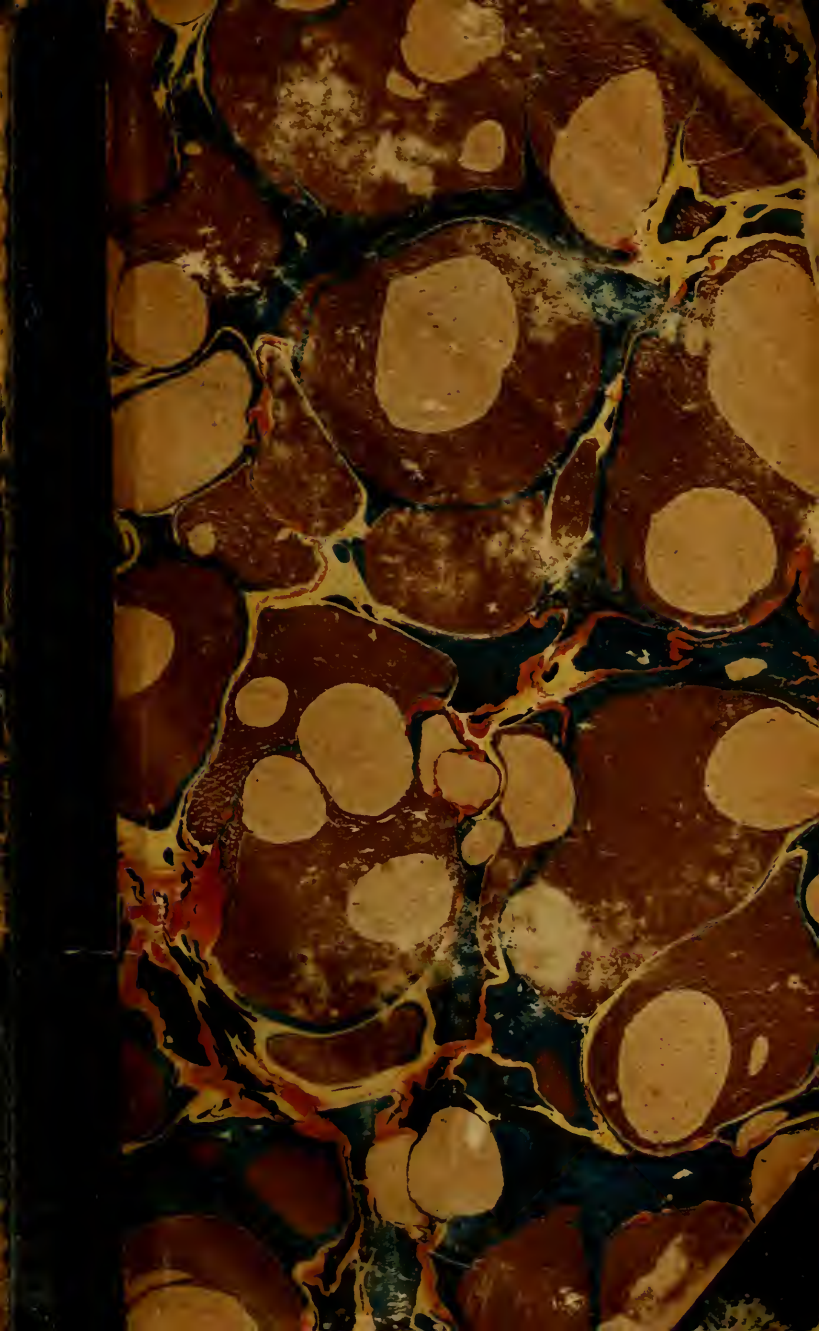






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The lives of the popes



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THE LIVES
OF
THE POPES.

VOL. I.

FROM THE RISE OF THE ROMAN CHURCH TO
THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION.

A.D. 100—1431.

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THE
LIVES OF THE POPES.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST BISHOPS OF THE ROMAN CHURCH.
A.D. 100—254.

THE POPES ! How ominous is the name to the ear of every educated Protestant ! What a train of fantastic and strangely assorted images, dismal, comic, and grand, sweeps rapidly through the mind at the very mention of the too familiar word ! All gorgeous emblems of pomp and power—the triple crown, the purple robe, and the gilded throne, followed in close succession by the uncouth and hideous symbols of bigotry and persecution—the gibbet, the wheel, the thumbscrew, and the rack ! What a tangled web must that be which interweaves such incongruous materials as these emblems and instruments of corruption, cruelty, and pride, with the pure, amiable, and meek religion of Jesus ! Nevertheless, it will be our aim, in the following narrative, to disengage from this web one conspicuously glittering thread that gathers

up its contexture, and runs through it from the beginning to the end.

The title of pope, or more correctly *papa*, was, in the earliest days of Christianity, spontaneously applied, by the love and reverence of believers, to those who were "over them in the Lord," and whom they justly regarded as their spiritual fathers. It was the common distinction of the presbyters and bishops from all the other members of the church, who styled each other, in the same spirit of Christian simplicity and affection, "brethren" and "sisters," and received new converts into their communion, as new members into a family, with a fraternal kiss. Not till the eleventh century was the title of pope claimed by the bishop of Rome as his exclusive right. From that time, however, it has been generally employed to distinguish the Roman bishop from all others holding the episcopal office in the Christian church, and has been applied to such as preceded the above-named epoch, as well as to those who have more lately occupied the papal chair.

The bishops of Rome did not attain, during the first two centuries, to any high degree of pre-eminence over their brethren; and there is, therefore, considerable doubt respecting the very names of some who then sustained the pastorate of the church which apostolical labours had cultivated, though not planted, in the metropolis of the world. It is believed, however, that LINUS, mentioned by Paul when

writing from Rome to Timothy, (2 Tim. iv. 21,) and CLEMENT, (Phil. iv. 3,) whom the same apostle designates his "fellow-labourer" during the time of his imprisonment at Rome, were among the first who presided over the infant church.

In those days of primitive simplicity, there were few honours or emoluments attached to the office of a bishop, whatever of moral dignity it possessed. Revered for his character, and supported by the voluntary offerings of the devout, the bishop shared with his fellow-Christians in the privations and sufferings to which most of the churches were subjected during the reigns of the persecuting emperors. He endeared himself to the people by his solicitude for both their temporal and spiritual welfare, and justly earned the honourable name of "father," by his assiduous zeal for the prosperity and happiness of his charge. In times of contagious and pestilential sickness, he often risked his own life that he might give consolation to the dying, in which noble example he was followed by the Christians generally, to the utter amazement of their pagan observers; for the latter, in visitations of the plague, would remorselessly abandon their dearest friends, casting them half dead into the streets, and leaving their bodies unburied.

It is pleasing to observe that this genuine spirit of Christianity continued to display itself, at least in some churches, till far into the third century, for we then find Cyprian, the renowned

bishop of Carthage, on occasion of a dreadful pestilence, exhorting his church to the performance of similar acts of charity. The pagans had, according to their habit, forsaken the sick and dying, and the streets were strewed with dead bodies. Cyprian called the members of his church together, and after commending them for the care they had taken of each other, said further, "But if we do good only to our own we do no more than the publicans and heathens. If we are the children of God, who makes his sun to rise, and sends his rain on the just and the unjust alike, we must show it by our actions, striving to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect; blessing those that curse us, and doing good to them who despitefully use us." Animated by such generous words, the members of the church quickly divided the work among them. The rich gave their money, the poor their labour, and in a short time the streets were cleared of their ghastly incumbrances, and the city was set free from the plague.

The city of Rome was far from being the most important centre of Christianity in those early times. Antioch especially, and many other eastern cities, took precedence of it as places of Christian resort; and the authority of the church of Antioch, in questions of doctrine or discipline, was highly esteemed, even before the Roman church could be said to have been thoroughly established. The earlier bishops of Rome, therefore, occupy no prominent place in

the history of the church. The devout or the cunning imagination of monks has spun many wonderful fables respecting them out of the fragile thread of tradition, but none of these stories are worthy of credit or attention. The very names of the bishops, during the first century after the apostolic age, are uncertain, for in those days of fiery trial they rapidly succeeded each other. Though many of them sealed their testimony with their blood, they are not so distinguished even in the annals of martyrdom as the pastors of some other churches. It is from the history of some who are better known to us than those who held the episcopate at Rome, that we learn how ardent was the love of the "truth as it is in Jesus," how simple and blameless the manner of life, how unassuming the deportment and conversation, and how steadfast the adherence to the ordinances of Christ, which distinguished the bishops of the primitive age.

Of such contemporary bishops, Ignatius, the second bishop of the church at Antioch, is amongst the worthiest of mention. In that fierce persecution which the emperor Trajan set on foot in the year 106, to sweep with misery and ruin the whole Roman empire, the church at Antioch was severely tried. Its faithful and devoted pastor was dragged away to Rome, to become a principal actor and sufferer in an encounter with wild beasts, one of those tragical entertainments with which the emperors sought to gratify the savage taste of

the citizens. The long voyage must have seemed all the longer from the cruel suspense in which the poor captive was held; but Ignatius was fortified with a zeal and fidelity which bade defiance to personal sufferings, and he busied himself to the last in promoting the welfare of the church. During his journey to Rome, he was strictly guarded by a band of soldiers, who treated him with such cruelty, that he wrote in metaphorical language, "From Syria to Rome I am contending with wild beasts by land and by sea, being tied to ten leopards." Yet, forgetful of his tormentors and of the gloomy prospect before him, he preserved such admirable serenity of mind as to write, whilst travelling, seven long letters of valuable advice to the bishops and members of as many Asiatic churches, in which he only refers to his own persecutions as a ground of rejoicing and hope.

Of like character was Polycarp, bishop of the church of Smyrna, who closed a long life of Christian service with martyrdom in the year 167. "He always taught," says Irenæus, as quoted by Eusebius, "what he had himself learned from the apostles, what the church had handed down, and what is the only true doctrine." His zeal for the truth was strikingly displayed in his treatment of Marcion, whose daring speculations had stirred up angry passions and created divisions in many churches. On meeting him after the lapse of several years, during which the friendly intercourse of their youth

had been suspended, the natural amiableness of Polycarp was overcome by his stern regard for purity of doctrine, and to Marcion's salutation, "Dost thou remember me, Polycarp?" the aged bishop replied, "Yes, I remember the *firstborn of Satan!*" Polycarp had reached the age of ninety, when he was called to set his church an example of constancy amid bitter persecutions. Many of the Christians of Smyrna had endured the vengeance of the civil power for not acknowledging the emperor as the *only lord*. The Jews and pagans, who were animated with the same spirit of hatred to the Christians, were only infuriated by this partial gratification of their spite. They loudly demanded that the punishment awarded to a few should be visited on all, and called for a general massacre of Christians, and first of their leader and bishop. Polycarp was hurried to the tribunal of the proconsul, but so venerable and majestic was his aspect as he stood calmly before it, that both magistrate and people were awed into silence, and a long pause ensued before the former could collect himself sufficiently to speak. At length, the proconsul urged him to swear by the genius of the emperor, expecting to find what he thought so trivial a request instantly complied with. "Swear," said he, "curse Christ, and I release thee!" Looking on his judge with a steadfast countenance, the aged saint replied, "Six and eighty years have I served him, and he has done me nothing but good, and *how* could I

curse him, my Lord and my Saviour?" The proconsul threatened to throw him to the wild beasts, but threats were in vain, his firmness was unmovable. Then, amidst the yells and execrations of the multitude, Polycarp was dragged to a funeral pile, which had been hastily heaped up by the people. The shops and the baths were ransacked by the Jewish and pagan mob for the wood and straw necessary for fuel. The martyr was fastened to the stake, and just as the fire was lighted, and the flames began to rise, he breathed his last prayer: "Lord, Almighty God, Father of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received from thee the knowledge of thyself, I praise thee that thou hast judged me worthy of this day and hour, to take part in the number of thy witnesses, and in the cup of thy Christ!"

It is to the honour of ANICETUS, the tenth bishop of the church of Rome, that he called Polycarp his personal acquaintance and friend. This is all that we know of him, but in the absence of more direct information, it is only fair to conclude, from the character of his contemporaries, that he and the other early bishops of Rome bore an equally honourable testimony to the truth, and were as faithful and devoted to the cause of the Redeemer as the bishops of Antioch and Smyrna.

With regard to a few of them, indeed, we may speak with some confidence, for history records, though briefly, their sufferings in behalf of religion. In the seventh persecution,

which fell upon the church in the reign of the emperor Decius, one of its first victims was the Roman bishop FABIANUS, who dared to continue boldly preaching the gospel, when many of his brethren forsook their flocks till the fierceness of the storm should be spent. This was in the year 252, and when, two years later, Gallus, the successor of Decius, renewed the persecution of Christians, the next bishop of the Roman church, CORNELIUS, was first banished, and soon afterwards condemned to death. LUCIUS, also, who had the courage to succeed him in these tempestuous times, became his follower likewise in banishment and martyrdom. Few of the bishops of this period enjoyed a long tenure of authority ; and, indeed, so unsettled was the state of society, that it would be difficult to decide, whether the imperial or the episcopal chair was the more uncertain and unsafe. Emperors were nominated and dethroned at the caprice of the prætorian guards, and bishops were always the first mark for vengeance when the cruel spirit of paganism was excited to persecute the church. The very perils of the times, however, tended to bring into exercise the graces of the true followers of Christ. Men were required to be decided for God, and amid the fires of persecution faith was tried and purified. Does the reader ask, What were the principles which sustained these early martyrs of the church ? The reply is not difficult to give. The love of Christ constrained them. They overcame all by their

faith in the blood of the Lamb. They had counted the cost of their profession; and animated by the Holy Spirit's strength, they reckoned not their lives dear unto them, so that they might finish their course with joy.

CHAPTER II.

DEGENERACY OF THE ROMAN BISHOPS IN THE NICENE AGE.
A.D. 254—325.

THE undeserved sufferings and heroic endurance of the first bishops secured for them the reverential and zealous attachment of the church; but the very admiration for these primitive confessors which was so naturally inspired in the breasts of their followers, proved the germ from which were afterwards developed, in such baneful abundance, the fruits of corrupt doctrine and worldly aggrandizement—fruits which were poisonous to those who first tasted them, and became widely destructive to the best interests of mankind. So liable are even our noblest feelings, veneration and gratitude, to be perverted and abused.

It is astonishing to observe how rapidly, even in times so stormy and apparently ungenial, the church grew and multiplied; and how, as its branches spread, the daily increasing opportunities of gaining power and wealth gradually ensnared men, and led those who, in defending the truth against violent opposition were ready

to sacrifice their lives, to make their spiritual office a source of secular advantage. It has been well said, that "the evils which were so fearfully developed a century later under the sunshine of imperial favour, had reached a bold height even while the martyrs were still bleeding." Not without abundant cause had the apostolic warning been given, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work." The time had arrived when the Antichrist foretold in prophecy should commence to exert its baneful influence on the souls of men, "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." It will now accordingly be our office, as we descend the stream of ecclesiastical history, to watch the gradual mode in which the church of Rome manifested, both by acts and spirit, that this appalling designation was emphatically her own.

The Roman church, from various causes, grew faster than many others. Situated in the metropolis and mart of the world, it was daily visited by Christians from all parts of the east and west, many of whom took up their abode in the city or its environs, and joined the communion of the church. By the middle of the third century, it already rivalled its elder sisters of Jerusalem and Antioch in magnitude and influence. It numbered at that time no fewer than forty-six presbyters, with one hundred and six inferior officers. The authority of the bishop of such a church must needs have been great, and we can hardly be surprised if even the pious men who then held the office

were sometimes betrayed into arbitrary and oppressive measures. One of the first who distinguished himself in this unholy manner was VICTOR, who presided over the church A.D. 185, in the reign of the emperor Commodus. A controversy had arisen between the churches of the east and those of the west, respecting the proper time of the year for commemorating the resurrection of the Saviour; and Victor was so far carried away by zeal for his own practice that he pronounced his opponents to be heretics, and even proceeded to excommunicate all who did not follow the rule which he prescribed. His arrogance and want of charity were, however, severely rebuked by Irenæus, and other contemporary bishops, who were far from acknowledging the supreme authority of any particular church.

The same spirit of assumption and pride discovered itself yet more offensively in the behaviour of STEPHEN, the successor of that bishop Lucius who was martyred under Valerian. The churches of Asia, about the year 256, adopted a regulation in reference to baptism which Stephen wholly disapproved; and not content with absolutely refusing compliance with the decision of a synod held at Carthage, which confirmed the Asiatic custom, the Roman bishop boldly set up the authority of his own, in opposition to that of the universal church; and carried his blind, unchristian zeal so far as to excommunicate all the churches of Asia Minor. Nor did he hesitate to employ the most

disgracefully abusive language towards a man far superior to himself, the excellent Cyprian, bishop of the Carthaginian church. He afterwards refused to give audience to the bishops who waited upon him as a deputation from the synod, and strictly forbade his church to show them any hospitality, or receive them into their houses as guests !

From these instances it is very easy to perceive, that even during the early days of Christianity the professors of religion, and its very teachers and exemplars, were exposed to great temptations, before which they sometimes fell. These temptations were of course greatly multiplied to the bishop as the church under his care grew larger and richer. The smaller communities, formed in neighbouring villages and towns, were regarded as offshoots of the parent tree. Over these some presbyter of the elder church was appointed as a subordinate bishop, and thus the influence and importance of the superior bishop were necessarily increased, and the inducements, or at least the opportunities for abusing his power were greatly multiplied.

Moreover, in the third and fourth centuries, when vehement controversies on various questions of faith and order began to agitate the church, and conferences and synods were of more frequent occurrence, a new danger presented itself in the spirit of rivalry which sprang up for the seat of presidency in these august assemblies. As the choice of the synods, also, not unfrequently fell upon the bishop of

Rome, in consequence of the importance of his church, some colour was given to the claim which the Roman bishops afterwards preferred to precedence over all other bishops whatsoever. Thus, in Italy over neighbouring churches, and throughout the world over churches of longer standing than his own, did the bishop of Rome gradually acquire an influence that eventually became supreme. In unholy pride and unchristian desire of pre-eminence are to be found, therefore, the root of this great apostasy from the faith. The repeated exhortations of the apostle were forgotten, that "nothing should be done in strife or vain-glory," but that "in lowliness of mind each should esteem other better than themselves." The mind that was in Christ Jesus was evidently wanting; and as might have been expected, envying and strife followed; confusion and every evil work.

The causes of corruption, however, just enumerated, though quite sufficient to make a priesthood ambitious and arrogant, were by no means all that combined to taint the purity of the Roman, as well as other primitive churches.

Even in the days of persecution, the churches in large cities began to accumulate wealth. Many who died in the faith bequeathed property to the Christian community which they had joined, for the relief of its poorer members, and for the general expenses of the church. As an avowal of faith in Christ generally excluded the convert from all intercourse with his pagan relatives, and as the regulations of the primitive

churches rigorously exacted simplicity of life from all members, it was no uncommon thing for large sums of money to be thus dedicated to pious and charitable uses. About the year 150, as we learn from Tertullian, a Christian stranger coming from Asia Minor to reside in Rome, immediately made over his property, amounting to two hundred thousand sesterces, or about sixteen hundred pounds sterling, to the bishop of the Roman church for the benefit of his flock. Such gifts grew larger and more numerous when the laws of proscription were repealed, and the persecuting spirit of the imperial government gave place to a milder policy. In the year 259, the church of Rome was in possession of buildings, cemeteries, and lands; and many churches had by that time erected splendid edifices for the worship of God. So abundant were the contributions poured into the treasury of the metropolitan church of Italy, that no fewer than fifteen hundred widows were supported out of its funds, besides the regular maintenance of its bishop, presbyters, and many other officers. The revenue of so large an establishment must even then have been very considerable, and so rapid was its increase, that, in a few years, the management of it became an object of avaricious cupidity and vehement unhallowed strife.

To the bishop in every church the control of its funds had been generally committed from early times, and these rulers would indeed have exhibited a wonderful exemption from the com-

mon frailties of humanity, if they had in every case continued proof against the temptations to personal aggrandizement which were thus strewn in their path. Accordingly, we find that when a long period of tranquillity had been enjoyed by the churches, a persecution was really beneficial, sifting them of ungodly professors, purifying the lives of their members, and awakening their bishops to the solemn responsibility of their office. Thus Cyprian, writing about the year 250, respecting the terrific persecution just begun by the emperor Decius, and which threatened apparently to exterminate Christianity from the earth, says, "The Lord would prove his people, and because the Divinely prescribed regimen of life has become disturbed in the long season of peace, a Divine judgment has been sent to re-establish our fallen, I might almost say, slumbering faith. Forgetting what believers did in the times of the apostles, and what they should always be doing, Christians have laboured with insatiable desire to increase their earthly possessions, and many of the *bishops*, who, by precept and example, should have guided others, have neglected their Divine calling, to engage in worldly concerns."

Cyprian's lamentation is fully justified by the accounts we have received of some of the bishops of that age. It would not, indeed, be strictly just to cite PAUL of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, as a specimen of his class, for he was unanimously excommunicated in a council

assembled for the purpose of investigating his character ; but then, the principal ground of this sentence was his erroneous doctrine, and not his ungodly and unscriptural life. In the latter he was too closely resembled by many of his brethren. Of this Paul, then, it is told, that he erected a throne in the midst of his church, on which he seated himself, with all the pomp of a magistrate, desiring to be considered a civil as much as a religious ruler. Sometimes he would screen himself with curtains from the gaze of the assembly, after the custom of the judicial officers, and on coming forth he expected, and even commanded the people to applaud him by clapping their hands, as they would an actor in the theatre. In passing through the streets of Antioch he was always attended by a multitude of followers, and in every gesture and action discovered intolerable pride. Although born and reared in extreme poverty, Paul had contrived to amass enormous wealth, and constantly indulged in the most luxurious style of living. Sad indeed was the change that had already passed upon the churches of Christ, when it was possible thus early for a bishop to become so utterly unlike his Divine Master. It is plain that the seeds of corruption were already sown, and only waited for a genial season to spring up in the rankest and most destructive luxuriance.

With the advent of Constantine to the throne of the empire this season was introduced. That extraordinary man had the penetration to

discover, what had been hidden from all his forerunners, that Christianity was fast driving idolatry out of the civilized world. He saw that to oppose it would be futile, perhaps perilous ; and although probably without much value for it in his heart, he resolved to employ it as an instrument for strengthening his own hands, and renovating the decaying energies of the empire. He observed that idolatry was uninfluential even with those who professed it, but that Christianity, on the contrary, exercised a potent sway over the minds of its adherents ; and he determined to make the new power subservient to his political ends. His sagacity was displayed as much in the means he adopted as in the object he pursued. As he gradually enlarged his share in the vast dominions of Rome by victories over his competitors for power, he extended a degree of toleration and favour to the Christians which no former emperor would have dared to concede, even if he had wished to do so. He thus engaged the Christian subjects of the empire in his cause, and led them very heartily to wish him success. Prayers were publicly offered in the churches when any great battle was at hand, or any struggle in progress between Constantine and his rivals, that victory might attend the arms of the "Christians' friend." Constantine was already recognised as a champion of the faith.

At length his enemies were silenced, either by conquest or by death, and Constantine sat securely on the throne of the Roman empire,

He had never expressly avowed himself a Christian, yet it was amongst his first concerns to promote the prosperity of the Christian cause. In conjunction with Licinius, who then shared in the imperial power, he had *previously* granted a free toleration of all religions, including the Christian. He now, however, directly favoured the professed believers in Christ. In a law of the year 319, he publicly stigmatized idolaters as slaves to superstition. "They who are desirous," said the edict, "of being slaves to their superstition have liberty for the exercise of their worship; we do not forbid the rites of an antiquated usage to be performed in the open light." At the same time, the emperor acknowledged that all his victories had proceeded only from the "supreme and holy God, Lord of the universe." He also caused a group of waxen figures to be publicly exhibited before the windows of the imperial palace in his new city of Constantinople, representing himself beneath the protection of the cross, trampling under foot the dragon of idolatrous superstition.

Constantine next ventured to give the Christians proofs of his special regard. He had awarded them justice—he now began to show partiality. He courted the favour of the bishops, inviting them to reside in the imperial palace, and giving them large sums of money for the erection of edifices, the purchase of lands, and the support of the poor of their flocks. He preferred Christians to the high offices of state, even appointing them governors

over provinces. He at last so far hazarded an encroachment upon the feeling in favour of the old religion, which, of course, still lingered among the less enlightened, as to overturn the idols by violence, and despoil the temples of their treasures. The latter he either transferred to Christian places of worship, or appropriated to the uses of the state. He next proceeded to interfere in the internal affairs of the church. Desirous that there should be amongst the ministers of religion the same gradation of ranks as existed amongst the officers of state, he assumed the power of arranging them into patriarchs, exarchs, metropolitans, and archbishops—the ancient and scriptural title of bishop being thus made the lowest of a series. He nominated the bishops of his four greatest cities, Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople, the patriarchs of the empire, taking care also that their revenues should be adequate to support with dignity, and even with splendour, the rank which he had conferred.

This new arrangement of ranks was formally sanctioned by the council of Nice, A.D. 325 ; and by it SYLVESTER, then bishop of Rome, was appointed the primate over all the sees of Italy, and, with more limited powers, over those also of northern Africa, with the islands of the Mediterranean. His spiritual authority was made, agreeably to Constantine's plan, commensurate with the civil authority of the vicar of Rome.

But although the outward prosperity of

Christianity could not but appear to be advanced by the patronage it received from the emperor, it is still with many a serious question, whether the injury done to its spirituality did not greatly deduct from, and even overbalance the apparent advantage. The clergy had been more than men had they successfully withstood the temptations which now multiplied around them. Dazzled by imperial munificence and favour, and solicited by innumerable opportunities of acquiring both wealth and power, it is not to be wondered at that they often became the pliant instruments of the monarch's will. Yet it fills us with sadness to see some of them so carried away by servility, or an excess of gratitude, as to receive a humiliating check from Constantine himself. A bishop, who was present at his court when the thirtieth anniversary of his reign was celebrated, congratulated the emperor that he was "appointed by God the ruler over all in this world, and *destined to reign with the Son of God in the world to come!*" Constantine, shocked at the profanity of the speech, admonished the bishop to refrain from such sinful adulation, and rather to pray for him that he might be "deemed worthy to be a *servant* of God, both in this world and in the next." How effectually, we may add in conclusion, do the transactions recorded in this chapter warn not only churches, but individuals, to take heed to the Divine counsel, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world,

the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii. 15.

CHAPTER III.

ARROGANT PRETENSIONS AND WORLDLY SPIRIT OF THE
BISHOPS OF ROME.

A.D. 325—385.

THE bishop of Rome now enjoyed advantages which belonged to the bishop of no other see in the universal church. The direct authority with which he was invested over the most ancient and wealthy part of the empire was, of course, the principal of these ; but many others conspired to increase his dignity, and to make his influence paramount, at least over the churches of the west. By donations and legacies he had become possessed of large landed estates, some of them situated beyond the limits of his diocese, and in all such places his importance was necessarily increased. It was admitted, also, to be not the least of his claims to universal deference, that he presided over a church which had, according to tradition, been honoured by the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul, and which still retained their supposed tombs. With that self-esteem, therefore, which usually outstrips general opinion, the Roman bishops already began to entertain the idea, that as successors and representatives of Peter they were entitled to the sovereign guidance of the whole church of Christ.

Filled with this unscriptural notion, and fired with unholy ambition, they were not slow to improve the advantages which their position conferred. Their large revenues they employed, not merely for the welfare of the church, but also in such a way as to advance their own greatness, and diffuse around themselves an air of state and splendour. The vestments of the clergy were studiously and symbolically adorned with a variety of colours, and with large figures of the cross. The mode of conducting Divine worship no longer wore the aspect of primitive simplicity, but was burdened and made pompous with processions, priestly ceremonies, and contrivances to produce effect. Lighted tapers, golden and silver vases, with other gaudy and imposing pageants, were introduced into the worship of God—sorry substitutes for that spiritual vitality which was so fast vanishing from the services of the church. With a like mixture of motive, the influence of the clergy over the laity was promoted by the establishment of hospitals and orphan-houses out of the funds of the church. Even buildings for public convenience, such as bridges, were sometimes undertaken by the bishop's direction, and at the church's expense. Not content with thus assuming to himself the character of a secular magistrate, rather than that of a spiritual guide, the ruler of the church too frequently vied with the first officers of state in the pomp of his equipage and the luxury of his table. Candidates for the Roman bishopric made unheard-of

efforts to obtain it, "knowing," says a pagan writer of that day, "that this once obtained, they would overflow with gifts from the wealthy matrons, would ride in sumptuous carriages, be elegantly appavelled, and have banquets prepared for them surpassing the festivities of kings."

To SYLVESTER and MARK, in whose time these important and detrimental alterations mostly occurred, but of whose personal character history leaves us in doubt, JULIUS succeeded as the now powerful bishop of Rome. That he fully entered into the spirit of his office, as it was then constituted, is evident from an incident which took place in the reign of Constans, the son of Constantine the Great. The controversy between Arius and Athanasius, respecting the true nature of Christ, was then agitating the whole Christian world, though it raged with most fierceness among the churches of the east. Athanasius' enemies had so far succeeded as to eject him from his bishopric of Alexandria, which he was employing the most strenuous efforts to regain. Aiming at some satisfactory solution of the question, a council of Asiatic bishops assembled, at Sardica in the year 347, and taking the appeal of Athanasius into consideration, resolved, "That whenever a bishop who is deposed asserts that injustice has been done him, the synod which condemned him shall write to the *Roman bishop*, who shall nominate judges to renew the investigation ; and no other person shall be appointed to fill the place of the deposed bishop

without the concurrence of the Roman bishop." This synod of Sardica, therefore, expressly admitted the supreme authority of the bishop of Rome.

But although it was no unusual thing, nor indeed unnatural, for the weaker party in the vehement, and sometimes persecuting strifes of that controversial age, to seek the aid of the powerful bishop of the metropolitan church, yet the churches in general were far from conceding to Rome the supremacy which she sought ; for on the leaders of both parties in this Arian controversy sending delegates to Julius, each hoping to secure his support, he, thinking to turn it to his own advantage, entreated them to refer the matter to a synod, which he would himself convene, and over which he would preside. But the bishops in general took alarm at so bold an attempt to establish a judicial authority at Rome, and told the encroaching prelate that he was not to suppose that because he ruled a larger and wealthier church, that he was therefore of greater consequence than any other bishop.

The history of LIBERIUS, who succeeded Julius, affords melancholy proof of the spiritual decay which had fallen on the church. Constantius, the emperor, was a zealous Arian, and when the council of Milan had confirmed the judgment of the eastern churches by pronouncing a sentence of deposition on the champion of orthodoxy, Athanasius, he sent messengers to those bishops who were absent from the council,

commanding them to subscribe the sentence which it had passed. Amongst the absentees was the bishop of Rome, whose absence had been intentional, and who now stedfastly refused to commit an act which his conscience condemned. The emperor, pretending it was his duty to execute the decrees of the church, banished Liberius forthwith to some city in Thrace, and by underhand means procured an Arian presbyter, Felix, to be elected to the see. Liberius went into exile, and was followed in his banishment by the sympathies and prayers of the whole Roman church. The emperor himself condescended to show some respect by sending him money to defray the expenses of his journey.

This money Liberius indignantly returned, with the sarcastic message, that the emperor and his eunuchs might possibly want the money to pay their soldiers and their subservient bishops. So great was the danger of his being rescued by the people, that he was removed in the night with all imaginable secrecy and dispatch. When his banishment became known, the city was thrown into universal uproar. The clergy bound themselves by a solemn oath never to acknowledge the intruder Felix, and for two years they continued to absent themselves from the churches, and led the devotions of the people in private places of worship. At the end of that time the emperor visited Rome, and was instantly besieged by a prodigious multitude of matrons, many of whom were

wealthy and noble, and had arrayed themselves for the occasion in magnificent and costly attire. These, with one voice and loud lamentations, implored the restoration of their venerable bishop.

Constantius continued unmoved, and Liberius would doubtless have remained in perpetual exile, had he not himself proved faithless to the principles for which he had endured so much suffering and loss. In better and purer times, a Christian bishop would have counted it a distinguished privilege to suffer for the truth, and the day of his martyrdom would have been celebrated as a second birthday. A melancholy change had, however, taken place, under the influence of a worldly spirit. When the Arian creed, which the council of Sirmium composed, was presented to Liberius for his signature, he basely consented to subscribe what his judgment utterly condemned. He was then permitted to return to Rome, to enjoy, if he could, after so disgraceful a recreancy to conscience, the honours of the bishopric. But as Felix, the emperor's favourite, could on no account be displaced, it was decided that he and Liberius should conjointly hold the see. This division of the prelatical power was altogether offensive to the citizens of Rome. They assembled in the streets and public places, shouting, "One God, one Christ, one bishop!" and the sedition and confusion were not appeased till many of both parties had been cruelly murdered. Felix himself, with the emperor's consent, was at last expelled from the city.

It is evident that the true spirit of Christianity must have greatly passed from the church before events like these could occur amongst its accepted members, and under the express sanction of their bishops. The animosities thus excited did not quickly subside ; but when, by the death of Liberius, a new election became needful, they broke out with fresh and even aggravated violence.

One party chose DAMASUS, and the other Ursicinus, to be their spiritual head, and the passions of the whole populace soon became engaged in the struggle. Damasus was a proud man, and it is doubtful if either of the candidates had any real title to the Christian name. Former bishops, in similar circumstances, had been known to surrender everything rather than be guilty of promoting strife and schism, but these not only permitted, but encouraged their followers to contend, until much blood was shed and many lives were lost. The party of Damasus came with arms, and attacked their opponents in the church of the Basilica, and the walls which usually resounded with the melody of sacred praise now echoed the shrieks and groans of dying men. One hundred and thirty-seven bodies were left dead on the pavement of this strange and unmeet battle-field. Damasus triumphed, and his rival left the city.

Not much was to be expected from an episcopate so unscripturally and inhumanly won. The short career of Damasus was disgraced by an edict, which the rapacity of the clergy com-

pelled a reluctant emperor to enact against them. This edict forbade ecclesiastics to receive any gift, legacy, or inheritance, at the hands of devout women ; so early was the influence of the priesthood over the female sex found liable to abuse, and perceived to be an injury and nuisance to society. The clergy were obliged, according to custom, to publish this decree from all the pulpits of the city, and thus they very appropriately became the heralds of their own infamy, proclaiming that *they*, a Christian ministry, were unworthy to possess a privilege not denied to pagan priests or the most dissolute of the laity. It may, however, be mentioned, as perhaps a redeeming feature in the government of Damasus, that he retained as his secretary the celebrated and really learned Jerome, one of the most renowned of the so-called "Fathers of the church," and supported and defended him with the fidelity of true friendship. This much then may be recorded to his credit. But oh ! how totally unlike was the spirit of Damasus to that which breathed in the apostle Paul, when, in the review of his ministerial labours, he could with holy confidence exclaim, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts xx. 33—35.

CHAPTER IV.

INTRODUCTION OF VARIOUS SUPERSTITIONS—CELIBACY—
MONACHISM—SAINT-WORSHIP.

A.D. 385—417.

MANY corrupt doctrines and anti-scriptural practices had by this time taken deep root in the church, for the fostering of which the bishops of Rome must be held largely, though not wholly responsible. The east was the indigenous soil of most of these poisonous plants, but it will be the eternal disgrace of the Romish priesthood, that they quickly transplanted and diligently cultured them at home and throughout the west.

SIRICIUS, who succeeded Damasus in 385, favoured very strongly the ascetic spirit, which had been introduced from Egypt and Palestine. The custom early sprang up in Asia for bishops to live unmarried, and if previously married, to divorce their wives and lead thenceforth a single life. Celibacy was regarded as a more holy condition than matrimony, and thus a practice was established in direct opposition to the apostolic precept, that a bishop should be "the husband of one wife." This error was now beginning to infect the western churches—a melancholy symptom that the scriptural view of salvation by faith only was gradually yielding to the soul-destroying doctrine of justification by works, penances, and rites.

So zealous was Siricius in behalf of this innovation, that he actually issued a decree to

all the bishops under his superintendence, prohibiting them from continuing in the married state, and from entering upon it if single. The Spanish bishops were, however, still independent enough to resist this law, and they persisted for some time longer in the ancient and scriptural custom. Of the detestable nature of the system thus adopted by the Roman see, enlarged comment is here unnecessary; it is repugnant to every maxim of sound social policy, and has been the fertile source of vice, crime, and misery. Nor is it less opposed to Scripture than to the welfare of the community. "Forbidding to marry" is expressly declared by an inspired writer to be a "doctrine of devils." Siricius was the author of another divergence from the practice of the apostles in reference to the ordinance of baptism, which he enjoined upon his clergy to administer at no other time, except in peculiar cases, than the festivals of Easter and Pentecost, which he evidently regarded as seasons pre-eminently sacred.

These facts are but suggestions rather than examples of the innumerable corruptions that now began to overspread the church. Our narrative has occasionally stepped aside from the direct pathway marked out for it, and which is often quite bare, in these scantily reported times, of well-authenticated facts, to glean from the field of contemporary history such incidents as may serve to illustrate the features of the age, and thereby help to indi-

cate the character of the papacy itself. Such a divergence seems justified here by the much greater prominence given by the annalists of the fourth century to other churches and ecclesiastics than to the church of Rome and its bishops.

Monachism, and the undue elevation of the priestly office, were the master evils of this period. The former originated in the deserts of Egypt, about the year 300. A Christian named Anthony, residing at Coma, a village of Central Egypt, had parted with all his estates to the poor or to the church, and betook himself to the solitude of the desert, for quiet contemplation of the works, and perhaps the word of God. Here he supported himself, in a frugal and abstemious way, upon the fruit of the date palm, or the produce of the soil, which he cultivated with his own hands. His abode was a rude grotto or cave, formed by nature. The self-denial, rare holiness, and profound wisdom of this recluse were soon borne abroad on the wings of fame, and ere long he was surrounded by many disciples, some desirous of profiting by his instruction and example, others emulous of his renown, and all dwelling likewise in caves, and placing themselves beneath his paternal control. The pattern thus set by Anthony was improved on by Pachomius, a like-minded man, who instituted the custom of living apart from the world in cloisters or monasteries. On an island of the Nile, Tabenne, he founded a society of

monks, which, during his lifetime, numbered three thousand, and afterwards seven thousand members. These employed themselves in labours of various kinds, chiefly weaving baskets from the osiers of the Nile, or cultivating the soil. In later times, handicraft trades of all sorts were introduced; the monastery resembled a manufacturing town, but the produce was always sent for sale to Alexandria or elsewhere. The immediate object professed to be sought in this unnatural mode of life was spiritual perfection, which was supposed to be intimately connected with the practices of celibacy and retirement from the world. It led, however, much more directly to spiritual pride, to morbid fanaticism, which degraded human nature, as in the case of Simeon Stylites, and too often to gross sensuality, in which their concealment from the world enabled these monks to indulge without fear of discovery. It is indeed humiliating, and calculated to teach us with what caution we must receive the opinions of even excellent men, to find these monastic institutions extolled by a Chrysostom and a Jerome, by the latter of whom they were first introduced and established at Rome. The Christianity which thus retreated to the rock, the desert, and the cloister, instead of manfully contending with the trials, and occupying itself in the duties of life, proved itself to be false, unreal, and altogether at variance with the spirit of Christ. The Saviour expressly foretold his disciples that in the world tribulation

awaited them. Instead, however, of counselling a flight from it into the caves of the earth, or a burial in monastic solitude, he animates his followers to conflict by the encouraging announcement—"Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Well does a modern writer observe respecting the Christians of that age, that, "fascinated, deluded, and still more blinded by the deepening shades of error, they forgot almost entirely the emotions of a true repentance, of a cordial faith, and of a cheerful obedience; and in the rugged path of gratuitous afflictions and unnatural mortifications, pursued a spectral resemblance of piety, unsubstantial and cold as the mists of night."*

The rapid growth of a spirit tending to the undue elevation of the priestly office, has been already partially displayed in the ever-increasing assumptions of the Roman bishops. It was, however, equally conspicuous, sometimes more so, in other churches. The notion that the ministers of religion were a holier class of men than ordinary Christians was zealously inculcated by the clergy themselves, and as readily received by the people, who had already begun to trust to the priest as an effectual mediator with Heaven. Even Chrysostom, the "golden-tongued," at this time bishop of Constantinople, with all his zeal for Christ, and profoundly humble views of himself, could speak of the Christian ministry as invested

* "Natural History of Enthusiasm," by Isaac Taylor, p. 191.

with powers and functions which never can belong to mortal men. He described the sacerdotal act as possessing something of that fearful omnipotence and sovereign authority, which attach only to the doings of Him who "openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth;" "for," said he, "as to the priests are committed all spiritual births, so, through their virtue only, are the fires of hell escaped, and the crown of glory secured." If really conscientious men entertained such extravagant views, it could only be expected that individuals of a proud and ambitious character, or who mingled with their devoutness some desire of worldly applause, should push their pretensions as far as the credulity or the patience of their followers would permit.

