was promulgated, the most noticeable points of which are the assertion that the church can constitute other impediments to matrimony besides the forbidden degrees of the Levitical code, and can dispense with such impediments ; that clerks in holy orders and regulars vowed to celibacy cannot contract valid marriage ; and that celibacy is superior to matrimony. The simultaneous decree on reformation lays down rules for the creation of bishops and cardinals, so as to avoid unfit promotions ; directs that diocesan synods shall be held yearly, and provincial synods trien- nially ; lays down rules for episcopal visitations, and for the quali­fications to be exacted of persons promoted to cathedral dignities and canonries ; appoints the provincial synod the judge of minor causes against bishops, referring graver causes to the pope’s de­cision ; and enacts various other technical regulations. By this time all concerned were thoroughly weary of the council, and the remaining matters for discussion were hurriedly discussed, result­ing, in the twenty-fifth and last session (December 3 and 4, 1563), in a decree, very cautiously worded, upon purgatory, the cultus of saints, and that of relics and images. In this same session was also enacted a decree in twenty-two chapters, regulating several matters affecting the discipline of convents of monks and nuns ; and another decree on reformation, in twenty-one chapters, the most important of which enjoin all cardinals and bishops to keep modest households, and not to enrich their kindred with church property ; that all prelates shall receive and publish the decrees of the council ; that duelling shall be prohibited under severe penal­ties ; and that the authority of the Holy See both is, an is to be understood to be, untouched by any decrees of the council touch­ing the reform of morals and discipline. On the last day of the session was passed a somewhat indefinite decree upon indulgences, forbidding all evil gains connected therewith, and directing that, wherever abuses or superstitions are prevalent concerning them, the bishops shall collect the facts, lay them before the provincial synod, and after discussion there refer them to the pope for ulti­mate decision. The distinction of meats, and the due observance of festivals and fasts, were also enjoined ; and a formal statement was made that the committees which had been engaged upon the index of prohibited books, on the draft of a catechism, and on the revision of the Missal and Breviary, thinking that the synod could not deal with them conveniently, had determined to lay their reports before the pope to ratify and publish at his pleasure. Formal acclamations, and an anathema against all heretics, closed the session ; and the legates, after forbidding any bishop, under pain of excommunication, to leave Trent till he had either signed his assent to the decrees, or left documentary proof of such assent, gave the blessing and dissolved the assembly.

Two hundred and fifty-five signatures were attached to the decrees, and also those of the ambassadors still remain­ing at Trent. The bull of confirmation was issued at Rome on January 26, 1564, and followed by another fixing May 1, 1564, as the date from which the decrees should be held binding. The bull of confirmation forbade all persons whatsoever, whether ecclesiastics or laymen, to gloss or interpret the decrees upon any pretext whatever, without papal authority for the purpose. The republic of Venice was the first power to signify its reception of the decrees, followed speedily by the other Italian states (except Naples) and by Portugal ; but the king of Spain, though receiving the decrees, issued them at first in his own name, and not in that of the pope ; the emperor and the king of Bohemia demanded the lay use of the chalice and the marriage of priests as the terms on which they would accept the council, and obtained a partial concession of the former demand, but were refused the latter ; and in France, while the dogmatic decrees were accepted, the disciplinary ones were not, and have never, in spite of efforts many times renewed, made part of French ecclesiastical law. The pro­vision referring the explanation of the council to the pope was given shape by Sixtus V., who erected in 1588 a Con­gregation of the Council of Trent to sit permanently at Rome, where it has ever since continued to be included amongst those standing committees which divide among them the administration of the pontifical government.

Two questions remain to be considered in relation to this great synod :—how far was it free, and representative of the mind of Latin Christianity at that time ? and what have been its effects upon dogma and discipline ? Ample materials exist for answering the first question, in the form of contemporary letters, either separately published, as those of Vargas, or included in the great collection of documents made by Le Plat, and in the official acts of the council itself, drawn up by the secretaries Paleotto and Massarelli. From these it is perfectly clear that the council was never free for a moment, but was hampered and fettered, not merely by the permanent fact of a large Italian majority, subsidized by the pope,@@1 but by the method of procedure in the congregations, since by a skilful distribution of the members into groups or classes, so as to prevent combined action, and by careful packing of the sub-committees to which the preparation of business for debate was entrusted, little could be done save when and how the majority pleased ; and, above all, the vigilant supervision exercised by the legates, their constant refer­ence to Rome of every point of any importance before they would permit it to come on for regular discussion (so that Lanssac, one of the French envoys, somewhat profanely said that the Holy Spirit was brought to the council in a carpet-bag from Rome), and their uncompromising use of their presidential authority to interrupt or silence un­acceptable speakers (as frequently appears in the Acts) effectually bound the council hand and foot ; and thus its decisions, as a whole, represent little more than the Italian and, to some extent, Spanish opinions of the time, and not those of German, French, or Hungarian Catholics. The demeanour of the legates differed much, and there is a wide interval between the open browbeating employed by Crescenzio and the high-bred dignity of Gonzaga or the diplomatic subtlety of Morone ; but the policy was alike in all cases, and its results the same. As to the dogmatic effect of the council, it went much further than merely restating the current Catholic theology of the pre­Reformation era ; for it marks a new departure, closing many questions previously left open (nothing is more noteworthy in the debates than the manner in which several divines of unquestioned ability and loyalty delivered themselves of opinions closely allied to those advocated by leading Reformers, and then still tenable within the Roman obedience), re-wording old propositions, or framing new ones, in an incisive fashion. It recovered for papal authority all it had lost, or was likely to lose, through the action of Basel and Constance ; and, above all, it unified Roman teaching for the first time, and crystallized it into rigid compactness. Thus it made concessions and explana­tions for the reconciliation of the revolted Protestants, although the primary cause of the council, practically im­possible thenceforward, since the Roman Catholic system, thus hastily consolidated out of a former condition of partial flux, became like a “ Prince Rupert’s drop,” from which, if the smallest fragment be broken, the mass is at once resolved into disintegrated powder. In the matter of disciplinary reform the council enacted but little of an effective nature, except in the abolition of the traffic in indulgences, and the establishment of theological seminaries, which has proved the most effectual agency for creating that doctrinal uniformity which now prevails throughout the Roman obedience ; and the real honours of the Counter­Reformation rest with the Jesuits, to whose unremitting diligence, powerful organization, and ceaseless precept and example must be attributed by far the larger part of the abatement of ecclesiastical abuses and scandals which marks the succeeding era. Doubtless, the Tridentine decrees, in strong and resolute hands, proved most useful subsidiary weapons to compel local reforms ; but decrees of little less stringency had been enacted by previous

@@@1 The Italian character of the council of Trent can best be exhibited by a classified table, showing the nationality of the bishops present in the later sessions:—Italians, 189; Spaniards, 31 ; French, 26; Greeks (titulars), 6 ; Portuguese, 3 ; Illyrians, 3 ; Irish, 3 ; Germans, 2 : Flemish, 2; Polish, 2; Croatian, 1; Moravian, 1; English, 1.