

CHAPTER XVII.

THE COMMUNISTS.

“Shelter France under the mystery of thy Face, and have mercy on her for the glory of thy Name.”

(Words of the Sister.)

Secret societies, the scourge of the French people and the sworn enemy of the Church of God, had long been plotting their destructive machinations. The entire world has been more or less poisoned by the pernicious influence of both political and religious sects, diametrically opposed to all law and order. France, unhappily, has been the centre, and the most active agent in the formation and encouragement of these diabolical institutions. It is from her midst, Paris especially, that the revolutionary and anti-social spirit has spread all over Europe, assuming different names at different epochs to suit the caprice of the moment; at one time styling themselves Socialists, then Liberals, and again Nihilists.

Toward the end of the reign of Louis Philip, at the period to which the life and communications of Sr. Mary St. Peter now lead us, they

bore the appellation of Communists. These by degrees had usurped the entire control of the press. They numbered among their party, illustrious writers, men distinguished in the schools of philosophy, and among the literati of the day, not a few of whom had endeavored to put their dangerous chimeras into execution. This sect, by its secret manœuverings, had rapidly increased. Silently and skillfully had they laid their subterranean mines; the moment for explosion was near at hand, those entrusted with their country's welfare seemed totally unconscious of the danger. France was asleep in the very mouth of a volcano. But the watchful child of Carmel, with an attentive eye to the wants of her country and the salvation of souls, raised the cry of alarm from the depth of her solitude and while pointing out the danger to the sacred sentinels, indicated the means of averting the catastrophe. The communications which she received on this subject form a series in themselves, with which the following extracts will make the reader sufficiently acquainted. On the 29th March she writes :

“God has imposed on me a new mission, at which I would be disturbed were I of any consequence, but as I am nothing but a feeble instrument in his all-powerful hand, I am not alarmed. He has commanded me to cross swords with the Communists, who, as he told me, were the sworn enemies of the Church, and of his Christ. He gave me to understand that the great-

er number of these renegades were born in the bosom of the Church, of whom they now declare themselves the most bitter enemies. Then he added : ' I have already made known to you that I hold you in my hands as an arrow, now I will shoot forth my arrow upon my enemies. To combat them, I give you the arms of my Passion, my Cross, of which they are the enemies, as also all the other instruments of my sufferings. Wage war against them with the simplicity of a child but with the courage of a valiant warrior. For this mission be signed with the blessing of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' ”

Then I besought the Blessed Virgin, she who is compared to the Tower of David with a thousand bucklers, to take charge of these arms which I had just received. Our Lord gave me more information on this subject, but it is too difficult to explain.—I exclaimed : ' Prepare me for the combat, O Lord ! and instruct me how to use these holy arms.' He replied : ' The arms of my enemies inflict death, but mine restore life.' ”

“ I frequently recited the following prayer : Eternal Father, to oppose thy enemies, I offer thee the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the instruments of his holy Passion, that thou mayst counteract them by divisions and discord ; for thy well-beloved Son hath said : ' Every kingdom divided against itself shall perish.' ”

It is now that our little sister has entered

the arena; her arms are the cross and the instruments of the Passion. With these she resists the attacks of the enemies of God. To encourage her in this mystic combat, the Saviour reveals to her the designs of the Sectarians, and their anti-christian principles.

On Holy Thursday, April the first, he said : " The soldier who knows the object of the war in which he is engaged, aware of the insult offered his prince, arms himself fearlessly to avenge the affront. Well, my daughter, it is the Communists who have dragged me from my tabernacles, profaned and despoiled my sanctuaries, and have even dared to raise their hands against the anointed of the Lord, but their designs shall be frustrated. Have they not committed the crime of Judas! Have they not sold me for silver! This knowledge should not remain sterile in your soul, for I give it you to help you in the combat. Be actuated with a spirit of simplicity, for if you reason too much, you will not be a fit instrument in my hands. Think rather of the glory which the heavenly court will render me for having made use of so worthless a creature in so noble a cause!"