The history of Martin, the bishop of Tours, is very instructive on this point, and shows also the strides which the church had already made towards rivalling the power of kings. When Maximus ascended the imperial throne by the too beaten path of usurpation and bloodshed, he promptly received the fawning adulation of a whole crowd of bishops. But Martin of Tours stood aloof from the court, refusing, as he said, "to eat bread with a man who had deprived one emperor of his throne and another of his life." At length, however, he was persuaded to relent, and to the joy of the new emperor, who well knew the value to a usurper of priestly support, repaired to the royal banquet. The tables were crowded with guests of the highest

rank, and among them the brother and uncle of Maximus himself. Between these reclined one of Martin's presbyters, he himself occupying a seat next the emperor. During supper, according to custom, a servant presented a goblet of wine to the emperor, who desired it to be offered first to the bishop, but expecting, of course, that from the hands of Martin it would pass to his own. Martin, however, when he had drunk of the cup, handed it to his presbyter, not deeming any one present equally worthy to drink after himself. Maximus and his officers, we are told, had the magnanimity or the prudence to bear this expression of contempt without discovering resentment.

Martin afterwards frequently visited the palace, where he was always a welcome guest, at least to the empress. This lady not only hung upon his lips for instruction, but, in imitation of the penitent mentioned in the Gospels, literally bathed his feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Unmindful of her royal rank, she would lie prostrate before him, until, by the emperor's intercession, she had obtained the bishop's permission to wait upon him at table as a menial servant. When Martin could no longer resist her importunities, the empress prepared the table and the couch, superintended the preparation of his food, and whilst he ate stood at a respectful distance, like a slave, or mixed and presented the wine with the profoundest humility. When the bishop's meal was ended, she reverently

collected the crumbs, deeming them of higher worth than the delicacies of a royal feast.

Not content with paying so much honour to their teacher during life, the Christians of this age displayed a still greater veneration for the tombs, relics, and embalmed remains of martyrs and saints. The presumed sepulchres of the apostles Peter and Paul were visited at Rome by all classes, from the slave and pauper to consuls, generals, nobles, and emperors. The bodies of early confessors were exhumed, and transferred to cities whither the strangers of the world resorted, such as Constantinople and Rome. A dream was reported to have revealed the resting-place of Stephen, the first martyr, and the grave being found, the precious remains were transported in solemn procession to a church erected for the purpose on the summit of Mount Zion. Miraculous effects were attributed to these sacred relics. A drop of blood, or the scrapings of a bone, were believed to possess a Divine and healing virtue. Many fabulous tales were invented, and many spurious relics were palmed off as genuine. In the cathedral of Tours the bones of a malefactor were adored instead of those of a saint until the imposture was discovered; and then the same love of the marvellous gave credence to the story, that the bishop Martin had extorted a confession of the fraud from the lips of the dead man.

Thus the superstition and follies of paganism were passing over to Christianity, whilst pagan-

ism itself was rapidly on the decline. The ancient religion discovered no further symptoms of life than the power which it yet retained of tainting and corrupting the new. Its priesthood, its temples, its worship, were fast vanishing away. Hitherto, indeed, idolatry had been tolerated, but under the later emperors many laws had passed tending to discourage it, and the last edict of Theodosius inflicted on it a deadly wound. "It is our will and pleasure," says the emperor in that decree, "that none of our subjects, however exalted or humble his rank, shall presume in any place to worship an inanimate idol by the sacrifice of a guiltless victim." Sacrifice and divination are declared to be high treason, and crimes to be expiated only by death. Few, therefore, remained who ventured to avow a preference for the religion of their fathers, and multitudes, without either faith or knowledge, became unworthy professors of Christianity. Encouraged by the smiles of princes, the bishops proceeded in many cases to oppress those who yet favoured the elder institution, resolving to exterminate from their dioceses the last traces of idolatry, by means as unjustifiable as the resolution itself was praiseworthy. They marched at the head of a rabble of priests, monks, and soldiers, to destroy idols and temples, and forcibly to eject the pagan priesthood who clung to the altars. In the height of their zeal they destroyed what might well have been spared, and the magnificent library of Alexander, together with

many a splendid edifice, the trophy of Grecian skill, was ruthlessly swept into oblivion.

What share in these acts of barbarism was taken by ANASTASIUS, who, in 398, succeeded Siricius in the bishopric of Rome, history has not recorded, but in all probability he was too much occupied in providing for his own safety to encroach much on the liberties of others. The fifth century opened with dark omens to the stability of the Roman empire. The death of the emperor Theodosius, and the imbecility of his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius, who divided his dominions between them, opened great and tempting opportunities to the enemies of Rome to attempt her destruction. The Gothic tribes, driven from their Scythian homes, fierce by nature, and grown fiercer by the checks which they had received from Theodosius, had long hung like a cloud upon the northern frontiers, and now descended in thunder on the crowded cities of the south. Their leader, Alaric, was endowed with all those gifts that qualify for the command and subjugation of men. For a few years he was baffled in his aims by the courage and skilful tactics of Stilicho, the general of Honorius; but the jealousy and mistrust of this vain and foolish emperor induced him to cause the murder of the only man who could ward off ruin from the state. Alaric soon appeared at the gates of Rome, and now the degenerate citizens could only withstand their assailants with bribes and prayers.

Luxury and sensuality had reached their utmost height within the walls of the western metropolis. The stately mansions of the nobles almost warranted the hyperbole of the poet Claudian, who said that Rome contained a multitude of palaces, and that each palace was equal to a city. Although they were destitute of many modern conveniences of life, (for it has been as truly as humorously observed, that the emperors of Rome had neither glass to their windows nor shirts to their backs,) yet in the pomp and splendour, both of their furniture and their apparel, the Romans of that period far surpassed the most wealthy nation of the present day. "Our modern nobles," said a contemporary historian, "measure their rank and consequence by the height of their chariots, and the weighty magnificence of their dress. Their long robes of silk and purple float in the wind, and as they are agitated by art or accident, discover the under garments, the rich tunics embroidered with curious figures. Followed by a train of fifty servants, and tearing up the pavement, they move along the streets with the same impetuous speed as if they travelled with post-horses, and this example is boldly imitated by the matrons and ladies. Sometimes, indeed, these heroes undertake more arduous achievements; they visit their estates in the country, and procure themselves, by the toil of their slaves, the amusements of the chase. If at any time, but more especially on a hot day,

they have courage to sail in their painted galleys from the Lake Avernus to their elegant villas on the sea-coast—they compare their expeditions to the marches of Cæsar and Alexander. Yet should a fly presume to settle on the silken folds of their gilded umbrellas, should a sunbeam penetrate through some unguarded and imperceptible chink, they deplore their intolerable hardships.”*

A people so sunken in effeminacy and sloth were not very formidable to the sturdy warriors of the north. Honorius had retreated to Ravenna, a place much stronger by its natural defences than Rome. The senate sent a deputation to Alaric, with a message, that if he exacted harsh conditions he might drive them to despair, and would then find them an innumerable host of well-disciplined foes. “The thicker the hay, the easier it is mowed,” was the contemptuous reply of the Gothic king. He demanded all their gold and silver, all their precious movables, and all their foreign slaves. “What then will you leave us?” asked the helpless Romans. “*Your lives*,” was the concise reply.

The city itself was thus spared for the present, but the following year, A.D. 410, Alaric again appeared before its walls, enraged at some insults offered his subjects by the creatures of Honorius; and the gate being treacherously opened, his army entered at midnight, to begin such a work of spoliation and savage cruelty as Rome had not witnessed since

Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xiv. 6; xxviii. 4; *passim*.

Romulus laid its foundations, eleven hundred and sixty-three years before.

INNOCENT was now bishop of the church, and his presence had some influence in mitigating the horrors of the calamity. The sack of the city continued only for six days, and besides the comparative shortness of this period, several instances of moderation distinguished the conduct of Alaric, which may perhaps be properly ascribed to the respect he felt for the bishop, as at least the representative of the Christian religion. He manifested the profoundest regard for the clergy and the places of worship; and when Innocent, who had fled with his royal master to Ravenna, came upon an embassy to conciliate the conqueror, Alaric courteously directed that he should be guarded on his return by a detachment of Gothic soldiers.

The Goths were by no means wholly an idolatrous people at this time. On the contrary, Christianity had made considerable progress among them. Already they had their own bishops, and the Scriptures translated into their own tongue. A copy of the Gospels in the Gothic language, supposed by some to be the original written by Ulphilas, the translator, is still preserved in the university of Upsal, and is called the "silver manuscript," because it is written in letters of silver on a purple ground. When the Goths became a settled people, and fixed their habitations in Germany, Italy, Spain, and France, they generally adopted the religion of the people whom they had subdued.

Thus it was that the ecclesiastical institutions in these several countries were comparatively unaffected by the great political and social revolutions that were taking place. The power of the bishops continued unimpaired, or rather, perhaps, it was increased by the superstitious veneration which the more ignorant Goths felt for men who laid claim to such superior sanctity and learning. The authority of the Roman bishop, or patriarch, also, was still undisputed by the churches of the west, and Innocent exercised it in several instances, although on questions of little importance. A difference of opinion, for example, having arisen among the Spanish bishops respecting the fasting-days, which, now that fasting was regarded as a meritorious service, had become very frequent, Innocent took upon himself to decide that Saturday as well as Friday should be observed for this purpose.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONTROVERSIAL AGE—FREQUENT APPEALS TO
THE ROMAN BISHOP.

A.D. 417—432.

ON the accession of ZOSIMUS to the patriarchate in 417, matters of far greater moment were referred to the tribunal of Rome. The controversy which sprang up in the African church between Augustine and Pelagius, respecting the freedom of the human will, and the

necessity of Divine grace to secure the salvation of the soul, had created much bitterness of feeling. The doctrines of Pelagius had been strongly condemned by the churches of northern Africa, over which Augustine, the bishop of Hippo, exercised a paramount influence. Pelagius, therefore, resolved to appeal to the patriarch of Rome, and in the autumn of 416 his disciple and coadjutor, Cœlestius, crossed over to Italy for the purpose of pleading their cause against the African clergy. On bringing the matter before the new bishop, a man probably of eastern descent and education, Cœlestius found it hard to convince him that the subject in dispute was one of much consequence. However, the eloquence of the pleader, combined with the indifference of the judge, produced a decision in favour of Pelagius. Zosimus wrote to the African bishops, reproaching them for misunderstanding or misrepresenting a good and orthodox Christian. He also showed the imperious spirit which had already taken possession of the Roman church, by decreeing that unless a successful accuser of Cœlestius and Pelagius should appear in Rome within two months, no one for the future should presume to question their orthodoxy.

The pretensions thus set up by Rome were not yet, however, tamely admitted. The African bishops, influenced by Augustine, protested against the patriarch's decision, and affirmed that he had been deceived by Cœlestius. They then drew up nine canons, which directly

contradicted the doctrines of Pelagius, and proceeded to make exertions at the imperial court to get their views sanctioned by the civil power. Zosimus was too undecided in his own convictions to maintain his ground against this array of opposition, and commanded Cœlestius to appear again to undergo a fresh examination. Cœlestius foresaw the result, and hastily fled from Rome, upon which Zosimus gave sentence against him, and issued a circular letter, denouncing Cœlestius and Pelagius as heretics, and declaring the doctrines of Augustine and the African bishops to be the doctrine of the whole church. Devoid of all shame at his temporizing policy, notwithstanding the suddenness of his own recantation, and in spite of the palpable fallibility of his own judgment, the Roman patriarch required all the bishops of the west to subscribe the same declaration, and many who refused were deprived of their office, and banished from their churches. So tyrannical was the spirit that already ruled at Rome.

Long after the death of Zosimus, and indeed through both the episcopates of his successors, Boniface and Celestine, the Pelagian heresy continued to cause a great degree of agitation, especially among the western churches. Nevertheless, BONIFACE found leisure to attempt the extension of his influence over the Christian world—a matter generally of much greater consequence to the bishops of Rome than the settlement of theological truth. He asserted that the new churches established in the countries to

the east of Italy belonged to his jurisdiction, rather than to that of the patriarch of Constantinople. The success which attended these efforts was but partial, but in this jealousy between the two metropolitan bishops we may discern the origin of that great schism which ultimately rent asunder the Roman and Greek churches.

CELESTINE, who followed Boniface in 423, found ample occupation in nicely steering his course through that boisterous sea of controversy which now overflowed the world. Although the creed of Augustine had been adopted by the Roman bishop, it was far from obtaining general acceptance, and was stoutly rejected by most of the clergy of France. These held their course midway between Pelagius and Augustine, and their chief advocate, Cassian, abbot of Marseilles, taught the unscriptural doctrine, that whilst human nature is corrupt, and needs Divine grace to renew and make it holy, yet that all, without exception, will eventually receive that grace, and be saved by its purifying power. The controversy was tedious, and the opponents of Cassian at length resorted to the method, now growing common, of appealing to the Roman tribunal. Celestine published his decision in 431, in a letter addressed to the bishops of France. In that letter he complains that *presbyters* should presume to agitate foolish and curious questions in opposition to their bishops, and rebukes the latter for not maintaining their superior authority. He clearly enough enforces that capital doctrine of Rome, the necessity of

complete subordination amongst the inferior functionaries of the church, but his sentiments on the point in dispute are so vaguely expressed that we need not be surprised at their producing no effect. The agitation of these subtle questions did not subside till many changes had taken place, both in the empire and in the church.

The position which the Roman see now assumed in relation to those of Constantinople and Alexandria, is clearly illustrated by the behaviour of Celestine during the Nestorian controversy, which in his time convulsed the whole society of the east.

Nestorius, a man of greater probity than prudence, was transferred, late in life, from a cloister near Antioch to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople, for only by so lofty a title can the grandeur of that bishopric in the fifth century be properly expressed. Long before this, differences of opinion had arisen in the east respecting the true nature of Christ ; some contending that there was a perfect union in Him of the human and Divine natures ; others, that the two natures were separate, and that Christ differed from other men in being enriched by the indwelling of the Deity. The clergy of Alexandria, and throughout Egypt, maintained the former view, but, governed by the feverish passion for doing honour to saints and martyrs, they distinguished the virgin Mary as the *mother of God*. This phrase became the battle-cry of the party, because the use of it gave particular offence to their opponents, who

asserted that although Mary was the mother of *Christ*, she could in no sense be styled the mother of *God*. To the latter party belonged Nestorius when he was elevated to the see of Constantinople, and he immediately began to employ his high influence for the suppression of what he regarded as the erroneous doctrine and blasphemous practice of the Alexandrian theologians.

But in this attempt he met with the fiercest opposition, for the Alexandrian view had already become popular in many churches of the east, and Cyril, the lordly and aspiring bishop of Alexandria, openly denounced Nestorius as a heretic, who disparaged the real Divinity of the Saviour. At length the controversy grew so hot that it was evident one party or the other must be crushed. Cyril, bent on humbling Nestorius, and perhaps jealous of his greater weight in the councils of the east, resolved to obtain the aid of the Roman patriarch. He accordingly addressed a letter to Celestine, containing a very unfair report of the course pursued by Nestorius, and written in so flattering a style as to be tolerably sure of success. Cyril professed to leave the whole matter in the hands of the Roman bishop, and besought his interference on the ground that this only could harmonize the unhappy dissensions of the church.

Celestine was already unfavourably disposed towards his eastern rival in patriarchal dominion, because of the bold and independent attitude which Nestorius ever maintained in relation to

Rome, and therefore seized with avidity the opportunity thus offered him of humbling his brother prelate before the whole church. With an arrogance hardly reached by any of his predecessors, but which was unhappily destined to become characteristic of the Roman see, he actually decreed, that if Nestorius did not send to Rome a *written recantation* of his errors within ten days of his receiving the sentence, he should be excommunicated from the church, and no longer recognised as patriarch. The execution of this presumptuous decree, as if to aggravate the insult, he committed to Cyril.

To compose the various strifes of the church, and the Nestorian schism amongst the rest, the emperor Theodosius II. issued an order, A.D. 430, for a general council of bishops to assemble at Ephesus. The Egyptian clergy mustered in large numbers, and the partisans of Nestorius were probably intimidated by the declining popularity of their leader, whose impetuosity and imprudence had raised him many enemies in the Constantinopolitan court. Celestine did not attend the council himself, but he gave orders to it to follow in all respects the directions of Cyril. Thus the current had set in strongly against the eastern patriarch, so that when Nestorius arrived at Ephesus he was filled with dismay, and believing that his very life was in jeopardy, he demanded from the civil magistrate a guard of soldiers to defend his person and his house.

It was of course an easy matter for Cyril to

obtain from a council so composed whatever decision he wished for, and Nestorius was formally and quickly deposed. But when the circumstances were made known to the emperor, he was so satisfied of the unfairness of all the proceedings, that he refused to ratify its decision. Cyril then had recourse to artifice, resolving at all hazards to accomplish the downfall of his enemy.

There was living in Constantinople a monk, named Dalmatius, who had acquired great renown for his sanctity, having never once quitted his cell for the space of forty-eight years. The emperor himself had sometimes visited him, to receive his advice or his exhortations. The opinions of this monk had always been opposed to the doctrine of Nestorius, and he was in the habit of saying to his disciples, "Take heed, my brethren, for an evil beast has come into this city, and he may hurt some of you with his doctrines." This man appeared to Cyril a very proper instrument to aid him in his purpose. He therefore wrote an account of the proceedings of the council, and the emperor's refusal to ratify them, and inclosing the document in a hollow reed, sent it by the hands of a beggar to the cell of the recluse. Such a missive, addressed to such a man, was as a spark of fire falling on gunpowder. Dalmatius received the message as a summons from Heaven. He straightway forsook his cell, and was soon surrounded by a multitude of monks and abbots, who came forth from cave and cloister to save the church from impending ruin, in the continued

SIXTUS III.

government of a heretical bishop. Brandishing flaming torches, and chanting strains breathing the most indignant and hostile spirit, this procession of priests advanced to the imperial palace. Admitted to the emperor's presence, Dalmatius boldly demanded of the monarch to whom he would give ear—to the six thousand bishops of the whole Christian church, or to one godless man? Wearied by importunities, if not awed by priestly assumptions, the emperor at length consented that the partisans of Cyril should come to Constantinople, and plead their cause before himself. Dalmatius and his followers then marched in triumph to a church, where the news of his success was received by the people with loud shouts of “Anathema to Nestorius!”

The untiring enmity of Cyril soon afterwards wholly triumphed, and Nestorius was commanded to return to his cloister—a decree which was regarded as a victory no less by the patriarch of Rome, who rejoiced in the humiliation of a powerful rival, than by Cyril himself, to whose perseverance and artifice it was principally due.

CHAPTER VI.

AGE OF LEO THE GREAT—MISSION OF PATRICK—
“COUNCIL OF ROBBERS.”

A.D. 432—449.

OF SIXTUS III., who in 432 succeeded Celestine, history makes but slight mention. An event

happened, however, in connexion with the Roman church during his life, and partly during his episcopate, of more than ordinary interest to the English reader. This was the mission of Patrick, since canonized as the tutelary saint of his adopted country, to convert the idolaters of Ireland.

The Irish, like the ancient Britons, adhered to the superstitions of Druidism; and the horrid rites of their worship, such as the sacrifices of children to Com-cruach, the Moloch of Ireland, continued in use to a much later period among them than in Britain. It was about the year 403, when Patrick was sixteen years of age, that he was seized by pirates upon the coast of France, or, as some say, Scotland, and carried away captive to Ireland. Sold as a slave to a native chieftain, Patrick became the herdsman of his flocks. In his solitary rambles through forests and over mountains, the instructions which he had received in his childhood from his pious father, the deacon of a church, proved suitable and impressive themes for reflection. He felt that his captivity was designed to be a blessing to his soul, by bringing him to a thorough faith in the Redeemer, and through this into fellowship with God. Escaping, after some years, from his bondage, he found his way back to his native land.

Here his thoughts often reverted to the idolatrous and cruel rites he had so frequently witnessed with abhorrence in Ireland. In dreams by night, and in meditations by day, the con-

viction thrust itself upon him, that he was called to attempt the rescue of the poor benighted race amongst whom he had dwelt from a spiritual thralldom, of which his own captivity was only a feeble type. About the same time, Celestine had appointed a Roman presbyter, named Palludius, to proceed to Ireland, for the purpose of gathering together and instructing those scattered professors of Christianity, who had been converted by occasional intercourse with French or British Christians, and who were largely tinctured with Pelagian views. Palludius, however, died without accomplishing much, and now Patrick, who had made his desires known at Rome, was commissioned to succeed him.

Patrick landed at Dublin, which was even then a port of considerable repute, in 432, the year of Sixtus's accession. Conversant with the language and manners of the people, and earnest in his work, his success was even beyond his hopes. A chieftain shortly became a convert, and proved a faithful auxiliary and a powerful protector to his teacher. In a large barn belonging to this chief, Patrick preached to crowded audiences every day, and his disciples rapidly increased. Large concourses of people were also assembled in the open air by the sound of the drum. At the approach of Easter, the zealous missionary determined on a public celebration of the ceremonies which in that age were usually observed at this festival. It was the time of year when the princes of the whole

kingdom assembled in council at the ancient city of Tara. On Easter-eve, a *pagan* festival was also to be kept, and it was a law that no fires should be lighted on that night, till the great fire in the palace of Tara was kindled. But early in this eventful evening, the flames of a large fire were beheld by the astonished princes ascending from the hill of Tara. It was the paschal-fire, lighted by the hands of Patrick. Inquiry was instantly made, and the Christian apostle was summoned into the royal presence, where he gladly availed himself of so good an occasion for denouncing the cruel superstitions of the Druids, and preaching, it may be hoped, salvation only by Christ.

Patrick continued his labours in Ireland for more than thirty years, founding many churches, and giving an impulse also to civilization and learning, which led to the Irish taking rank, some centuries later, with the most enlightened of the European nations. Although many, indeed most of the legends of this remarkable man, are doubtless to be rejected as utterly unworthy of belief, he is certainly among the few who deserve a place in the great catalogue of saints, which veneration, superstition, and priestcraft, have conjointly compiled.

Sixtus III. did not live to witness the final success of Patrick's labours in Ireland, for, in 440, we find LEO I. occupying the patriarchal, or as it may now fitly be called, the papal chair of Rome. Leo, called afterwards the GREAT,

was a man admirably adapted for the troublous times in which his lot was cast. He was, indeed, a far greater man in all qualities of intellect than any of his predecessors. His will was imperious, yet his passions were kept under control. His understanding was capacious, and his invention of resources equal to all emergencies. With these commanding powers, he set himself to work with great energy to enlarge those boundaries which had circumscribed the authority and crippled the domination of his forerunners. He was the first boldly to assert that the bishop of Rome was the only primate of the universal church, and based his assertion on our Lord's address to the apostle Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church." The pretensions of the patriarch of Constantinople to be accounted his equal in dignity he scouted as a profane usurpation. Himself the first of a series of pontifical labourers, who appeared at intervals to build up and consolidate the papal edifice, Leo may be said to have laid the foundation of that supremacy to which the popedom ultimately attained.

The age of Leo was eminently one of turbulence and strife. To the empires, both the eastern and the western, but particularly the latter, innumerable omens foreboded a speedy dissolution. In the church, the fever of controversy raged with unprecedented violence, leaving when it passed away the seeds of many diseases, which continued to infect the

ecclesiastical system down to the Reformation.

The western churches were still agitated by the contentions that sprang out of Pelagianism and its numerous offshoots. In these controversies, Leo, who was a profound theologian, took a very conspicuous part; and the work generally ascribed to his pen, on "The Calling of all Nations," is not only to be regarded as a masterpiece of logical skill, but must also receive the praise of having greatly allayed the fierce animosities that prevailed.

But if some of Leo's exertions were directed to the promotion of peace among the churches under his care, he displayed, on the other hand, so determined a resolution to increase the authority of his see, that he excited the most angry and indignant reflections from many of his brethren in office. When, for instance, Hilary, archbishop of Arles, had suspended, by the consent of a synod, the bishop Celidon from all his episcopal functions, the latter resolved on appealing to Leo, and, to receive a favourable hearing, lost no time in proceeding to Rome. His appeal was successful, for he so deceived the Roman patriarch, that the decree of Hilary was reversed. Hilary hastened to Rome to make a personal representation of the case, but finding the mind of Leo too far prejudiced in Celidon's favour to allow any hope of altering his decision, the archbishop intimated his intention of returning immediately to Arles. At this Leo was incensed, interpreting Hilary's

withdrawal from Rome as signifying a resolution to act independently of his authority. He therefore caused the archbishop to be imprisoned, saying, "He who dares to dispute the primacy of Peter will find himself wholly unable to lessen that dignity; but puffed up by the spirit of his own pride, he will plunge himself deep into hell." Thus Leo presumed to exclude from the kingdom of heaven any one who refused to submit to the spiritual domination of the pope.

Nor were Leo's attempts to aggrandize the papal power confined to the churches of the west. The east was now on fire with the monophysite heresy, or the doctrine that Christ's nature was absolutely one, and Leo interfered, in the hope of quenching the flames. Nestorius, Cyril, and Dalmatius, had, indeed, disappeared from the stage of controversy and of life, but other actors had taken their vacant posts. Dioscurus represented Cyril at Alexandria, and Eutyches was the successor of Dalmatius at Constantinople. Flavian, who had been elevated to the throne of Nestorius, attempted to moderate the vehemence of the contending parties, but with very indifferent success. The emperor, Theodosius II., favoured the Alexandrian party, and caused a second council to be convened at Ephesus, for the express purpose of condemning all who refused to subscribe to their creed. He took great care that none should be admitted to the council who would be likely to thwart his design. Even Flavian, patriarch of the imperial

city, whose position seemed almost to entitle him to the favour of his prince, was compelled to attend this council, not as its president, nor even to vote in its decisions, but as a petitioner at its bar. To complete the iniquity of the plot, Dioscurus was made president, and, as in the former council, the chief accuser was constituted the judge.

The acts of this council were such as might be expected, and earned for it from Leo the just appellation of "The Council of Robbers," a name which has adhered to it ever since. The cathedral in which they met was surrounded with troops of soldiers at the beck of Dioscurus. If any of the bishops dared to commence a defence of the two-fold nature of the Redeemer, he was stopped by loud and undignified shouts, full of acrimony and rage. "He is a Nestorius! He has cut asunder Christ, let *him* be cut asunder! Burn him, burn him alive!" were some of the cries of this theological mob. In the end, all the bishops who refused to sign the Alexandrian, or monophysite creed, were sentenced to be instantly deposed. When Flavian's name was included, some ventured to remonstrate. "Do you mean to raise a sedition?" cried the furious Dioscurus—"Where are the soldiers?" Forthwith the cathedral was filled by the swarms of soldiers and monks who had hitherto besieged the doors, armed with staves, chains, and swords. The trembling bishops hid themselves behind the altar and under the benches, and soon consented to sign a *blank paper*, which was after-

wards filled with Flavian's sentence of deposition. It is said that Flavian himself was reviled, buffeted, and trampled upon by his brother bishop of Alexandria, and died the third day after, from the wounds and bruises he had received.

To this "Council of Robbers" Leo had sent by deputies the copy of an elaborate epistle, which he had previously addressed to Flavian, respecting the true doctrine of Christ's nature ; but although the legates made several attempts to have the letter read, the bishops were too far committed to a different creed, and too infuriated by party rage, to listen to a document which eventually became a standard of orthodoxy on this subject. Amid such controversies, it could not be expected that the spirit of genuine Christianity could flourish. The fruits of love, joy, and peace, long-suffering and gentleness, which mark the true believer, disappeared amidst the bitterness of theological rancour ; an unholy zeal was substituted for true conversion of heart. Those too who ought to have been examples to the flock became eminent only for their ungodliness. To professors of such a character in every age, to all, in short, who substitute dependence on any form of creed, however accurate, for a living faith in the righteousness of the Saviour, may appropriately be recalled the solemn warning of our Lord : "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ? . . . And then will I

profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

CHAPTER VII.

AGE OF LEO THE GREAT—BARBARIAN INVASIONS—
CORRUPTIONS MULTIPLIED.

A.D. 449—461.

THE indignation of Leo knew no bounds when he heard of the infamous decrees of this infamous assembly. He denounced its theological decisions as heretical, declared that an unpardonable insult had been offered the Roman church, and refused to acknowledge the new patriarch of Constantinople, until he had assented to and signed the letter which he had himself addressed to his predecessor on the topic of debate. Although the emperor Theodosius, fearful of a rupture between the eastern and western churches, called another council at Chalcedon,* at which he invited the Roman patriarch to attend, Leo thought it not consistent with his dignity to be present in person, but he sent legates, and by their influence the letter which he had formerly addressed to Flavian was accepted as the basis of the creed of the universal church. The doctrine of Leo is still embodied in the second article of the church of England, and is in accordance with the views almost unanimously entertained by evangelical Christendom. Dioscurus and

* The modern Scutari.

his associates received at this council a just retribution for their cruelty to Flavian, being severally deposed from the offices they had held in the church.

While ecclesiastics were waging this bitter strife of words, the empire was reeling under the fearful shocks of a new and indomitable foe. The Goths and their allies, indeed, were no longer hostile, but had quietly settled for the present in the western and northern parts of Europe. New kingdoms had sprung up, and the descendants of Alaric and his followers now sat upon thrones which they had erected for themselves, and governed a partly civilized people, established between the Rhine and the sea. But the Roman empire was destined to be assailed by many such savage hordes.

“ Oft o’er the trembling nations from afar
Has Scythia breathed the living cloud of war ;
And, where the deluge burst, with sweepy sway
Their arms, their kings, their gods, were rolled away.
As oft have issued, host impelling host,
The blue-eyed myriads from the Baltic coast.
The prostrate south to the destroyer yields
Her boasted titles, and her golden fields :
With grim delight the brood of winter view
A brighter day, and heavens of azure hue ;
Scent the new fragrance of the breathing rose,
And quaff the pendent vintage as it grows.”

GRAY.

Nations fiercer than the Goths had now paused for a while, in their march from the north-east, to found a kingdom on the plains of Hungary, till their borders becoming too strait for them, they looked with eager eyes upon the fertile plains that lay beyond the Alps. The leader of the Huns was Attila,

whose relentless cruelty in war entitled him to the dreadful name of "The Scourge of God." He was in person a finished example of the Calmuc Tartar race to which he belonged. His head was large, his complexion swarthy, his eyes small and sunken, his nose flat, his body short, square, broad-shouldered, of ungainly appearance, but of enormous strength. The fierce rolling of his eyes indicated the wild passions that possessed his soul. Such physical endowments were well-adapted to give him supremacy amongst the savage tribes he led. He was, besides, of royal birth, so that the influence he enjoyed over the Huns was unbounded. For a long time that barbarous people, dangerous both as friends and as foes, had been kept in a sort of alliance with Rome, by the payment of large presents from year to year, which Attila regarded as nothing less than tribute. On one occasion, when the presents were not forthcoming at the appointed time, he sent an ambassador to the emperor with the insolent message, "Attila, my lord and *thy* lord, commands thee to provide a palace for his immediate acceptance." So much rudeness was the inevitable precursor of aggression. For a time the evil day was deferred, but an occasion at length offered which brought the Huns into direct collision with the fast declining, yet still colossal power of Rome.

A dispute had occurred between two Gothic princes settled in France, in which one of them sought the aid of Attila, the other the support

of the emperor. The plains of Champagne, which extend more than fifty miles in every direction from the ancient city of Chalons, were the appointed battle-field, and towards this the combatants moved all the forces they could command. Here were assembled, under Attila, all the barbarians of Scythia who had lately passed into Europe, Huns, Rugians, Franks, Burgundians, and the rest; while the settled and more ancient population of Europe rallied around the standard of Ætius, the Roman general. It was a memorable epoch, on which the Christian cannot look back without intense interest, though much saddened by the view which it affords him of the degradation of humanity when unvisited by the gospel. At the issue of this great conflict it is impossible not to feel gratitude and joy, much as we may deplore and execrate the horrors of the conflict itself. The struggle between Ætius and Attila was the crisis of civilization and barbarism. Had the Scythian prevailed, the tide of barbarism must have overflowed all Europe, sweeping away every trace of ancient refinement. Christianity herself would have received a staggering, though not a mortal blow. But, happily, it was otherwise ordained.

On the day of battle, Attila behaved like an infuriated lion. "I, myself," said he, "will hurl the first spear, and the wretch shall die who refuses to follow my example." But the personal prowess of one man was of little avail. His comparatively undisciplined hordes at length

gave way before the caution and military skill of Ætius and Theodric, his Gothic ally. The number of the slain in this awful battle, "unparalleled in all ages," said the warriors themselves, "for its fierce, various, obstinate, and bloody encounters," is differently estimated; some stating it at one hundred and sixty-two thousand, and others as many as three hundred thousand. It was at least so disastrous as to compel the retirement of Attila; and the battle of Chalons decided that the nations already settled in Europe, and partly Christianized, should retain their possessions, and that the established institutions of society should not be rudely swept into oblivion by one devastating hurricane.

But though repulsed at Chalons, Attila was far from being crushed, and in the year 452 he resolved on crossing the Alps, and invading Italy itself. The enervated Italians, quite unable to cope with so fierce an enemy, either fled before him, or yielded at discretion. Aquileia, Padua, Milan, Pavia, submitted to pillage and rapine, thankful at such a cost to save their walls and roofs from the flames. Many wealthy families flying before the invader took refuge, with what property they could carry, on a number of small islands lying at the head of the Adriatic Gulf, and here formed themselves into a new community, which eventually became the prosperous republic of Venice.

It need hardly be said that Leo could not look on all these disastrous events as an unmoved

spectator. The inhabitants of Rome now trembled for their own safety, and to conciliate the conqueror the emperor despatched the Roman patriarch to gain the best terms he could ; a mission which Leo readily undertook. He had been bred in courts, and in addition to his other gifts was endowed with all a statesman's talent. He soon succeeded in prevailing on Attila to withdraw from Italy, though not till the barbarian had received Honoria, the emperor's sister, in marriage, with an immense sum of money as her dowry.

The invasion of the Huns was followed, ere long, by the assaults of the Vandals, under Genseric, a leader second only to Attila in courage and daring ambition. But this time the tide of barbarous invasion set in from the south. Nearly twenty years had elapsed since Boniface, the Roman general in the African provinces, had revolted from his allegiance, and invited the Vandals, who had already overspread Spain, to cross the Straits of Gibraltar, and aid him in his rebellion. The Spaniards beheld with joy the departure of their ruthless spoilers ; and the Vandals hastened not so much to help Boniface, as to enrich themselves with the acquisition of a fair and fertile country. The seven provinces of northern Africa, stretching from Tangier to Tripoli, had long been reckoned amongst the most valuable possessions of Rome—its storehouse in seasons of famine, and the ample receptacle of its redundant population. By the prowess of Genseric these provinces

were soon wrested from the enfeebled Roman arms, while the flourishing vineyards and stately edifices which had long adorned them were recklessly laid waste and destroyed by his savage followers.

And now that the ravages of Attila had weakened, almost to helplessness, the imperial government, Genseric resolved to extend his conquests and depredations to the mother country. Rapidly constructing a navy, he shipped a large army of Vandals and Moors across the Mediterranean, and cast anchor at the mouth of the Tiber, in the spring of 455. Advancing upon the defenceless capital, he was met by an unarmed procession of the inhabitants, headed by the pontiff Leo, clothed in the priestlike robes of his office. Leo had little hope of succeeding this time in entirely averting the vengeance of the assailant; but his imposing appearance and persuasive eloquence softened the barbarian's heart, and the Vandal king promised to spare both the city and its inhabitants the horrors of fire and sword. But the houses of the citizens were remorselessly pillaged, and for fourteen days and nights, rapacity, avarice, and lust, raged with unchecked fury. The churches afforded the richest booty to the spoilers, and after their departure Leo himself caused six silver vases, the gift of Constantine, each of an hundred pounds' weight, to be melted down to repair the losses sustained—an evidence at once of the enormous wealth already acquired by the Roman church, and of the immense

booty which the barbarians must have secured. Genseric also carried back with him to Africa the golden and silver vessels, including the seven-branched candlestick, which Titus had saved in the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem.

Although Leo was thus a witness of the humiliations to which the Roman empire was subjected in its decay, he did not live to behold its final ruin. He died in 461, after holding the papal office for the unusually long period of twenty-one years.

Very singular and very instructive is the spectacle of a church rising to greater power amidst the decline and the dying throes of the mightiest empire this world has ever seen. Each abstraction of authority from the secular government contributed to increase and strengthen that of the spiritual. As the emperors sank, the popes rose, first to extensive influence, and then to absolute dominion. And never was man better fitted than LEO THE GREAT to take advantage of such a crisis. He attended, in turn, to all the demands upon his energies. He checked refractory bishops, and controlled or dictated to pusillanimous sovereigns. His eagle eye at once scanned the horizon, and attentively watched the region beneath his feet. Careful to maintain his claims of spiritual supremacy at Alexandria and Constantinople, he at the same time took pains to consolidate and perfect the system of papal jurisdiction and authority nearer home.

In particular, he so altered the terms on

which penitent offenders might be re-admitted to the bosom of the church, as to enlarge almost indefinitely the limits of priestly power. It had been customary, from the apostolic age, for backsliders and excommunicated persons to acknowledge their offences in public, and in public to undergo the long and painful penances, lasting sometimes for years, which were the condition of their re-entrance to the church. But Leo introduced the practice of *private confession to the priest alone*, whose judgment and will thenceforth became the sole tribunal of transgressors. Penances imposed in private might as privately be discharged. The wholesome check of public opinion was utterly destroyed. An avaricious priest might be bribed into collusion with crime; an ambitious priest might tyrannize at will over the wounded and tender conscience. The tremendous power which this change threw into the hands of the priesthood, and the perilous temptations to which it exposed them, have often been descanted on, and Leo has not improperly been said to have laid in this institution the great corner-stone of the entire papal fabric.

The Roman church had now undergone such changes, in both its spiritual and its temporal aspect, that it can hardly be recognised with propriety as a Christian communion, or be identified in any of its features with that simple-minded and faithful band of disciples, to whom the apostle of the Gentiles addressed his most elaborate epistle, and from whom it

derived its origin. In its long conflicts with paganism, it had, indeed, succeeded in exterminating the old idolatry, but not in eradicating the superstitions which idolatry had so thickly sown. On the contrary, these corruptions were, in many instances, grafted upon Scriptural ordinances, and were thus perpetuated by the church itself. In their eagerness to multiply converts, the Roman bishops early lost the true idea of conversion, and substituted for it a merely nominal change of faith. They no longer demanded of candidates for baptism some satisfactory evidence of a heart renewed by the Spirit of God, but were content with a verbal adoption of the orthodox creed, and a promise to conform to the regulations of the church. This fearful corruption paved the way for a multitude of others, and led to the sanction of many heathenish customs, for the sake of conciliating those to whom they were familiar habits.

