan form of, I, 21, 49
 Henri of Navarre, I, 223, 236
 Herschell, theory of light anticipated, II, 408
- Hieronymites, I, 51
 Holland, Capuchins in, II 346
 Holy Office, Congregation of, II, 263
 Honoré de Champigné, II, 253
 "Houses of Recollection," I, 78, 144
 Huguenots, I, 158, 210, 223, 229f.; II, 260f.
- Ideal, Franciscan, I, 25, 29
 Ignatius Loyola, St., I, 161, 177
 Innocent IV, I, 94
 Inquisition, Roman, I, 132
In Suprema, Bull, I, 78
 Ippolito da Bergamo, I, 208
 Ireland, Capuchins in, I, 197; II, 329; Dublin, Slane, Limerick, Drogheda, 330
 Italian Observants, I, 86
- Jansenism, II, 413f.
- Jerome de Laurens, II, 258
 Jesuits, I, 216, 219, 241; II, 274, 314, 319, 351, 388, 429
 Joannes Evangelista von Hertogenbosch, II, 404f.
- Jose, Fray, missionary, II, 394
 Joseph le Clerc du Tremblay, Père, II, 262, 304f.; and Richelieu, 306, 309; his character, 307; his mystical life of prayer, 308; and the Protestant Ascendancy, 308; and the Holy Land, 309; and Fr. Francis Nugent, 329; and the Conversion of England, 339; and Foreign Missions, 377, 389
- Joyeuse, Henri de (Frère Ange), I, 221f.; 232; II, 269
 Julius III, brief of, I, 165
- Lady of Compassion, Confraternity of our, II, 279
- Languedoc, Capuchins in, I, 210, 228f.; missions in, II, 264
- Laybrothers and preaching, II, 155
 League of Union (Protestant), II, 294; dissolved, 300
 League, Catholic, II, 294, 315
 Leonessa, S. Giuseppe da, II, 374
 Lepanto, battle of, I, 190
 Lindsay, Fr. Epiphanius, II, 335f., 339
- Ligeurs, Catholic, I, 210f., 215, 223f.
- Longa, Maria, I, 68
- Lorenzo da Brindisi, S., I, 231; II, 285ff.; preaches to Jews, 287; character of, 287; in Prague and Vienna, 288f.; and the Turks in Hungary, 291; leads the troops, 292; Stuhlweissenburg, 292; made General of the Order, 292; and Donauworth, 293; at Spanish Court, 295; in Munich, 296;

- his death, 296 ; his preaching, II, 351f.
- Louis, St., Province of, I, 206
- Ludovico da Fossombrone, I, 19, 42, 60, 72f., 81, 90f., 99, 105
- Ludovico da Reggio, I, 70f., 96
- Lunello, Vincenzo, I, 96
- Lutherans, I, 108f.
- Luzerne, I, 217
- Lyons Province, foundation of, I, 206
- Maddalennette, I, 257
- Mainardi, Pier Francisco, II, 368
- Manzoni, and the Capuchins, "*I promessi sposi*," II, 384
- Mario da Mercato-Seraceno, chronicler, II, 433
- Martin IV, Apostolic Syndics, I, 87
- Martin V, I, 28, 95
- Martire, Pietro, I, 137, 140
- Massaccio, I, 40
- Matteo da Bascio, biography, I, 17f. ; unrest of, 18 ; applies to Rome, 21, 30 ; meets Giovanni da Fano, 45 ; Vicar General, 56 ; resignation of, 59 ; 105, 106 note.
- Mattia da Salo, I, 203 ; II, 353 ; his preaching, 402f. ; method of prayer, 418
- Maurienne, Jean de, I, 236
- Maximilian, Duke, II, 294f.
- Medici, Catherine de, I, 200
- Mental, prayer, I, 261, II 418
- Milice chrétienne*, II, 310, 388
- Missions, Capuchin, II, 257f. ; Foreign, I, 186 ; II, 370
- Missions volantes*, II, 282f.
- Modena, Alfonso III, Duke of, II, 368
- Monti di Pieta*, I, 164
- Monti Frumentari*, I, 164
- Montmorcency, I, 229ff.
- Mysticism, in France, II, 266 ; Capuchin, II, 399, 417 ; Benet Canfield, 411ff., 421f.
- Nantes, Edict of, I, 238f.
- Naples, Capuchins in, I, 68
- Nicholas III, I, 94
- Nocera, Duke of, I, 70
- Nugent, Francis, II, 325 ; college at Lille, 326 ; defends mystic Johannes Tauler, 326 ; petitions for Capuchins for Britain, 327 ; at Douai, 327 ; founds settlement on Rhine, 328, 341 ; Charleville, 328 ; opposed by Joseph du Tremblay, 329
- Observance, "mitigated," "stricter," I, 27
- Observant, Reform, I, 19, 27, 28, 31
- Observants, Discalced, I, 21, note ; separation of Observants from Conventuals, I, 28 ; some become Capuchins, I, 62 ; Calabrian, 65 ; 71 ; and poverty, 71 ; difficulties in Venice, 74 ; Italian, 86, 87, 89
- Ochino, Bernardino, I, 75 ; joins Capuchins, I, 80, 91, 107, 109, 121f.
- Organisation, Franciscan, I, 25
- Orsini, Camillo, I, 83
- Ottoni, Lord Rainuzio, I, 37
- Pacifico, Fra, I, 38
- Pacifique de Provins, pioneer missionary, II, 379f., 388
- Paolo da Chioggia, I, 43
- Paolo da Salo, I, 203f.
- Paoluccio da Tricini, I, 27f.
- Paris Province, foundation of, I, 202
- Parochial duties and Capuchins, I, 154
- Pastoralis officii cura*, I, 168
- Paul III, I, 84, 92, 98 ; Bull *Exponi vobis*, 111, 114 ; *Regimini Universalis*, 113 ; Roman Inquisition, 132 ; Edict of, 201
- Paul IV, Pontificate of, I, 177
- Penitents, Capuchin, II, 368
- Philip Neri, St., I, 176
- Piedmont, Capuchins in, I, 124
- Pius IV, Bull, *Pastoralis officii cura*, I, 168
- Pizzotti, Paulo, I, 62f., 67, 71, 73, 78 ; forced to resign, 80, 84
- Plague, in Camerino, I, 18, 47 ; in Venice, 123, 190, 192, 194 ; in France, 270f. ; in Italy, 363f.
- Poitou, missions in, II, 263
- Pole, Cardinal, I, 133
- Politiques' Party, I, 210f.
- Portiuncula, I, 28
- Poverty, relaxation of, I, 25 ; law of, 29 ; place of, 153, 169
- Preaching, lay-brothers and, I, 155 ; Capuchin method of, I, 54, 157 ; II, 351, 362