" Observe, if you please, reverend mother, that Our Lord made me understand this yesterday; and to-day, Holy Thursday, a most memorable day, for it was on this day that he instituted the ineffable sacrament of the altar in which he is exposed to the outrages and the profanations of his enemies, I wish to make again an

honorable amend to my Divine Saviour in the sacrament of his love, in reparation for these sacrilegious outrages, which he so forcibly recalled to my mind and which, alas! I had too soon forgotten.”

Some days after she writes :

“I have entered the arena to combat the enemies of God ; my soul has recovered its calmness since I have received the banner of obedience, if I can thus express myself. I am secure under this standard, and I no longer fear the evil spirit. Jesus gives me grace and courage to remain firm at my post ; to-day after holy communion, he encouraged me to the combat and pledged himself to give me a cross of honor, which would open Heaven to me, if I were faithful. He also assured me that he would give me the gold of charity : I understood that he meant by this, tribulations which he in his mercy reserved for me, and that he would grant me the grace to suffer with patience and love. May his Holy Name be blessed ! But reverend mother, I have some remorse after having combatted the enemies of God with all my strength, during these three days. I shall explain myself : I am afraid that I have made use of imprecations against the enemy, although I am certain that the holy king David has done likewise, as we may perceive from his psalms : yet I am in doubt whether it be permissible for me to do the same. But I have said all that Our Lord seemed to inspire, if it be wrong, I shall do so no more.”

“ I begin by placing my soul in the hands of God, then I ask him to bend his bow and to shoot forth his arrows on his enemies that I may combat against them with his cross and with the instruments of his Passion in virtue of the holy Name of God. On this point arises my uneasiness with regard to the imprecations, for I have repeated the same words a hundred times, but I had no evil intention. These Communists are so malicious and vindictive that I wished to destroy their vices and I pray that virtue may triumph where vice has reigned. I said : Let God arise, let his enemies be dispersed, and let all those who hate him be scattered before his Face ! May the Name of God thrice holy upset all their schemes ! May the Sacred Name of the living God bring disunion and dissention in their designs ! May the terrible Name of God wipe out their iniquity ! ”

“ I also repeat many other invectives, and having fought them thus I add : ‘ I desire not the death of the sinner but that he be converted and live. Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. ’ I perform this exercise with great facility and without any disturbance of mind for I allow myself to be conducted by grace.”

It may be of interest to know the state of her interior during this period of generous labor for the salvation of souls, and the spiritual welfare of France ; we shall most certainly find that she has rendered an account to her superior. We quote the following :

“The way by which Our Lord now conducts me is most painful to nature, for my Divine Saviour continually exacts from me the most absolute interior mortification. I rarely experience any spiritual joy for the communications which I receive, are more of a nature to cause much suffering, as they unveil to my view the justice of an angry God, and the eternal loss of so many immortal souls, as well as the sight of France on the verge of the abyss. This Work of Reparation, I have now borne for nearly four years, and God alone knows how much suffering it has caused me, he himself being the author. Alas! It has not yet appeared upon the earth, and yet terrible calamities are menacing us. O my God! arise, and defend the cause which is thine as well as ours. Shelter France under the mystery of thy Face, and show her mercy for the glory of thy Name!’ I most firmly believe that the future of France depends on this work. It is always shown to me as the means of salvation which God, in his infinite mercy, has designed for her. I would shed even the last drop of my blood to obtain its establishment, for then, the anger of the Lord would be appeased, and a multitude of souls would be saved. Such are the sentiments with which he inspires me, and which I make known to you, reverend mother, to unburden my conscience. I declare that none other than God has given me this idea, and that I was perfectly ignorant of the establishment of a similar association at Rome,