Thus, prayers were offered in behalf of the dead ; and with the singular inconsistency of a religion derived from opposite sources, prayers were also presented to the dead. The intercessions of glorified saints and martyrs, and especially of the virgin Mary, were sought for in profane conjunction with the intercessions of Him who is alone appointed as the "Mediator between God and men." Pagan temples, instead of being destroyed, were converted into Christian churches ; the altars of Moloch were changed into the altars of Christ ; and even the heathen statues and festivals were continued

under some new name, being now often employed to commemorate the fame of a fabulous saint instead of a fabulous divinity.

Not all of these abuses, however, owed their birth to a pagan parentage; many of them sprang from the natural tendencies of the human heart, or originated in the Jewish predilections of the primitive church. To the former may be ascribed that veneration of saints and martyrs, which degenerated ere long into an absurd superstition, a reverence for places, pictures, images, relics, and days. To Jewish notions must be attributed the construction of churches on the plan of the ancient temple, having a "sanctuary," a "most holy place," and an "altar;" and finally, the designation of the Lord's supper by the name of the "Christian sacrifice."

Other errors combined with the foregoing to destroy the apostolic purity and simplicity of worship. Baptism was regarded as synonymous with spiritual regeneration; the Lord's supper was believed to convey the very nature of Christ to the soul of the partaker; and purgatorial fires were supposed to perfect, in another world, the spiritual purifications which had only been begun in this. Thus the germs of all those corruptions in doctrine which have given the papacy its "bad eminence" in history, were already beginning to be developed when Leo the Great occupied the papal throne. The control which the pope now exercised over other bishops; the firm grasp which the new mode of confession gave the priesthood upon

the minds of the laity ; the imposing splendour and pomp of the public services of religion, united with the other elements of deformity already portrayed, concurred to give the Roman hierarchy those hideous features of *The Antichrist*, which grew more and more revolting as ages rolled away. Prophecy had now in part received its fulfilment ; there had come a falling away, and the man of sin had been revealed—"the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GOTHIC PERIOD—CALAMITIES WHICH BEFEL THE ITALIAN CITIES.

A.D. 475—568.

THE immediate successors of Leo were not men of any considerable note. HILARY, SIMPLICIUS, FELIX II., and GELASIUS, followed faithfully in the track which the genius of Leo had marked out for the elevation of the Roman see, so far as their abilities enabled them. But they had fallen on evil days. The Goths, having settled themselves in Spain and France, had converted those ancient members of the empire into independent kingdoms. Next, looking with sinister eye upon the Italian plains, they ingratiated themselves with the feeble emperors, and from

being their allies soon found means of becoming their masters. The story of the quarrels between the Goths and the Romans would be tedious, and is not intimately connected with our present theme. It will be enough to bear in mind, that from the year 475 may be dated the entire subversion of the ancient empire, and the commencement of a new but short-lived dynasty. Odoacer, a rude Gothic soldier, held his court at Rome.

The Goths were professedly Christians, but being of the Arian party, they had little sympathy with the Roman church, and but little veneration for the established institutions of the people they had subdued. It taxed all the ingenuity of the popes in these difficult times to maintain their position at home, and they had not much leisure to attend to the foreign relations of the church. Still, when opportunity offered, they manifested unabated jealousy of the rival claims of the eastern patriarch, and pope Felix II. and Acacius of Constantinople mutually excommunicated each other. At home, the fast declining state of commerce and agriculture, the perpetual apprehension of pillage from their Gothic tyrants, and the rapid decrease of the population, all tended to diminish the revenues of the church. Gelasius deplored that in his time some of the districts of Italy, formerly the most fertile and populous, were reduced almost to desolation.

So lamentable a state of affairs, in so lovely a region, at once aroused the compassion and

tempted the cupidity of Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, whose kingdom was then seated on the banks of the Danube. Theodoric had received a liberal education at the court of Constantinople, and he now proposed to the eastern emperor Zeno to conquer Italy for him, and to hold it as his deputy. The emperor was eager to accept the offer, and indeed it is conjectured by some that he suggested the enterprise. Theodoric obtained an easy conquest, and although nominally holding his authority from the eastern court, he succeeded in establishing a really independent kingdom on the banks of the Tiber, which continued to subsist to the time of the emperor Justinian.

Under the reign of Theodoric, Italy somewhat revived, and the national enjoyment of prosperity left the popes more leisure for the prosecution of their designs to aggrandize the church which they governed. We know little of ANASTASIUS II. or of SYMMACHUS, but their successors in the popedom appear to have given Theodoric some share of that uneasiness which the ambition of aspiring churchmen has so often occasioned to civil rulers. Theodoric never interfered in the internal affairs of the church, but, anxious for a real unity between his own kingdom and the eastern empire, he did his utmost to heal the breach which the jealousy of the rival patriarchs had opened, each of them aiming at universal supremacy. The pope HORMISDAS was too haughty to make any concessions whatever to the Constantino-

politan bishop ; but on the accession of JOHN I. to the popedom, Theodoric sent him on a special mission to the imperial capital, to effect, if possible, a union. John, however, displayed the same arrogant spirit, and even demanded that in the public assemblies a loftier throne should be erected for him than for his brother patriarch, Epiphanius. Theodoric was so incensed when informed of his insolence, that on his returning to Rome he threw him into prison, and kept him there till his death.

The popedom of FELIX III. is rendered more remarkable than those which just preceded or followed it, by the fame of a man who far surpassed the pontiffs of his time, both in excellence of character and in activity of life. This was Benedict, a native of Norcia, in Italy, who founded the order of monks which still exists under his name. The monastic mode of life had now spread into the west, and both there and in the east was generally perverted to purposes of licentiousness and fraud. To remedy these abuses, and to transform the monastery into a school for the church, were the objects to which Benedict devoted his life. When yet quite a youth he forsook his home, and took up his abode in a solitary cave, where he remained for some years, subsisting always on the coarsest and scantiest fare. He thus gained a great reputation for sanctity, so that multitudes flocked to him, to learn in those perilous times—when all they possessed might be taken away at a stroke—how they might still be

happy though under the hard pressure of poverty. Even the rich and the powerful visited him, and many begged him to take charge of their sons, that he might give them suitable instruction.

At length, he was enabled to found twelve cloisters, in each of which he placed twelve monks under a superior. To these, and to all the other cloisters which he afterwards established, he prescribed those rules of life which gave the Benedictine order so great a name for holiness, and made it for ages so influential in every country of Europe. The object of these rules was to create a self-denying, watchful, meek, and devout demeanour. Too much stress, however, was laid on the mere outward appearance, and hence it often came to pass that the head bowed down, the eyes fixed on the earth, and the oft-repeated form of self-accusation and condemnation, were the accompaniments of real pride of heart, and resolute indulgence in sin. The Benedictine rules were, nevertheless, admirably adapted to produce a race of men who should zealously promote, in all circumstances and times, the interests of the Roman see. Capable of enduring much bodily fatigue, devoted to their creed and their church with an ardour only second to that which they felt for their order, the disciples of Benedict have ever been among the most laborious and successful missionaries employed by the popes of Rome.

Contemporary with Benedict was a man of

a very different class, the learned and celebrated Boethius, who may be justly regarded as the last visible star in the thickly-clouded night that was now setting in upon the mind of Italy. During a long and laborious life, Boethius enjoyed the esteem of the Gothic king Theodoric, and effected something towards diffusing a love of literature and science amongst his barbarous subjects. But the zeal of Theodoric for the Arian doctrines led him at last to suspect Boethius of plotting against his government, and he stained his reputation, and disgraced the close of a prosperous reign, by cruelly putting to death one of his best and noblest servants, together with his venerable relative, the patrician Symmachus.

Theodoric died in the year 526, and left a grandson, in his minority, as the heir to his kingdom. Many quarrels ensued between the various branches of his family, and the Gothic power was so rapidly weakened, that the Italian crown became a tempting and promising prize to the generally wakeful eye of foreign ambition.

The popes who governed the church during this unsettled period are totally unworthy of remembrance. BONIFACE II. was elected by only a part of the Roman clergy in 530, and his rival, Dioscurus, appears to have had an equal share of the suffrages usually sought. But Boniface was secured in his seat by the suspiciously sudden death of Dioscurus, which ended the dispute, and the divided allegiance of the church, about a month after the election

had been made. In two years Boniface was no more, and JOHN II. obtained the papal office upon payment of a large sum of money to the young Athalaric, the intemperate and spendthrift successor of Theodoric. John enjoyed his purchase little longer than his predecessor had done; and AGAPETUS, who followed him, sat on the unsteady throne only a few months. There can be little doubt that SYLVERIUS, the next pontiff, gained the tiara by the same unworthy means as John II. had employed, for the Gothic prince, Theodatus, by whose influence he was supported, was a man of the most insatiable avarice, and would unquestionably have disposed of the seat to his own pecuniary advantage. But the pontificate of Sylverius was signalized by events of more than ordinary interest, which fix our attention upon him with somewhat greater curiosity than we can possibly feel respecting those who preceded him.

The emperor Justinian was now the ruler of the eastern empire, and the wisdom of his legislative acts, together with the general prosperity of his reign, produced a historian, Procopius, whose writings throw some lustre over an age which would otherwise have been almost impenetrably obscure; so rapidly was the light of literature vanishing away from the ill-fated nations of Europe. Very early in Justinian's protracted reign his renowned general, Belisarius, had undertaken to rescue the provinces of Africa from that Vandal horde, which, under the name of governing, infested and ravaged

them without mercy. This enterprise was crowned with complete success, and having reduced Africa to the allegiance of his sovereign, Belisarius next turned his eyes upon Italy, now groaning under the oppression of Gothic rulers. The successors of Theodoric had quite forgotten his engagement to hold his crown by favour of the eastern court. They did not even affect submission to the emperor, and under their selfish and tyrannical rule the country was reduced to a condition nearly as wretched as at the period of Theodoric's invasion.

When Belisarius appeared, then, on the coast of Italy, he was hailed by many as a deliverer, and amongst these was Sylverius the pope. After a tedious campaign in Sicily and the south, the Greek general advanced upon Rome in the spring of the year 537. The Goths retreated to the open fields, feeling themselves unable to sustain the siege of the city, and Sylverius, at the head of his clergy, welcomed the conqueror within the walls. It was now the invader's turn to be besieged. The city was rapidly surrounded by the Gothic troops, and the siege continued from March to November. Although every precaution had been taken by Belisarius that his fertile genius and lengthened experience could devise, the hardships of so long a blockade were excessively severe; and the scarcity and unwholesomeness of their food, with the prevalence of contagious diseases, at last provoked an

impatient and murmuring spirit among the citizens, who had now learned of how little consequence it was whether their masters bore a Latin or a Gothic name.

It was natural that Sylverius, both for his own sake and for that of the people who looked to him as their friend and guide, should wish to put an end to the sufferings this contest produced. But the means he employed bespeak the immorality of the age, and show that the pope himself was not a whit superior to the rest. He had given his allegiance to the emperor to save himself from trouble—the same motive now induced him to transfer it once more to the Goths. He caused a letter to be conveyed to the Gothic king, Vitiges, offering to open privately the gate adjoining the Lateran church, and so to admit his troops. This letter was intercepted by a soldier in Belisarius's army, and Sylverius was forthwith summoned into the presence of the general whom he had plotted to betray. His own handwriting convicted him, and defence was in vain. He was immediately stripped of his robes, clad in the habit of a monk, and placed on board a vessel bound for the east. This vessel conveyed him to a desolate island on the coast of Asia Minor, near the town of Patara. He soon afterwards died there, either by starvation, or, as some say, by the hand of an assassin.

The next pontiff, VIGILIUS, was nominated by Belisarius, and the clergy, who were commanded to go through the forms of an election, were in

no condition to refuse. Vigilius had purchased the honour with a bribe of two hundred pounds' weight of gold. A seat so disgracefully obtained was not likely to be very safely or very worthily held. Vigilius was the servile creature of the imperial court, and, except in one or two instances, always complied with its mandates. After the departure of Belisarius, the Goths revolted against the weak and oppressive commanders who took his place, and Vigilius, still courting the favour of the emperor, entreated that an efficient force might be sent to compel submission and preserve tranquillity. Anticipating a siege from the Goths, he purchased with the revenues of the church large quantities of corn to provision the city, and was gratified at last, if the enslavement of his country could afford him any matter for joy, by beholding the triumphant entry into Rome of the general Narses, who completed the work which Belisarius had begun, wholly subverting and destroying the Gothic dominion, and restoring Italy, for a brief space, to its former position as an appendage of the eastern empire.

But the same year that beheld the subjugation of Italy witnessed also the humiliation of Vigilius. The emperor Justinian was fond of theological studies, and interfered much in the controversies of the church. A chief reason for his confirming the choice of Belisarius in making Vigilius a pope, was the expectation that so unprincipled a man would readily become an instrument for his own designs.

Justinian was intent on fixing the orthodox faith according to a creed of his own, and in pursuance of his object he summoned Vigilius to Constantinople, that he might influence by his presence some obstinate ecclesiastics. The emperor had issued an edict, under the title of "The Three Chapters," in which he anathematized Theodore, Theodoret, and Ibas, three leading controversialists upon the long-disputed point, the nature of the Saviour's person. To this edict he hoped to obtain the sanction of the whole church, and with this view it was that he sought the pontiff's aid. Vigilius was quite indifferent to the controversy itself, but he knew that a large proportion of the western and north African churches was decidedly opposed to the edict, and he therefore ventured to petition the emperor that he would refer the matter to a general council. He even bound himself by an oath, that when the assembly met he would do all in his power to forward the emperor's views. But the council was not to be coerced, and Vigilius, surprised at their firmness, fancied they were strong enough to support him in asserting the independence of the church from all imperial control. His oath was wholly forgotten, and he wrote to the emperor desiring him to revoke the offensive edict. But he had greatly overrated his own importance and the strength of the bishops. Justinian, incensed at his behaviour, ordered him to be instantly seized; and though Vigilius fled to the sanctuary of a church, he was

dragged from the very altar, and imprisoned in his own house. He shortly after consented to do all that the emperor commanded, and was then suffered to return to Italy. He died on the voyage, in the year 555.

The general condition of Italy after the reign of Justinian, and the character of the popes who more immediately succeeded Vigilius, are subjects involved in deep obscurity. We are now fairly embarked on the "sunless sea" of the dark ages. Literature was nowhere cultivated. Justinian himself had closed the schools of Athens, which had feebly survived till then, though hardly shedding around a gleam of that splendour with which they had anciently enlightened the world. Very few undertook to chronicle the events of the age, and those few are of doubtful credibility. Certain, however, it is, that in consequence of the difficulty which the emperors of the east experienced in defending their dominions from foreign invasion, they left Italy very much at the mercy of the Gothic or Vandal tribes that still dwelt between the Alps and the Danube. The representative of the imperial authority, the exarch of Ravenna, had little influence beyond the neighbourhood of that city. In some towns, the Goths, in others, the more ancient inhabitants, retained the governing power; and those petty principalities began to arise, which afterwards divided between them the whole of Italy. Under these circumstances, the fair regions of the south became a tempting bait to the poor and hardy

barbarians beyond the Alps. The most powerful of these, a Vandal race, known as Longobards, or Lombards, from the immense beards which they wore, made an irruption into Italy in the year 568, led by their warlike chief, Alboin. Meeting with trifling resistance, they settled in the spacious plain watered by the Po, and which still retains from them the name of Lombardy. They afterwards established their power throughout the peninsula, and held it for the most part till the days of Charlemagne.

In all the calamities which the cities of Italy were thus doomed to endure, the ancient metropolis bore its full proportion. Frequently did the senate and clergy send to Constantinople for aid, and as often did they find their suit rejected, through the growing incapacity of the eastern empire to defend its own frontier. But the revenues of the popes, and of the priesthood generally, suffered much less than those of secular landlords, for all the combatants who strove for mastery on the Italian fields, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Greeks, and Lombards, were professed Christians; and though the barbarian tribes were mostly of the Arian persuasion, yet even they manifested respect for the office and estates of the Roman bishop.

Amidst the darkening shades which had enveloped society at this period, religion had largely suffered. All the great truths of the gospel had, more or less, disappeared from the spiritual horizon, and the inventions of men, by which their place was supplied, only added

to the increasing gloom. Repentance towards God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the renewing operations of the Holy Spirit, were no longer the doctrines dwelt upon by those who professed themselves the ministers of the everlasting gospel. The beneficial influence which pure religion exerts upon a community being thus withdrawn, the arts disappeared, literature died away, and the social system itself became disorganized. So intimate is the connexion between evangelical truth faithfully dispensed and the prosperity of nations; and so closely does national decay follow the diffusion of Romish error.

CHAPTER IX.

GREGORY THE GREAT.

A.D. 568—604.

THE close of the sixth century may be regarded as the time when the fortunes of the "eternal city" reached their lowest ebb, and just at that crisis a man was raised to the popedom peculiarly qualified to restore and advance them. The population of Rome was rapidly declining; the inhabitants who remained dwelt in perpetual alarm from the frequent ravages of the Lombards; the stately edifices, so long its glory, were fast mouldering with decay; the surrounding country was left uncultivated until it changed into a foetid morass; when GREGORY THE GREAT,

and the first of his name, ascended the papal chair.*

Gregory was descended from an ancient patrician house, and was born at Rome a little earlier than the middle of the sixth century. The first years of his manhood were spent in the public service, in which he exercised the office of Roman prætor. On reaching, however, the meridian of life, he became, though far from being unambitious, disgusted with the ordinary objects of human pursuit, and retired into a convent, devoting at the same time all his property to the uses of the church. His statesmanlike habits peculiarly fitted him for political affairs, and he was soon drawn from the seclusion he had chosen, and sent by pope Pelagius II. on a special embassy to the court of Constantinople. Returning to Rome, he once more made the convent his home; and it was during this period that, walking one day in the market-place, he noticed some young slaves from England exhibited for sale, with whose fair complexions and beautiful features he was so charmed, that he eagerly inquired from what country they came. Being told that they were *Angles*, he observed, "They would not be *Angles*, but *Angels*, if only they were Christians." The incident operated so powerfully upon his mind,

* Four pontiffs intervened between Vigilius and Gregory the Great, PELAGIUS I., JOHN III., BENEDICT I., and PELAGIUS II.; but so little is known of them, beyond their uninteresting squabbles with the emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople, that their names would only encumber the narrative.

that he was from that day constantly brooding over a project for converting the native land of these fair-haired youths—a land from which Christianity was now driven by the Saxon invasion to the fastnesses of Scotland and Wales.

In the year 589 Pelagius died, and the clergy of Rome were unanimous in electing the abbot Gregory as his successor. Gregory seems not to have desired the honour, for he promptly declined it; and to avoid its being thrust upon him fled into the country, and concealed himself in a wood. Being discovered, he was brought to Rome to be formally installed, but he still persisted in declining the office, and sent letters to the emperor Maurice, begging that the election might be negatived. The probability is, that he had a higher view than most of his brethren of the immense responsibility that, in the existing state of Rome, would attach to him, as respected both its ecclesiastical and political welfare.

Once possessed of the popedom, however, none of the pretended successors of St. Peter knew better than Gregory how to improve his position for the increase of his power. Yet in fairness it must be admitted, that he sought not to aggrandize himself, but directed all his efforts to what he regarded as the good of his country and his church. In him the patriot and the priest seemed always contending for mastery. Admirably fitted for the troublous times in which he lived, he by turns conciliated the Lombards, whose growing power was now

the dread of Rome, and stimulated the exarch of Ravenna to as sturdy a defence of the imperial territory as the inferior force at his command would justify him in attempting. The finances of the citizens were greatly impoverished by the frequent sieges which they had been compelled to sustain, and Gregory supported out of the patrimony of the church many of the decayed nobles and well-born matrons of Rome, besides three thousand virgins, and many of the provincial bishops, whom the rough hand of war had driven from their homes. He was sensitively alive to the duty, or the policy, of maintaining the poor, and it is said, that once hearing that a beggar had perished in the street, he bitterly accused himself of the neglect which permitted it, and by way of penance interdicted himself from the exercise for several days of his sacerdotal functions. As long as Gregory lived, the sick and the helpless had their wants promptly and tenderly supplied, and he would never sit down to his own repast till he had sent away dishes from his table suited to the wants of his needy pensioners.

Not only was Gregory conscious of his position as the first citizen of Rome; he was equally diligent in upholding his primacy in the church; and the clergy had now so greatly degenerated, that he was constrained to adopt a strict, and even a severe superintendence. The bishop Natalis, of Salona in Dalmatia, had been guilty of gross sensuality, and had utterly neglected the duties of his office. He had enriched his

relatives with presents of the gold and silver vessels belonging to the church, and had wasted much of its revenue in luxurious banqueting. Gregory sharply reprov'd him, and threatened him with suspension from office. Natalis had the audacity to defend his excesses by alleging that he followed the example of Christ, who was called "a gluttonous man." When charged, too, with forsaking the study of the Scriptures, he replied, with the effrontery of hardened hypocrisy, that he "trusted to the illumination of the Holy Spirit." Gregory, however, insisted on his reforming his life, and exposed the fallacy, or rather the impudence of his arguments, but it does not appear that he was deposed. Such an incident as this reveals very clearly the awful depravity of the professed spiritual guides of that age; and the daring perversion of Scripture doctrines by Natalis, would not seem to indicate any great respect for the understanding or the theological attainments of the pope.

Gregory was evidently a very zealous, though we can hardly consider him a very enlightened man. He could at least, however, perceive that the immorality and indolence of the clergy were altogether destructive of their influence over their flocks; and this appears to have been an urgent motive with him to attempt a reformation. For this purpose he composed his "Rules for the Pastoral Office," which continued to exert a beneficial influence many years after his death. In these rules he says, exhorting his brethren to be full of good works, "Let not the bishop

think that reading and preaching alone will suffice. Let his hands be bountiful, let him lend to the needy, let him consider the wants of others as his own, for without such qualities the name of bishop is but a vain and empty title." He inculcates on them also a careful and economic management of the estates bequeathed to the church, in which particular he himself set so excellent an example, that his books of accounts were preserved three hundred years in the library of the Lateran as models of pontifical economy.

In the disjointed state of political affairs during the whole lifetime of Gregory, many opportunities occurred of extending the primacy of Rome over other churches besides those of Italy; and Gregory, always ambitious for the papacy, if not for himself, did not fail to profit by every such occasion. His project of sending missionaries to England, formed before his attaining the pontifical dignity, was among the first to be carried into execution. In the year 596, he despatched Augustine, with forty assistant monks, to effect the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. *Conversion*, in the dialect of Rome, now signified nothing more than proselytism, and it was sanguinely hoped, that by influencing the chiefs to renounce idolatry their subjects would soon be converted in a mass.

This was not, indeed, as is well known, the first introduction of Christianity into Britain, whose inhabitants were among the earliest of Europeans to receive the gospel, and probably

derived their knowledge of it from eastern Christians. Churches had been established in the island for centuries, but in the fierce and protracted struggle with the Anglo-Saxons most of these had disappeared. Some still existed in the mountainous regions of the west and north, but they exerted little influence on the new population of the country. The hatred which ever burns in the breast of the oppressed against their oppressors, and the contempt which conquerors usually feel for those whom they have enslaved, were no doubt among the principal reasons why the ancient inhabitants did not communicate the gospel to their heathen masters. It was, therefore, not the British, but the Anglo-Saxon race which the Roman missionaries came to convert.

The success of Augustine and his brethren was even beyond their expectation. Landing on the Isle of Thanet, they applied to Ethelbert, the king of Kent, for permission to preach in his kingdom. Ethelbert had married a Christian princess, and was, therefore, not unfavourably disposed towards his uninvited guests. Yet so ignorant was he of the nature of their errand, that he insisted that their first interview with him should take place in the open air, lest he should fall a victim to their magical arts. Augustine's eloquence, however, soon inspired the king with confidence, and Ethelbert then granted to the missionaries an old ruinous church at Canterbury, dedicated to St. Martin, and which had existed from the time of the

Romans, as their first station for preaching the gospel. Ere long, the king yielded to the arguments of Augustine or the persuasions of his wife, and his baptism was followed by that of many of his subjects, no fewer than ten thousand being thus nominally received into the church on a single occasion.

In considering an event so intimately connected with the history of our country, it is not out of place to observe, that the reception of the rite of baptism under the circumstances we have recorded must have been, in the vast majority of instances, an empty and an impious form. Such, however, continues to the present day to be the false and unscriptural practice of Romish missionaries amongst heathen nations. The external sign is substituted for the inward operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, and man claims the glory of a work which it is the prerogative of God alone to perform.

Gregory was overjoyed at the success of his mission, and needed no solicitations to send a reinforcement of preachers, all of whom were monks. He next divided the whole island into two archbishoprics, appointing Augustine to be archbishop of London, and constituting the city of York the metropolitan city of the north when Christianity should have penetrated so far. As London had not yet, however, embraced the new religion, and was not within the domains of Ethelbert, Augustine made Canterbury his abode and see.

In the true spirit of Roman arrogance, Au-

gustine assumed to himself the right of governing all the churches in Britain, whether planted by the recent labourers or existing from earlier times. But the ancient British churches were indignant at such an encroachment on their independence and liberties. "We are all prepared," said Deynoch, abbot of Bangor, on one occasion, "to hearken to the church of God, to the pope of Rome, and to every pious Christian, so as to manifest to all, according to their several stations, perfect charity, and to uphold and aid them both by word and deed. What other duty we can owe to him whom you call *pope*, or father of fathers, we do not know; but this we are ready to exercise towards him and every other Christian." This independence by no means pleased Augustine, and he was heard to say to his Anglo-Saxon followers, "Well, then, since they will not own the Anglo-Saxons as brethren, or allow *us* to make known to them the way of life, they must regard them as enemies, and *look for revenge*." The horrible spirit which dictated such a speech is too apparent to need comment, and shows how little of real Christianity the Roman missionaries mingled with their zeal for the advancement of the papal see.

In the contests which the new church thus waged with the old, the influence of Augustine and his followers with the Saxon kings generally enabled them to triumph, and although the British churches long persevered in maintaining their freedom, they gradually became

absorbed in the Anglican hierarchy ; and, long before the Norman invasion, those who ventured to dissent from the Roman forms of worship were only to be found in the extreme parts of the island.

During the pontificate of Gregory, the Spanish church also became subject to the primacy of Rome. Before this period the Goths, who had established their power in Spain, were of the Arian party ; but on their king Reckared professing his belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, the bishops in a body requested the pope to undertake the supervision of their affairs, a request which Gregory was only too happy to grant. He attempted, moreover, to obtain the subjection of the French clergy, but in this he could only partly succeed. Nevertheless, he formed alliances with the French princes, nobles, and bishops ; and considering their church as subject to his inspection, did not hesitate to interfere on many occasions both with advice and with admonition.

It was, perhaps, the zeal of Gregory for multiplying nominal converts to Christianity, that led him to introduce alterations in the forms of worship, which were so exaggerated by succeeding pontiffs as to change the solemn service of God into a ridiculous show. Observing the influence which the harmonies of music and the beauties of painting and sculpture exerted upon the minds of the Lombards and other half-civilized tribes, he resolved to employ the arts as handmaids to religion. He took great

pains to improve the singing in the church, himself conducting the musical education of the youths who formed the choir. The sofa on which he reclined while thus instructing the choristers was shown in Rome as a relic so late as the ninth century, and the "Gregorian chant" still commemorates both the name and skill of its composer. By his exertions the entire service of the Roman church was reduced to a complete and regular form ; the communion was administered in a more imposing manner, accompanied with a magnificent assemblage of pompous ceremonies ; and he personally officiated, till the last days of his life, in what was now called "the canon of the mass," the full performance of which continued above three hours. He moreover descended to the minutest details of church order, regulating the number and method of the processions, the calendar of the festivals, and the changes of sacerdotal robes. When it was represented to him that the images of Christ, of the virgin Mary, and of the saints, were placed in many churches to be worshipped, he declared that though they were certainly not to be regarded as objects of worship, they might very properly be used to instruct the ignorant, and to stimulate devotion. Having been requested by a hermit to send him an image of Christ, and some other figures of a similar kind, the pontiff gave him an image of our Saviour, with others of Mary and of the apostles Peter and Paul, and in a letter accompanying them expressed his approbation

of the request, and explained what was the right use of them, and how they might be made serviceable to the cause of religion. Experience, however, has abundantly shown how futile were the distinctions which Gregory made, and that when such unlawful aids to devotion are found needful, the spirit of devotion is itself rapidly degenerating into a base superstition. The observation of a historian is both sagacious and true, that "by a slow though inevitable progression the honours of the original were transferred to the copy; the devout Christian prayed before the image of a saint; and the pagan rites of genuflexion, luminaries, and incense again stole into the Catholic church." By such ceremonies as these the senses may be impressed, but the *heart*, the seat of devotion, can never be truly changed. To kindle aright the affections in Divine worship, the apostolic practice must be followed—"We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." A sense of pardon through a Saviour's blood, and the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, form the true springs of heartfelt devotion.

Gregory seems to have been a devout believer in the miracles which the monks of that age pretended to work. On being requested by the empress Constantina to send to Constantinople, as a suitable relic to enrich her new church of St. Paul's, the *head* of that apostle, buried at Rome, or at least some portion of his

body, he excuses himself on the ground of the imminent peril which would attend so sacrilegious a transfer. "My predecessor," he says, "undertook to make some repairs near the tomb of St. Lawrence. As they were digging, without knowing precisely where the venerable body was placed, they happened to open his sepulchre. The monks engaged on the work, though they did not presume to touch the body, yet only because of having *seen* it all died in ten days. It is, therefore, the custom of the Romans, when they give any relics, not to venture to touch any portion of the body, but simply to place a piece of linen in a box very near it, which, when it is withdrawn, will work as many prodigies as the bodies themselves. For, in the time of St. Leo, some Greeks, doubting the virtue of such relics, that pope called for a pair of scissors, and on his cutting the linen, true blood flowed from the incision. But what shall I say respecting the bodies of the holy apostles, when it is a known fact, that at the time of their martyrdom, a number of the faithful came from the east to claim them, who succeeded in carrying them out as far as the catacombs, but were then unable to move further, being stopped and dispersed by a terrific storm of thunder and lightning. The napkin, too, which you wished to be sent with the body, cannot be touched any more than the body itself can be approached. Yet that your pious desires may not be wholly disappointed, I will hasten to send you some part of those *chains*

which St. Paul wore on his neck and hands, if indeed I can succeed in getting off any filings from them. For since many continually solicit as a blessing some portion of those filings, a priest stands by with a file, and sometimes it happens that portions fall off from the chains suddenly, and at other times the file is long drawn over them, and yet nothing can be scraped off."

Who can doubt that Gregory was himself the dupe of "these lying wonders?" deceptions discreditable alike to his own intellect, and to the church over which he presided.

A more serious charge than even that of pandering to superstition is alleged against Gregory. Yet his subservient and fawning attitude towards the emperors, which is the crime referred to, must in all probability be attributed to his almost fanatical zeal for the aggrandizement of his church, and affords a memorable example of the wretched maxim, now so long sanctioned in the code of Romish morals, "that it is lawful to do evil that good may come." Eager to withstand the assumption of the eastern patriarch, who laid claim to the title of "Universal Bishop," Gregory wrote to the emperor Maurice, earnestly entreating his interposition. In 602, however, Maurice was deposed, and the usurper Phocas possessed himself of the eastern empire, inhumanly slaughtering, in his ambitious and traitorous march to power, the emperor, the whole royal family, and multitudes besides. The pope, who

formerly flattered Maurice, became now equally servile to Phocas. "Let the heavens rejoice," he writes, "and let the earth be glad ; for your illustrious deeds let the people of every realm, hitherto so vehemently afflicted, now be filled with joy. May the necks of your enemies be subdued to the yoke of your supreme control."

The language employed throughout this epistle is that of base adulation, and it is impossible to blame the censure pronounced by a writer, that "the joyful applause with which Gregory salutes the fortune of the assassin, has sullied with indelible disgrace the character of the saint." Gregory was, indeed, no saint, but he was greatly superior in the tone of his morals to the majority of the popes ; and he laboured with an energy, a perseverance, and a sincerity worthy of a better cause, to strengthen and consolidate the power of the church. If Leo the Great laid the corner-stone of the papal edifice, it may be said with equal truth, that Gregory the Great erected the framework of that stupendous fabric of superstition, fraud, and impiety.

CHAPTER X.

A DARK CENTURY—POWER OF THE POPES STEALTHILY INCREASED.

A.D. 604 — 715.

THE long interval of more than a century from the first to the second Gregory is a dreary waste in history, and although the pontifical

chair received no fewer than four and twenty occupants during that period, hardly one of them is worthy of particular attention. A rapid summary may comprise nearly all that it is desirable to record concerning these ephemeral princes.

SABINIANUS obtained the pontificate in 604, and in his brief possession of it for a year and a half, contrived to secure universal hatred and lasting execration by his avarice and extortion. After the lapse of a year, during which there was no election, BONIFACE III. received the triple crown, but only to lose it by death in a few months. BONIFACE IV., his successor, was more successful in the duration of his power, and so distinguished himself by the happy conception of converting the ancient Pantheon, in which the statues of all the gods were placed, into a church dedicated to *all the saints*, that he was himself enrolled by a grateful priesthood amongst that doubtfully sacred band. DEODATUS next bore the papal crown, but in the same year transmitted it to BONIFACE V., whose genius for priestcraft suggested that the church might augment her power by appointing all sacred edifices to be sanctuaries from the pursuit of justice ; thus throwing her protecting ægis over every criminal, however stained with guilt. The longer popedom of HONORIUS I. was spent in angry and tedious controversies with the eastern church ; and his successor, SEVERINUS, did not in consequence obtain the tiara except on condition of maintaining the creed then prevalent at the

imperial court. JOHN IV. and THEODORE I. were engaged in the same disputes ; and the stubborn resistance of MARTIN I. to his royal master's will cost him his mitre and his life. The struggle was continued by EUGENIUS I. for two short years ; but on the accession of VITALIAN to the popedom, the zeal or the bigotry of the eastern court appeared to relax, and under the mask of friendship the emperor Constans II. paid a personal visit to Rome. Never, however, had the gates of the city admitted a more relentless foe. He stripped the pedestals of their bronze statues, the churches of their treasures, and the Pantheon of its costly ornaments ; and having destroyed more works of art, and committed greater depredations than all the Goths and Vandals of former days, he contemptuously left the pope and his clergy to mourn over their irreparable losses. Of ADEODATUS, DONUS I., AGATHON, and LEO II., we only know that they carried on fierce contests with the archbishop of Ravenna, for refusing to acknowledge their supremacy, which were terminated in the pontificate of Leo by mutual concessions, the archbishop agreeing to receive the pallium at the hands of the pope, and the pontiff to bestow it without the customary fee. Neither BENEDICT II., JOHN V., nor CONON, lived a whole year after their assuming the triple crown. SERGIUS I. next gained the popedom by forcibly driving out his competitors, and bribing the deputy of the emperor. Yet his reign was remarkably long, lasting nearly twelve

years, but leaving, nevertheless, a memory not worth preserving. JOHN VI. and JOHN VII. have bequeathed us only their names; and the month's reign of SISINIUS, with the image-championship of CONSTANTINE, who succeeded him in 708, are the only other events recorded on this nearly blank page of papal history.

It is difficult to decide whether pity, scorn, or indignation, should predominate as we survey the character of this long pontifical array. Certainly admiration and envy would be wholly out of place. It is pitiable to see men eager for honours which were not only sure to be short-lived, but which could be enjoyed but at the sacrifice of independence and peace of mind; it is detestable to witness them now cringing to the powerful, now cruel and haughty to the weak; and it justly awakens our profoundest horror, that for a whole century (alas! for many centuries!) the spiritual rulers of Christendom should be themselves the most striking patterns of corruption, irreligion, and vice.

The circumstances of Italy during this period were, on the whole, favourable to the maintenance of the power which the popes had already organized; and those who were not solely intent on the enjoyment of the ease and grandeur which their position conferred, devoted a portion of their energies to increase the privileges and revenues of the see. Although the Lombards were masters of nearly all Italy, they never became possessed of Rome; and as the eastern empire declined, the exarch residing at Ravenna

exercised a constantly diminishing control over the affairs of the papal city. Still the pope acknowledged the emperor as his sovereign, and the emperor sometimes chose to impose his mandates on the pope. Thus, when Martin I. stood forth as the opponent of the Monothelite party,* then dominant at Constantinople, the emperor Constans II., a violent partisan, was so incensed that he sent secret instructions to the exarch to capture the pope, and bring him by force into Greece. In executing this command, the exarch was obliged, however, to proceed with the greatest caution, for in Rome the pope's influence was undoubtedly greater than the emperor's. Arriving on Saturday, he allowed the Sunday to pass over, dreading the multitudes which would then assemble at the churches. Early on the Monday, fearing that his design had been anticipated, he sent to the pope, announcing his apprehensions that armed men were concealed in the church of the Lateran, where Martin lay ill, and that he and his followers would be stoned, as it was known that he came with a message expressive of the emperor's displeasure. Martin ordered the servants of the exarch to be shown every part of the building, and as soon as that officer knew that he had nothing to fear, he pressed into the church with an armed band of followers, and

* The Monothelite controversy was one of those metaphysical disputes which so vehemently agitated the theologians of the first ages. As the *Monophysites* taught that Christ's *nature* was one and undivided, so the *Monothelites* contended for the simple unity of his *will*.

having read the order of the emperor, acquainted Martin that he was deposed, and that he was immediately to prepare for his journey to Constantinople. But even then it was found necessary to hurry the pope's departure at midnight, and the gates of Rome were closed and carefully guarded till the pontiff, attended only by a few servants, was safely embarked on board a ship instantly bound for the east.

For the most part, however, the popes were not disturbed by such foreign interference, and their authority, therefore, gradually increased. Over the inferior clergy it had long been paramount, and Gregory the Great had so extended it in this direction, that no bishop was now regarded as duly installed unless his election had received the sanction of the pope. Although Gregory had contended so hotly against the title of "universal bishop" being appropriated by the patriarch of Constantinople, or indeed by any bishop whatsoever, and to mark his disgust at such presumption had called himself *servus servorum*, the servant of servants, yet one of his earliest successors, Boniface III., adopted the very title which his predecessor had condemned; and from that time to the present the pope has constantly united these contradictory epithets in his style of address, which is thus happily illustrative at once of the hypocrisy and the arrogance of the papacy.

In the course of this seventh century, the popes also made considerable accessions to their landed estates, which they pompously and ludi-

crously designated the "patrimony of St. Peter" — *that* Peter who forsook his "patrimony" of a boat and fishing-net to become a "fisher of men." The extreme ignorance and superstition which everywhere prevailed gave the priesthood vast influence over the popular mind, and many a Lombard chief, as well as Roman citizen, thought that he amply atoned at death for the sins of a licentious or turbulent life, by dis-inheriting his family to enrich a monastery or endow a church. Thus the most fertile districts, and the most prosperous cities of Italy, gradually passed into the hands of the episcopal and monastic clergy, over whom the pope had nearly absolute sway, besides receiving by far the largest share of such munificent bequests. Within the civic boundaries, and soon within the limits of Italy, the pontiff thus became not only the wealthiest, but in all respects the most influential noble. Civil, and even criminal offences, were often referred to his decision, and all the officers of the city were placed under his inspection, and were removable at his pleasure.