- Predicatori litterati*, I, 156
 Prisoners' Aid Society, I, 164
 Propaganda Fide, II, 263, 355 note, 388
 Prophecies, Franciscan, I, 145
 Pucci, Cardinal, I, 42

 Quarant' Ore, I, 162, 205; II, 260, 264, 276f., 290, 358, 360
 Quinones, I, 43, 61f., 67, 79, 88, 98, 99f., 111, 116

 Raffaele, companion of Ludovico da Fossombrone, I, 39
 Ratisbon, diet of, II, 294, 298, 315f.
 Recollects, I, 61; Calabrian, 68
 Reform, cloister, II, 266
 Reform, Conventuals, I, 73, 123, 167
 Reformation, Catholic, Capuchin influence, I, 220, 257
Regimini Universalis, I, 113
Religionis zelus, Bull, I, 50, 65f., 102
 Religious Indifference in France, II, 260
 Renaissance, Rome of the, I, 31
 Restitution, Edict of, II, 314; revocation of, II, 316f.
 Rhaetia, I, 214
 Rhine Province, Capuchin, II, 328, 340
 Richelieu, II, 306
 Riformati, I, 65, 116, 220
 Rule, more importance than Order, I, 31
 "Rule of Perfection," Canfield, II, 268
 Russian Church, and reunion, II, 317

 Sanseverino, Card., defends Capuchins, I, 140
 Savoy, missionary province, II, 274, 282
 Scotland, Capuchins in, II, 331f.
 Seraphino da Montegranaro, Br., II, 350
 Sestola, Giovanni da, II, 361, 369
 "Seven Chapters," I, 67, 73
 "Seven Dialogues," I, 130
 Siena, Capuchin settlement in, I, 124
 Sillery, Jean-Baptiste Brullart de, I, 241f.
 Simony, I, 206; II, 263
 Sixtus V, I, 176, 225
 Spain, Capuchin provinces in, I, 212f.

 Speculation, Capuchin, II, 399
 Spirituals, tradition of the, I, 19, 23, 90, 145, 181f.
 Stefano da Molina, I, 77
 Studies, Capuchin, I, 154; II, 401
 Suppression, application for of Capuchins, I, 64, 65
 Syndics Apostolic, I, 87
 Switzerland, Capuchins on, I, 214

 Testament of St. Francis, I, 184
 Theatines, I, 109, 129, 132, 137
 Theological writings, Capuchin, II, 401f.
 "Théologie naturelle," la, of Yves de Paris
 Thirty Years' War, II, 297, 310, 344
 Tolerance, religious, unknown in seventeenth century, II, 299; Capuchins in Germany, II, 320
 Toulouse, Province established in, II, 209
 Trent, Council of, I, 168, 186
 Turks, crusade against, I, 188f.

 Union with God, method of, II, 399f.
 Urbino, Duke of, I, 45.
 Usurers, I, 159

 Valdez, Juan, I, 126f.
 Vaeriano Magno, II, 312f.; character, 313; writer and theologian, 313; Edict of Restitution, 314, 316f.; reunion of Russian Church with Holy See, 317; Poland and Bohemia, 318; his Apologia, 319; imprisoned, 319; student of St. Bonaventura, II, 407
 Vallais, conversion of the, II, 274, 279f.
 Valle, Giovanni, I, 27
 Vanzozi, I, 60
 Varani, Baptista, I, 47f.
 "Venetian Chapters," I, 76

 Wallenstein, II, 315
 Westphalia, II, 343

 Yves d'Evreux, missionary, II, 375
 Yves de Paris, II, 414f.

 Zacharie de Lisieux, II, 413

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