which I did not know until long afterwards, and only by a special permission of Providence. I also declare that I have never been influenced by any one in demanding its establishment, but on the contrary, and thanks be to God, I have had the good fortune to receive from my worthy and prudent superiors, nothing but reprimands and humiliations because of this work. I likewise declare, that the unity of idea prevailing among these successive communications is due solely to God; and not to me, for I make a short note of each communication that I receive and present it to our reverend mother, then I feel relieved and think no more of it, except to pray God to accomplish his designs; I dare not converse about them with our mother superior for I am covered with confusion when I speak of these heavenly communications. When Our Lord first confided this mission to me, I begged of him the following graces which he has had the mercy to grant:—first, that of never entertaining sentiments of vanity because of the communications with which he favored me; and second, that of not being known as the instrument of the divine mercy.”

“Our Lord, himself, who conducts my soul in this way, convinces me of my misery and my utter nothingness, so that it would be impossible for me not to be covered with confusion at the sight of the extraordinary graces which I receive from his divine hand, notwithstanding my repeated ingratitude. To my worthy

superiors, I leave the care of establishing this work; as for me, my mission is to tell them all Our Lord says to me, to submit to their decision and to pray for the accomplishment of his designs for the glory of his Name. For this object, I have copied the letters containing these revelations. *Sit Nomen Domini benedictum.*"

Shortly after, she adds: "The object of this work is twofold: Reparation for blasphemy, and Reparation for the profanation of the Lord's Day by manual labor, consequently it embraces not only reparation for the outrages committed against God, but likewise the sanctification of his Holy Name. Here it will, perhaps, be asked if the devotion to the Holy Face should form a feature in the work? I answer, yes; for it is its most precious ornament and the source of its riches. Our Lord, himself, has given his most Holy Face to the associates, in order that this divine Face which is, so to say, outraged and despised anew by the blasphemy of sinners, as he himself complains, that this Holy Face be respected, honored and revered in a most particular manner. In the second place, Our Lord makes us a present of his most Holy Face, that we may thereby be all-powerful before the throne of God, by means of the offering which we would thus be able to make of this most august and sacred Face, the sight of which is so agreeable that it will infallibly appease his anger, and draw down his infinite mercy upon poor sinners. When the Eternal Father beholds the Face

of his well-beloved Son, bruised and covered with ignominy, when he looks upon this Sacred Head crowned with thorns, emblem of the sins of mankind which Jesus has taken upon his divine head to save his members (as he one day told me) this sight moves the very bowels of his mercy. Let us try to profit by such a precious gift, and beg of our Divine Saviour to conceal us in the secret of his Holy Face, during the wicked days of calamity about to befall us. O God! our Protector! Look upon us, and cast thine eyes on the Face of thy Christ!"

God did not break off his communications with the humble carmelite on the principal object of her mission. The divine Master, from time to time, suggested new motives of encouragement.

One day, May 5th, 1841, when she was asking him for the establishment of the Reparation, he replied that he would grant this grace through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin.

"Our Lord," said she, "informed me that he had placed all things in her hand, and that she would obtain the Brief from the Sovereign Pontiff. This Work of Reparation is so necessary for France and fraught with so much glory for God, that he desires his Holy Mother to have the honor of giving it to this kingdom, as a new pledge of mercy. Let us then have recourse to the most Blessed Virgin who is the treasurer of the graces of God.

Let us continually recall to her mind that France has been consecrated to her, consequently, that it belongs to her. Let us redouble our zeal for this work and let us not be disheartened. Our Lord has given me boundless confidence. *Sit Nomen Domini benedictum.*"

On the feast of Pentecost, May 23rd, while before the most Blessed Sacrament, the sister asked what more had she to do, and manifested her willingness to make any sacrifice, even to shed the last drop of her blood, were it necessary, for the establishment of the Reparation.