While the popes were so rapidly striding towards the establishment of an independent sovereignty, they frequently neglected altogether the spiritual welfare of their flock. Indeed, to expect a pious example or pious instruction from such men as we have described, could only belong to an ignorant and superstitious age. But the age we are now treating of was one of the darkest the world has ever seen.

Learning concealed herself from mankind, and the few studious men that might here and there be found in the cloisters, confined their researches to the writings of Augustine or Gregory, and their compositions to homilies badly compiled from these works, or the still more unprofitable relation of absurd stories about relics and miracles. Religion was burdened with a multitude of ceremonies and forms, pilgrimages and penances, from which it never escaped till the Reformation; and a popular substitute for even that debased kind of religion was a superstitious reverence for the priesthood, who carefully inculcated that their prayers for the sinner were of much greater consequence than the sinner's prayer for himself. The dense ignorance of the clergy themselves may be imagined from the fact, that at the councils of bishops it was no unusual thing for the signatures appended to the canons to be written by one bishop for many, the formula in each case running thus: "A. B., bishop of —, having affirmed that he is *unable to write*, I whose name is underwritten, have subscribed for him."

Gloomy, however, as this period is, an occurrence took place in it of deep interest to the people of England. This was nothing less than the commencement of a practice which paved the way for the supremacy of the Roman see over the bishops and clergy of Britain. In 668, the pontiff Vitalian consecrated to the archbishopric of Canterbury one Theodore, a native of Tarsus, in Cilicia, but in other respects little

more like the apostle Paul than the rest of his brethren. Theodore was a man of considerable learning, and brought with him into England a valuable library of Greek and Latin authors, among which were the poems of Homer. He soon established schools for the education of both clergy and laity, and thus gave a slight impulse to learning, though so slight that Alfred the Great at his accession could find very few priests north of the Humber who were able to translate the Latin service into the vulgar tongue, and south of the Thames not one. Theodore was also a devoted servant of the pope, and it took him not long to discover that however rapid, almost to a miracle, the success of Augustine and his followers had been, there were still many irregularities, chiefly in forms and discipline, which a faithful son of Rome must seek to rectify. Foremost of these was the form of the tonsure. Whilst the Roman priests wore their hair round the temples, in imitation of a crown of thorns, they were horror-struck at the clergy of Britain, who, according to the custom of the eastern church, shaved it from their foreheads into the form of a crescent; and Theodore himself, who wore the eastern tonsure at the time of his being called to the primacy, was obliged to wait for four months before entering on his functions, that his hair might grow so as to be shaven in the orthodox, that is, the Roman mode. He now endeavoured to induce the British clergy to conform in this and other respects to the ritual of Rome; and

in a council convened at Hertford in the year 673, he so effectually urged his cause, that the bishops consented to the canons he had brought from Rome, and a complete agreement was established with the papal see, both in worship and faith.

Triumphant in obtaining conformity, Theodore's next object was to secure entire subjection to Rome. He therefore asserted his right to the primacy of all England, and proceeded to re-arrange the dioceses of the north which belonged to Wilfred, archbishop of York. The latter, no less servile to the pope, and equally bent on personal aggrandizement, immediately appealed to Rome, and the pontiff, perhaps as a reward for setting so loyal an example, pronounced Wilfred's claim to be just. This practice of appealing to the pope as supreme arbiter in ecclesiastical disputes, became more and more common, till the papal authority was as paramount in Britain as in other parts of the west.

CHAPTER XI.

MOHAMMEDANISM AND THE IMAGE CONTROVERSY— THEIR EFFECTS ON THE PAPACY.

A.D. 609—730.

BARREN of events as was the western world during the seventh century, a new power had arisen in the east, which was destined to make all Europe tremble, and which bore an aspect of determined hostility to the establishment of

a papal throne. In the year 609, Mohammed proclaimed himself the founder of a new religion. For thirteen years he persisted, in spite of much opposition and persecution, especially from the people of his own tribe, in preaching his new doctrines. Like many reformers, however, he was more popular abroad than at home, and when, in the year 622, he fled for safety to Medina, he suddenly found himself at the head of a large and devoted band of disciples.

Mohammed now began to display the vices which prosperity and power are so apt to develop. At first he was content to punish those only who had previously persecuted himself or his followers, and withstood his doctrine. But ere long he conceived the idea of spreading, by violence and compulsion, the religion of which he styled himself the *prophet*. "Different prophets," said he, "have been sent by God to illustrate his different attributes—Moses, his providence; Solomon, his wisdom, majesty, and glory; Jesus Christ, his righteousness, omniscience, and power. None of these attributes, however, have been sufficient to enforce conviction, and even the miracles of Moses and Jesus have been received with unbelief. I, therefore, the last of the prophets, have been sent with *the sword*."

From the first publication of this manifesto, the sword of Mohammed and his successors was never sheathed till it had established a vast empire, comprising extensive portions of Asia, Africa, and Europe. A religion to be propa-

gated by conquest was exactly suited to the fierce character of the Arab tribes, and they promptly enlisted under the banners of Omar, Khaled, and Mohammed's other chief captains. The Asiatic provinces, for which Heraclius, emperor of the east, and Khosru, king of Persia, had so long contended, were among the first to fall under the dynasty of the caliphs of Bagdad. Victory followed victory; Persia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, submitted in rapid succession to their Saracen invaders. In twelve years they reduced to obedience thirty-six thousand cities, towns, or castles, destroyed four thousand temples, or churches, and built fourteen hundred mosques, dedicated to the religion of their founder. They did not stay their progress till they had subjugated the Moors, and brought all Africa, from Alexandria to Tangier, under their lordly sway.

It is only too probable a conjecture, that one reason why Mohammed chose to fabricate for himself a new and motley creed rather than adopt Christianity, from which he borrowed so many of his cardinal doctrines, was that the Christianity he looked upon was so corrupted as not to recommend itself to the judgment of a penetrating but illiterate mind. He was, doubtless, able to perceive that it must have degenerated greatly from the sublime and simple teachings of Him who came, according to Mohammed's own declaration, to proclaim God's righteousness, omniscience, and power. One of the earliest charges brought against the

Christians by the Arabian impostor or reformer, as he is variously designated, was that of idolatry, arising from the universal prevalence among them of the worship of relics and images of the saints. We have seen that Gregory the Great rather encouraged than opposed the worship of images and the adoration of the virgin. In the east, moreover, to which, of course, Mohammed's knowledge was confined, these practices had become popular much sooner than in the west. But in the dark century that followed the death of Gregory, the adherents of the pope eagerly adopted all the superstitious customs of their eastern brethren, and image-worship was now universally regarded as an essential part of the orthodox religion.

Such was the state of Christendom when GREGORY II. assumed the robes of the pontificate, in the year 715. He was a native of Rome, and possessed considerable patriotic spirit—a feature which the calamities in store for the city were well calculated to develop. In daring conceptions, resolute decision, and energetic action, he bore a close resemblance to his predecessor of the same name, and was not unlike him in his zeal for enlarging the church's boundaries, and in upholding the traditional forms of religion.

Events soon occurred which gave occasion for the display of all these qualities. In 717, Leo the Isaurian mounted the throne of the east. He was of barbarous extraction, and

had passed his early life amongst the mountaineers of his native province in Asia Minor. There also it is not unlikely that he mingled much with the followers of Mohammed, and thus contracted a dislike to the idolatrous practice of image worship, so prevalent among his subjects when he came to the throne.

At this time a sect had arisen in the empire which sought to restore the Christian worship to its primitive simplicity, aiming in the first place to abolish the adoration of pictures and statues. From Leo these *iconoclasts*, or image-breakers, received much countenance and aid, at first in secret, and in the twelfth year of his reign by open and avowed support. The emperor then issued an edict, commanding all images to be removed from the altars and chancels of the churches, and placed at such a height that whilst they continued visible to the eye, they should be too remote to inspire superstitious veneration. But this measure, as might have been expected, proved wholly ineffectual in altering the habits of the people. By another edict, therefore, Leo proscribed images altogether, commanded them to be removed from all churches in his dominions, and the niches they had occupied to be filled up with cement.

So peremptory an interference with the customs of the church was sure to arouse a fierce opposition both from clergy and laity. When the officers of the emperor proceeded to put the edict in force, they met with the most

determined resistance. An image of the Saviour had long stood above the gateway of the imperial palace at Constantinople, and this was directed to be the first taken down. A ladder was planted against the wall, and some soldiers mounted it to demolish the figure; but a crowd of women, who had assembled to witness the sacrilege, cried out for an assault, and the ladder was so furiously shaken, that the soldiers were dashed from the summit, and were killed by the violence of their fall on the pavement of the street.

Similar scenes occurred in almost every city of the empire. The islands of the Archipelago, in which monasteries were innumerable, and images universally regarded as sacred, boldly armed a fleet of boats and galleys, which steered direct for Constantinople to dethrone the impious emperor. This rebellion itself was, indeed, quickly quelled, but the bitter spirit of religious strife was not so easily hushed, and the image controversy continued for many years to vex the professed believers in Christ, without attaining any decisive or useful result.

Upon the arrival of the imperial edict in Rome, it threw the whole city into tumult. From the time of Gregory the Great the popes had been the most zealous promoters of the practice now prohibited; and the emperor's authority, which had long been waning in Rome, was not likely to be implicitly acknowledged in a matter so nearly touching the gains of the priesthood.

The Gregory who now ruled the church was prompt and daring in his measures. He strictly forbade compliance with the royal decree, and wrote letters to the emperor, in which he fearlessly used the harshest language of rebuke, and even extolled the rebellious act of the populace in Constantinople in murdering the spoilers of the consecrated statues. "You accuse the Catholics of idolatry," wrote the haughty pope, "and by the accusation you betray your own impiety and ignorance. To this ignorance we are compelled to adapt the grossness of our style and argument. The first elements of sacred learning are enough to confute you; and were you to enter a grammar school, and avow yourself the enemy of our worship, the simple and pious children would be provoked to throw their horn-books at your head. You assault us, tyrant, with a military array. Unarmed and defenceless, we can only implore the Christ, the Prince of the heavenly host, that he will send unto you a devil for the destruction of your body and the salvation of your soul. You say, with foolish arrogance, 'I will despatch my orders to Rome; I will break in pieces the image of St. Peter; and Gregory, like his predecessor Martin, shall be transported in chains to the foot of the imperial throne.' But we are not reduced to risk our safety on the event of a combat. Incapable as you are of defending your Roman subjects, the maritime situation of the city may, perhaps, expose *it* to your depredations; but *we* can

remove to the first fortress of the Lombards, and then—you may pursue the winds. The barbarians have submitted to the yoke of the gospel, while you alone are deaf to the voice of the shepherd. These pious barbarians are kindled into rage; they thirst to avenge the persecutions of the east. Abandon your rash and fatal enterprise; reflect, tremble, and repent! If you persist, we are innocent of the blood that will be spilt in the contest; may it fall on your own head!"

This angry, vehement, and unchristian epistle was soon followed up by corresponding actions. Indeed, Gregory had no alternative; for after such a treasonable defiance, submission would have been certain death. He therefore boldly armed the citizens, and in pastoral letters admonished the Italians generally of their duty, and summoned them into the field. The entire exarchate was convulsed with revolt, and the Venetians and Lombards promised their assistance in defence of holy images and the pope. The people threw down the statues of Leo from their pedestals, and even declared themselves willing to create a new and orthodox emperor, and with fleet and army to conduct him to the palace at Constantinople.

Leo on his part was by no means inactive. Expeditions were fitted out, and several assaults were made upon Rome, in which some Italians were found ready to assist. A decisive battle was at last fought under the walls of Ravenna, in which the arms of the emperor experienced

a signal defeat, and the waters of the Po were said to be so deeply tinged with blood that its fish were unfit to be eaten for several months. The people, overjoyed with their triumph, appointed an annual feast to perpetuate the worship of images and the expulsion of the Greek tyrant ; while the pontiff called together a synod of ninety-three bishops, which fervently denounced the heresies of the iconoclasts, and by excommunicating as heretics all who departed from the traditions of the fathers, placed the ban of the church upon the emperor himself.

From this period the eastern emperors never regained their authority in Rome. The citizens were left to choose their own magistrates, and elect their own senate ; but though they revived the forms of the ancient constitution, it was impossible to recal to existence the spirit of freedom with which that constitution had been instinct. Requiring a government of firmness and stability, and unable to supply the want from among themselves, the citizens naturally looked to their bishop for guidance and control, and tacitly consented to his assuming the position of chief magistrate or prince of the city. Thus, in the year 730, the foundation was laid for the *temporal* sovereignty of the pope ; the title of *Dominus* was added to that of *Servus Servorum* ; and the humble successor of the " Fisherman " was transformed into *Our Lord the Pope*.

But the sweets of liberty are seldom unmingled ; and although Rome was now freed from

subjection to the emperor, it became all the more exposed to the attacks of the Lombard kings, whose domain comprehended most of the regions adjacent to the city. This defenceless condition soon attracted the attention of Lütprand, the reigning king, who, in the hope of adding Rome to his possessions, quickly assembled his troops beneath her venerable walls.

Gregory, now sovereign as well as bishop, was filled with deep anxiety for the safety of his native city, and at first sent for help to Charles Martel, the heroic defender of France from Saracenic invasion. Eventually the pope found that the more legitimate weapon of persuasion might be wielded as successfully as the sword, and Lütprand, moved by his eloquent entreaties, withdrew his forces from the neighbourhood, and then entering the city alone, went devoutly to St. Peter's, and there offered his sword and dagger, his cuirass and mantle, his silver cross and crown of gold, on the tomb of the apostle.

CHAPTER XII.

STRUGGLE OF THE POPES WITH THE LOMBARDS—THE
POPEDOM BECOMES A SOVEREIGNTY.

A.D. 730—754.

THE now divided and defenceless state of Italy, combined with the ambitious character of the Lombard king, rendered the papal throne a very insecure possession, notwithstanding the submission and homage of Lütprand. The next pontiff, GREGORY III., found considerable

difficulty in maintaining his ground against this warlike and aspiring prince, and had recourse to the stratagem of fomenting discords amongst the Lombards themselves.

In 741, ZACHARY ascended the papal throne, and finding Lütprand bent on hostilities in consequence of the support given by his predecessor to some rebellious nobles, he resolved to disarm the king by showing a pacific and friendly disposition. Under his directions, the Romans joined their force with the Lombards to reduce the rebels to obedience, and Lütprand, in return, entered into cordial relations with the pope, and promised the restoration to the Roman state of certain cities which had been captured in the recent wars.

This promise not being immediately performed, Zachary was fearful of some deception, and decided on paying a personal visit to Pavia, the Lombard metropolis. Leaving Rome with a splendid retinue of bishops and priests, he quickly announced his arrival to Lütprand, who, though earnestly dissuaded by his officers, determined to give him a friendly reception. Zachary, with great ceremony and pomp, entered the presence of the Lombard chief, and used all his eloquence to persuade him to restore the captured cities. Forgetting that his own motives were altogether selfish and worldly, he reminded Lütprand of the vanity of all temporal grandeur, and of the awful account which must hereafter be given for all acts of violence and robbery. The fears of the king were so

excited by this cunning discourse, that he cried out in a loud voice, "The cities are no longer mine. As they properly belong to the apostle Peter, I hereby restore them to Zachary his successor." He made a present, at the same time, to the pope of several large estates in various parts of Italy, and the successful pontiff returned joyfully to Rome, escorted to the banks of the Po by the soldiers of Lütprand.

The entire policy of Zachary was peaceful ; and though he did not forget to advance, as much as possible, the temporal interests of his see, Italy was on the whole much indebted to his efforts for the maintenance of order in a very turbulent age. Yet it was Zachary who first set the example of papal interference in the affairs of neighbouring states—a practice which was so heartily followed by his successors, as to render the pope a political nuisance to Europe. The occasion of this step was the troubled condition of France.

Charles Martel, who, by his decisive victory at the battle of Poitiers in 732, had rolled back the tide of Saracenic invasion, which threatened to overwhelm the west as it had already done the east, had further enhanced his claims to the gratitude of posterity by giving to France a strong instead of an imbecile government. He had set aside the impotent and idiotic Merovingian line of princes, and, though not daring to assume the *name* of king, had transmitted the real sovereignty to his own son Pepin, with the general approval of the nation.

But in effecting this sweeping and highly necessary reform, Charles had earned the bitter hatred of the clergy, since he had not scrupled to levy a tax on their rich estates, which from the days of Constantine the Great had been exempt from such burdens. For this application of their property the priesthood never forgave him, and both in their writings and their harangues pitilessly consigned his soul, without hope of release, to the dungeons of the eternally lost. By proclaiming this from every pulpit in the land, they hoped to terrify all future rulers who might meditate similar encroachments.

So effectually did these fierce declamations alarm the superstitious son and successor of Charles, that he used every imaginable means to soothe the anger of the clergy and conciliate their support, and to effect this object he, in 751, besought the aid of the pope.

Though virtually possessed of the sovereign power, he had never yet dared to assume the title of king. A youth of the Merovingian race still bore that nominal honour, by the name of Childeric III., and as he was now arriving at years of manhood, (a rare occurrence in that degenerate house,) Pepin thought it safer to set him wholly aside, and to ascend the throne in person. But this he dared not attempt without the consent of the clergy, and to secure their goodwill he determined to stoop so low as to ask the pope's permission to the step he contemplated taking. "Is it not lawful," said Pepin's messenger to Zachary, "for a valiant

and warlike people to dethrone a pusillanimous and indolent monarch, and to substitute in his place one who is worthy to rule?" The pontiff well knew the importance of so powerful an ally as Pepin promised to be, and governed evidently by this selfish consideration, replied, "It is meet that he who possesses the real power and government of the state should also be acknowledged king."

This valuable piece of service was amply recompensed by Pepin to Zachary's successor in the popedom, STEPHEN III., who commenced his reign in 752. The Lombards still continued to agitate the duchies of northern Italy by their ambitious projects, and Astolph, the present king, not content with the sovereignty of the region in which the Lombards had settled unopposed, aimed now at appropriating Ravenna and its subject territory, still governed by the exarch of the eastern emperor. In the course of his depredations he threatened and even laid siege to Rome; and the pontiff Stephen, looking around for help in the emergency, bethought himself of the Frankish king. Apprehensive, however, that his cry from a distance would hardly be heard, the pope resolved on a personal visit to France, and in the winter season set out on his journey across the Alps. In the town of Pontyon he was met by Pepin, who saluted him both with kindness and with reverence, probably knowing that in doing homage to the head of the church he was securing the best guarantee for his own possession of the

crown. On meeting the pontiff, Pepin alighted from his horse, bowed down his face to the ground, and then walked in all humility by the side of Stephen, holding the bridle of his horse, and performing all the functions of an esquire.

But next day it was the pope's turn to be humble. In a private interview, he told the king the melancholy situation of Rome, and falling on his knees, implored him, with prayers and tears, to lead his intrepid warriors across the Alps, to the discomfiture of the Lombards, and the deliverance of the apostolic city. Pepin hearkened to his petition, and Stephen joyfully repassed the Alps, not as a suppliant, but as a conqueror, at the head of a French army, led by the king in person. The result can be easily foreseen. Astolph was compelled to raise the siege of Rome to defend his own metropolis, Pavia, and Pepin finally extorted from him a solemn promise to restore all the estates of the Roman church.

The visit of the pontiff to France had been rendered further remarkable by the public and stately performance of the ceremony of coronation, which Pepin had not till then found time to attend to. The celebration took place in the monastery of St. Denis, to which all the nobility of France thronged for the spectacle. To the other rites of the service, Stephen on this occasion added that of anointing the king, after the manner of the ancient Jews. He then solemnly placed the diadem on the head of Pepin, who pledged himself in return to be the ever faithful guardian of the Roman see.

The promise which Pepin had extorted from the Lombards was violated almost as soon as the French monarch had turned on his homeward march. Instead of restoring the possessions of the church, Astolph commenced new aggressions, and Stephen hastily despatched messengers to recal the king, beseeching him, in a letter full of passionate entreaty, not to forsake the city which he had sworn to protect. In this letter the pope wrote under the name and character of Peter the apostle. The writer says, that though dead in body he still lives in spirit, and expects instant obedience from all who venerate him as the founder of the Roman church. He says that the virgin, the angels, the saints, the martyrs, and all the host of heaven unanimously urge the request, and will confess the obligation. He promises riches, victory, and paradise, if Pepin will make the attempt; but denounces eternal perdition if he shall suffer the apostolic city, temple, and tomb, to fall into the hands of the Lombards.

Whether Pepin regarded this letter as actually dictated by the glorified apostle, or whether, as is more likely, he considered it as a rhetorical appeal from the pope himself, he immediately complied with its request. His march was as rapid, and his victory as decisive on this as on the former occasions. He moreover entirely humbled the power of the Lombard king, and wrested from him some of his fairest provinces, conferring them on the pope, as the inalienable patrimony of St. Peter's successors. The docu-

ment which formally conveyed to the pope the whole territory which had previously belonged to the emperor, and the keys of the several cities contained in that district, were devoutly laid by the French king upon the tomb of the apostle, and Pepin hoped by such superstitious and obsequious reverence for the church to expiate the crimes of a blood-stained life.

Not the least melancholy part of this spectacle is the attitude assumed by the pope, who is seen, as the professed head of the church, inculcating such degrading superstitions for his own selfish and mercenary ends.

Thus, then, it came to pass that the comparatively nominal sovereignty which was grasped by Gregory II., when he revolted from his allegiance to the emperor Leo, was now converted by the arms of Pepin into a real and substantial dominion. From this time the popes take their place in history among the sovereigns of Europe—a place which they occupy at the present day, though after many and wonderful mutations, both in the amount of their power and the extent of their domains. But although the popes had changed their real character, and had become civil instead of spiritual rulers, they by no means relinquished their spiritual pretensions. Well knowing the influence of religious rites in governing mankind, they still retained the forms, the names, and the observances appertaining to a church. They called their officers a priesthood, and their subjects their spiritual children. And in

palming this gross imposition on the world, the pontiff of Rome never received more powerful or effectual aid than when Pepin stooped to accept at his hands the crown of the French kingdom. By this act he sanctioned the claim of the Roman bishop to universal supremacy, and gave colour to the arrogant assertion which was made by later pontiffs, of precedence and even lordship over merely temporal monarchs.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHARLEMAGNE DEFENDS THE POPES FROM THE LOMBARDS.
A.D. 754—774.

THE possessions which the pope had so suddenly acquired were not long uninterruptedly enjoyed, and the lustre of his new diadem grew dim beneath the overshadowing canopy of that mighty empire which was erected by Pepin's famous son, the emperor Charlemagne. Although Pepin left three sons, the whole of his dominions remained, by the death of the two brothers, in the hands of Charles, by the time the latter was twenty-six years of age. This young king was of majestic appearance, his height being nearly seven feet, and his strength proportioned to so great a stature. Sprung from a warlike race, he even surpassed his sires in the endowments which qualify for the subjugation and government of mankind.

His first years, however, were more worthily employed than in a career of bloodshed and

conquest. Under the direction of the most learned clergy that could be attracted to his court, he studied various languages, becoming quite proficient in Latin, and not meanly skilled in Greek; and gained as much knowledge as his instructors could bestow in the natural sciences and general literature of that illiterate age. Throughout the life of Charlemagne, it continued to be one of the best features in his character, that he encouraged learning of every sort, both by patronage and by example. The eminent English scholar, Alcuin, was his special favourite; and in the years of repose that followed his successful wars, he took great delight in gathering around him all men of genius and talent, so that his court presented a striking and illustrious contrast to those of contemporary monarchs.

But whilst Charlemagne was pursuing this peaceful and studious course of life, events were occurring in Italy which paved the way for his invasion of that country, and the commencement of his warlike career.

On the death of PAUL I. in 766, whose popedom was only marked by perpetual quarrels with the Lombards, the papal throne was occupied a whole year by a person named CONSTANTINE, whom the Romanist historians, for the most part, pass over in discreet silence, lest the opposition of popes, *all* infallible, should become too apparent. Constantine seems to have been elected by the suffrages of a large party of both clergy and laity, and in all probability had as legitimate a title to the chair as any of his predecessors.

But the image controversy was still rife, and the new pope took the unpopular side, advocating very earnestly the disuse of images altogether. The clergy, offended at the innovation, but unable to restrain the pope, resolved on dethroning him, and sought, not the votes of the people, but the swords of their Lombard neighbours. By their aid Constantine was forcibly deposed, and having been cruelly deprived of sight, was shut up in a convent.

A furious defender of images was elected his successor, under the title of STEPHEN IV., but so much in opposition to the will of a large party that he could only maintain his seat by the help of the Lombards, until the leaders of the insurrection were taken and incapacitated for future revolt, according to the barbarous practice of the age, by having their eyes put out. Either to gratify revengeful passions, or to support at all costs the appearance of infallibility, Stephen next summoned a council of provincial bishops to assemble in the Lateran church, which abrogated all the decrees of Constantine, deposed all the bishops whom he had ordained, annulled all his baptisms and chrisms, and, according to some historians, actually sentenced him to be ignominiously scourged, and then put to death—a decree which was executed by burning him in the nave of the church !

Stephen IV. appears to have been one of that basest class of men to whose breasts even gratitude is a stranger. The services of the Lombards had placed him in power, and one

of his earliest actions was to requite them by advising the young French monarch to repudiate an alliance which he had formed with the daughter of their king—a step which ultimately led to their ruin by the invasion of a French army, commanded by Charlemagne in person.

Rather in compliance with his mother's wish than from any personal inclination, Charlemagne had been wedded in his youth to the daughter of Desider, the Lombard king—a match not more repugnant to his own taste than it was offensive to the pontiff, who dreaded the great influence it would give to his Lombard neighbours. As soon as the young prince was possessed of sovereign power he determined to divorce his wife, and the pope very readily pronounced that his marriage ought not to be regarded as valid; “for,” said the wily priest, “it would be arrant folly in the Franks to contaminate their noble race with the perfidious infected blood of the Lombards, who have brought leprosy* into Italy, and who do not deserve to be reckoned among nations. Having promised to St. Peter to be friends of his friends, and enemies to his enemies, the Franks ought to shun the alliance of the Lombards, who are the deadly enemies of Rome.” Stephen even ventured to conclude his epistle by threatening the French king with excommunication if he spurned this advice, reminding him that it proceeded from St. Peter, on whose tomb the letter was written.

Charlemagne was, of course, not backward

* The pope here alludes to the Arian heresy.

to comply with a mandate which, whether he sought it or not, was certainly highly congenial to his own wishes. But Desider, the Lombard chief, very deeply resented the insulting and ungrateful language of the pope, and inflicted a not unmerited chastisement by harassing his life with perpetual threats of invasion, and by making frequent predatory incursions on the estates of the church. Thus the pontificate of Stephen IV., which had commenced on his own part in bloodshed and cruelty, was retributively ordained to be passed in violence inflicted on him by the hands of others.

The enmity of the Lombards still continued to show itself after the accession of ADRIAN I., who received the tiara in 772. The following year, Desider, mindful of his former injuries, endeavoured to force the pope to anoint and consecrate two nephews of Charlemagne, residing in Italy, to the sovereignty of France, and on Adrian's refusal renewed his hostilities with Rome. Adrian urged Charlemagne to undertake the quarrel; and he feeling himself partly involved, and perhaps not sorry to have so plausible an excuse for invasion, quickly crossed the Alps, and besieged Desider in his capital of Pavia, continuing the blockade for nearly a year.

It is said, that at the approach of the French army the Lombard king stood upon the battlements, eagerly searching with his eyes for his daring assailant; and that at length perceiving Charlemagne, mounted on an iron-clad charger, clothed in armour from head to foot, and con-

spicuous by his stature amid the surrounding throng, he was struck with such amazement at his awful aspect, that he exclaimed in a dejected tone, "Let us descend and hide ourselves beneath the earth from the angry glance of such a powerful foe!"

On receiving the submission of the king, Charlemagne sentenced him to be imprisoned for life in the monastery of Corvey, and then proceeded in triumph to Rome, where the grateful acknowledgments of the pope and the citizens awaited him.

Arriving for the first time in view of the walls and towers of the far-famed city on Easter-eve, 774, he was received with all the honours which had been formerly paid to the imperial exarch. No sooner was Adrian informed of his approach than he despatched a company of magistrates and nobles, who, having met the young conqueror at the distance of thirty miles from Rome, conducted him in great state to her gates. The Flaminian Way was lined for a whole mile by troops of citizens, arranged under the Greek, Lombard, Roman, or Saxon banners, according to their respective nations. The soldiers were under arms, and bands of children waved branches of trees, and sung patriotic hymns in honour of their great deliverer. The clergy and nobles formed themselves into a procession, preceded by large decorated crosses and ensigns of the saints. As soon as these emblems met the eye of Charlemagne, he alighted from his horse, and pro-

ceeded on foot to the stairs of the Vatican, whose steps he devoutly kissed. In the portico, Adrian awaited him, and leading him to St. Peter's shrine, the pontiff there publicly proclaimed Charlemagne to be "King of Italy and Patrician of Rome;" the latter title being given in the Middle Ages to foreign princes who protected the Roman see. Charlemagne, upon his part, promised to confirm the grant of territory made by Pepin to the pope, and engaged to fulfil all the purposes of his illustrious father for the welfare of the church.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FORGED "DECRETALS" AND "DONATION"—INFLUENCE OF CHARLEMAGNE ON THE PAPACY.

A.D. 774—795.

ADRIAN soon felt that the conquest of the Lombards by Charlemagne had delivered him from a troublesome, but comparatively harmless foe, to give him in exchange a patronizing and powerful master. He therefore sought very assiduously to secure the friendship of Charlemagne, and succeeded in obtaining from that great monarch several marks of personal esteem. But the French king was more anxious to use the clergy as his instruments in governing, than to enrich them or invest them with independent power. Many years elapsed before Charlemagne gave any substantial fulfilment of his promise respecting the Roman territory,

and many letters were written by the pope urging the completion of the contract.

It was in the hope of deciding the mind of Charlemagne on this subject, that Adrian I. perpetrated that enormous deception* which has, ever since its discovery, made his memory as hateful to truth as that of the vilest popes. In the retirement of the Vatican, some monk or bishop was employed to forge the famous documents known as the Decretals, and the Donation of Constantine—"those two magic pillars of the spiritual and temporal monarchy of the popes." By the former, all ecclesiastical disputes, occurring in any part of the world, were ultimately referred to the bishop of Rome; and by the latter, Constantine the Great is represented as resigning to the popes, on betaking himself to his new eastern metropolis, the full and perpetual sovereignty of Rome, Italy, and the provinces of the west. Appealing to these documents as authentic in one of his letters to Charlemagne, Adrian founds on them his claim to the fulfilment of the promise given by both himself and his father, regarding it no longer as a favour, but only as a partial restitution of a right which the Greek princes had for centuries usurped. So great was the credulity of the

* In ascribing this deception to Adrian, it is not meant to be inferred that he was the *author*, directly or indirectly, of the *pseudo-isidorian* decretals, though even this is far from impossible. The authorship is unknown, and probably belongs to no single individual; but that the popes were at the bottom of it, and that Adrian was the first to publish them to the world, are facts tolerably patent from the *Codex Carolinus*, épist. 49, et aliis.

age, that the fictitious instruments to which Adrian then appealed were enrolled, without opposition or distrust, among the decrees of the canon law, and Adrian was by no means the only pope who had the effrontery to palm them on the world as the genuine production of the devout Isidore of Seville.

But besides caring for the temporal welfare of his see, Adrian's mind was much troubled by the image controversy, which still agitated the east, and in which he upheld the cause of idolatry as zealously as his predecessors. The emperor Leo iv. espoused the side of the iconoclasts with hereditary spirit, but his influence was much neutralized by the exertions of his wife, the empress Irene, who, an Athenian by birth, was imbued with national prejudices in favour of image worship. She had generally contrived to conceal her own fondness of images from the emperor's knowledge, but it happened that at a time when his anger was so inflamed against the orthodox or idolatrous party that he had put some of them to death, he found in his wife's bed two images which she had secretly worshipped. Indignant and resentful, the emperor was taking measures for her trial, perhaps her death, when suddenly, in attempting to place upon his head a crown consecrated by his wife to the crucifix, his skin became covered with pustules wherever the crown touched it, and a burning fever succeeding, he died in a few hours.

After thus murdering her husband, Irene, who was as ambitious as she was profligate and

cruel, seized on the reins of power, governing in the name of her son Constantine, who was yet a youth. Her zeal for image worship was now unrestrained, and her first step was to court the assistance of the pope to aid her in utterly exterminating the iconoclast sect. To the disgrace of Adrian, he consented to abet the plots of this wicked woman, whose share in her husband's death he entirely overlooked, pretending even to believe that his shocking end was miraculously awarded him as a punishment for his opposition to the orthodox practice of the church. A council was convened by Irene, which met at Nice in the year 787, and with the concurrence of Adrian's legates it unanimously decreed, that the worship of images was agreeable to Scripture and reason, as well as to the fathers and councils of the church. Very justly have the acts of this council been pronounced "a curious monument of superstition and ignorance, of falsehood and folly." Images of the cross were thenceforth to be consecrated, and put on all the vessels and vestments employed in the worship of God ; they were to adorn also the walls of houses, and to ornament the public ways. Especially it was decreed, that images of Christ, the virgin Mary, the angels, and the saints, should be regarded as sacred ; and if any should teach otherwise, or dare to throw away books or pictures bearing the painted cross, or the effigies of these holy personages, or treat with contempt the relics of martyrs, they should fall under the censures

and punishments of the church. Offenders in holy orders, it was added, should be deposed, and all others excommunicated from the rites of religion.

The same year that this council was held, Charlemagne paid a second visit to Rome, when his son Pepin was christened by the pope. But though Adrian had gained some influence with the king, it was not adequate to obtain his countenance to the spread of idolatry in the church. The clergy of France were, perhaps, as superstitious, and as bent on reducing the laity to subjection as those of Italy or the east, but their object was attained by other means. Whilst the Greeks and Italians worshipped the images, the French and Germans adored the relics of the saints, and the popes found it as profitable to enrich their treasury by selling in France bones taken from the catacombs, as to enhance their power at home by exalting the sacredness of consecrated statues and pictures.

Charlemagne, however, was endowed with an intellect which rose superior to these superstitions, and on receiving from Adrian the decrees of the Nicean council, he placed them in the hands of the learned Alcuin and others, with directions to draw up a confutation of their errors, which was afterwards published in the name of the king, and known as the "Carolinian book." In 794, he further convoked an assembly at Frankfort of three hundred bishops of the west, by whom the decrees of the eastern council were unanimously rejected, and supreme con-

tempt expressed for the idolatrous practices which those decrees sanctioned and enjoined.

These decisive steps of the Frankish king were a source of great annoyance to Adrian, but he thought it wise to cloak his mortification, and in various letters endeavoured to prove that there was no real opposition between the Frankfort and Nicean decrees.

In truth, the pope felt that the friendship of Charlemagne was becoming every day more essential to the strength and safety of the Roman see, of which as patrician he was the sworn protector. In all his conquests, the king made it a condition on which he spared the lives and property of the conquered, that they should profess the Christian faith. The whole Saxon nation, with the valiant Witikind at their head, after carrying on for years a desperate and sanguinary conflict, were at last compelled by Charlemagne to submit to baptism. By a process like this, the warlike king became one of the most successful missionaries of a church which only asked for nominal converts.

Moreover, whilst Charlemagne was able thus greatly to add to the dignity and influence of the pope and the priesthood, he was, on the other hand, equally competent and not indisposed to limit their power and regulate their functions. He regarded them as the teachers and civilizers of mankind, and though he often intrusted them with magisterial offices, it was simply because he thought them more capable than others of discharging such offices with

ability. In several ecclesiastical assemblies he laid down new and stringent regulations for the internal order of the church. He forbade the clergy to carry arms, to keep falcons, dogs, or jesters; but knowing their unconquerable love of the chase, he permitted them to retain this amusement on condition of their converting the skins of the animals they killed into binding for books, which he hoped by these means to render more common. Moderation, decency, and gravity of behaviour were enjoined upon all priests, and the monks were obliged to find employment in the fields and schools.

Such proofs of an independent spirit caused Charlemagne to be feared and courted at the same time by the crafty and aspiring pontiff; and with so much prudence and policy did Adrian I. conduct all his intercourse with the king, that upon his death, which took place on Christmas-day, 795, Charlemagne expressed very profound grief, and composed an epitaph in Latin verse, breathing both respect and affection. The vices of Adrian's character were of a kind that often conceal themselves from contemporary observers to become apparent to the eyes of posterity.

CHAPTER XV.

CHARLEMAGNE THE EMPEROR—HIS REGULATIONS FOR
THE CLERGY.

A. D. 795—814.

LEO III., who next ascended the papal throne,

LEO III.

was as careful as his predecessor to cultivate the regards of the powerful Charlemagne. One of his first acts was to send the banner of Rome, with the keys of St. Peter, to the Frank king, requesting that some nobleman might be deputed to receive the oath of allegiance. Charlemagne complied with the request, but also expressed his intention of visiting Rome in person.

Until this visit was paid, the seat of the new pontiff appears to have been somewhat insecure. The relatives of the late pope, from some unknown cause, exhibited a violent dislike to Leo, and even conspired against his life. In the year 799, as Leo was one day riding through the city in some religious procession, followed by a long train of priests and chanting the liturgy, he was suddenly attacked by two of these relatives of Adrian, (one a canon, the other a sacristan,) aided by a body of armed associates, who threw him from his horse, and dragging him through the streets into a neighbouring convent, were about most cruelly to mutilate him by putting out his eyes and cutting out his tongue, when the pope's party breaking in rescued him from their hands. It would seem, from the conspirators being only sentenced to perpetual exile, that there had been some provocation on the part of the pope; but whether this be so or no, the view here disclosed of the moral state of the priesthood in that age is alike melancholy and revolting.

In the year 800, the invincible Charlemagne

had completed his career of conquest. Italy had submitted to his sway ; the Saxons, Thuringians, Avars, and a multitude of smaller barbarous tribes between the Rhine and the Elbe, had been subdued and brought under a uniform system of government and laws. The far-seeing genius of Charlemagne had perceived that unity was the want, and anarchy the tendency of the age ; and the wars he engaged in were undertaken less in a spirit of ambition than with a settled purpose to avert, perhaps by the only means within *his* reach, the danger which threatened society. The system of polity he established, since known as the *feudal*, was that which already existed amongst his own nation, and though certainly unfavourable to the liberty of the governed, was well adapted to give strength to the arm of the governor—an alteration which seems to have been just then essential to the growth of civilization. Had the hostile tribes which Charlemagne united under one head continued much longer divided, Europe would most likely have relapsed into the barbarism from which it had partially emerged since the settlement of the Franks and Goths. The consequences of such a relapse are too dismal to contemplate, for there was no fountain of religion or literature in Italy, Greece, or the world, from which the regions parched with drought might be replenished and refreshed.

By the armies of Charlemagne the power of the Mohammedan or Saracenic Moors was also broken at Roncesvalles and elsewhere, so that

his authority was now acknowledged throughout the entire west, and he even entered into a treaty with Irene, the empress of the east, which defined the limits of their respective dominions, and divided all Europe between them.

In all these successes Charlemagne had received much assistance from the Roman pontiffs, whose emissaries sometimes prepared the way for his victories, but more frequently followed in his track, and instilled the principles of obedience and fidelity. It was said that "God had given two swords wherewith to govern the world, the one to the pope, the other to the emperor;" and Charlemagne was not ungrateful for the support thus afforded him, nor slow to recompense the service. It was he who first set the example of *compelling* the payment of tithes to the clergy, which had before been a voluntary offering; he also attached vast estates to abbeys and churches in various parts of his empire; he gave the clergy entire jurisdiction over their own body, with great influence in all civil affairs; and finally, he resolved that on exchanging the regal for the imperial crown, he would receive it at the hands of the pontiff himself, that each might thus gain honour by conferring it on the other.

On the 24th day of November, in the year 800, Charlemagne made his entry into Rome, being met beyond the walls by pope Leo III. Seven days after, an assembly was convoked, consisting of the French and Roman nobles,

abbots, and prelates, before whom Leo appeared, to answer certain charges brought against him by the party who had before attempted his life. But this was no season for a rigorous investigation of the facts, and Charlemagne willingly accepted the declaration of the pope that he was guiltless of the crimes alleged.

In return for so important a favour, Leo prepared due honours for his illustrious guest. On Christmas-day, Charlemagne appeared at the service of the mass in St. Peter's, and to gratify the people he wore on the occasion the costume of the Roman patrician. When mass was concluded the pontiff approached Charlemagne, who was kneeling before the altar, and first anointing him, then placed on his head a golden crown. Instantly the lofty roof echoed to the shouts of the vast assembly, both clergy and people exclaiming, "Long life and victory to Charles, most pious Augustus, crowned by God the great and pacific emperor of the Romans!" The pope was then the first to perform the act of homage.

Thus was the western empire revived, after an interval of more than three centuries; for from this period Charlemagne dropped his former titles, assuming those with which the people had greeted him on the day of his coronation. From this time, also, the popes were permitted to exercise the temporal sovereignty of Rome and its territory, though still acknowledging subordination to Charlemagne and his successors—a fact expressed in the

coinage issuing from the papal mint, by the pontiff's name being inserted on one side of the coin, and that of the emperor on the other.

CHAPTER XVI.

EFFECTS OF CHARLEMAGNE'S POLICY—THE POPES AIM AT INDEPENDENCE.

A.D. 814—858.

As long as Charlemagne lived to control and restrain the pontiffs, the alterations he had effected were probably beneficial, at least to the temporal interests of the Roman people. Although he had greatly elevated the power and increased the revenues of the pope, his vigorous arm was able not only to keep them in subjection to himself, but also to oblige them to the active performance of what he regarded as their duty. There was a visible improvement in both the intellectual and the moral character of the clergy during the reign of this emperor.

But when, in the year 814, the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle received the remains of the mighty Charlemagne, and the crown descended to his son, Louis the Meek, it soon became apparent that the popes were now endowed with powers which would prove injurious to themselves, and make them a terror even to kings, and a pest to society at large. Louis inherited none of the qualities of his father's master-mind, and the pontiffs were not slow to discover the defect.

In 816, STEPHEN V. succeeded to the papal chair, and so secure did he feel in the emperor's indolence, that he did not even think it necessary to ask the imperial sanction, which ADRIAN I. had made indispensable to the validity of an election. His judgment had not deceived him, for on Stephen's visiting the emperor at Orléans, shortly after his consecration, Louis saluted him with all kindness and respect, notwithstanding the indignity he had received.

Stephen survived his election little more than seven months, and was followed by PASCHAL I., who thought he could not do better than imitate the independent example of his predecessor, and did it with equal impunity. But of him, and of EUGENE II. and VALENTINE, who quickly succeeded in the enjoyment of the short-lived pontifical power, nothing worthy of narration is known, except perhaps that Valentine is said to have been the first to receive, on his accession to the tiara, the homage of the senate and people in the abject and disgusting ceremony of kissing the foot.

The memory of GREGORY IV., who began his pontificate in 828, is rendered odious, chiefly by the part he took in the parricidal wars of the sons of the emperor Louis, with the view of effecting that monarch's dethronement. The weak Louis exhibited so much partiality for his youngest son, Charles, as to arouse the jealousy of the two elder. Lothaire, the eldest, was to succeed to the imperial title, with Italy and the Rhine country for his domain; but

even he grew apprehensive that his father's fondness for Charles would interfere with his future rights, and he therefore joined with his next brother in a conspiracy against Louis. The wary pontiff, perceiving the incapacity of the emperor, and prognosticating his fall, espoused the cause of the undutiful sons. Happily the sword was not appealed to ; but in the negotiations which decided the dispute, Gregory, as the ambassador of the unfilial conspirators, performed the traitorous office of demanding from Louis a formal recognition of their claims, and submission to their authority. Nor was he content until the dishonoured king had also done penance, in the monastery of Soissons, by kneeling on a hair-cloth and reading a paper, in which he accused himself of theft, perjury, and murder.

The brief reign of SERGIUS* was troubled, as that of his predecessor had been, by the predatory incursions of the Saracens. In 846, a fleet of these armed marauders dared to sail up the Tiber almost as far as the walls of the city. They left Rome itself untouched, but could not depart till they had violated the reputed sanctity of St. Peter's church, which then stood without the gates. Looking with fierce and intolerant hate on what they too truly regarded as the idolatrous worship of the Christians, they stripped the church of its images and rich ornaments, and carried off in triumph the silver altar-piece. The Romans, trembling for their

* Sergius II., who succeeded Gregory in 844.

homes and their lives, implored the aid of the Franks ; but the force sent was far too feeble to give effectual protection, and the question began to be mooted, if it would not be wise for the ancient metropolis to offer once more its allegiance to the Greek emperor.

In the midst of these troubles pope Sergius died, and was immediately followed in the seat of power by a man well adapted for the crisis, and who was chosen by the acclamations of the people, not at all because of his moral worth, but because he seemed the best qualified to defend the city in its present distress.

This was LEO IV., who, without waiting for the consent of the emperor, set himself at once to discharge the functions of his office, at least as a temporal prince. He took the promptest measures to replenish the exhausted treasury, caused the walls to be repaired wherever they were broken down or decayed, built fortifications on the banks of the Tiber, and threw iron chains across from side to side, to hinder the ascent of an enemy's fleet.

It was very soon found that all these precautions were needful. The Saracens returned in greater force, and threatened not a mere invasion, but conquest and dominion. But Leo had obtained timely assistance from the Greeks, and a naval conflict took place at the mouth of the Tiber. A tempest aided the Italians, scattering and destroying great part of the hostile fleet, which had no harbour offering it refuge from the violence of the sea. Many who escaped the

waves were mercilessly put to the sword, and the remainder were employed in their captivity to restore the edifices they had helped to destroy.

Of the spoils of this victory Leo devoted a considerable part to the service of the church. Thirteen Arabian bows, of pure and massive silver, were hung as ornaments and trophies around the altar of St. Peter's. Four thousand pounds' weight of silver was reserved to replace the silver vessels used in Divine service, and a single plate of gold, embossed with portraits of the pope and the emperor, and encircled with pearls, weighed no less than two hundred and sixteen pounds. Leo did not, however, expend all his booty in vain displays of splendour. He laboured more than most of his predecessors to beautify and strengthen the city. In particular, he surrounded the Vatican hill with walls and towers, that the shrine of St. Peter might be no more exposed to the insults and ravages of Saracen or other invaders; and the district thus permanently inclosed within the civic boundary has ever since, in memory of its founder, been distinguished as the *Leonine* city.

It is as successor to Leo that many historians have placed the fabulous female pontiff, JOAN. The reality of her existence, though certainly not an impossible occurrence, is exceedingly improbable, as the annalist of the popes, Anastasius, who lived at this very time, omits even to mention her name, nor can it be found in any writer for nearly two centuries afterwards. The probability is, that the surpassing

and altogether monstrous profligacy of the popes who filled up the interval, had so prepared the public mind for the reception of the tale, that it was no sooner invented than it met with ready belief, and has in consequence been confidently repeated by most writers not seeking their information at those fountains of authentic history, contemporary records. The papacy has crimes enough to answer for, without our swelling the catalogue unnecessarily; and however plausible the story of pope Joan may appear, it is the duty alike of Christian charity and of historic truthfulness to reject it, unless established on the surest evidence.*

The pontificate of BENEDICT III. claims just a passing notice, for the evidence afforded, in the circumstances of his election, of the dependence of the papacy at this time upon the imperial crown. The election of Benedict having been violently opposed by a party who would have conferred the office on another priest, both the claimants appealed to the emperor. The deci-

* As those who give credence to the story may think it unfair to suppress the narrative entirely, it shall be given in the words of *Menzel*, the German historian: "Pope John VIII. is said to have been a German, named Jutta, or Gerberta, who was born at Ingelheim, and received an excellent education from her father, a man of deep learning. Becoming enamoured of a monk at Fulda, she disguised herself in male attire, took the oath of celibacy, and joined her lover in his monastery. They subsequently travelled together as far as Greece, and Jutta appeared at Athens in the character of a public teacher. Here her lover died. She, however, gradually rose from one dignity to another, and was finally elected pope, when she took another lover. During her pregnancy, according to the legend, an angel promised her forgiveness for her crime if she would consent to publish her shame before the assembled people, and she was accordingly delivered during a great and solemn procession," and immediately died.

sion from the imperial court was at first in opposition to Benedict, who was thrown into prison. But shortly afterwards this judgment was reversed, and Benedict was transferred from a dungeon to the throne of the church.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE POPES GROW MORE ARROGANT—THE “GREAT SCHISM” COMMENCED.

A.D. 858—900.

NICHOLAS I., who commenced his papal reign in 858, was a man of remarkable character, and his history exhibits in bold relief the danger of investing a priesthood with secular power. We have already seen that the ambitious pontiffs were of two sorts—one, whose bent of mind led them to seek the spiritual; the other, the temporal exaltation of the Roman see; and as Leo iv. was a fair example of the latter class, so was Nicholas i. of the former.

Taking his stand on the forged Decretals and Donation, which had been urged with so much vehemence against Charlemagne by pope Adrian, Nicholas deliberately resolved to exalt the tiara above mitre and crown, and boldly taught the doctrine that the pope's authority should be paramount over every other. Although indebted for his election to the friendly, perhaps servile influence of the emperor Louis ii., who was then residing in Rome, and who graced the ceremony of consecration by his presence, the

haughty priest so successfully exercised his arts upon the monarch's superstitious nature, as to cause him to set the example to future emperors of humbly leading on foot the horse of the pontiff, holding the bridle for as great a distance as a strong man might hurl a spear ; which thus became a form, not of courtesy, as when Pepin received the pope for his guest at Pontyon, but one of custom, and even obligation.

The first public measure of Nicholas was an act of interference with the affairs of the eastern church, with which the popes had in some degree renewed their intercourse after the favours conferred by the Greek emperor upon Leo iv. The emperor now reigning had deposed the patriarch Ignatius, and elevated Photius, a man of great learning and superior talents, to the primacy of the Greek church. The deposed Ignatius appealed to the pope, and Nicholas, perhaps jealous of Photius, perhaps flattered by the appeal, or, what is still more likely, vexed at the continued withdrawal from Roman jurisdiction of the provinces to the east of the Adriatic, insisted on his right to regulate the succession of all bishops, both in the east and in the west. Nicholas further excommunicated Photius—a compliment which the patriarch returned by anathematizing the pope. Thus was laid the foundation of the lasting schism between the Greek and Latin churches ; for these ambitious rivals for universal supremacy, Nicholas and Photius, were never reconciled, and the strife between the two sects

ended, some generations later, in a mutual and absolute renunciation of fellowship.

Bishops and monarchs were alike compelled to humble themselves before the imperious spirit of the haughty priest who now swayed the sceptre of the Roman church.

The princes of the age were weak and superstitious, and the popes seldom lost any opportunities for asserting the authority of the pope-dom, and trying to establish its supremacy over all merely secular powers.

Nicholas was succeeded in 867 by ADRIAN II., who soon discovered a temper fully in harmony with that of his predecessor. The king of Lorraine, Lothaire II., was still under the censure of the church for divorcing his wife Thietberg ; but hoping that by a change of pontiffs the prospects of his suit were brightened, he ventured to sue once more for permission to appear in Rome, and to plead his own cause. With Adrian he urged also that he deserved this favour for his faithful exertions to drive back the Saracens from the papal domains. Adrian permitted the visit, but resolved on duly humbling the visitor ; and when Lothaire arrived in Rome, he found himself regarded and treated as a criminal rather than as a king. Presenting himself at St. Peter's, no priest was in attendance to receive him, and alone with his followers he knelt at the tomb of the apostle. On entering the rooms near to the church, which were fixed for his abode, he found them not even cleanly swept. The next day was Sunday, and Lothaire

attended the services of the church, but although a monarch was amongst the worshippers, and when their interest required it the popes were never slow to do homage to these august and rare visitors, Adrian carefully abstained from taking any part in the ceremonies of the mass.

On the following day, an explanation took place, and the pope consented to receive the apologies of the king, but at the same time insisted on his submitting to a public humiliation. Inviting Lothaire and his court to a solemn communion, the pontiff thus addressed the king: "If thou art innocent of the crimes laid to thy charge, and heartily intendest to refrain from such crimes in future, approach and receive the sacrament of redemption, which shall be to thee the pledge of the remission of thy sins, and of eternal salvation. But if otherwise, beware of taking this sacrament, lest that which the Lord hath prepared as a remedy for his faithful servants, be converted into a *chastisement* for thee." In like manner Adrian addressed each of the nobles who partook of the sacrament, warning them that to be accomplices in Lothaire's guilt would expose them to a similar retribution. "And the king," says the credulous chronicler, "and every one of them, knowing himself to be guilty, took the communion with a rash boldness, and every one of them died by a judgment from heaven before the first day of the next year!" *

* Hincmar, in his "Annals of St. Bertin," quoted by Sismondi, "Fall of the Roman Empire," vol. ii. p. 148.

So imposing had the arrogant and fallacious claims of the pontiffs now become, that posterity is amazed to see these men, for the most part common-place, and often contemptible, regarded as almost omnipotent by the superstitious generation amidst which they lived and reigned. The threat of the pope Adrian was construed by the undoubting credulity of the age to be the immediate cause of a sickness which soon afterwards befel Lothaire, and terminated his life. The pontiff took good care to profit by the event, for he announced it in due form to the several monarchs of Europe, assuring them it was an awful lesson of Providence to the kings of the earth, inculcating on them the duty of implicit submission to the church.

The vast empire which Charlemagne had consolidated out of the various tribes and clans inhabiting central and western Europe, was now again divided into factions amongst his descendants; the title of emperor still belonging, however, to the possessor of the territory watered by the Rhine. There arose continual and bloody conflicts between these degenerate and feeble princes. The disorders and contentions which now prevailed among all the European states, gave occasion to the popes for greatly increasing their influence, as they often became the last arbiters of quarrels which the sword was unable to decide. In availing himself of this advantage, the successor of Adrian, JOHN VIII., greatly distinguished him-

self, displaying to excess that greedy lust of power and proud spirit of domination, by which the occupants of the papal chair have rendered themselves odious to mankind.

Charles the Bald, one of the last surviving descendants of Charlemagne, although wholly incapable of defending his possessions, was not the less desirous of enlarging them ; and while actually paying tribute to the Northmen, who ascended without resistance the Seine and the Loire, laying waste the very heart of the country, he plotted an invasion of Italy, to extend his already unprotected frontier. In this design he was abetted by pope John, who foresaw that so weak and unprincipled a man might easily be turned into a creature of his own. In the year 875, Charles hastened to Rome, on the death of the emperor Louis II., and was solemnly crowned as emperor by the pontiff, during the service of high mass on Christmas-day. The pope then wrote to the feudal barons assembled at Pavia, to discuss the imperial succession, and exhorted them to unite in favour of Charles, saying, "WE have elected him ; we have approved him, with the consent of our brethren the bishops." And so influential was this choice, that at an assembly of bishops and nobles held three years later in the same ancient city, the power which the pope thus insolently claimed of disposing of the imperial crown was acknowledged by the synod in these words, addressed to Charles : " Since the Divine favour, through the merits of

the holy apostles, and of their vicar pope John, has raised you to the empire, we unanimously elect you, according to the will of the Holy Ghost, for our protector and lord."

For such valuable support the pontiff expected of course to receive an adequate return; and as if the humiliation of receiving his crown at the hands of the pope were not sufficiently degrading, Charles further consented to place the government of Italy under his control—a power which John and his successors most shamelessly abused.

From this period the popes made no secret of their pretension to a supreme authority over both civil and religious affairs. They declared that the empire itself had been transferred by their decree from the Greeks to the French, and that the ceremony of consecration which they performed was an act of power and bestowment. It was on this flimsy pretence that they afterwards grounded their claim to transfer the imperial crown again, first to the Italians and then to the Germans.

As for Italy, John plainly expected to govern it without the slightest means of defending it from foreign encroachments. He looked to the emperor Charles for all necessary succour, and when, towards the close of his pontificate, the Saracens menaced Rome with a siege, he wrote letters to that monarch, reminding him of his obligation, and employing argument that savours much more of the sovereign master than of the subject and dependent. "The

heathen," says he, "overwhelm us with such a multitude of evils, that nothing comparable to it can be found in the memory of man. The remnant of the people have retreated within the walls of the holy city ; there they struggle against inexpressible poverty and want, whilst the whole region beyond the walls is laid waste and reduced to a solitude. There remains to us but one evil to fear, and may God avert that from us—the loss and ruin of Rome itself." Then anticipating excuses from the beleagured Charles, the pope reminds him that the power that conferred the crown could also take it away, bidding him remember the hands that had given him the empire, "lest, if driven to despair, we should *change our opinion*."

John died in 883, and the two next years each supplied the world with a pope; but neither MARTIN II. nor ADRIAN III. have left any record behind them. One incident in the life of their successor, STEPHEN VI., is worthy of being preserved.

Stephen was raised to the pontificate at a momentous period in the history of Europe. The empire of Charlemagne was rapidly falling to pieces through the singular incapacity of his descendants, and an entire reconstruction of the European political system seemed requisite. At last, the extreme imbecility and indolence of Charles the Fat compelled the German barons to assemble in diet, and elect a prince who should be able both to govern and to defend them. Their choice fell upon Arnulf, duke of

Bavaria. But the setting aside of the directly legitimate succession was not likely to be accomplished by the vote of an assembly, however powerful it might be, or however imperious the necessity that demanded the step. The extraction of Arnulf was considered by many as tainted, although he was of royal descent; and accordingly rivals sprang up in almost every direction, some contending for the personal independence of the empire, and some for the imperial crown itself. Among the latter were Guido, duke of Spoleto, and Berengar, duke of Friuli, between whom a battle was fought, which decided Guido's superiority, and by consequence secured to him the support of the pontiff, at least so long as the Italian house should be able to withstand the German claimant of the crown. Arnulf, however, had at present enough to do without crossing the Alps; the danger of a German invasion appeared tolerably remote; and Stephen, therefore, crowned Guido as king of Lombardy and emperor Augustus.

But Stephen's brief tenure of the papal power had not long been closed by death before his successor, FORMOSUS, finding the Italian nobles unmanageable, requested Arnulf to come to his aid; and although he had already crowned Lambert, Guido's son, with the imperial diadem, he did not scruple now to salute the German prince as the rightful emperor, hoping to secure to himself a powerful and valuable ally. Arnulf marched into Italy at the head of a strong

army, and after some opposition from the nobles, whom he treated as rebellious vassals, he took Rome by storm, the Italians having shut the gates against him in spite of the pope. His enemies being thus silenced, Arnulf was publicly crowned by the pontiff as emperor of the west.

Formosus, in 897, was succeeded by STEPHEN VII., who immediately began to manifest the most implacable hostility to the very memory of his predecessor. It was no unusual thing for contentions to exist between the connexions of a deceased and a reigning pope, and it generally happened that when the newly-elected pontiff took possession of the Vatican, he found that palace plundered of all its valuable ornaments and furniture. But the rancorous and revengeful spirit of Stephen VII. cannot be accounted for on any such ordinary grounds, nor is it possible now to discover the cause, though he tried to justify himself by the pretence that the late pontiff was an usurper, who had been excommunicated by pope John VIII.

Stephen, not content with reviling the memory of the deceased pope, caused the body of Formosus to be dragged from its tomb, that it might formally receive a sentence of deposition. The body was carried into the presence of a council of Italian bishops, convened for the occasion, and by these inhuman wretches the inanimate form was mockingly arrayed in the rich vesture and ornaments which it had worn when endued with life. They then placed it in

horrible state upon the papal throne. Stephen, the living pontiff, now advanced, and demanded of his lifeless brother, "Wherefore, O bishop of Porto, hast thou carried thy ambition so far as to usurp the see of Rome?" On receiving no reply, this grave assembly passed sentence of deposition, and the condemned corpse, being stripped of its robes, was brutally beheaded and deprived of three fingers, and then ordered to be cast contemptuously into the Tiber.

This ridiculous and disgusting farce was the prelude to proceedings of greater consequence. Stephen published an edict, in which Formosus was pronounced an usurper, and all the acts and decrees of his pontificate were unconditionally annulled—at the hazard, it should seem, of creating thereby a rather serious breach in the much vaunted chain of regular and unbroken succession. The revolting behaviour of Stephen soon met with just retribution; for, as might be expected, the friends of Formosus could set no bounds to their indignation, and raising an insurrection in the city, they broke into the pope's abode, and hurrying him to a dungeon, strangled him without even the preliminary form of a trial.

In the disturbances which ensued, two popes, ROMANUS and THEODORE, were elected to the chair, and were superseded in the same year by JOHN IX., whose honours were almost equally short-lived, as he died about the close of the ninth century.

And now commenced a scene of fierce discord, base and treacherous outrage, and unblushing licentious profligacy, which has had no parallel in the history of Christendom, nor, perhaps, in the history of the world. It is summarily described by Hallam as comprehending "a series of revolutions and crimes, in which six popes were deposed, two murdered, one mutilated. Frequently two, or even three competitors, among whom it is not always possible by any genuine criticism to distinguish the true shepherd, drove each other alternately from the city. A few respectable names appear thinly scattered through this darkness; and sometimes, perhaps, a pope who had acquired estimation by his private virtues, may be distinguished by some encroachment on the rights of princes or the privileges of national churches. But in general the pontiffs of that age had neither leisure nor capacity to perfect the great system of temporal supremacy, and looked rather to a vile profit from the sale of episcopal confirmations, or of exemptions to monasteries."*

CHAPTER XVIII.

LICENTIOUSNESS OF THE POPES—INTERFERENCE OF
 OTHO THE GREAT.

A.D. 900—973.

It is, perhaps, well that the annals of the times now to be reviewed are so meagre as to relieve

* Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 531.

both the historian and the reader of the painful necessity of contemplating a scene of iniquity and vice, in which even the better characters are distinguishable from the rest only by being engaged in a less flagitious order of crime. Most of the popes of the tenth century must be passed over in silence, and those whom the continuity of this narrative obliges us to consider, shall be described with as much brevity and decent reserve as fidelity to truth will permit.

During the first quarter of the tenth century, Italy was a prey to the factions of the feudal chiefs, who were now rising into importance, and amongst whom the popes strove, generally in vain, to maintain an independent sovereignty over the city and territory of Rome. In order to accomplish this they never hesitated to favour the claims, whether good or bad, of the most powerful party. Thus pope BENEDICT IV. abused the functions of his office; and when, in 901, Louis, king of Provence, defeated his rival pretenders to the Italian crown, and came to Rome to be installed, Benedict consecrated him both as emperor and as king of Italy. In the following year, Benedict fell into the hands of the hostile duke of Friuli, who had aimed at possessing the crown, and whose right was just as good as that of Louis. The pope on this occasion paid the penalty of his subservience by being violently put to death.

LEO V., who next assumed the tiara, was still more unfortunate, for in less than three months he was deposed by the plots of his own chaplain,

Christopher, and probably ended his career in a Roman dungeon. CHRISTOPHER ascended the blood-stained steps of the throne, but was in his turn driven from power, after holding it a few months. His expulsion was effected by a revolt of the citizens, who, in these times of anarchy and crime, became the ready tools of any daring and wealthy noble who would pay them well.

Adelbert, duke of Lucca, was one of the most powerful of the Italian nobles, and obtained predominant influence at Rome through the aid of the licentious Theodora, a Roman lady of fortune. At her instigation, he placed in the vacant chair of the papacy SERGIUS, one of her paramours, and the third pope of that name. Little is known of Sergius, and what is known redounds only to his dishonour and that of the Roman see. His connexion with Marozia, the daughter of Theodora, and the equal of her mother in every vice, brands his name with eternal infamy. For a few years he continued in power, and then fell, more likely by violence than otherwise, to make way for new favourites. ANASTASIUS III. and LANDO arose, at the bidding of these infamous women, to the dangerous post of honour, and both died so suddenly as to excite suspicion of foul play.

Another lover of Theodora's succeeded as JOHN X., whose tenure of office and of her favour was more protracted. Yet, although his pontificate endured for the extraordinary period of twelve years, its history relates almost exclusively to domestic intrigues and broils.

It is said, indeed, that John united with the dukes of Benevento and Naples to oppose the Saracens, and that their joint efforts were so successful, that these fierce invaders were utterly swept from the Italian shores for many years; but what share in these feats of arms was borne by the priestly voluptuary under consideration is left to our conjectures. Certain it is, that though he died a violent death, it was not on the field of patriotic conflict. His end was in keeping with his life. The wanton daughter of Theodora was provoked to jealousy by the slights she imagined she received from the pontiff, and by the greater attention which he had paid to her mother than to herself; and imputing her loss of influence over John to the remonstrances of his brother Peter, she resolved, with all the madness of infuriated jealousy, to accomplish the destruction of both. She, therefore, incited her husband Guido, duke of Tuscany, a man as dissolute and reckless as herself, to execute the plot which her own ingenuity had devised. The appointed day arrived; the pope and his brother were both known to be enjoying the luxurious repose of the Lateran palace, when Guido, at the head of his soldiers, broke suddenly in upon their seclusion, and first killing Peter in the pontiff's presence, dragged John himself to prison, where he was speedily despatched.

Two other equally miserable victims were exalted to the popedom by the vile Marozia and her husband, in order to be quickly de-

stroyed. One of these creatures, LEO VI., was pope for seven months; the next, STEPHEN VIII., for somewhat more than a year. Both of them probably died by poison or the dagger.

On the death of duke Guido, Marozia married Hugh, king of Burgundy, who had now triumphed over all the other pretenders to the crown of Italy, and was, therefore, recognised as its king, though the yoke of a transalpine sovereign was very impatiently borne by the feudal chiefs of Lombardy. Hugh was as licentious as his wife; both indulged their guilty passions without restraint, and as they gave to the papal chair what occupants they pleased, we may be sure that the qualification for the popedom would not now be piety, or even morality or learning, but a congeniality of taste and habits in sensuality and vice.

The power of Marozia at Rome being now at its height, she gave the tiara, in 931, to her son Octavian, who acknowledged pope Sergius III. as his father, and who was then just twenty years of age. The young pontiff, who assumed the name of JOHN XI., was not destined, however, long to occupy the seat in which he had been placed by such unlawful and polluted, though powerful hands. Marozia's son by the first marriage, Alberic, was incensed at her new alliance, and sympathised with the Italian nobles in regarding the intrusion of a foreign prince as an insult and degradation. To please his mother, he nevertheless attended the nuptial banquet, but conducted himself so haughtily

towards his new father, that Hugh gave him a blow on the cheek. Alberic no longer restrained his indignation, and turning to the nobles around him, "Romans!" exclaimed he, "once you were the masters of the world, and these Burgundians the most abject of your slaves. They now reign, these voracious and brutal savages, and my injury is the commencement of your servitude." The banquet was now turned into a conspiracy, and a revolution was shortly effected. Marozia was thrown into prison; Hugh and his Burgundians expelled the city; and Alberic assumed the government of Rome under the ancient title of *consul*, permitting his brother John still, however, to conduct the management of ecclesiastical affairs. But even this curtailed dignity was not long allowed him, for after being closely watched for a couple of years, this unfortunate pope died in prison, not without suspicions of having suffered violence.

The new government established by Alberic continued for more than twenty years, but without any visible improvement in the character of the papacy. The pontiffs successively raised to office during that period were appointed by Alberic, and appear to have been chosen for their readiness to become his servile instruments. Of such men as LEO VII., STEPHEN IX., MARTIN III., and AGAPETUS, history has absolutely nothing but their names to record.

On the death of the latter, in the year 956, Alberic considered his son Octavian, then eighteen years of age, mature enough for the

pontifical dignity, and accordingly designated him pope by the name of JOHN XII. This profligate youth surpassed, if it were possible to surpass, his predecessors in his utter disregard, not merely of religion, but of the commonest forms of morality. Truth, honour, decency—were all shamefully defied. Hardly a vice could be named or imagined of which he was not guilty. The gold and silver vessels belonging to St. Peter's were given as presents to his mistresses and other companions in sensual pleasures; the female pilgrims who visited Rome were decoyed to the Lateran and ruined; the treasures of the see were squandered away in gambling of every kind; the very show of Divine worship was abandoned altogether, or indecently hurried through; and the audacious pope did not scruple publicly to invoke the pagan deities, and mockingly to drink at his revels to the health of the devil.

Such was the character of pope John XII., as portrayed by the Romanists themselves; and yet the unblushing effrontery of Rome still calls on us to believe that this wretch was a legitimate successor, and during his life the only one on earth, of the self-denying Peter and Paul; and that sacraments administered by his polluted hands could themselves convey grace to the receiver. Surely common sense alone would serve to suggest, that were the fiction of sacramental grace as true as it is false, the channel through which the grace comes should at least be untaintedly pure.

Meantime, a new yoke of servitude for poor, sunken, and priest-defiled Italy was in course of preparation. Otho the Great had now reunited the German nations, which had fallen into confusion after the death of Charlemagne; and he next proceeded to lay hands on Italy, which was ill able to resist invasion. Invited by the pope, who found himself incapable of ruling the ambitious Italian nobles, Otho marched across the Alps, and without much difficulty succeeded in reaching the papal metropolis. The pontiff soon found that he had obtained a master where he expected to find a friend; for Otho compelled the reluctant John both to acknowledge him as the lawful emperor of the west, inclusive of Italy, and with his own hands to perform the ceremony of coronation. He completed the series of humiliations by causing the Romans to swear that they would never more elect a pope without first ascertaining the imperial pleasure.

No sooner had the emperor departed from Rome, than John declared that the oath taken by himself, the clergy, and the people, was utterly null and void, and retracted all the promises which he had so lately given. The news of this treachery overtook Otho before he had reached the great mountain barrier, and he immediately returned to inflict chastisement on the faithless pope. Feeling that his life was not safe among so false a people, he commanded his sword-bearer never to quit his side, lest he should be assaulted and murdered even at the

foot of the altar. Convoking a council of the clergy, he ordered them to depose the pope, on the ground of his many profligate acts, which were fully exposed and clearly proved. John's associates in revolt were severely punished, and the pope himself, thus disgraced, soon afterwards ended his scandalous life by a horrible, but retributive death; for being taken in adultery, he was killed on the spot by the injured and exasperated husband.

On the degradation of John, the emperor had appointed LEO VIII. to be his successor, but the nomination was so displeasing to the citizens of Rome, that, in defiance of the imperial mandate, they proceeded to elect a pontiff of their own choice, named BENEDICT V. The emperor again hastened back, and reducing the city by famine, compelled the clergy to accept Leo, and sentenced Benedict to perpetual exile. Leo died two years after, when JOHN XIII. was raised, by imperial command, to the papal chair. Against this appointment also the Romans rebelled, and boldly imprisoned the emperor's nominee. Otho once more marched upon the contumacious city, and this time made a signal example of several leading revolvers. The prefect was mounted naked on an ass, whipped through the city, and then thrown into a dungeon; thirteen of the most determined were hanged, and many others were either mutilated or banished from Rome. John was restored to power, and retained it till 972. His character is little known, but no very favour-

able glimpse of it is given in his introducing the absurd practice of baptizing and consecrating the *bells* of cathedrals and churches—a ceremony which has ever since been regarded by the superstitious devotees of Rome as a certain charm to preserve the sacred edifice from the approach of evil spirits.

CHAPTER XIX.

STRIFES OF RIVAL POPES—VAIN EFFORTS AT REFORM
IN THE CHURCH.

A.D. 973—1003.

THE death of Otho the Great in 973 was the signal for new disturbances in Italy, which resulted in disastrous consequences to the pontiff, BENEDICT VI. Led by their priests, the citizens of Rome broke out into revolt against the imperial authority. Especially indignant that a pope had been imposed upon them without their consent being even asked, they chose a cardinal named Francone as their leader, and at his instigation hurried Benedict to the castle of St. Angelo, where he was presently strangled. Francone was hastily elected to fill his place, and he forthwith ascended the papal throne with the title of BONIFACE VII.

The career of Boniface was throughout worthy of its commencement. His licentiousness and cruelty were such, that the same hands that carried him to the throne were in a few

months again lifted for his expulsion from power. But though driven from the city, he still claimed the supreme ecclesiastical authority, and his title was acknowledged by some of the clergy. Meanwhile others stepped into the vacant seat. First DONUS, of whom nothing further is known, and then BENEDICT VII. obtained the coveted but dangerous honour. The city was kept in a continual state of uproar, by pretenders to the civil as well as the ecclesiastical magistracy. Crescentius, a son of the abandoned Theodora, seized the opportunity to attempt a restoration of the republic, and styled himself its first consul. The adherents of Crescentius supported the pretensions of the exiled Boniface to the popedom, while another faction contended for Benedict, who was in actual possession of the office. The providence of God thus most righteously and instructively ordained that the popes should themselves become the instruments of exposing to the derision and scorn of the world their ridiculous and impious assertion of infallible wisdom. The opposition between the rival "heads of the church" was absolute. The pope of one party was the anti-pope of another. What one authority decreed, the other strictly forbade. Benedict excommunicated Boniface, and Boniface anathematized Benedict.

To quell these angry tumults, the emperor Otho II. hastened in person to Rome, and his presence there produced at least temporary order. Crescentius was pardoned, but the

banishment of his associate or creature, Boniface, was confirmed. Benedict VII. sat on the papal throne in unalarmed security, but in undignified dependence, for the brief remainder of his life.

Dying in 984, Benedict was succeeded, at the imperial command, by the chancellor of the empire, JOHN XIV. But the early death of the emperor gave new courage to the faction of Crescentius and Boniface. The latter returned to Rome, and seizing on his rival, not only ejected him from power, but caused him immediately to be put to death. In a few months, however, his own possession of office was ended, and the clamour of his party silenced by the stern and peremptory fiat of the "last enemy," and Boniface VII. left the undesirable prize of the tiara to be struggled for by other competitors.

JOHN XV. was the successful aspirant, and low as the real authority of the popes had now sunk, he contrived to display as much as the mightiest of his predecessors, the arrogance inherent in the papacy. Saint worship had, by this time, become the universal practice of Christendom. The virgin Mary, with a host of church heroes and heroines, known and unknown, claimed an equal or even a larger share than the Saviour of the world in the prayers of professed Christians; and the priesthood found the canonization of new saints to be as lucrative a source of revenue, as they formerly had the discovery of fabulous relics.

But greatly as this custom of canonizing the

dead had come into vogue, and much as it had already been abused by designing priests, no pontiff had yet assumed to himself the power and right of enlarging the calendar at will. This innovation was reserved for an age of unequalled credulity and superstition, and John xv. was the daring and successful originator of the crime.

In the year 993, this pope held a synod at Rome, in which one Udlaric was formally and solemnly enrolled in the catalogue of saints. The ground of the procedure was a traditional and legendary account of Udlaric's life, (including some most absurd and incredible tales,) which was presented to the pope by the bishop of Augsburg, and which John pretended implicitly to believe. He forthwith issued a decree, enjoining on all Christians the due veneration of the newly installed saint, expressed in the following terms: "John, servant of the servants of God, to all archbishops, bishops, and abbots, greeting and apostolical benediction. Having convened an assembly at our palace of the Lateran on the last day of January, in which John the most holy pope was sitting, and the bishops and clergy standing, the most reverend Lintolph, bishop of Augsburg, said, 'Most holy bishop, give me leave to read in your presence the book which I hold in my hand, respecting the life and miracles of Udlaric, formerly bishop of my diocese.' The book having been read, we hereby resolve and ordain that the memory of Udlaric shall be honoured with

pious affection and sincere devotion, because we ought to honour and show respect to the relics of martyrs and confessors, in order to adore Him whose martyrs and confessors they are. It is, therefore, our pleasure that the memory of Udlaric be consecrated to the honour of the Lord, that it may serve to celebrate his praise for ever."

The pretensions of the papacy were thus, as we see, advanced more insolently than ever at a period when her corruptions and entirely unscriptural character were reaching their height. But the conduct of the pontiffs had now been so long and so constantly an outrage, not only on Christianity, but on humanity itself, that there were many in all countries, and not a few even of the clergy, who began to dispute the authority of the pope, and to desire some kind of reform in matters of religion.

This feeling displayed itself in France during the pontificate of John xv., and the boldest denouncer of the papacy was himself a churchman, destined to become afterwards a pope. This was Gerbert, a man so renowned for his learning in the physical sciences that the vulgar thought him a magician; but so esteemed by Hugh Capet, then king of France, that he appointed him president of the cathedral school of Rheims. Now it happened that the archbishop of Rheims had offended the king, and the latter wishing both to humble the archbishop and to flatter the pope, besought John's interposition. The pontiff, however, delayed

taking measures so long, that the king grew indignant, and summoned a synod of the French clergy to adjudicate in the affair. In this synod many bold speeches were uttered respecting the character of the papacy. Arnulf, a friend of Gerbert's, referring to the recent popes, exclaimed, "Is it, then, settled, that to such shameful brutes, destitute of all knowledge, both secular and sacred, the clergy, distinguished through the world for wisdom and purity, are submissively to bow? For what do we take him who sits, blazing with purple and gold, on a lofty throne? If, devoid of love, he is puffed up with knowledge, then is he *antichrist* sitting in the temple of God. If he is wanting in both knowledge and charity, he sits in that temple like a statue—an idol; and to seek a decision from such an one is like asking counsel of a block of stone. Much better were it to seek advice where we might expect to find the fullest understanding of the Divine word—of the bishops of Belgium and Germany—than in a city where everything is venal, and where judgment is pronounced according to the amount of the bribe. How shall any of the Roman clergy, among whom hardly a man will be found who can either write or read, pretend to teach what he has not himself learned?"

This synod assumed to itself the right of deposing the archbishop, and appointed Gerbert to succeed him. But pope John would by no means admit that such power was vested in the synod, and pronounced the deposition invalid,

suspending from their functions all the bishops who had voted. Gerbert now felt it his duty to interfere, and writing to a brother bishop, who seemed disposed to coincide with the pope, he pleaded thus in vindication of the synod: "Why do our opponents urge that we ought to have waited for the decision of the pope? Can they show that the judgment of the Roman bishop is greater than the judgment of God? The first Roman bishop said, 'It is better to hearken unto God than unto men.' Shall we, then, give up this right of deposing our bishops, and with it the power of punishing even the most guilty? I say, and persist in it, that if the pope himself has committed a sin against his brother, and having been often reminded of it, do not listen to the church, he must, by the command of God, be considered as a heathen and a publican; for the more exalted the station one occupies, the deeper is his fall."

It is gratifying thus to see that, even in the darkest age, there were some who could perceive and dared to speak the truth; but the time for attempting a reform in the papacy had not yet arrived, and when it came, the utter failure of the attempt only made more apparent than ever the viciousness of the principles upon which the whole system was based. In truth, the very men, such as Gerbert and Arnulf, who desired a reform, knew not what it was that was required. Their own minds were so largely imbued with the popular notion, that the established forms of religion, in govern-

ment, discipline, and worship, were essential to the existence of the church of Christ, that the really spiritual nature of Christianity altogether escaped them. The great doctrines of the gospel, that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight;” that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” that “the righteousness of God without the law is manifested . . . even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe”—of these and many other important truths they knew little or nothing, and were therefore quite unprepared to sweep away the huge and stifling mass of rubbish beneath which Rome had entombed the fair form of the Christian religion.