"Our Lord gave me to understand," she writes, "that his sole desire was to possess my heart and my will; that the more I would love him, the more grace I would obtain for the accomplishment of his designs. Soon this Divine Saviour took possession of all the powers of my soul, favoring it with a most admirable perception of the beauty and excellence of this reparatory work which I beheld as a mine of gold. Our Lord told me that it required much patience and care to work this mine, for it was only by dint of hard labor that we could obtain the gold. He also said: 'Oh! if the world could only behold the immense treasure to be reaped by those who work my mine, I would not be without laborers. Make known this communication.' Then my good Saviour, to console me, showed me that the work performed in this mine for four years, had not been without

fruit; and I saw that indeed the numerous prayers already distributed, for instance, the little Manual and the other prayers relative to the work, were like gold discovered in this precious mine, and Our Lord addressed me these consoling words, regarding the reparatory prayers: 'This new harmony has charmed my ears, delighted the angels, and appeased my wrath, but I shall not repeat again what I have said before; *I want the Work finished.*' "

"This encouragement has filled my heart with joy, while the tears covered my face, but they were tears of joy; then I answered: — 'My sweet Saviour, if I say you are no longer angry, I am afraid that your cause will be injured and the zeal of those who are as yet not very much interested, will be cooled.' Our Lord answered: 'Oh! my daughter, what have you just said! the contrary to what you imagine will happen; that soul must have very little love who would not be more inflamed with ardor to perfect a thing so agreeable to me that it subdues my wrath.' Then he gave me wonderful light on the sublimity of this Association and the preference with which he esteems it more than all others established in the Church, because of its object, to make reparation for all the outrages offered against the Divinity by blasphemy and by the profanation of the Sunday. He compared the first to the common wine used at the wedding of Cana, and the latter, to the

miraculous wine served at the end of the supper. I told him that there were many obstacles to his designs ; but he consoled me and assured me that all this opposition would only make it shine forth with a more resplendent glory, and that I should tell our motherprioress to continue to labor in its cause when she found a favorable occasion ; he gave me to understand that it required prayer, ardent desires and suffering.”

“ Behold, as nearly as possible, reverend mother, what has transpired in my soul. In conclusion, my Divine Saviour said : ‘It is to my holy Mother that you are indebted for the communication you have just received ; she has obtained it. Live Jesus and Mary forever!’” The day following the sister wrote : “The letter which, I remitted to you yesterday about the grace which I received from Our Lord concerning the work by excellence consecrated to the glory of his Name, does not satisfy me, for I still feel urged to speak ; the effects of this communication are so great, and have fortified my soul to such a degree, that earth and hell armed together against the work (if such a thing were possible) could not diminish my confidence. *If God be with us, who shall be against us ?* When the moment appointed by God will have come, all things will yield to his sovereign power. Oh ! How excellent is this work ! How sublime ! What immense benefits are reserved for the defenders of the Holy Name of God ! Would that

I could publish to the entire world all the truths my soul has learned on this memorable day of Pentecost by means of this celestial light which it is not given to mortals to express !”

“Why have I not the eloquence of a St. Bernard that I might win all men to enroll themselves in this holy crusade! In the early ages of the Church, the Lord raised up an army of courageous soldiers to combat the enemies of the Holy Land ; and his faithful servant St. Bernard preached this holy Crusade with marvelous success : but in our times, the same Lord demands courageous soldiers to defend his Holy Name, blasphemed and despised by his enemies. Alas! Shall he not find one ! It is not necessary to go to foreign lands and arm oneself with breastplate and buckler, nor to endanger one’s life. In our sacred militia the cross of Jesus Christ will be our arms, both offensive and defensive with which to attack, and to defend ourselves against these enemies ; and his sacred Name, full of virtue and power, will be our buckler of defence.”

“ But to succeed in this pious undertaking, we must address ourselves to the glorious Virgin Mary with a boundless confidence. Beg her to place herself at the head of this holy army, she the General of the armies of the Lord, more terrible than an army set in array ! It is this amiable Mother who has obtained for me, notwithstanding my unworthiness, the unheard of favor which I received yesterday

from her dear Son. May she be forever blessed ! Being at the feet of this august Mother, I felt inspired these two days, to invoke her under the title of Our Lady of the Holy Name of God. Then I composed a crown of seventy-two invocations, to honor the precious years of her holy life. At the end of each decade, I recalled to her these words which she pronounced in her divine canticle: *Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen ejus.* (He who is mighty hath done great things unto me, and Holy is his Name). After these words, I added : ‘ O most holy and most worthy Mother of God ! most powerful advocate of Christians ! I place the cause of the Holy Name of God into thy hands.’ I believe this little prayer touched the tender and compassionate heart of my Blessed Mother, for while offering it, I felt convinced that she accepted it.”

“ O holy Virgin ! ” said I, “ deign to receive this new title for thou art really Our Lady of the Holy Name of God, since thou art the Daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son and the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, and that thou dost thyself proclaim that he has done great things unto thee and that his Name is holy ! Verily, O Blessed Virgin Mary ! thou art the honor and glory of the Holy Name of God, for thou art the masterpiece of his hand, of him who has operated such wonders in thee. Therefore, I style thee, Our Lady of the Holy Name of God. Thus, reverend mother, I say

all that I can think of, to the most Blessed Virgin in order to win her favor for the Work of Reparation, if I can thus express myself, respectfully reminding her, that she, more than all others, is obliged to work for the honor and glory of Him who has favored her more than all his other creatures, and that I doubt not she will obtain for us the establishment of this work, which Our Lord has compared to the delicious banquet at the wedding of Cana. Let us remember that it was the most Blessed Virgin who obtained from her Son this miraculous wine. In the meantime, I humbly beg you to invite all who have at heart the establishment of this work, to salute with me this Holy Virgin under the title of *Our Lady of the Holy Name of God.*"

As a sort of "Remark on the glory of the most Blessed Virgin," the pious sister adds:

"Our Lord made me approach his most Holy Mother, to receive from her blessed hands the grace which I had been soliciting for such a length of time for the glory of the Holy Name of God. I placed myself with all confidence in the heart of this Mother of Mercy, begging her to be my advocate in the cause of God, earnestly recommending to her this great object, during the beautiful month entirely consecrated to her. I did not invoke her in vain; she beheld the tears of her little servant, she listened to her sighs and entreaties and soon inspired her servant, the Bishop de Langres, who heard the project spoken of,

to take the most lively interest in it. His zeal for the Holy Name of God urged him on to establish the Association. The rules were formed, June 28, 1847, on the vigil of the feast of the most holy Apostles, Sts. Peter and Paul; and what is quite remarkable, was that it was solemnly and canonically erected into an Association on the 16th of July, feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel."

"O powerful hands of Mary! it is you who have performed all, men have been but your instruments. I thank you a million times! Mayst thou be forever blessed! Let us admire another trait of Divine Providence and of the mercy of Mary; Mgr. the Bishop of Langres brought the plan of this Work in Reparation for Blasphemy and the violation of the Sunday before the Sovereign Pontiff, to obtain a Brief which would enrich this Association with the blessings and the indulgences of the Holy Church. Our Holy Father signed this Brief on the 27th of July, 1847, and a second the 30th, erecting the Association for Reparation into an Arch-confraternity. I look upon the Church with admiration bringing forth this work during those three days of sorrow. * I behold the mercy of God, superabound where sin hath abounded. Be forever blessed, O my God! All this has not occurred by hazard; thy Providence has conducted and directed all for the glory of thy Holy Name and for the salvation of

* Allusion is here made to three days of July.

France. Protect this work, which is thine, and defend it against its enemies. Propagate it in this kingdom consecrated to the glorious Virgin Mary."

We have not wished either to interrupt or abridge this pious and simple narrative of the sister, relative to a fact which has so happily crowned all her desires. There remains to us to relate some of the details connected with the principal circumstances of the formation of these societies.