The pontiff, GREGORY V., who was raised to the popedom by Otho in 997, lived only two years to enjoy the honour. Yet in that brief interval he gave abundant proof to the world, that however abject, morally and politically, the papacy may become, it will never relinquish its claims to universal supremacy in the church. The king of France had just then married a lady who stood within the prohibited line of relationship. Gregory publicly declared that the marriage was null and void. At first, the king defied the arrogant priest, but Gregory knew his powers, and boldly proceeded to pronounce the monarch an excommunicate person, and his kingdom under the interdict of the church. The astonished prince beheld himself immediately deserted by

all his subjects, and his court converted into a solitude. Two faithful domestics alone remained with him ; and even these, fearful of spiritual infection, superstitiously avoided his touch, and threw into the fire the vessels which he used in eating and drinking. Under circumstances so stringent the king was compelled to submit, and by dismissing his bride obtained the pardon of the pope.

On Gregory's death, the emperor Otho, still hoping to secure some beneficial changes in the state of the church, appointed his preceptor, the learned Gerbert, to succeed him, under the title of SYLVESTER II. The earlier career of this remarkable man might justify us in expecting that his advent to power would commence a new era in the history of the Roman church ; but if he had not previously changed his sentiments concerning the papacy, he had at least learned the corrupt policy of silence ; and on becoming pope, instead of instituting reforms, he strenuously upheld all the vices of the Roman see. Perhaps, also, he found hindrances over which he could exercise no control, as well as temptations which he had not the moral strength to resist.

Amongst other difficulties with which Sylvester, had he been ever so desirous of interfering with established usages, would have had to contend, was one of a most singular and extraordinary character ; this was the panic-stricken state of society on the approach of the year 1000 of the Christian era. A belief

was prevalent throughout Europe that in that year the awful predictions contained in the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse were destined to be accomplished, and that the generation then living would witness the final judgment of the world. So great was the excitement, and so extravagant the consequent fanaticism, that the wheels of commerce stood still, tradesmen forsook their merchandise, students their books, and multitudes resigning their estates into the hands of the church, retired into convents, to prepare with due solemnity for the expected event. So sudden and vast an accession of wealth must have greatly strengthened the power of the bishops and clergy throughout Europe; and had Sylvester been ever so strongly inclined to introduce beneficial alterations, it is probable he would have utterly failed at so unpropitious a time.

His life was, however, so shortly terminated, that he had little opportunity of displaying either his genius or his intentions. He died in 1003; and the death of Otho III., at almost the same time, occasioned an entire revolution in Italian affairs, and changed into a phase yet darker, if possible, the foul and lowering aspect of the Roman church.

CHAPTER XX.

HEIGHT OF ANARCHY IN THE STATE, AND PROFLIGACY
IN THE CHURCH.
A.D. 1003—1046.

DEGENERATE as were the Italians of the Middle Ages, compared with their renowned and warlike ancestors, the spirit of liberty had never wholly departed, and had, perhaps, received new life from the admixture of the Lombard and Gothic population with the ancient inhabitants of the land. The yoke of a transalpine emperor was always felt to be galling, and a moment of weakness in the imperial government was sure to be seized for erecting the standard of independence. Such an occasion presented itself on the death of Otho III., when the Germans were much divided in the choice of a successor ; and Henry II., who was eventually elected, found full occupation for many years in suppressing the factions of his rivals.

Left thus to themselves, the nobles of Italy recommenced those struggles for freedom which had ceased since the time of Otho I., and nothing but internal disorganization could have prevented Italy from acquiring an independent sovereign of its own. But many causes combined to hinder this desirable result. The feudal system had taught the nobles independence of each other, and now they were more eager for individual greatness than anxious for their country's welfare. The policy of Otho I. had

also been directed to the dissolving of the bonds of connexion between these powerful nobles, whose union would have made them formidable to the safety of the empire. To humble the barons and the bishops, he had given charters of freedom to many cities, and even permitted them to surround themselves with walls and fortifications. Each of these, thus transformed into a petty state, was selfishly expending for its own aggrandisement the resources that ought to have been devoted to the common weal. Venice was commencing, with all the ardour of youth, her career of commerce and conquest. Naples and other seaports strengthened their own power in their efforts to resist the piratical Saracens and Normans. Florence, Milan, Pavia, and other inland towns, had built up their walls, and armed a militia to repel the attacks of the Hungarians. So that, although Ardoïn, the marquis of Ivrea, on being elected king by some of the northern nobles, was able to maintain the title and style of a monarch for some years, he never gained the support of the nation, and his forces were easily routed when the new emperor found leisure, in the year 1014, to quit his German dominions and march into Italy. But although Henry II. then enjoyed the honour of being crowned before a Roman assembly, and by pontifical hands, he did not greatly interfere in ecclesiastical matters, which were thus abandoned for a long time to the unscrupulous selfishness of a venal priesthood.

The popes who ruled Rome in this interval of discord were all of them the mere nominees and creatures of such nobles or popular leaders as held for the moment the predominant power in this miserable and distracted city. Whatever genius or ability they had was, doubtless, exhausted in their endeavours to maintain some shadow of authority in the midst of domestic squabbles. It need occasion us no sort of regret that history records nothing but the names of JOHN XVII., JOHN XVIII., and SERGIUS IV., the last of whom died in 1012.

The power of the counts of Tusculum, a barony in the neighbourhood of the city, was now paramount at Rome, and the next occupants of the papal chair were accordingly taken from among their partisans. The first of these was BENEDICT VIII., whose reign was distracted by domestic quarrels, and by frequent invasions of the Greeks and Saracens. Dying in 1024, he was succeeded by his brother, who was also of the Tusculan party.

JOHN XIX., as the new pontiff was styled, had never been a priest at all; but being senator and duke of Rome, it was easy for him to seize on an office which, though sacred in name, had long ceased to be so in fact. Yet it was necessary to gain over the clergy, and this was quickly accomplished by extensive and unblushing bribery. An office so obtained was not likely to be esteemed for its own sake, and this soon appeared in John's conduct respecting it. He only valued the popedom for the worldly

advancement which it promised him, and if it did not answer this end it would hardly cost him a sigh to part with it for a better prize. The authority of the popes was daily on the decline ; and so uncertain a remuneration, held on such dangerous terms, quickly induced the mercenary pontiff to form the design of selling his office to the highest bidder ; and he accordingly entered into engagements with the Greek emperor, Basil, to transfer to the Greek patriarch the title of "Universal bishop," on condition of receiving a large sum of money in return. A visit of the emperor Conrad II. to Rome, in 1026, was in all probability the cause of this engagement remaining unfulfilled. The disorders of Italy brought across the Alps that worthy successor of Otho the Great ; and after the ceremony of coronation had been performed, Conrad laid down such stringent regulations, both for the nobles and the clergy, as insured the return of order, at least for a season.

On the death of John, in 1033, the counts of Tusculum, still in the ascendant, had the audacity to elevate to the vacant chair a boy of their own family, not twelve years of age, to whom they gave the name of BENEDICT IX. It is hard, indeed, to determine to which of the titles ordinarily chosen by the popes should be awarded precedence for baseness of reputation ; but perhaps, in the person of this monster, the name of Benedict has attained to that disgraceful pre-eminence. As soon as Benedict had arrived on the verge of manhood, he recklessly

plunged into every species of debauchery and crime. No expenditure was too lavish, no act was too daring, that would serve to gratify his passions. All that has been related of John XII. might be repeated of Benedict IX., and still the whole would not be told. The former was a voluptuary, the latter was a voluptuary and a tyrant. To licentiousness he added ungovernable fury of anger, and committed several murders with his own hands. The chroniclers of the age, wearied or disgusted with their task, are fain to sum up the catalogue of his enormities in few words, by declaring that the details are too horrible to narrate.

Used as the Romans were to base and profligate pontiffs, their indignation was at length aroused by the unparalleled vileness of pope Benedict; and excited by his repeated and wanton acts of cruelty, they raised an insurrection, and ejected him by force from the city. His powerful alliances, however, enabled him to return, and perhaps he might much longer have continued to pollute society by his pernicious example, but that his passions were turned in a direction which led him eventually to vacate the papal chair.

Becoming enamoured of the beautiful daughter of an Italian noble, he formally demanded her in marriage. Her father pretended to be willing, but said he could only consent on condition that Benedict would abdicate his office, hoping that the throne of the church would thus fall into his own hands, and that he might

seat on it whom he pleased. But Benedict, though in nowise reluctant to part with the tiara, was determined to make the sacrifice a source of pecuniary profit. He therefore selected a priest, named Gratianus, who had acquired considerable reputation in Rome for being more than usually religious, and whose reputation had proved so advantageous as greatly to enrich him, and to him, for a suitable price, he sold the supreme headship of the church. It is not unlikely, also, that the party, now growing into importance, who wished for reforms in the church, aided John Gratianus to purchase the office, in the hope that he would become their instrument in accomplishing those reforms. At all events, Gratianus, by his own confession, bought the triple crown, and Benedict consecrated with his blood-stained hands this hopeful successor of the apostles by the title of GREGORY VI.

But Benedict was yet doomed to disappointment. The father of his intended bride, mortified at the failure of his own schemes, refused to part with his daughter, and assuming that the papacy was still vacant, nominated another John, bishop of Sabina, under the name of Sylvester III. And now Benedict, enraged at the trick that had been played him, resolved to retain the supreme power in the church. He therefore continued his abode in the Lateran, and still styled himself the most holy pope. Thus the world beheld, with some astonishment, three pontiffs at once, living in different palaces,

and officiating at different altars in the papal city—Benedict performing the priestly functions at the Lateran, Gregory in St. Peter's, and Sylvester in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore; "the afflicted church," to use the language of the times, "wedded at once to three husbands, witnessed the celebration of as many rival masses in the metropolis of Christendom."

But these spiritual combatants by no means confined themselves to spiritual weapons. Each summoned his partisans to his aid, and Rome was filled with brawls, robberies, and murders. Swords were crossed in battle over the tombs of the apostles and martyrs, and the offerings which the devout still occasionally brought to the shrines of the saints were no sooner deposited than they were greedily carried off by one party or another.

In these bloody affrays Gregory particularly distinguished himself, for he was an unlettered man, and probably thought what was afterwards said by pope Julius II., that a sword was better than a book. But the party who supported his pretensions, feeling somewhat scandalized by the military character of their spiritual chief, adopted the singular expedient of making the archbishop of Amalfi his deputy in all spiritual offices, so that while the bishop was performing mass for the pope, Gregory might uninterruptedly wield the sword in defence of the bishop.

The eyes of all lovers of peace were now anxiously directed to the emperor Henry III.,

whose power alone seemed competent to settle these disputes, and Henry was himself desirous of terminating broils so disgraceful to the name of religion. In the autumn of 1046 he arrived at Pavia, where he was entertained by Boniface, margrave of Tuscany, with a magnificence and splendour that dazzled and surprised him. Proceeding to Sutri, a town about thirty miles northwards of Rome, he there convened a council of bishops and clergy. At this council, Gregory presented himself, in the hope of receiving the imperial sanction to his claim of the popedom. He was compelled, however, to confess that his claim rested on no better ground than that of simony, and he and his rivals received one sentence of deposition.

The emperor entered Rome on the twenty-third of December, and the day following he held in St. Peter's an assembly of the clergy and people of Rome, whom he commanded to proceed in his presence to elect a new pontiff. But they, on the contrary, intreated the emperor to accept the office of Roman patrician, and promised that, as in former days, they would abide by his choice in the selection of a pope. This, probably, was just what Henry intended, and forthwith assuming the green mantle, golden circlet, and ring, which formed the patrician costume, he took the hand of Suidger, bishop of Bamberg, who had followed him from Germany, and leading him up to the papal chair, invited the assembly to do homage to pope CLEMENT II. Next day, being Christmas-day,

the new pontiff received in public the tiara and purple robe, and immediately afterwards placed the iron crown on the head of his imperial patron.

Henry set out, a few days later, on his return to Germany, taking in his train the three deposed popes, and also a friend of Gregory's—a man who was destined afterwards to play a more remarkable part than any of them in the papal drama. This was Hildebrand, afterwards pope GREGORY VII.

With these events this portion of our narrative properly ends. We have now traced the papacy from its rise to the close of the first cycle in its sin-stained and melancholy course. We have seen a Christian ministry, designed by its Divine Founder to instruct and purify the world, receive the first element of corruption at Jewish fountains, and insensibly transforming itself into a priesthood, establish a spiritual despotism over the churches of Christ. We have seen that, in their eagerness to extend their influence and dominion, they lost sight of the true idea of conversion, and accepted a mere outward profession of Christianity, that might be enforced by the sword or bought with a bribe, in place of the Scriptural evidences of a heart renewed by the Spirit of the living God. We have seen them, growing yet more deeply intoxicated by the love of power, courting the favour of monarchs on the one hand, and pandering to the superstitions of the people on the other. We have seen that, from becoming

the subordinate and occasional administrators of civil power in an age when they were almost the only persons capable of exercising it, they took occasion, on the decline of the empire, to assert an independent sovereignty, and to found a kingdom of their own. We have seen how the spiritual authority, which at the first was the same among all bishops, was gradually increased by the bishops of Constantinople and Rome, until in the schism which divided them, the latter laid claim to the universal supremacy of the church. And, finally, we have seen how, from this period, when the church ceased to be a spiritual community, and when the bishop of Rome became much less a minister of religion, either true or false, than a temporal sovereign, ecclesiastics forgot their sacred functions in the eager pursuit of wealth and rule, and the popes themselves became eminent only for worldliness and ambition, which at length degenerated into an excess of profligacy, voluptuousness, and crime, that renders the pages of history inscribed with their names the blackest of the entire volume.

With the progress of corruption in manners, the corruption of doctrine kept pace. In the prurient spirit of controversy which distinguished the early fathers of the church, the abstruse question of the intermediate state of the soul between death and the resurrection gave rise to the notion of a purgatory, or purifying fire, of which the priesthood of Rome have made such a profitable use. The fierce

REMARKS.

disputes respecting the nature of Christ, which arose from the same spirit, originated, or at least gave effectual prevalence to the honour paid to the virgin Mary, and led to her eventual designation, as absurd as it is impious, the queen of heaven. When pastors became priests, prayer ceased to be communion with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and was changed into the intercession of a holy few on behalf of the sinful many. When mere profession was mistaken for conversion, the performance of vain ceremonies took the place of the sincere homage of the heart, and a reliance upon these outward rites was substituted for a trust in the atonement of Christ. The efficacy of that atonement once forgotten, the door was wide open for the wretched contrivances of men to establish their own merit. Hence self-mortifying practices, fasts, pilgrimages, and penances, were rapidly multiplied, and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper were transmuted in the hands of the priesthood into infallible means of grace. The baptism which they administered could alone regenerate the soul—the bread which they blessed conveyed to the recipient the very nature of Christ. And when the bishops of Rome changed the public acknowledgment of sin into a confession whispered in the ear of a priest, the sluices were unstopped for the foul and desolating flood of sacerdotal despotism, scandalous morals, purchased absolutions, indulgences, interdicts, and all the other accompaniments of priestly domination, which

swept away the last landmarks of the ancient and apostolic faith.

The papacy had lain for long years on a couch of degenerate pleasures. Emaciated, haggard, and wan, she had become to the world a spectacle of mingled astonishment, horror, and disgust. But the time had now arrived when, laying aside the aspect of enfeebled and paralysed age, she sprang with new life upon the world ; and in fairer guise and with firmer attitude than ever, boldly claimed and triumphantly won the renewed homage and allegiance of mankind. The particulars of this wonderful metamorphosis and apparent renovation, it must be left for future pages to explain.

THE
LIVES OF THE POPES.

PART II.

FROM THE AGE OF GREGORY VII. TO THE
DAWN OF THE REFORMATION.

A.D. 1046—1431.

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THE
LIVES OF THE POPES.

CHAPTER I.

EFFORTS OF THE ROMAN PRIESTHOOD TO REFORM
THEMSELVES.

A.D. 1046—1052.

HISTORY affords us few instances of renovated empires. Their progress from decay to ruin is usually more certain than their advance from incipient vigour to dominant maturity. The power of resisting decay is indeed very unequal, but even the old Roman empire, long as it struggled for existence, fell at last beneath the inevitable pressure of time. The papal power affords, however, a remarkable exception to the general rule. From a state of inanition that threatened instant death, it arose again to astonish the world by its might, and to win even a greater dominion. The secret of its strength lay in the moral weakness of mankind. It had already paralysed by its touch the *minds* of men. As religion is the strongest motive to high and noble deeds, so is superstition,

or the perversion of religion, the most powerful chain wherewith to bind and fetter the soul. The authority that wields it and rivets it upon our moral nature may securely exult in the slavish subserviency and degrading thralldom of its victims. In the middle ages superstition had its mightiest hold on the European mind, binding and swathing into helpless subjection all the institutions of society. The pope's was the hand that held and tightened at will the cords of bondage ; and we shall accordingly see, in the further progress of our narrative, how the pontiff's power increased with the strengthening of superstition, and how it rapidly declined when superstition relaxed its grasp at the bidding of advancing civilization, and above all of reviving religion.

The eleventh century opened amidst general murmurs of discontent at the profligacy and impiety of the clergy. Too faithfully copying the example of their papal head, the inferior orders of the priesthood bought and sold the sacred office without the faintest attempt at secrecy, or the least discovery of shame ; using it when purchased not at all for the benefit of souls, but to their lasting injury, by making it merely an instrument to worldly and licentious ends. "The world," says a witness of their own, "lay in wickedness ; holiness had disappeared, justice had perished, and truth had been buried ; Simon Magus lorded it over the church, whose bishops and priests were devoted to luxury and vice."

To check these growing evils had been the main concern of the emperor Henry III., when, at the council of Sutri, in 1046, he deposed the three rival popes, Benedict IX., Gregory VI., and Sylvester III., appointing in their stead his faithful subject and hearty coadjutor in ecclesiastical reform, pope CLEMENT II.

Neither Henry, however, nor Clement, nor any other influential leader of that age appears to have had a just view of the reform that was really wanting. Religion had, in truth, already fled away in disgust from the society that called itself *The Church*, and had taken refuge in the sequestered valleys of Piedmont and the south of France; and she was not to be lured back to the busy world by men who would either keep her in intolerable bondage to secular control, as the emperors designed, or compel her to become the mere handmaid of priestly ambition, as Clement and the reforming clergy would have made her. Neither the imperial party nor the reforming churchmen seemed aware of the sad truth, that religion herself would stand aloof equally from both, shocked at the presumption of the one, and the hypocrisy of the other. The fundamental error on both sides was the prevalent mistake of the age, the supposing that religion consisted in the formal discharge of sacerdotal functions by a peculiar class of men, rather than in a vital and soul-subduing faith in the great High-priest—the Divine Redeemer of mankind.

The immediate effect of Henry's interference

at the council of Sutri, was to throw a great accession of power into the hands of the emperor. It was settled that for the future no pontiff should regard himself as duly installed until the emperor's consent to the election had been given; and the imperial prerogative in ecclesiastical affairs was in various ways greatly enlarged.

To the reforming party amongst the clergy such results were only less distasteful than the rude anarchy and lawless immorality which it replaced. The restraints imposed by the emperor were a yoke too grievous to be borne, and they panted for the entire emancipation of the priesthood from secular control. They saw, also, that to make the influence of their order permanently secure, a vigorous reform was requisite among themselves of all abuses that diminished the veneration of the vulgar, and gave occasion for scandal. This party had confidently hoped that Gregory VI., their own partisan, would have received the popedom at the emperor's hands; and when Gregory was sent into exile, Hildebrand, the real leader of the movement, accompanied him, to await in the retirement of the abbey of Cluni, a more favourable time for carrying their plans into effect.

Hildebrand, whose powerful intellect and determined energy imparted new life to the papacy when it was quivering in the throes of death, and a life so vigorous that the repeated shocks it has since sustained have not yet

sufficed to destroy it, was a man of low origin, but trained from childhood for the priestly office, and endowed with a temperament that made such training exactly congenial to his soul. "He was," says one of his annalists, "a monk from his boyhood," and his career throughout was one of abstinence, bodily mortification, and rigid self-command. In the monastery of Cluni, Hildebrand's strict monastic habits gave him great popularity among the fraternity, who showed their appreciation of his genius by electing him to the office of prior; and here he continued for two years, patiently awaiting the events which his sagacity confidently predicted, and which were to prepare the way for the accomplishment of his own vast designs.

The short reign of Clement II. was by no means one of ease. Besides all his other sources of discomfort, the Tusculan faction were still actively sowing the seeds of discontent in the hearts of the Roman populace, and plotting for the restoration of Benedict IX. It is not unlikely that to their machinations the Roman priesthood were indebted for the early removal of their chief, as the death of Clement took place in 1047, and so suddenly as to give much colour to the suspicion that it was procured by the administration of poison.

Another German bishop was selected by the emperor to occupy the dangerous post, by the title of DAMASUS II., but his tenure of power was yet more brief than that of his forerunners.

In less than a month, the office was again vacant; and upon Henry the embarrassing task once more devolved of finding a suitable successor.

After much deliberation, the emperor resolved on calling a council, and to leave the choice of a new pontiff to the wisdom of that assembly. This council was held at Worms, in the winter of 1048, and Hildebrand, the prior of Cluni, both attended it and bore a prominent part in its proceedings. His arguments succeeded in securing the election of Bruno, bishop of Toul, a man of fair reputation, but whose easy and pliable disposition rendered him well adapted to the purposes of the subtle Hildebrand, and whose connexion with the imperial family assured his proving acceptable to the emperor. Bruno was accordingly appointed by Henry to the papal dignity, under the designation of pope LEO IX.

Sympathizing with the views of the reformers, and nerved by the daring spirit of Hildebrand to so bold a deed as putting a slight on the emperor, Leo resolved not to assume the pontifical style and office until he should receive the gift at the hands of the Roman clergy and people, whom the reforming party professed to regard as the only proper constituents of the Roman bishopric. Accompanied by his strong-minded associate, the prior of Cluni, Leo proceeded to Rome, not with the usual pomp of a pontiff entering on possession of his see, but in the simple guise of a pilgrim, on foot, and without attendants. But the

influence which Hildebrand had already acquired in Rome, made the hazard of such a step much rather apparent than real. By his cautious intrigues, the affair was so skilfully managed, that the pilgrim visitor no sooner appeared in Rome, and announced to the assembled citizens that it was only from them that he would accept of the dignity which the emperor had offered, than the city rang with acclamations of ready acknowledgment and joyful greeting. And so, in February, 1049, Leo received the doubly confirmed honour, and rewarded at the same time the zeal of Hildebrand, by raising him to the rank of cardinal, and investing him with the offices of sub-deacon of Rome, abbot of St. Paul's, and keeper of the treasury and altar of St. Peter.

The main result which Hildebrand and his party now hoped to achieve was the strengthening and consolidation of the priesthood into a distinct and superior caste. But it was clear to the sagacious mind of their leader, that as long as the present habits of the clergy continued such a hope was visionary and vain. Superstitious as the people were, it was impossible for them not to deride and despise claims to sanctity put forth by men whose practices were the scandal and chief disgrace of their age. To rear the stupendous fabric which Hildebrand's imagination had already designed, it was requisite to prepare the materials. To strengthen "the church," it was first of all necessary to reform the clergy.

And in Leo IX. Hildebrand found a most useful instrument for the execution of his plans. Severely ascetic in his own habits of life; himself a victim to that strange and lamentable superstition which leads men to think that they shall propitiate a God of love by "voluntary humility" and self-inflicted tortures, Leo, though naturally timid, was prepared to dare much in order to stem the tide of voluptuousness which had rushed in upon the church. Personally familiar with those inventions of a deranged pietism—beds of bare earth, pillows of stone, shirts of rough hair, and midnight vigils—Leo looked with as stern an eye as Hildebrand himself on the luxurious indulgences of his ecclesiastical brethren.

Two sins in particular he regarded as crying for swift judgment and relentless extermination. These were the open traffic of the clergy in sacred offices, and their general lapse into the supineness and pleasures of married life. Respecting the former, no comment is required. No excuse will be pretended by any for so manifestly worldly an abuse of an institution that ought ever to be looked on with reverence, and only upheld by hands of unstained purity. But the latter wears a different aspect. The church of Rome opened a wide inlet for crime, when she pronounced that to be dishonourable in the clergy which the apostle had unconditionally declared to be "honourable in *all*." Forbidden to marry, the priesthood generally disobeyed either the letter

or the spirit of the prohibition. And as the obligations which wedded life involves were felt by the vicious to be irksome, it was far more common to keep the letter of the law and still violate its spirit, than to risk the dangers of a formal and legal marriage.

Cunibert, bishop of Turin, had, on the other hand, given permission to his clergy to marry, and even Hildebrand's party were constrained to admit that the diocese was greatly superior to others in the purity and intelligence of its spiritual guides. But the celibacy of the priesthood was an essential part of Hildebrand's scheme for strengthening and aggrandizing the order; for how could they be sufficiently wedded to each other, and their party interests pursued at the expense of society, if permitted to entangle themselves with society by matrimonial ties? The simple Leo thought celibacy virtuous—the subtle Hildebrand knew it to be expedient; and so, with one motive or another, the whole band of reformers, with the pope and the cardinal at their head, set themselves to denounce and prohibit both simony and marriage as crimes of an equal dye.

Engrossed with this project, hardly a month had passed away since his instalment in office, before the new pontiff commenced a vigorous onslaught upon the twin corruptions of the church. In April, 1049, Leo summoned a council at Rome, and plainly announced his intention of suspending all prelates guilty of simoniacal practices. He was shamelessly met

by the assertion, that this measure would be destructive of the whole church, as *none* could be found who were not culpable to a greater or less degree. And so true was the statement, that Leo found himself obliged to moderate his zeal, or, at least, to limit its exercise. Yet, during the three following years, the pope held councils in many different cities, both Italian and Transalpine, and in all of them simony and marriage were the special objects of his indignation, censure, and punishment.

But, in the year 1052, the labours of Leo were turned in another direction, and we behold the austere and ascetic priest transformed into the armed and aggressive warrior. It is the natural consequence, righteously retributive, of the Roman bishop's blending the two incongruous characters of a spiritual and a secular chief, that he is often compelled to be inconsistent with himself; and Leo, who, at the synod of Rheims, in 1049, had enacted that the clergy should never bear arms in war, is found four years later leading in person a hostile expedition against the Norman settlers in the south.

No spectacle is more pitiable than that of an apparently sincere man vainly struggling to arrive at truth. And this seems to have been the condition of Leo and a large portion of the reforming party in the church. They had closed the Scriptures, and trusted with blind confidence to the counsels of fathers and popes. And without the guidance of that word which

is a "lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path," no wonder that at every step they plunged deeper in the mire. Their very efforts at reform were violations of the Divine commands, and naturally involved them in grosser corruption than ever.

CHAPTER II.

THE PSEUDO-REFORMATION DEVELOPED: HILDEBRAND'S TACTICS.

A.D. 1052—1061.

THE mighty Charlemagne, it is said, shed tears on one occasion, as he beheld the ships of the Northmen sailing past the coast of France, and predicted that those bold mariners would some day quit their Scandinavian wilds to assail, and perhaps overturn the empire he had laboured so hard to establish. This prediction had been long since fulfilled in part, and the Normans had established a strong kingdom in France itself, when their adventurous spirit tempted them, in the eleventh century, to visit new scenes, and to acquire, if possible, new possessions in the Italian peninsula.

Tancred, whose chivalry is immortalized in Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered," had sent forth twelve valiant sons to win laurels and rewards still more substantial on this classic, but ill-fated soil. Lower Italy was in a most unsettled state, and furnished the best field in the world for the prowess of soldiers of fortune. The

Lombard chiefs dwelt on their castled heights ; the more ancient inhabitants governed themselves in petty civic republics ; and the piratical Saracens had established more than one flourishing sea port, from which they could issue at pleasure to molest and despoil their neighbours. With such an accumulation of combustible elements, it is no wonder that Southern Italy was perpetually involved in the flames of civil war.

It was in one of these affrays, in the year 1016, that some Norman pilgrims from the Holy Land, tarrying for a time at Bari, so distinguished their valour in the aid they gave to the citizens, as to receive an earnest invitation to bring over from Normandy a strong company of their countrymen, to dwell in lasting alliance with the natives ; and it was in response to this, or a similar invitation, that the sons of Tancred, amongst whom Robert Guiscard and William of the Iron Arm are especially eminent, took up their abode in Italy. They shortly became so prosperous as to establish an independent government, the metropolis of which was Melfi, and the first prince William of the Iron Arm.

It did not, however, belong to Norman genius to cultivate the arts of peace, and the warlike habits which at first made them welcome in Italy, soon proved them her most terrible scourge. Tidings at length reached the ear of the pope of the outrages they openly committed, and what no doubt chiefly

provoked him, of the injuries inflicted on the estates of the churches and abbeys by their marauding expeditions.

Resolved to rid Italy of so dangerous a guest, Leo hastened across the Alps to the emperor, and implored the assistance of German discipline and arms. But Henry was fully occupied in quelling the revolts of his own subjects, and was unwilling to undertake the settlement of so remote, and to him so uninteresting a quarrel. Nevertheless, at the earnest entreaty of the pontiff, he furnished him with a guard of seven hundred Germans. This insignificant army was increased, but not strengthened, by the adhesion of a multitude of Italians, who flocked to the standard of the pope in his progress from Mantua to Beneventum; and with such a promiscuous array Leo took the field in the spring of 1053.

The Normans were at first desirous of conciliating their spiritual chiefs, and offered to hold the lands they had acquired as humble vassals of the Roman see. But the pontiff, confiding in his large army, spurned all conditions of peace except the total and absolute relinquishment of all their estates. To this they gave an unhesitating refusal, and Leo, issuing from the gates of Civitella, gave instant signal for battle.

The conflict was soon over. The "rabble rout," which Leo had gathered around him, fled at the first assault, leaving the handful of German allies to cope alone with the enemy.

But although they disdained to flee, these auxiliaries were unequal to so hard a task as conquering. They were quickly cut down, and Leo himself fell into the hands of the victorious Normans.

Whether from policy or from superstition, the conquerors treated their priestly assailant with as much consideration as if he had been their constant friend. It is true that they detained him for a time as a captive, but their deportment towards him was of the most courteous and respectful kind, and, kissing his feet, they implored in the same breath, pardon for their sinful victory, and his paternal benediction.

But Leo was not to be comforted by kindness; he pined away with grief, disappointment, and perhaps remorse. He but just survived the day of his release, and having been escorted with all honour into Rome, died on the 19th of April, 1054.

The battle of Civitella threatened to be a serious, if not a disastrous blow to the papal interests, but the skill of Hildebrand converted it into a signal advantage. The nine months' intercourse which the captivity of Leo enabled the cardinal to hold with the Norman leaders, convinced him that they possessed the very qualities of which the Roman see was soon to feel the want—courage and address in war, combined with profound veneration for priestly authority. By Hildebrand's policy the Normans were prevailed on to enter into special friendship with the papal party, and although

unquestionable conquerors, both to hold their territories of Calabria, Apulia, and Sicily, as fiefs of the church, and to acknowledge the supreme pontiff as lord paramount of all their domains.

The dying Leo had confided the care of the see to Hildebrand until his successor should be elected, and the reforming party were anxious that the cardinal should himself assume the tiara. But he patiently awaited a more propitious time, and for the present preferred obtaining permission from the clergy to proceed, as their ambassador, to the imperial court, and to recommend whom he chose for the emperor's confirmation. Nor did he discover less depth of policy on this occasion than when he procured the election of Leo ; whilst his perfect self-reliance, and his ease in gaining the mastery over other minds, were never more conspicuously seen.

On arriving in Henry's presence, he implored that Gebhard, a German bishop, both a personal friend of the emperor, and his staunch adherent in all his struggles with the encroaching papacy, might be nominated the successor of Leo. Henry knew not what to do. He was unwilling to lose the presence of so useful a counsellor, and probably he dreaded the influence which the wily Hildebrand might acquire over him ; yet the deserts of Gebhard were undeniable, nor was the emperor loath to reward them, though he would greatly have preferred choosing his own method, and not

one so full of peril to himself. Neither was the bishop at all anxious for the honour thus thrust upon him ; but for every excuse Hildebrand had a sufficient reply, and at length Gebhard became pope, under the title of VICTOR II.

Hildebrand had not overreckoned his powers. At his bidding Victor engaged, at the council of Florence, in 1056, to pursue the reforming policy commenced by his predecessor. He held many councils and synods during his short pontificate, and the decrees of all of them were directed against simony and marriage, those effectual barriers to ecclesiastical ambition. Towards the close of the year 1056 he was summoned to the imperial court, where he arrived just in time to close the eyes of the emperor in death—an event which threw the states of the empire into direful confusion, and prepared the way for the struggle between priestly and royal sovereignty, which Hildebrand had so long foreseen and daily expected. Victor received from the dying monarch the charge of the young prince, and promised very carefully to guide his infant mind ; but the friendly pontiff was himself snatched away by death in the following year.

In one of the visits of pope Leo IX. to the court of Henry III., he had brought away with him into Italy two illustrious guests, whose fortunes were afterwards united in a singular manner with those of the papacy. These were Godfrey, duke of Lorraine, and Frederic his brother, both of them exiled by the emperor

for revolting against his authority. Godfrey continued unchanged by adversity, and sought in exile to achieve, by both his military and his political skill, the wealth and the station which he had been disappointed of at home. Eventually he became the most powerful prince of Northern Italy, by his marriage with Beatrice, the rich margravine of Tuscany. His brother Frederic, more pacific or more superstitious, was persuaded, no doubt by the master-spirit that then guided the Roman church, to take orders, and so became archdeacon and chancellor of Rome.

Thenceforth the princely Frederic held a high place in the esteem of the Roman court; his pliant disposition, no less than his royal connexions, fitting him exactly for the purposes of the sagacious Hildebrand. And when the death of Victor opportunely occurred, Frederic was instantly elevated to the papal chair, and, without question, through Hildebrand's influence, although the subtle cardinal had skilfully contrived to be personally absent at the time.

STEPHEN IX., for so the new pontiff was called, had no sooner assumed the tiara than he duly rewarded the pope-maker of the age, by conferring upon him the title of cardinal-archdeacon, and appointing him legate at the imperial court. Hildebrand, having secured the tranquillity of the papal throne in Italy, at least for the present, by seating upon it a man whose powerful relationships would sufficiently protect him from domestic foes, set forth for the German

court, to reconnoitre the ground, to ascertain for himself the exact position of parties, and to forward, by his personal presence, the great scheme of ecclesiastical aggrandizement and imperial humiliation which he had so carefully matured, and thus far so cautiously, yet so perseveringly and successfully worked out.

The genius of this statesman-priest quickly compelled the submission of the gentle Agnes, the empress-mother, who was appointed regent of the empire during the young Henry's minority. Not capable of fathoming his ultimate designs, or of resisting the commanding energy of his will, Agnes meekly yielded to the counsels of Hildebrand, even in suggestions that with the most unsuspecting would seem adapted to awaken mistrust.

But whilst thus prudently feeling his way and making sure his progress at the imperial court, the unwelcome news reached the cardinal legate that Stephen IX. was no more, having expired after a brief reign of eight months. The same letters bore tidings of violent and successful efforts put forth by the counts of Tusculum to seat upon the papal throne one of their own partisans. Resolved at all hazards to baffle a party whose object was the very reverse of his own, and who would certainly restore all the corrupt practices which he had largely purged from the priesthood, Hildebrand promptly recommended the regent empress to nominate Gerard, bishop of Florence, to the Roman see, who would be as sure of

duke Godfrey's support as even pope Stephen had been. Agnes willingly consented ; and, guarded by Godfrey's soldiers, Gerard entered Rome early in 1059, and took possession of the Vatican without the least opposition.

NICHOLAS II. was the title which Gerard thenceforth assumed, and his brief pontificate was distinguished by some highly important events. Both in its ecclesiastical and its political relations, the papal power received large augmentation.

The reforming party in the church professed to aim at the re-establishment of primitive practice in all matters of discipline and order. It was on this ground that they advocated the enforcement of celibacy and the punishment of simony. The same principle would have led them to defend the election of the pope, and of bishops in general, by the suffrages of the people. We have seen, indeed, that when it suited their ends they actually pleaded this doctrine, and maintained the right of the Romans to elect their own pontiff without appealing to the emperor. But their real object was to establish the authority of the *priesthood* on an independent basis, removed from the interference of either the emperor on the one hand, or of the people on the other. The obtrusion of the latter had been most offensively felt in the steps lately taken by the populace at the instigation of the counts of Tusculum ; and Hildebrand saw that the present occasion was highly favourable for the

commencement of a new line of policy, that should prevent such obtrusions for the future. Against the people he would certainly be supported by the strong arm of Godfrey, and the imperial court might just now be easily circumvented by guile.

A council was accordingly convened in the Lateran church, at which it was formally enacted that the election of the "bishop of the Roman universal church" should henceforth be vested with the five-and-thirty cardinal bishops and presbyters, who resided in the city and territory of Rome, and who composed the college of cardinals. Mention was indeed made in the canon both of the emperor and of the people, but in such terms as precluded either the one or the other from exercising any effectual control over the election. Whatever sentiments may have been held at the imperial court respecting this audacious procedure, no notice was taken of it at the time. The character of the empress Agnes was too timid, and the young emperor was altogether too immature, to allow of any resentment being discovered; and so the vast consequences which lay enfolded in this unjustifiable piece of policy were left to disclose themselves as the progress of events should open the way.

By a new alliance with the increasingly powerful Robert Guiscard, the Norman duke of Apulia, pope Nicholas also strengthened himself against any possible revolt of the people, and the principal occasion of such revolts was

soon afterwards removed, when Robert marched at the head of his warriors against the strongholds of those independent and turbulent nobles, who had so long disputed with the clergy and the emperor the right of nominating the popes. One by one these baronial castles were levelled with the ground, their owners killed in battle or driven into exile, and the undisputed sovereignty of central Italy was finally left in the hands of the supreme head of the church.

Whilst these political events tended to consolidate the power of the priesthood, Hildebrand zealously persevered in his labours at reforming the order itself, which process he well knew could alone give security to its new acquisitions. It was perfectly natural that the reforming party, insidious as were their real objects, should enlist on their side whatever of sincere piety yet existed in the nominal church. And it is gratifying to think that during the pontificate of Nicholas II. there were some, the motives of whose ardour in the cause of reformation are beyond suspicion. Such was Arialdo, a priest of Milan, who raised his voice with invincible courage against the gross corruptions of the clergy in that city. He accused, and alas! he could justly accuse, the entire body of mercenary traffic in sacred things. Even the archbishop of Milan had purchased his office with a large sum of money.

The zeal and eloquence of Arialdo soon created him a party, and the whole city of Milan was quickly divided into factions, and

engaged in a hot contest, the majority of the laity siding with Ariald, and the clergy indignantly denying, not the charges alleged against them, but the right of their accuser to interfere with their time-honoured customs. Both parties at length eagerly, and, as the sequel proves, rashly, invoked the decision of the pope. No request could have been more welcome to Hildebrand, who promptly embraced every opportunity of extending the authority of the Roman see over every other diocese. Legates were speedily sent, and a sweeping reformation was begun. All priests convicted of simony were obliged to do penance, and not a few were deprived of their livings.

But the true purpose of the reforming party was quickly discovered to be very different from what they so ostentatiously professed. This invitation of papal arbitration by the inhabitants of Milan was straightway interpreted by the Roman legates as a confession of papal supremacy, and the church of Milan, which had boasted of its independence, even from the days of the great Ambrose its primitive bishop, was to be henceforth enrolled among the subject churches of the Roman see.

Nicholas died in 1061, and the struggle between the secular and the ecclesiastical, the imperial and the papal parties, which had so long been approaching, now began in good earnest. The clouds had long been gathering blackness, and the tempest burst in fierce hurricanes upon both sides of the Alps.

It was an ill omen for the reforming party, that they did not scruple to employ any method of artifice or deceit. The principle that the end justifies the means had virtually become already the law of the Roman church. Pretending to seek reform, they really aimed at aggrandizement ; and professing to be most pure, they secretly countenanced corruption of the worst kind. How could any real reformation be effected by men who themselves possessed so little of the spirit of their great Master, and who so utterly forgot that ministers especially are bound to show themselves “patterns of good works ; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned ?”

CHAPTER III.

STRUGGLE OF THE POPES WITH THE EMPERORS
CAUTIOUSLY COMMENCED BY HILDEBRAND.

A.D. 1061—1073.

ANXIOUS, before proceeding to the election of a new pontiff, to ascertain how far they might presume on the forbearance of the German court, the papal party despatched thither a confidential presbyter, whose instructions were to obtain the consent of the empress regent to the election of a successor to Nicholas by the mere vote of the college of cardinals. But the empress, apprised now of the intentions of the party, had grown indignant at their audacity. She firmly refused to see the envoy, and finding

all endeavours to gain an audience fruitless, in less than a week he set out on his return.

Defeated in this attempt to soothe the court into compliance, Hildebrand's daring spirit now resolved on open opposition. Convoing the cardinals, he proposed to them that Anselm da Badagio should be elected pope, and as all were unanimous in agreement, Anselm forthwith assumed the style and functions of supreme pontiff under the title of ALEXANDER II.

The empress Agnes had also summoned a council immediately on the departure of the envoy, and the prelates who met at Basle in obedience to the mandate, elected Cadalous, bishop of Parma, who was acknowledged by the whole imperial party as the true and proper pope by the title of HONORIUS II.

In the spring of the following year, the pretensions of the two claimants to apostolical succession were put to the test, not, however, by an arbitration or a council, or any other peaceful and Scriptural means. These professed ministers of peace and chieftains in the church of Christ were content to employ "carnal" rather than "spiritual" weapons, and resolved to decide their claims by an appeal to the sword rather than to the word of God.

Early in the year, therefore, Honorius hastened to Rome, attended by an army of Germans, whose commission it was to establish their leader by main force in the "apostolic see." On arriving before the walls of Rome, they found the city filled with the troops of

Alexander. A bloody battle ensued outside the gates, in which Honorius was the victor, driving back his rival to the shelter of the city. Yet their strength was so equal that they were both compelled to wait for fresh resources before renewing the strife.

In the mean-time, the duke of Tuscany had approached the scene of conflict; and conscious of superior might, peremptorily enjoined a truce on the combatants, and commanded both pretenders to retire each to his own diocese, and there await the final decision of their claims, which he would shortly bring in person from the imperial court.

With this injunction both Alexander and Honorius promised to comply. Honorius was confident that judgment would go in his favour, and Alexander trusted, though less hopefully, to the skill of his great leader, Hildebrand.

The prospects of the papal party were indeed gloomy, but the genius of its wonderful chief did not quail before the storm, however tremendous it might be, that now threatened to overturn all his designs, and utterly ruin his cause. The papal historians impute the successful and extraordinary turn which events now took to a singular coincidence, or to the concurrent ambitious aims of other men; but the impartial student of Hildebrand's character and life will hardly hesitate to ascribe it to his widespread influence, his unscrupulous boldness, his practised strategy.

Hanno, the archbishop of Cologne, was a man

of fearless courage and restless ambition. There is no reason to question the statement, that he aimed at swaying the political councils of the empire, and that he was jealous of the greater authority and confidence which the empress Agnes reposed in the bishop of Augsburg ; but it is certain that he sympathized with the papal or reforming party in the church, and the qualities just alluded to, would make him all the more suited to be the instrument of their designs at so critical a juncture as the present.

It was during the suspension of hostilities between Honorius and Alexander, that Hanno invited the young emperor, then twelve years of age, with his mother and the whole court, to keep the feast of Pentecost at his palace at Nimeguen. The royal party had reached Kaiserswerth on the Rhine, and in the company of the archbishop rested there awhile from the fatigues of the journey. A banquet was prepared, and during the festivities of the evening, Hanno talked of a sumptuous galley which he had recently had built, so richly embellished with gilding, carved work, and tapestry, as to surpass every vessel of its kind. He then politely inquired if the young prince would not like to inspect this triumph of art, which lay at anchor near the bank of the river. Henry, with boyish curiosity, readily complied, and was immediately conducted on board. No sooner had he embarked than the signal was given ; the rowers bent sturdily to their task, and the boat was swiftly urged against the stream in

the direction of Cologne. Some way had been made before the treacherous purpose of his kidnappers burst on the young emperor's mind, but on guessing their intent, with characteristic bravery, he plunged into the river, hoping to gain the nearest bank, and so escape from their hands. But a stronger swimmer than himself was at his heels, and easily recaptured, he was carried in triumph to Cologne. The affairs of the empire were now in the hands of the archbishop, and with all other matters of state, the question of the succession to the papacy must be referred to his decision.

It does not appear that any advocate of Honorius was permitted to appear before the archbishop's tribunal. Damiani, a zealous partisan of Hildebrand, conducted the whole business in the form of a discussion respecting the relative claims of the two pretenders to the papal chair. The discussion in such hands could have but one termination. It ended, of course, with the triumphant establishment of Alexander's right, and Hanno immediately ratified the decision by a formal sentence in his favour.

Godfrey himself accepted this sentence as the decree of the imperial court, and Alexander accordingly marched back to Rome under the protection of the duke. But the pontiff's power was still inadequate to overturn the opposition of his rival. Honorius had seized on the castle of St. Angelo, and in that fortress he continued for six years, disputing on every

occasion his opponent's title to the popedom. The decrees of Alexander were also disregarded by a large portion of the clergy, and, indeed, the whole of the priesthood, according to the complaint of one of their number, were much more intent upon the various pursuits of ambition and avarice than on mere ecclesiastical questions, and were more interested in the pleadings of legal advocates than in providing their flocks with the bread of eternal life.

This interval of suspense was ended in 1067, when archbishop Hanno called a council at Mantua, and summoned both the contending parties to appear and receive a final settlement of their claims. Alexander attended, well knowing the feeling of Hanno in his favour, and willing for the sake of the advantage to overlook the anomaly of a sovereign pontiff appearing at the tribunal of an inferior prelate. But Honorius, equally aware of Hanno's views, declined to be present unless he were honoured with the presidency of the council. Alexander was, therefore, formally pronounced by that assembly to be the rightful pontiff, and from that time he retained undisturbed possession of the see.

The pontificate of Alexander was a mere continuation of Hildebrand's policy, for in the hands of that man the pope was only an instrument. So complete was the mastery which the cardinal had acquired in all the councils of the church, that even his own party began to complain of his oppressive and overbearing rule. One of the most stedfast and

eminent of his partisans was that Damiani who had so successfully pleaded the cause of Alexander before Hanno. But zealous as he was for the independent or reforming party, he could not brook the imperious spirit of their leader. He withdrew altogether from public life, and to increase the chagrin of Hildebrand at losing so powerful an ally, he now turned his satirical pen against his former associate and friend, inditing verses whose epigrammatic point and witty truthfulness soon bore them to the lips of the people. Some of these still commemorate at once the bitterness of the feud, and the might of that gigantic spirit which then ruled the destinies of Rome. Ridiculing the meek subserviency of Alexander to his chief adviser, Damiani said—

“Papam rité colo, sed te prostratus adoro,
Tu facis hunc dominum, te facit ille Deum.”

which may be rendered—

Before the pope I bend the knee,
But must prostrate fall to thee;
Thou mad'st him sovereign pontiff here,
Therefore as God he'll thee revere.

And when exposing to the Romans the arrogance of Hildebrand's behaviour, he indignantly advised them—

“Vivere vis Romæ: clarâ deprome voce,
Plus domino Papæ quam domino pareo Papæ.”

Wilt thou live quietly in Rome? Then loudly swear to sing,
‘More than my lord the pope, I'll honour the pope's king.’

So little of true humility and genuine Christian spirit, according to the testimony of his own partisans, did that celebrated man discover,

whom the church of Rome regards as one of her chief benefactors, and numbers among her greatest saints.

The state of affairs had now become so critical as to tax all the firmness, and demand all the audacity of even Hildebrand. In Italy, Alexander was no sooner seated on an undisputed throne, than the public quiet was disturbed by the depredations of the Normans. Apulia and Sicily were already subject to these interlopers, and now they sought to push their conquests to the gates of Rome. In this extremity, the pope sought aid from Godfrey, the duke of Tuscany, and his veteran skill and courage drove back the invaders, and established peace in the neighbourhood of Rome. But a war of parties still raged in nearly every city. The strife which Ariald's zeal had kindled in Milan was not extinguished by his violent death, and the flames of dissension were rapidly spreading throughout Italian society.

But, baffled for a season at home, Hildebrand meditated fresh conquests for the church abroad, and the history of our own country affords an instance of the boldness with which he attempted encroachments. It was during the pontificate of Alexander II. that William the Conqueror undertook the invasion of England. Before commencing the enterprise, he sent the renowned Lanfranc, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, with other ambassadors, to Rome, in the hope of obtaining the sanction of the pope. Under the Saxon rule, England had not been so

obsequious to the Roman see as accorded with papal notions of fitness, and Hildebrand urged vehemently that William should receive the full countenance of the church. The Norman duke was quite ready upon his part with flattering promises, and even engaged to hold his conquests as a fief of the pope, and to send an annual tribute to Rome.

Lanfranc accordingly returned with a papal bull authorizing the expedition, and bearing in addition a consecrated banner and a precious ring, containing, as was pretended, one of the hairs of the apostle Peter. Armed with these sacred defences, the Conqueror set sail for Britain, and, in the autumn of 1066, commenced his victorious career by gaining the battle of Hastings.

Although the subjugation of England was not completed for several years, William very early rewarded the aged Lanfranc with the primacy of Canterbury. And now, ever watchful for the interests of Rome, the wily Hildebrand availed himself of Lanfranc's known devotion to the papal power to extend that power in England. The custom of receiving the pallium in person from the pope had long been discontinued by English archbishops, but when the announcement of Lanfranc's elevation reached the pontiff, joined with the request that the pallium might be transmitted as usual, a reply was sent that the *ancient* practice must be inviolably maintained; but that if Lanfranc would undertake a journey to Rome, he should be welcomed with all honour, and the investiture

be formally made. Accordingly, the old archbishop, accompanied by his brother of York, proceeded to the papal city, and by this act prepared the way for the further encroachments which Hildebrand had in contemplation.

But it was in Germany that the aims of the reforming party were most distinctly seen, as it was against the imperial power that Hildebrand directed his most powerful blows. From the hands of Hanno, the young emperor had passed into those of Adelbert, archbishop of Bremen, and here he experienced a wholly new manner of life. Hanno was austere, Adelbert was lenient and conciliatory. The prince was now surrounded with companions just suited to his taste, and was suffered to indulge freely every sensual passion. Henry soon became profligate, and as profligate habits are expensive, he became rapacious and tyrannical as well. He utterly neglected business, except when he interfered in it to obtain the means of pursuing his pleasures. Whether this deterioration of Henry's character was artfully sought by Hildebrand and his party or not, it certainly proved most serviceable to their ends.

The nobles of the empire soon began to complain of their sovereign's dissipated habits. Henry only laughed to scorn their remonstrances and prayers. The Saxons, who more especially groaned at his exactions, took up arms to avenge themselves. Henry laid upon them yet heavier burdens. The imperial supremacy was evidently falling to pieces. The

feudal system, which had created, was now destroying it. The nobles had grown too powerful to be kept in subjection; they had long been petty princes,—they now aspired to be independent monarchs. All this was very obvious to the keen eye of the sagacious Hildebrand, and he took his measures accordingly.

At the earnest entreaties of his nobles, but quite in opposition to his own wish, Henry had married the princess Bertha of Susa, an amiable, but not a personally attractive woman. His aversion for her rapidly increased, and at length he sought a divorce. This was not, however, to be obtained, except with the consent of his nobles and by the permission of the church, and neither of these could be gained.

An assembly of the imperial barons was convened at Worms, in 1069. By that assembly, the question of the divorce was transferred to a council to be held at Mentz in the ensuing autumn. Hildebrand heard of the scheme, and resolved to give the young emperor his first lesson of the empire's destined subjection to the church.

When the council was assembled, and the question of divorce fully opened, a papal legate appeared, and to Henry's utter consternation, peremptorily forbade the contemplated measure. He declared that if Henry persisted in contending with the laws of the church, no pontifical hands should ever consecrate him to the throne of the empire. A murmur of approbation ran through the assembly, and Henry, seeing that

his cause was lost, departed in haste and in wrath.

It was hardly to be expected, when prelates and monks did not scruple to sell benefices to the highest bidder, that a licentious and reckless young prince should hesitate to employ similar means for replenishing his frequently exhausted exchequer. And Henry made little scruple at conferring the most dignified offices in the church, and the choicest monastic estates, on those who were liberal in supplying his pecuniary wants. The sums given in this way by churchmen were so vast as to be called by the chroniclers of the times, "mountains of gold" and "rivers of money." The riches of *Cræsus* and *Tantalus* were said to have reverted to men who had taken on themselves the vows of poverty and the scandal of the cross.

Amongst the rapacious churchmen who sought to benefit by Henry's prodigality, was the archbishop Hanno, the emperor's first guardian, and the pretended reformer of ecclesiastical abuses. With Henry's permission, he had seized on the monastery of Malmedy, in the neighbourhood of Liège, and deaf to the remonstrances of the legal possessor, the abbot of Stablo, he vowed that he would not relinquish the prize, even though St. Remaclus himself, the founder of the abbey, should rise from the tomb to demand it.

Hanno forgot, in the utterance of such words, that he lived in an age when miracles were multiplied at will. In the following spring, the

city of Liège was honoured with an imperial visit, and great were the banqueting and carousal. The nobles assembled in great numbers, and amongst them at the royal table Hanno occupied the place at Henry's right hand. In the height of their festivity, the doors suddenly flew open, and a procession of monks entered, solemnly bearing a coffin. At their head was the abbot of Stablo, who, bidding his followers to pause before the emperor, and place their precious burden on the table, exclaimed, "Behold! Saint Remaclus has arisen from the tomb, to demand restitution of his rights?"

The guests were all thrown into confusion, the queen burst into a passion of tears, and the emperor and archbishop hastily escaped from the scene. But the rumour swiftly spread that St. Remaclus had arisen from his tomb, and the banqueting room was soon thronged by a crowd of superstitious devotees. Miracles were rapidly worked. The sick touched the coffin, and their disorders instantly ceased. The blind received sight, and the lame began to walk. The popular enthusiasm rose so high, that Henry and the archbishop no longer dared to resist the claim of the abbot, who triumphantly bore back to their resting-place the potent relics with which he had won the field, chanting at the head of his monks the pæan of victory and the praises of St. Remaclus.

The scandal of this ridiculous mummerly and priestly imposture was by no means so great in the eyes of either the people or the pope as that

of the violence of archbishop Hanno; and as Henry's share in such transactions was often repeated, by personal interference with ecclesiastical affairs, and by the countenance which he gave to simoniacal practices on the part of the clergy, the time seemed at length fully ripe for papal interposition, the more so as such interposition might now be safely ventured. The general disaffection of Henry's subjects, and the popular feeling in favour of the reforming movement, had greatly diminished, both in Germany and in Italy, the hazard of affronting the imperial power.

A council was therefore held at Rome, in 1073, at which sentence of excommunication was passed upon several of Henry's companions, and a letter was despatched, which summoned the emperor himself to appear before the pontiff, and answer to the charges of simony and other offences which had been alleged against him. This was the last public act of pope Alexander's life, for in the following month he died, and the summons thus daringly issued consequently fell to the ground. But the lips that had dictated the summons still breathed; the genius that had planned the entire conflict, which was to secure the independence of the priesthood, was as vigorous as ever. Five popes had died since this fictitious reformation, this real usurpation, had commenced; but Hildebrand, the pope-maker, still lived, and displayed in a green old age all the energy and boldness of his youth.

CHAPTER IV.

GREGORY VII: HIS MEASURES TO ESTABLISH THE
INDEPENDENCE OF THE PAPACY.

A.D. 1073—1075.

THREE days were appointed to be solemnly devoted to fasting and prayer before the election of a new pontiff. But the very next day to that of Alexander's death, events took place which decided the choice of his successor. Hildebrand's tactics were as politic on this as on former momentous occasions, and the promptitude and secrecy with which his plans were carried into effect, demonstrate the paramount influence he had acquired.

In the church of the Lateran there was a numerous gathering of both clergy and laity, to assist at the funeral obsequies of the deceased pontiff. The subdued cadences of the priests who chanted the service were the only sounds that broke the solemn stillness of the place, when suddenly, from every part of the assembly, a cry rang through the edifice, and echoed from the vaulted roof, that HILDEBRAND was the pope of the people's choice. Hildebrand flew to the pulpit, and by his vehement gesticulations seemed to implore that a restraint might be put upon these passionate and disorderly emotions. But his entreaties were in vain. The people would not be pacified until the cardinals announced that Hildebrand was the choice of

the conclave as well as of the people. Then, arrayed in the scarlet robe, and crowned with the tiara, Hildebrand was presented to the crowd, who renewed their shouts and acclamations, as pope GREGORY VII. arose to pronounce over their bended heads his paternal benediction.

When the news of this election reached the German court, the emperor despatched an envoy to learn the reason of such an unusual proceeding. It was by no means the new pontiff's desire to provoke the hostility of Henry, over whom he rather hoped to acquire that influence which had been invariably yielded him by others. He therefore received the messenger with great respect, assured him that the election was altogether contrary to his personal wishes, and declared that he still awaited the confirmation of the sovereign. With this feigned submission the thoughtless Henry, who knew little of Gregory's real character, was very well content, and the gorgeous ceremonies of the consecration were soon afterwards celebrated in due form.

And now Gregory was at full liberty to pursue the ambitious career he had so long ago marked out, and had hitherto pursued with so much caution and self-restraint. Resolved to strengthen the church, by which he understood the priesthood, *reformation* and *independence of secular control* were the two objects he kept steadily in view—the first as preparatory to the second. The great truth that religion ought not to be in bondage, ought not to be either

bribed or coerced into subjection, was firmly apprehended by Gregory, and for this he is entitled to all praise. But in his hands this truth was in danger of being perverted into error, as pernicious as that which it opposed; for Gregory would not scruple to bring both coercion and bribery into the service of religion. He did not perceive that both are essentially immoral, and inevitably subvert all truly religious principle, whether employed for or against that sacred cause. It was his determination, at all costs, to rescue the clergy from their vassalage to the feudal barons and kings; and beginning by asserting his own independence as pope, he proceeded to secure that of his order by enforcing with stern rigour the enactment against simony and marriage which had been sanctioned by his predecessors.

His first efforts were directed to the consolidation of papal power in Italy. Soon after his consecration he undertook a journey, which proved a sort of visitation to all the provinces of the south. Passing from city to city, he inquired into all abuses, and contracted new relations with the local authorities. Entering the territory of the Normans, he attempted also to bring into subjection the haughty Guiscard, who had now completed his conquest of Sicily. But this attempt was futile; Robert was as haughty and unbending as Gregory himself.

The pontiff next turned his attention to the condition of the church abroad, and as in his eyes the unity of the church depended on a

uniformity of ritual and a sameness of forms, he sought to effect such changes in foreign churches as should assimilate them to that of Rome. The liturgy of the Spanish church had hitherto been composed in the Spanish tongue, but Gregory made diligent, and in the end successful attempts to have it conformed to the Roman Breviary. He even claimed the Spanish territory as a fief of the Roman see; but the claim was probably misunderstood, or treated with ridicule by the Spanish princes, as they did not deign a reply.

France was the next country to feel the effects of the new pontifical election. Philip of France, like all the other monarchs of his age, had been accustomed to sell the high posts of dignity in the church without scruple or shame. And now, on the clergy of Mâcon choosing Landric for their bishop, Philip declined putting him in possession till he had received the customary present. Confiding, however, in the energy of their new pontiff, the clergy represented the grievance at Rome, and Gregory promptly applied himself to the task of redressing their wrongs. He wrote to the French king, sharply rebuking his interference in ecclesiastical affairs, and insisting on the immediate installation of the bishop. He even threatened to lay France under an interdict if his demands were despised. To the archbishop of Lyons he sent a peremptory command, to consecrate the newly chosen prelate without reference to the monarch's will. "And if you neglect this," said the doughty

pope, "let that person come to Rome, and by God's grace we will consecrate him ourselves."

But the emperor was by far the chief antagonist of papal domination. The imperial supremacy established by Charlemagne, and confirmed by Otho the Great, was still acknowledged by the princes of Germany, and although the greatly increased power of these princes indicated that they would not long continue to be mere subjects, the blow had yet to be struck that should degrade the emperor to the level of an ordinary king, and make the pope indisputably the first of European potentates.

It was from Saxony that the first omens appeared that threatened the integrity of the empire. Henry's hatred to his Saxon subjects almost resembled infatuation. It had been wickedly nourished in his youthful mind by his priestly guardians, for their own selfish or malicious purposes. He added oppression to oppression, wrung from them their hard-won wealth, and trampled on their liberties, till the patience of the Saxons was quite exhausted, and they desperately rose in revolt. But, heedless of all danger, the young emperor only mocked at their rage. The Saxon chiefs assembled at the gates of Goslar, where Henry was residing, and demanded an immediate hearing of their complaints. Henry was playing a game at hazard when the deputation presented their request, and he scornfully bade them begone, and wait till he had finished his game. Such contempt was not to be borne,

and the warriors departed, breathing deep threats of vengeance.

All Saxony was quickly in arms, and Henry was astonished and alarmed at hearing that sixty thousand men, led by Rudolf of Suabia, were on their march to besiege him in Goslar. He had no regular troops, and it was quite doubtful, in the present discontented state of the people, whether an army could possibly be raised. Henry shut himself up in the castle of Hartzburg; and, on escaping thence, fled on foot through dense forests and pathless wilds from his enraged and relentless foes. Fatigue and want, and harassing cares, soon induced a disorder which was only subdued by the inherent vigour of his constitution. In this miserable plight the forlorn monarch entered the city of Worms. The faithful citizens pitied their fallen king, and in beholding his calamities lost sight of his faults. They rallied around him, and shut their gates on his fierce pursuers. The tide of fortune had turned in his favour, but Henry knew not how to profit by the advantage. He merely made peace with the Saxons, promising that they should be unmolested for the future.

To all these movements in Germany, Gregory stedfastly directed his discerning eye. He foresaw the struggle that was impending between Henry and his vassal chieftains, and well knew how to convert it to the interests of the Roman church. Expecting that Rudolf of Suabia would yet become a competitor with

Henry for the imperial crown, he wrote him a friendly epistle, expressive of his wish that the temporal power should ever be in league and amity with the head of the church. To the emperor he also addressed admonitions to refrain from simony and sacrilege, and all warlike expeditions, until the papal legates should have investigated the state of affairs. And in return, the pontiff received a letter from Henry, who now began to feel his doubtful position, "full," as Gregory said, "of sweetness and obedience." The letter, in fact, expressed Henry's regret for the follies of his youth, and solicited the pope's friendly counsel and powerful aid.

Early in 1074, the pope summoned a council at Rome, for the further prosecution of his design of reforming, or, as we might more truly say, of aggrandizing the priesthood. This council forbade, not merely the marriages of priests, but the continuance of the marriage tie wherever it subsisted. The clergy were to put away their wives, and none of the laity were to receive the rites of religion at the hands of a wedded priest. The news of this decree threw all Germany into an uproar. There the sacred bond of marriage had been contracted by multitudes of priests, who now flatly refused to dissolve them. In vain did the archbishop of Mentz endeavour to enforce the decree. He soon found that the attempt could only be made at the hazard of his life. The same resistance was offered in France. The archbishop of

Rouen, who published the decree, was pelted with stones by his own clergy, and was compelled to seek safety in flight. Not one whit, however, did the sagacious and imperturbable pontiff abate the severity of his demands. He knew that he must conquer, for he had read the characters of men, and understood the signs of the times. With more than regal majesty, he wrote to the prelates of Germany and France, insisting on their prosecuting the work of reformation at any imaginable risk and toil. "Because there is no possibility," he said, "of evading the judgment of the great Judge of all, we entreat and warn you not to let the prophetic malediction come upon your heads, in which it is written 'Cursed is the man who keepeth back his sword from blood;' that is, as ye well know, who withholds the word of preaching from the censure of carnal men. Ye, brethren, yourselves are in fault."

CHAPTER V.

CONTEST OF GREGORY VII. WITH THE EMPEROR HENRY IV.—
THE PAPAL TRIUMPH.

A.D. 1075—1077.

THE "sweetness and obedience" of the young emperor did not last many months. Prosperity had returned to him, and he now indulged his passions and his whims unappalled by the threats of the church. His companions, who

had been excommunicated by the pope, were reinstated in favour, and that *simony* which Gregory detested beyond all things except marriage, was openly practised by Henry himself, and by all the nobles of the empire. Abbeyes and churches were sold to the highest bidder, or given away with indiscriminate and wanton levity.

Accustomed to preach to kings as well as to subjects, Gregory did not hesitate to address long and earnest remonstrances, not unmingled with threatenings, to the German court. Reciting Henry's numerous offences, the pontiff said, "It seems to us passing strange that thou inditest so often devout epistles, and pourest forth by the mouth of thy legates such expressions of humility, and yet exhibitest thyself by thine actions as most intractable." Gregory does not seem to have suspected that Henry had learned in his own school the arts of duplicity and statecraft. Wearied out at length by the disregard which Henry showed to his admonitions, the pope sent legates towards the close of 1075, commanding Henry's speedy appearance at a Roman synod to answer his many accusers. But in December of that year, an event happened which threatened to put a sudden end to Gregory's career, and which strikingly illustrates the rudeness of the times.

Right royal as was the pontiff's attitude, and menacing as was his tone to even kingly foes, he does not appear to have held undisputed sway in his own city of Rome. Nobles fortified

their houses into castles, and issued forth with their retainers to pillage the weak, or revenge an insult, as in cities of less importance. One of these turbulent chieftains was Cencius, who had a personal spite against Gregory, because of certain rebukes which he had received from the pontiff for his licentious and lawless life. It was midnight on Christmas-eve, and the pope, with his clergy, was celebrating high mass in the spacious church of Santa Maria Maggiore. The worshippers were few, for the night was tempestuous and dark, so that the church had a gloomy and deserted appearance. The pope was in the act of distributing the consecrated wafer to the laity, when Cencius and a band of ruffians dashed into the church. With clamorous shouts they dragged the pontiff from the altar. In the scuffle that ensued Gregory was wounded in the forehead by the cut of a sword. Stripped of his robes, he was hurried away to the fortress in which Cencius dwelt, and left there till he could be safely removed to a greater distance; for the populace had now been aroused, and were hastening to the fortress with fierce yells and threats of vengeance. Hasty efforts were made for defence, but battering engines were brought to the assault, and it soon became certain that the rescue would be effected, or all the inmates of the tower in which Gregory was confined be involved in one common ruin. Gregory was not unattended in his distress. A devoted female had followed him to the tower, and now

chafed his chilled feet and stanchd his bleeding wound. The rocking of the tower beneath the shocks of the catapult at length made Cencius aware of his danger, and throwing himself at Gregory's feet, he implored pardon for his crime. Throughout the entire scene Gregory had maintained the most unshaken dignity and serenity, and he now assured the wretched man of his hearty forgiveness and protection. The tower was just then broken open; Cencius escaped, and the pontiff was carried back in triumph to the church, that he might conclude the service so rudely interrupted.

The year had turned, but it was still the Christmas festival, and the emperor was celebrating the festivities with his court at Goslar. A deputation was announced as freshly arrived from Rome, and the legates of Gregory were ushered into Henry's presence. They acquainted the emperor that a synod was to be held at Rome in the approaching Lent, and in the name of the pontiff cited him to appear, warning him that excommunication would be the penalty of disobedience.

Henry's ire was aroused by so audacious a message, and driving the legates from the court, loaded with every species of insult, he immediately summoned a council of German bishops to decide on a fit punishment for the daring and rebellious pope. The council was held at Worms, and the prelates, forward to gratify their monarch, and very indignant at Gregory's

innovations respecting simony and marriage, unanimously agreed that he should be no longer pope, and a document, abjuring their allegiance, was signed by all present, and afterwards by the bishops of Lombardy. Roland, a priest of Parma, undertook the perilous office of bearing the tidings to Rome.

It was now the second week in Lent, and a synod of more than a hundred prelates was assembled beneath the richly sculptured and gilded roof of the Lateran. Gregory sat at their head. The synod were expecting some mention to be made of the imperial defaulter, when the priest Roland presented himself before the throne of the pontiff. In a fierce and vehement tone he thus addressed the pope: "The king and the united bishops of Germany and Italy transmit to thee this command—'Descend without delay from the throne of St. Peter; abandon the usurped government of the Roman church; to such honours none must aspire without the choice of the people and the sanction of the emperor.'" Then, turning to the conclave, he said, "To you, brethren, it is commanded, that at the feast of Pentecost ye present yourselves before the king my master, to receive a pope and father from his hands. This pretended pastor is a ravenous wolf."

A moment's pause, and a loud cry of indignation rang through the crowded aisles. The courageous Roland hardly escaped with his life; but Gregory, in the midst of the tumult, remained calm and unmoved. Reading aloud

the letters from the emperor which Roland had brought, he then addressed the assembly, chiefly to caution them against undue haste. Before the synod broke up, however, the decisive blow was struck, and as Henry had abjured the pope, the pope now excommunicated Henry, pronouncing him henceforth interdicted from the enjoyment of the imperial throne, and absolving all Christians from their oaths and allegiance to one who was himself now bound by a solemn anathema in the name of the holy St. Peter. Thus was openly commenced that quarrel between the feudal and the papal sovereignties, between the secular and the spiritual dominions, which was destined to reverse the positions of pope and emperor, and to give the papacy a long and triumphant career of supreme domination in Europe.

So little, however, did Henry understand the momentous character of the crisis, that he did not address himself to its exigencies with a tithe of his natural energy. He was more affected at first by the dangers which now threatened him again from Saxony, and it was in seeking to avert these that his eyes were opened to the far greater perils that were gathering on the other side of the Alps.

Saxony was once more kindling into revolt, for Henry's hatred to the Saxon race had tempted him to break the promises he had made to respect their rights, and govern them with kindness and good will. Hoping to quell the rebellion before it attained much strength,

he summoned his vassals, and hastened with a small force across the Saxon frontier. But he had woefully underrated the urgency of the occasion. Whether sympathizing with their Saxon fellow-subjects, or awed by the interdict of the pope which hung black with mysterious terrors over Henry's head, from one cause or another his nobles fell away in rapid succession, and the emperor had the mortification to see his forces dwindling down as snow melts in the sunshine. The Saxons also flew to arms with one consent, and Henry was compelled to retreat in disappointment and shame.

Gregory's measures were not so ill-judged. Well knowing the disaffection that prevailed among the barons of the empire, especially in Saxony, he addressed to the prelates and princes a letter of advice, pointing out to them that this was the moment for electing a new sovereign. In this letter, after insisting that Henry, if still permitted to reign, must be brought to obedience to the church, that he might "henceforth think of the holy church, not as of a bond-maid subject to his will, but as of a mistress set over him," Gregory proceeds to advise that "if the king shall not be turned in his heart to God, let a person be selected for the government of the kingdom who shall pledge himself to observe all the points we have mentioned, as well for the maintenance of religion as for the weal of the empire."

Such counsel was welcome to the haughty and indignant princes, and they accordingly

assembled for conference at Tribur in the autumn of 1076. For seven days did their discussions continue; legates from Rome, bishops from Germany, and barons from the whole empire, but especially Saxony, all taking an eager and excited part. Henry himself was not present. Not daring to appear, he remained a few miles distant at Oppenheim, and thence sent repeated messages, inquiring the progress of the debate, and making humble propositions, which he trusted would conciliate his offended and too powerful vassals.

The legates of Gregory were men wisely chosen and well-trained for their task. With subtle arguments and eloquent appeals they overcame all the loyal scruples and hesitating fears which had weight with any of the nobles, and the council finally resolved that Henry's continuance in power should solely depend on his reconciliation to the head of the church. "If the sun should go down on him still an excommunicate person on the 23rd of February, 1077, his crown was to be transferred to another." Until then he was to dwell in unostentatious retirement at Spires.

Unwelcome as this sentence was, the development of the feudal system had now made the emperor so completely dependent on his nobles, that Henry had no choice but to submit. That system, which in its youth had given the emperor absolute dominion over the estates and lives of his vassals, in its maturity divided the power among a multitude of nobles, each a

petty sovereign, with whose collective might no emperor could contend, and whose several forces might be brought to combine against him almost as readily as for him. Reduced to this sad necessity, Henry endured with a chafing spirit his solitude, and the anxieties of suspense for two weary months ; but his impatient soul could bear it no longer, and seeing no other way of obtaining relief, he determined on a personal visit to the pope, to beseech the pardon and favour of the church.

It was the depth of winter, a winter of such extreme severity that the Rhine was frozen over from November to April, and the road to Italy was, in those days, a bare track, often winding through mountain passes, blocked up at this season with snow, and sometimes scaling the very ridges of the Alps, from which the snow never departs. But Henry's impetuosity could brook no delay. Retinue he had none, save one faithful friend, and his yet more faithful wife, who bore a babe in her bosom. His path lay through hostile regions, and he had to purchase a passage from their sovereigns by the sacrifice of vast estates. As he entered the defiles of the Alps, peasants preceded him, and cleared away the snow and ice, which accumulated so much upon the heights as to occasion both difficulty and danger. The descent was still worse. The whole mountain side was one vast sheet of ice, where hardly the chamois could find a footing. The emperor himself, on hands and knees, slowly and

painfully made his way from crag to crag. Not seldom the treacherous path failed them, and men were rolled headlong into the deep abysses of snow. The queen and her infant son were let down in the skins of slaughtered beasts, by means of ropes. And thus, amidst hardships which royalty rarely knows, the journey was accomplished, and the imperial pilgrim found himself early in January, 1077, on the Italian side of the Alps.

No sooner was it noised abroad that the emperor had arrived, than his Italian subjects hastened to give him welcome. In the north of Italy, Gregory's name was hated for the rigour of his enactments respecting the clergy, and it was hoped that the emperor's visit would put a stop to his daring encroachments. Now again, therefore, Henry was surrounded by zealous friends, who, if they dared not fight for him, would at least give him liberal entertainment. But no time was to be lost in festivities. The decisive day was rapidly approaching, when the empire would either be confirmed in his possession or become the prize of a long and bloody strife. Gregory was proceeding for that very purpose through Tuscany to Augsburg, where the diet was to be held that should define and settle the future relations of the emperors and the popes. Hearing of Henry's approach and of the general welcome he had received, Gregory retired to the castle of Canossa to await the arrival of his royal visitor. Canossa was the favourite residence of the

“great countess” Matilda, who had succeeded to the Tuscan duchy of her mother, Beatrice, and her father-in-law, duke Godfrey. Over the mind of this extraordinary woman the genius of Hildebrand had obtained a complete mastery, and her devotion to his interests was undoubtedly one of the principal causes of his great success. She was herself a scholar and a warrior, the most powerful princess of Italy, and the most faithful adherent of the papacy in all its diversified fortunes.

To Canossa Henry accordingly directed his steps, attended now by a train of Italian followers. Arrived before the fortress, he solicited an immediate audience, first of the countess Matilda, and then of the pontiff. By the first, his request was granted, but neither his own royal character nor the intercessions of Matilda could prevail on the stern Gregory to admit Henry to his presence. Message after message did the emperor despatch, expressed in the humblest tone, and offering the most ample atonement, but not for many days would Gregory listen to a syllable of his petition. Henry was just reduced to the verge of despair, and a longer delay might have driven him to indignation and defiance, when he received the announcement that he should obtain absolution on one condition alone—his delivering up into the hands of the pope, his crown, sceptre, and other symbols of royalty, and confessing himself unworthy to bear the name of king. These arrogant terms were not, however,

insisted on even by the audacious Hildebrand, and probably they would not have been complied with even by the abject and crest-fallen Henry ; but it was inexorably demanded that he should do penance in the castle-yard before he should receive the pardon of the pope.

It was towards the end of January, and winter had laid his icy hand on all the scene, when Henry, attired in the white woollen robe of a penitent, entered the gates of the fortress. His followers regarded him with strange and conflicting emotions, in which pity strove with ridicule, and contempt with anger. But whatever emotions filled the breast of Gregory, they were not expressed that day. The rising sun found Henry at his post, and the setting sun still left him there, faint with fatigue and hunger, and bursting with a vexation and wrath which he dared not express. A second day and a third witnessed a repetition of the same barbarities, and the sovereign of vast kingdoms servilely submitted to cruelties which the most despotic tyrant would now hesitate to inflict on the vilest malefactor ; and to crown all, it was at the hands of one who called himself the vicar of Christ, the chief representative on earth of the "meek and lowly" Jesus.

On the evening of the third day, Henry's fortitude was quite overcome, and taking refuge in an adjacent chapel, he there fell on his knees before the countess Matilda, and besought her, with sobs and tears, to intercede in his behalf. This time her entreaties prevailed, and Henry

was permitted to appear before the now triumphant and exulting pope. The gates of the castle were thrown open, and the royal penitent stood in the presence of the haughty Gregory, "from the terrible grace of whose countenance," we are told, "the eye of every beholder recoiled as from the lightning." The one was youthful, tall, and graceful; the other was aged, decrepid, and austere. It was the submission of the physical to the intellectual, and still more of the secular to the sacerdotal, that was then ratified for ages to come; and Henry and Gregory were fit types of the new era. Henry promised to submit to the pontiff's judgment respecting the imperial crown, and even to resign that crown if Gregory's decision should be adverse. He engaged to be guided by the pope's counsel in all his future acts; and to abstain, till his judgment should be given, from any use of his royal prerogative. Then, and not till then, did Gregory pronounce the absolution.

But even in this act of assumed clemency the pope discovered his resolution to trample on his fallen foe. Holding in his hands the consecrated wafer, "Behold," he exclaimed, fixing his fierce eye upon the jaded countenance of the emperor, "behold the body of the Lord! Be it this day the witness of my innocence. May the almighty God now free me from the suspicion of the guilt of which I have been accused by thee and thine, if I be really innocent! May he this day smite me with sudden

death if I be really guilty!" Looking up to heaven, he then broke and ate the bread. Turning again to Henry, he said, "If now thou also art conscious of innocence, and assured that the charges brought against thee are false, free the church from scandal and thyself from suspicion. Take, as an appeal to Heaven, this body of the Lord!" This challenge, Henry was of course unable to accept. He submitted in silence to the haughty speeches of the pope, meditating in his heart a swift and ample revenge. When, at length, the monarch retired from the presence of Gregory and quitted the castle of Canossa, he repaired to the camp of his Italian followers, who had now greatly multiplied, and who anxiously awaited the issue of the strange transactions that were taking place within the fortress. Sympathizing with the indignation of Henry, they also felt and expressed their contempt for the emperor himself, who ought, in their estimation, to have treated a pope with as little ceremony as his father had done at the council of Sutri. They either forgot or did not know how crippled Henry's German resources had become by numerous divisions; and that, in fact, a crisis had arrived in the history of the empire, which not even the genius of Henry III. could have longer delayed.

But if we may pity Henry, how strongly must we reprobate the conduct of the pope! Is this a bishop of the Christian church? Is this a disciple of Christ? Whatever may have

been the sincerity and the zeal of Gregory in the cause which he adopted, the unbounded arrogance he displayed is too clear a proof that of the spirit and genius of Christianity he knew absolutely nothing. In him the passions of the unrenewed heart were displayed in their most developed and even exaggerated forms. Yet this is the man whom Rome adores! Well has it been said, that Gregory VII. was the most complete and finished example of the spirit and nature of the papacy itself!

CHAPTER VI.

RENEWAL OF THE CONTEST BETWEEN GREGORY VII. AND HENRY IV.—GERMAN CIVIL WAR AND PAPAL USURPATIONS—DEATH OF GREGORY VII.

A.D. 1077—1085.

ANIMATED alike by the reproaches and the promises of his Italian subjects, the emperor resolved on swiftly avenging himself for the insolence of Gregory. For this purpose he immediately invested the castle of Canossa with armed troops. By the aid, however, of his faithful friend, the countess Matilda, the pontiff escaped from the hands of the besiegers, and retreated in safety to Rome. The time had now expired for the settlement of Henry's tenure of the imperial crown, and though he had received absolution, the sentence of deposition had not been revoked. Neither did the

nobles of Germany at all desire that it should be, for, assembling at Forcheim in March, 1077, they elected Rudolf of Suabia as emperor; and the legates of the pope not only acceded to the choice, but actually crowned Rudolf in the new cathedral of the city of Mentz.

When the news of this transaction was brought to Gregory, he cautiously refrained from adopting either side. He foresaw that a struggle must take place between Rudolf and Henry, and he determined that, issue as it might, the event should be subservient in some way to the interests of the Roman see. Recognising both the rivals as kings, he bade both to lay down their arms, and await his own arrival in Germany, when he would make a just decision. But this cautious line of conduct was perfectly unintelligible to Rudolf's partisans. It was at the instigation of Gregory himself that they had elected a new sovereign. The papal legates had ratified the choice by placing the crown on his head; and the followers of Rudolf, therefore, naturally expected the pontiff's counsel and aid in the struggle they had commenced, and the more so because Rudolf was in favour of those very measures which Gregory so zealously urged for the reformation and aggrandizement of the clergy. But though Gregory, doubtless, wished well to the cause of the revolted nobles, he also saw that its success was doubtful, so that if veracity and faithfulness commanded, ambition far more loudly forbade him to link his own fortunes

and those of the Roman church with the uncertain destiny of Rudolf.

That the pope had sagaciously discerned the signs of the times in this as in all other instances, was abundantly proved by the events of the following year. Upon Henry's return into Germany he found himself once more the object of popular regard. Whether from pity of their monarch's misfortunes, or a revived sentiment of loyalty, or a dislike to the pretensions of Rudolf, multitudes flocked to the standard of Henry, and the emperor soon saw in his camp the principal nobles and prelates of the empire, together with an army of twelve thousand men. The horrors of the civil war, thus meanly promoted by the pontiff, continued for several years without either Rudolf or Henry gaining any decided advantage. Rudolf was in the position of a revolter, who has influence enough to disturb remote provinces, but not strength to subvert the government; Henry in that of a sovereign, who can maintain his own regal title in the heart of his empire, but too weak to preserve his authority at its extreme limits. Both parties appealed to the pope, for both desired the aid which papal anathemas could then give to the basest cause, and Gregory leaned to the one side or the other exactly as policy required.

Whilst this conflict was going forward in Germany, Gregory spent the comparative leisure allowed him by the interval of suspense, in attending to the discipline of the clergy, and

in endeavouring to strengthen the influence of the Roman church in distant countries. It was at this time that the celebrated Berenger, arch-deacon of Tours, was brought before a council to answer for his heresy in denying the doctrine of transubstantiation. For nearly thirty years had Berenger zealously contended, in opposition to the orthodox creed of the Romanists, that the bread and wine used at the Lord's supper continued to be bread and wine after their consecration by the priest. But Berenger was far more of the schoolman than the Christian, and rather a theologian than a martyr for truth. As often as he was brought into peril for his really Scriptural doctrine his fortitude always gave way, and he recanted his "errors." On the present occasion, he stood before a judge who cared little about the matter, and whose private opinions rather favoured Berenger's views. Gregory's whole soul was absorbed in what appeared to him of much greater consequence than the disputes of polemics, the struggle between the priestly and the secular powers. Still it would not have been seemly for a pontiff to countenance heresy, and he therefore insisted, though with comparative forbearance of manner, on Berenger's renouncing as falsehood what both of them believed to be the truth. Berenger made a declaration, that he believed the bread and the wine, "through the mystery of prayer, and through the words of our Redeemer, to be converted into the true, proper, and life-giving body and

blood of Jesus Christ our Lord." This satisfied his bigoted persecutors, and he was then allowed to depart unmolested. To the end of his days, however, he continued to teach what he really believed, and to deny the doctrine which he here pretended to accept. Of such weight is compulsory confession!

Gregory also renewed his efforts to establish a uniform liturgy throughout the churches of the West. The Bohemians had hitherto used their native language, the Sclavonian, in all the services of religion. At Hildebrand's suggestion, Alexander II. had prohibited the practice, and now the regulation he had originated as cardinal, he enforced as supreme pontiff. And before the end of the eleventh century—long, very long before Gregory's influence had died away, the Latin liturgy was generally received among the churches that acknowledged the pope's authority.

But Gregory's success was not uniform. In attempting similar encroachments in England he met with a decided and stern rebuff. The great "Conqueror," who then wielded the sceptre, was not disposed to stoop even to the pope, and he finally resolved that the priesthood of his kingdom should be under his own exclusive control. When, therefore, Gregory sent a legate to demand of William the performance of homage for his kingdom, and payment of the tribute called "Peter's pence,"*

* "Peter's pence" was a tax invented by the popes, by which a penny was gathered from every house in those king-

he received the following irreverent reply :
 "Thy legate, Hubert, holy father, hath called on me in thy name, to take the oath of fealty to thee and thy successors, and to exert myself in enforcing the more regular payment of the duties paid of old by my predecessors to the church of Rome. The one request I have granted, the other I have refused. *Homage* to thee I have not, and I do not choose to do. I owe it not on my own account, nor do I find that it has been done by those before me. So much of the *money* in question as is collected Hubert will lay before thee, and that which we have yet to collect shall be sent thee at a convenient season."

The chagrin of the haughty Gregory at this epistle may be easily conceived. He expressed it by recalling his legate from England, and directing him not to regard the money, which, without the homage, was not worthy to be received.

But what he lost abroad he more than retrieved at home. The prompt and strenuous support which Gregory received from the "Great Countess" Matilda, was ample compensation for the lack of, at the best, the constrained assistance of distant and grumbling allies. She not only supplied soldiers and money, sympathy and counsel, but completed her life-long devotion to the Roman see, by transferring a large portion of her Tuscan domains which acknowledged papal supremacy. A capital method at once to secure allegiance and fill the "treasury of St. Peter!"

patrimony to Gregory and his successors for ever, and which still counts among the most valuable estates of "the church."

The year 1080 brought with it some important results in the conflict between the pope and the emperor. The partisans of Rudolf had gradually diminished, until it was evidently necessary to strike some decisive blow to save his cause from absolute ruin. Once more, therefore, messengers were despatched to Rome, who earnestly entreated that Gregory would no longer delay to avow himself the associate and patron of the king whom his own legates had crowned. This time their entreaties prevailed. It is not likely that the politic and unscrupulous Gregory would adopt a cause which he knew to be failing, and it is, therefore, probable that for once he was deceived by over-coloured statements of Rudolf's prospects. Summoning a council of prelates, and other dignified clergy, he laid before them Rudolf's petition, and then solemnly pronounced an anathema upon Henry, with a sentence of deposition from the imperial throne. "I give, grant, and concede," were the pontiff's arrogant terms, "that Rudolf may rule and defend the German empire. Upon all who adhere to him I pronounce the absolution of their sins, and bestow upon them blessings in this world, and in that which is to come."

The supposition that Gregory was misled by false reports, is confirmed by the excess of folly into which he was on this occasion betrayed; so gross was it in itself, and so totally unlike

his usual demeanour, that except it sprang from a decided misconception of Rudolf's position, we can only ascribe it to the imbecility of age. On the Sunday which followed the synod, he solemnly foretold from the altar, that Henry would either be dead or deposed ere three months had passed away; and so confident of this did Gregory feel, that he transmitted to Rudolf a golden diadem, bearing an inscription, which united in one sentence, as by a bond of amity, the names of the pontiff and the future emperor.

On the news reaching Henry that the pope had now openly declared war against him, he instantly took vigorous measures for self-defence. He was no longer a thoughtless boy. Calamity had done something to instruct him, though it seems also to have soured his temper. He now determined to meet Gregory's excommunication by counter anathemas, and resolved that the deposition of the emperor should be followed by as formal a deposition of the pope.

Guibert, archbishop of Ravenna, had long been at the head of the anti-papal party in the north of Italy. He and his associates still kept alive the dissensions in Milan, which began with Leo ix.'s prohibition of clerical marriages. Against Guibert, in particular, had Gregory levelled the bolts of excommunication and anathema; but supported by imperial favour, the archbishop still maintained his ground. To this man the emperor now turned, resolving to elevate him without delay to the papal

throne. A council of about thirty prelates, but with a large concourse of nobles, assembled for this purpose at Brixen in the Tyrol, and decreed that "the insolent Hildebrand" was to be forthwith degraded and dethroned, and that Guibert, under the title of Clement III., should occupy the vacant chair.

A few months were spent by Henry in preparing for a blow equally decisive against his rebellious vassal, the Saxon Rudolf. That chief had encamped with a considerable army on the banks of the Elster, with a marsh in the foreground to protect him from a sudden assault. On Henry's arriving at this point, he lost no time in compassing the marsh, and commencing the attack on the flanks of Rudolf's army. A furious battle ensued, in which the imperial forces were entirely defeated, and the monarch only saved himself by escaping across the river, in which many of his soldiers were drowned. But the victory of the Saxons was purchased at a cost that made it worse than a defeat. Rudolf himself was slain, and with his death ended all rivalry for the imperial crown.

The same sun that witnessed the battle of the Elster, beheld also a conflict in Italy between Henry's forces and those of the countess Matilda; and there, Matilda suffered as signal an overthrow as Henry himself had received in Germany. The pontiff was now driven to other quarters for aid, and he hastened to obtain it, for he well knew the emperor would lose no time in punishing his numerous offences.

Henry crossed the Alps early in the following spring, but the rude German warfare of that age did not permit him to capture so strongly fortified a place as Rome in the brief space of a modern siege. For three whole years he hovered about the banks of the Tiber or the Po, now seizing a fortress, now gaining a town, and now suffering a partial defeat. By this harassing process, however, the patience of the Italians was gradually worn out ; and in the year 1084 he sat down before the metropolis, with the hope of soon becoming its master.

During this interval of tedious suspense, the pontiff's behaviour was in no wise altered. He never condescended to make advances to the emperor, nor ever dreamed of a single concession. On the contrary, at the diminished synods which he could yet assemble within the walls, he repeatedly excommunicated Henry, with Guibert, his ally, and the whole mass of their partisans. So much firmness and constancy, even in a questionable cause, extort admiration from the most reluctant, and compel us to believe that, however arrogant and unjustifiable were his assumptions, he was at least sincere and earnest in the cause he had espoused. In March, 1084, the emperor effected an entrance, and the populace, wearied by Gregory's obstinate resistance, hailed the triumph of Henry as a deliverance rather than a disgrace. Gregory shut himself up in St. Angelo, and Henry at last enjoyed the greatest ambition of his life, in receiving the imperial diadem in

the church of St. Peter, and at the hands of Clement III., a pope of his own appointment.

Meanwhile, succour was approaching for the imprisoned Gregory. Robert Guiscard, whose life had been spent in camps, had at length found leisure to attend to his pontiff's petitions; and at the head of a powerful army, containing in its ranks a host of Saracens, was marching to the deliverance of Rome. Appalled at the tidings, Henry hastily departed for Germany, pretending that an absence of four years made his return a necessary duty. Left to take their own course, the Romans decided on shutting their gates against the terrible Normans, and defending their city as liege subjects of the empire. But to Guiscard's veteran troops, the capture of Rome was no such labour as it had proved to the Germans. He took it in a few days, and meeting with a stubborn resistance after his entrance, he gave license to his soldiers to plunder, burn, and slay without restraint. By this savage procedure, the fiercest passions were excited, and a horrible and bloody scene ensued. Gregory beheld with impotent dismay his own partisan and protector becoming the worst enemy of his cause.

When the carnage was over, and the Normans, having indulged to satiety their lust, avarice, and cruelty, had taken their departure, the pontiff found that instead of being revered as formerly, with a homage little short of what is due only to God, he was now regarded with universal disgust. The Romans attri-

buted to him their misfortunes and sufferings, and could scarcely tolerate his presence. The unhappy old man fled hastily to Salerno, and there, borne down by the weight of years, and heart-broken by the calamities of his old age, he expired on the twenty-fifth of May, 1085. His end was in perfect keeping with his life. He earnestly and repeatedly besought his friends to continue the policy he had begun. Being asked to absolve, ere he died, the multitude on whom he had pronounced the censures of the church, he sternly replied, "*With the exception* of Henry, styled the king, and of Guibert, the usurper, and of those who abet their designs, I absolve and bless all men who unfeignedly believe me to possess the power as the representative of St. Peter and St. Paul." His last words were significant of the mortified pride of his soul: "I have loved justice," he murmured, "and hated iniquity, and *therefore* I die in exile." And so he breathed out his spirit.

We must do Gregory the justice to remember that his ambition was devoid, as much as that passion can be, of all sordid selfishness. It was the aggrandizement of the church, and not of himself, that he sought. But when this abatement is made, it is sufficient to place the character of this greatest of the popes by the side of that of his Divine Master to convince us that the true spirit of Christianity had altogether passed from the system which now usurped its name.

CHAPTER VII.

IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS OF GREGORY VII.—URBAN COMMENCES THE CRUSADES.

A.D. 1085—1099.

THE years immediately following the death of Gregory were not filled with events of a momentous nature. The papal party had carried their efforts as far as the state of society would at present admit. They had indeed gained a decisive victory, but were not yet in a position to enjoy the advantages of their success. The victory was a moral one—one of opinion. They had won the world to approve of their object, and henceforward the emperor was looked on as far inferior to the pope. In truth, the imperial power was dwindled to a petty sovereignty, whilst the influence of the pontiff was felt in all the courts of Europe. By his legates, who were established at all of these courts, he made known his will, and so widely spread was the sway of the priesthood, so completely did it embrace all ranks in society, that few monarchs dared treat with contempt the advice of a papal legate.

As yet, however, the true state of public opinion, and the real might which the popes had acquired, was only partially discovered. The emperor continued for some years to contend against the growing evil, and a series of anti-popes disturbed Italy by the struggles which they carried on, when both Gregory and

Guibert were laid in their graves. VICTOR III., who followed Gregory, was a man of considerable learning, but his bookish habits adapted him far more for the cloisters of Monte Cassino, which he reluctantly left, than for a prominent position in public life. After his consecration, he hurried back to his convent in great trepidation, and Rome was left in the possession of Guibert and his partisans for nearly two years, at the end of which Victor died. In 1088, Otho, the bishop of Ostia, and a personal friend of the countess Matilda, succeeded to the papal throne by the title of URBAN II. He had been educated at Cluni, and afterwards trained for ecclesiastical life, under the superintendence of Gregory, and was both desirous and capable of prosecuting the plans of his instructor. The policy of Gregory, both within and without the church, was as vigorously pursued as the troubled state of the times would permit. At the council of Placenza, held in 1095, it was decreed that no ecclesiastic should receive any church dignity at the hands of a layman; that no prince should confer the investiture; that celibacy was binding on the priesthood; and that transubstantiation was the orthodox doctrine respecting the Lord's supper; decisions, all of them tending to the aggrandizement of the church, and the furtherance of papal domination.

The multitudes that now began to attend at the papal councils, sufficiently attest the growing influence of the priesthood over the popular

mind. The council of Placenza was so large that it could only be held in the open air ; and that of Clermont, which was summoned in the same year, numbered two hundred bishops, four thousand of the inferior clergy, and more than thirty thousand of all ranks of the laity. But the occasion which brought such multitudes together at the council of Clermont demonstrates yet more clearly that the twelfth century was to open a new era to the world, the triumph of a corrupted religion, and the reign over nearly all Europe, not so much of feudal monarchs as of popish priests. From the age of Leo the Great, the system of private confession to priests had tended much to increase the influence of that order, and as the morals of society degenerated during the "dark ages," and in the large commixture of barbarians with civilized nations, that influence greatly advanced ; for penances were appointed, of so painful a nature, and of such enormous magnitude, that for some crimes a whole life might be wearily worn away before the sin was expiated, according to the priestly code. Interrogating the penitent respecting his minutest secrets, the priest not only compelled him to account for his words, actions, and thoughts, but also prescribed the terms of his acceptance with God. To every sin some penance was allotted, which might last from forty days to seven years. So that the remark of a shrewd but sarcastic writer is obviously true, that "in those times of anarchy and vice, a *modest* sinner

might easily incur a debt of three hundred years."

Thus the penances of the longest life were far from adequate, and it was to meet this difficulty that the ingenious but unscriptural system of *indulgences* was invented. The poor might compound for their penances by severe bodily mortifications; the rich by the payment of fines. A year's penance was taxed to the former at three thousand lashes, and to the latter at four pounds sterling. But other means of commutation were employed; and military service in defence of the pope, or a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, was often preferred to a voluntary infliction of stripes. In the eleventh century, these pilgrimages had greatly multiplied; and a journey to Jerusalem was naturally held to be more efficacious than a visit to the shrine of any mere martyr or saint. The Christian turns away in mingled horror and disgust from the perverted notions of atonement that meet him at every step as he traverses this gloomy period, and blesses God that the blood of Christ alone has abundant power to cleanse him from all sin.

From such a pilgrimage there returned to Italy, in the year 1093, a man of singular character and eccentric appearance. He was popularly known by the name of Peter the Hermit. This pilgrim came bearing letters from the patriarch of Jerusalem, complaining of the grievous abuses which devout pilgrims endured at the hands of the new masters of

Syria, the Ottoman Turks. But Peter himself was a far more efficient pleader than the aged patriarch. With bare head and naked feet, his emaciated and haggard form clothed in a coarse garment, riding on an ass and holding in his hands a huge crucifix, he passed through the villages and cities, haranguing the people wherever they could be gathered together, and passionately imploring their immediate assistance in behalf of his afflicted brethren, and in defence of the sacred relics which had been sacrilegiously snatched from the Christian hands alone entitled to guard them.

At length, the orator found his way to the pope, and was received by Urban with the greatest possible respect. The times were undoubtedly favourable to Peter's enterprise, and indeed the design was by no means new. Sylvester II. had ardently wished to deliver the Holy Land from the yoke of the Saracens, and Urban's own patron and exemplar, Gregory, had very seriously entertained the thought of rescuing it from the far more oppressive dominion of the Turks. He had even made arrangements for the purpose, when he was compelled to set them aside, that he might contest more important matters with his domestic foe, the emperor. But the emperor was now fully engaged in maintaining his own crown against rebellious vassals; and in the generally disorganized state of society throughout Europe, the pupil of Gregory saw, as Gregory himself had formerly seen, a favourable opportunity for

uniting, under papal guidance, the conflicting nations, and for taking advantage of that reverence for the priesthood which pervaded western Europe, to make more imperious than ever the supremacy of the papal throne. The enterprise which Peter suggested was the very thing to accomplish these subtle purposes.

The warlike spirit was more developed in France than elsewhere, and indeed Germany was yet hostile to papal rule, so that Urban naturally turned to the former for aid in his great design. First sending Peter (himself a Frenchman) on his mission of arousing the passions of the people, the pontiff announced at the council of Placenza, that he would shortly hold another at Clermont, in the province of Auvergne, expressly to lay before the clergy and nobility of France the duty of undertaking a religious war. It was in 1095 that this "monster" council was convened. People flocked to it from all parts of France, and even Germany. So great was the multitude that they could not be sheltered within the limits of Clermont. The neighbouring towns and villages were filled with strangers, and the poorest were obliged to dwell in tents, or to sleep in the open air. The square used for the market was the place of meeting, and a platform was erected in the centre as a throne for the pontiff and his attendant prelates. Next to Urban sat Peter the Hermit, clad in his grotesque and uncouth garb, and expressing in his wan and meagre countenance the passions that devoured his soul.

Peter first harangued the assembly, and then the pope himself rose to address them, in terms somewhat less feverish, but still violently impassioned. The wrongs of the pilgrims, the outrages of the infidels, the sacredness of the holy sepulchre and all the adjacent region, the duty, merit, and honour of the enterprise, were all vividly and pathetically set forth; and then—most conclusive argument of all—a general absolution, *plenary indulgence* for all sins whatsoever, was offered by the pontiff to every volunteer in this heaven-appointed mission.

Urban ceased, but the voice of the crowds around him soon broke the silence. First in a murmur, and then in a shout swelling louder and louder, the cry arose, "God wills it!" "God wills it!" "God indeed wills it," responded the pontiff; "let this be your watchword and battle-cry; and let the cross, a red, a bloody cross, be the badge upon your shoulders, and the emblem on your shields and banners!" The effect of these pontifical appeals was quickly seen. Everywhere the warlike spirit of the age received a religious direction, and a stronger because a sacred impulse. Unholy, because "carnal" weapons, were made bare in defence of what was imagined to be the kingdom of Christ; a kingdom from which the Saviour had too clearly departed, when it resorted to such weapons for its defence.

The prospect of a full remission of all crimes by means of adventures so congenial to their taste, incited innumerable desperadoes to assume

the badge of the cross. Robbers, incendiaries, homicides, joined themselves by thousands to the ranks of the crusaders. Fanaticism and hypocrisy, lust and avarice, strangely urged their several votaries to pursue one path ; and all under the sacred, and now wofully profaned name of Christian zeal. Not a few also were tempted by the tyranny of their feudal lords to abandon certain slavery at home in search of freedom or a grave in foreign lands.

The pontiff was earnestly intreated to put himself at the head of this motley array ; but Urban wisely decided that his presence was required at home, and committed the charge of this first armament—which, ere it reached the walls of Jerusalem, had lost by fatigue, famine, and battle, more than a million of men, women, and children, and still numbered forty thousand fighting men—to Godfrey of Bouillon, the devout and valiant hero of Tasso's, "Jerusalem Delivered," and who, in the poet's eyes,

" ——— Burns with a holy zeal to chase
From Zion's wall the pagan's impious race :
Yet, while religious fires his breast inflame,
Despises worldly empire, wealth, and fame."

BOOK I. 61.

The short remainder of Urban's pontificate was employed in efforts to strengthen the relations of the papacy with the various princes of Italy, especially the Normans ; and in carrying out, by the decrees of successive councils, the plans of Gregory for the isolation and aggrandizement of the priesthood. The pontiff died

in the month of July, 1099, just as the crusaders under Godfrey were triumphantly breaking through the ramparts of Mount Zion.*

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH OF HENRY IV.—IMPERIAL RIGHT OF INVESTITURE
RELINQUISHED BY HENRY V.

A.D. 1099—1122.

THE renowned abbey of Cluni now gave another of its inmates, another of the disciples of Gregory, to the papal throne. This monk, named Rainer, assumed the title of PASCHAL II., and having very reluctantly consented to guide the affairs of the church in these troubled times, set himself as vigorously as his weak mind would allow, to carry out the designs of his great master. The spirit of Gregory thus lived and reigned at Rome for nearly half a century after his actual death.

The emperor Henry IV. still continued under the interdict which Gregory had pronounced, and his hostility to the papal claims was as vehement as ever. One of Paschal's first measures was to renew the sentence of excommunication against him, and he further decreed that the right of investiture should no more be exercised by any layman, including the emperor himself. This decree might have proved as harmless to Henry as the thunders of the

* See "The Crusades" in the present Series.

Vatican have often been, had not Paschal followed it up by as base an act as any that can be found in these sad annals of perfidy and crime. The young son of the emperor, prince Henry, had broken out into revolt against his aged father, although he had bound himself by a solemn oath that, on condition of succeeding to the crown at his father's death, he would be a peaceful and obedient son. Knowing the importance of papal aid in his treasonable attempt, the prince applied to the pope for the remission of his oath, cunningly promising to support all the church's rights; and Paschal, tempted by so dazzling a bait, released him from the obligation of his sacred and filial vow.

In vain did the emperor protest against the ingratitude of his son. Though still supported by many of the nobles, he was abandoned by the majority, and these went over to the prince, who thus commenced his rebellious career under the most shining auspices. Battles were fought without any decisive result, and a conference between the aged monarch and his graceless son was finally held at Coblenz. Struck to the heart at the sight of his ungrateful child, the emperor threw himself at his feet, exclaiming, "My son, my son! if I am to be punished by God for my crimes, at least stain not thine honour, for it is unseemly in a son to sit in judgment over his father's sins." The prince pretended contrition, but shortly afterwards caused his father to be seized and imprisoned at Bingen, where he was required by the arch-

bishops of Mentz and Cologne to give up the crown jewels. The grey-headed man, finding entreaties useless, placed on his person the jewels once worn by Charlemagne, and then appearing in state before the prelates, defied them to touch the ornaments worn by the ruler of the world. He was, nevertheless, cruelly stripped of the insignia of royalty, and eventually compelled to sign his abdication in favour of his son. So low did he fall in his last days, that he was ungratefully thrust from the door by the very minions whom he had formerly enriched, and was obliged to part with portions of his apparel to provide himself with necessary food. He closed his eventful career in 1106, and from his death-bed sent his sword and ring to his hard-hearted son in token of forgiveness. The vengeance of the papacy followed him even in the grave; his body was disinterred from the consecrated ground in which it had been laid by his friends, and not till 1111 was the interdict removed, and his remains suffered finally to repose in the Cathedral of Spire.

The pontiff gained nothing, however, by his base espousal of the cause of the rebellious prince. That prince, now Henry v., was more determined than his father to assert the imperial right of investiture with crozier and ring. He appointed several bishops, in due form, to vacant sees, and gave to an excommunicated monk the government of an important abbey. Such direct opposition to canonical law provoked all the ire of the Roman see, and new proscriptions

and louder threats were the immediate result. Henry scornfully smiled at these fulminations, and resolved to visit Rome with an army, and so settle the question by force.

In 1110, the emperor crossed the Alps with a formidable warlike array, for his popularity in Germany enabled him to command the assistance of many powerful vassals who had treated his father with contempt. The pope was alarmed at his approach, and began to think of conciliatory measures. At last, he decided on proposing such reasonable terms, that one is astonished they should ever have emanated from a pontifical head, and is convinced that they could not except from the influence of fear. Paschal proposed that the church should abandon all the endowments which the emperors had ever conferred from the days of Charlemagne, and that Henry should on his part relinquish all right of interference in the management of the church. To the emperor this proposal was agreeable enough, and he peacefully entered Rome to ratify the treaty, and then to receive the imperial crown at the hands of the pope. He reverentially kissed the feet of the pontiff at the threshold of the Vatican, and entered the church of St. Peter with him hand in hand. But here discussions arose that boded ill for the continuance of amity. The bishops were dissatisfied at the concessions of the pope, and the emperor would rather demand more than accept less. A dispute, a scuffle, and a battle, were the successive results. The

pope was stripped of his robes, bound with cords, and carried off in triumph to prison. The strife continued until the pavement of the church was drenched with the blood of the combatants.

In confinement, the wavering Paschal agreed under oath to all the emperor's demands, and Henry, having been hastily crowned in St. Peter's, left Rome, supposing the question of investiture to be finally settled. But the Italian bishops viewed the conduct of their leader with indignation, and in a council afterwards held, Paschal revoked all that he had conceded, and declared the grant extorted by Henry to be "null and void, because contrary to the will of the Holy Spirit and the authority of the canons." Of such force are papal promises and vows! But even this would hardly appease the wrath of the mortified priesthood. Provincial synods declared the concessions of the pope to be "wicked and detestable," and for some years it appeared quite uncertain if the unfortunate Paschal would retain his unenviable seat. Upon his return to Germany, the emperor found too much occupation at home, in quelling the revolts of his vassals, to attend immediately to transalpine affairs. But, in 1115, Matilda, the "Great Countess," died, leaving her Tuscan estates to the pope. Henry now, therefore, hastened into Italy, chiefly to secure possession of those lands for himself, regarding them as a fief of the empire, and partly to be re-crowned at Rome. Paschal fled before him, and the

ceremony of coronation was now more solemnly, but not so canonically performed by a Portuguese archbishop, who chanced to be in Rome—the only prelate who could be persuaded to accept the honour. On Henry's retirement from Rome, Paschal returned, but only just in time to breathe his last. He has been compared to Gregory, but they were alike only in their fortunes and their ambition. Gregory's genius overtopped that of the timorous Paschal by Alpine heights.

Fearful of delay, the papal party immediately elected a successor ; and John of Gaeta, a monk of Monte Cassino, ascended the throne of the church as GELASIUS II. The imperial party was, however, too strong even in Rome not to dispute the election, and by them, the Portuguese prelate who had crowned Henry, was proclaimed by the title of GREGORY VIII. For the present they succeeded, and drove Gelasius from Rome. After many wanderings and much suffering, this unhappy pontiff died in 1119. Grown more politic by experience, the indomitable disciples of Gregory now elected a prelate of great distinction, and nearly related to the emperor, but whose vehement advocacy of their tenets assured them of his constancy to their cause. Assuming the title of CALIXTUS II., the new pontiff began his career by pronouncing a sentence of excommunication upon the emperor, and stimulating the rebellious vassals of the empire to persevere in their revolt. Not till he had done this did he leave his archbishopric in

France, to take possession of his new and loftier honours. As he passed from city to city, he had convincing, and to him most gratifying evidence, that the tide of popular opinion had now fully turned in favour of papal independence. In every place, he was saluted by the applause of the people, while magistrates and nobles escorted him on his journey with more than royal state. At Rome, he was received in the same spirit, for the citizens of all ranks, wearied with domestic brawls, were hopeful that so distinguished a man would not only dignify his own seat, but bring peace and comfort to their distracted homes. The anti-pope of the imperial party, Gregory VIII., who had hitherto occupied the Vatican, and presided over the ecclesiastical affairs of at least one-half of Christendom, now fled hastily in despair. But he was quickly pursued, and when overtaken, was ignominiously brought back to Rome. He was seated on a camel with his face towards the tail, clothed in the skin of a newly-slain sheep, in mock imitation of the pontifical robes, and after parading the streets amid the insults of the mob and the triumph of his opponents, was immured in a convent for the rest of his life.

The emperor, Henry V., appears to have been fully aware of the growing strength of the papacy, and he accordingly made proposals for reconciliation, which Calixtus was too wise to reject. To ratify these proposals, the emperor met the pontiff's legates in the city of Worms in 1122. Great preparations were made for so

important an occasion. So extensive was the interest excited by the termination of a struggle that had caused so much dissension and bloodshed, that multitudes flocked to the city, and pavilions were erected for the interview on the plain between the city and the Rhine, where Charlemagne, in former days, had held the diets of the empire, and given laws alike to soldier, layman, and priest.

In the presence of this vast concourse, Henry signed a declaration that he renounced for ever from that day the imperial claims of supremacy over the church; "resigning to God, to his holy apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and to the holy Catholic church, all investiture by ring and crozier, and leaving to all churches the liberty of canonical election and free consecration." The legates, on behalf of the pope, signed a document, "granting to his beloved son, Henry, that the election of bishops and abbots should be made in the royal presence, and that the person elected might be admitted to the *civil* dignities of his office by the delivery of a *sceptre*, and for this might perform homage." The emperor was then formally absolved and released from the papal interdict, and the convention broke up, as we are told, amidst general rejoicings.

The very tone of this treaty is sufficient to indicate the altered relations now occupied by the principal parties concerned. It is the emperor who *resigns*, it is the pontiff who *grants*. And though concessions were appa-

rently made on both sides, it must be remembered that the emperor conceded what he had inherited from Charlemagne, but the pope only the most extravagant part of claims which had never been heard of till the last few years.

CHAPTER IX.

POPE AND ANTI-POPE—ABELARD AND ARNOLD OF BRESCIA
—ST. BERNARD AND THE SECOND CRUSADE.

A.D. 1122—1155.

POPE CALIXTUS II. died soon after the conclusion of these long-continued disputes, and was succeeded by HONORIUS II., whose short pontificate was much disturbed by the tumults of civil war, mainly excited by the Normans of the south, and which resulted in no addition to the power of the papacy, if its influence was not materially weakened. On the death of Honorius, in 1130, a furious contest once more commenced for the honours of the popedom.

One of the expedients devised by Hildebrand, and executed in the pontificate of Nicholas II., for the consolidation of papal power, was the limiting the right of election to the college of cardinals. But it was now to be shown that even the conclave could be divided against itself. One party elected the cardinal Gregory, under the title of INNOCENT II., while the rest supported the claims of Peter, the son of a Roman prince, who assumed the name of ANACLETUS II. And thus Rome was once more

favoured with a divided sovereignty in both church and state. Each of the popes found supporters abroad as well as at home. The Norman duke, Roger, took part with Anacletus, who, in return, crowned him at Palermo as king of Sicily and Apulia. The emperor Lothaire espoused the opposite side, and Innocent, fleeing from Italy, was received with pontifical honours at the imperial court, and recompensed the favour by crowning Lothaire as king of the Romans in the city of Liège. It was owing, however, to the influence of the famous St. Bernard, whose reputation was then rapidly rising in France, that Innocent proved so successful. The election of Anacletus was undoubtedly as legal as that of his rival, but Bernard, regarding Innocent as the better man, used his most strenuous exertions to have him acknowledged as pope. His efforts prevailed, first with the French king, and with a council of French prelates, convened at Etampes, and afterwards with Henry I., king of England, who was then on a visit to his estates in Normandy.

Anacletus, notwithstanding, maintained his position in Italy, and the emperor, partly to prove his sincerity in Innocent's cause, but still further incited by ambition, made repeated expeditions through that unhappy country, filling it with all the horrors of continual war. The death of Anacletus, in 1138, terminated the strife, and left Innocent in undisputed possession of the coveted prize; but a rivalry of such long endurance—a brace of popes, both

canonically chosen, both issuing bulls and conferring episcopal offices—would appear to damage rather seriously (if so weak a cause could suffer damage at all) the absurd pretence of direct apostolical succession. The only remarkable incidents in the brief remainder of Innocent's reign were the persecutions carried on against those two celebrated men, pioneers of the advancing spirit of inquiry, Abelard, and his pupil, Arnold of Brescia.

Romantic as were the events of Abelard's early life, they had not prevented his devoting himself with unconquerable ardour to the pursuit of learning. And when, afterwards, he commenced lecturing at St. Denis, the youth of France crowded around him, astonished at the boldness with which he handled doctrines which had hitherto been received with implicit credit, because sanctioned by the authority of the fathers. The vehemence with which he attacked the monastic orders for their licentious habits, had already aroused vindictive feelings in that class of the clergy, when his free expression of new opinions gave umbrage to that sedate portion of whom St. Bernard was the representative.

That remarkable man, whose piety was tainted by a narrow and fanatical spirit, openly accused Abelard of heretical teaching, and when challenged to a public disputation, considered he had advanced quite satisfactory evidence of the charge, when he had placed the doctrines of his opponent by the side of those of the Fathers.

The discrepancy, indeed, was apparent, although it was not quite so obvious to an impartial judge that truth necessarily inclined to the patristic side. But Abelard saw in this procedure the intention of Bernard against him. He was not to dispute, but to plead. And as if this indication of a resolution to crush him were not enough, he was called to plead before an assembly that was neither a fair nor a legal court of judgment. The influence of Bernard was plainly paramount, and fearing a summary sentence of condemnation, Abelard hastily arose and departed, exclaiming, "I appeal to the pope." But Bernard's authority was great also with the pontiff, and eventually Abelard thought it more safe to be reconciled to his powerful antagonist, and retire from public life. He entered the monastery of Cluni, and after three years of conventual solitude, mortification, and obedience, peacefully expired. Abelard's disciple, Arnold of Brescia, was not so easily silenced. His fiery spirit longed to propagate the truths which Abelard had taught. And Arnold had, moreover, gained a much truer insight than his master into the nature of the gospel. He not only exposed without fear the vices of the clergy, but he preached the necessity of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" as the only way of a sinner's acceptance, the only safe ground of hope. Baptism was nothing, the Lord's Supper was nothing, he truly said, without that living faith which unites the soul of man to Christ the

Son of God. Returning to France after a long absence, just at the time that Abelard was so hotly attacked, he instantly embraced the cause of his former teacher, and the zealous but bigoted Bernard, therefore, denounced him to pope Innocent as "Abelard's chief armour-bearer and herald." Arnold was obliged to flee, and found a refuge for the present amid the mountains of Switzerland in the city of Zurich.

In the midst of these exciting commotions, Innocent died, and was succeeded by CELESTINE II., whose pacific disposition promised to bring back quiet to the troubled times; but to the infinite regret of all who sighed for the return of peace, he died after a five months' reign.

Neither did LUCIUS II., who followed Celestine, restore harmony to society. Soon after this pontiff's accession, Arnold forsook his asylum in Switzerland, and boldly presenting himself in Rome, commenced a series of public and powerful assaults upon the corrupt lives of the priesthood. It is singular that in this point he and his great enemy, Bernard, were entirely at one. The language of both in denouncing the vices of the age was strong and even violent. But there were wide differences between them in other respects. Arnold's views were far more Scriptural, and therefore more heretical than Bernard's; and Bernard was zealous for all the papal institutions, whilst Arnold exclaimed against the institutions themselves as much as against their abuses. Arnold's eloquence was successful in arousing a spirit of revolt among

the Roman people against the usurpations of the priesthood. They resolved that the clergy should be restricted to their spiritual functions, and besought the emperor Conrad to come to Rome, and, by assuming the sovereignty of Italy, to restore the integrity of the empire. They concluded their letter to Conrad with these words, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to the priests the things that are the priests'; as Christ commanded, and as Peter paid tribute."

It was not likely that the proud priesthood of Rome would quietly submit while the power they had so painfully acquired was forcibly snatched from their hands. Pope Lucius gathered a body of armed men to quell the revolt which Arnold and his party had stirred up, and in one of the affrays that followed was himself struck upon the head by a stone, and died shortly afterwards from the effects of the blow.

To the now vacant chair, a friend and disciple of Bernard was next elevated by the unanimous choice of the conclave. He assumed the title of EUGENIUS III. ; and fearful of dwelling in Rome until the present excitement should have subsided, he immediately fled to Viterbo. Through the whole of his pontificate, the influence of Arnold continued to prevail with the Roman citizens, and thus Eugenius was seldom able to reside in the proper metropolis of his sec. This circumstance, however, did not hinder his being acknowledged as pope, or his

exercising the functions of his office. And as the abbot Bernard was a great favourite with Eugenius, the pontiff called him to his side, and was guided by his counsels in nearly all the public acts of his reign.

The disturbances of Italy were now destined to be forgotten for a time, in the overwhelming greatness of a calamity which affected all Christendom. News came from the Holy Land that the entire fruits of the first crusade were unhappily lost, and that a new expedition was indispensable to retrieve the honour of the cross, and to protect pilgrims in their visit to the sacred shrine of the Redeemer. The first crusaders, having captured Jerusalem, had established a sovereignty there, with a view of preserving to Christians the treasures they had won. But the enervating climate and intercourse of the east soon engendered a degenerate spirit, and the next generation wholly lost what it cost their fathers so much labour and bloodshed to gain. The city of Edessa had fallen into the hands of the Saracens, and thirty thousand Christians had perished before the walls, the remainder passing under the shameful yoke of an infidel bondage.

Roused by such woful tidings, the enthusiastic Bernard undertook to become the Hermit Peter of a second crusade. The pope engaged heartily in the cause, and only waited the co-operation of the Christian kings to bless their banners, and bestow, like Urban, a plenary absolution on all who risked their lives in so

sacred an expedition. By the enthusiasm and energy of Bernard, the princes of Europe were quickly incited to the task. Louis VII. of France, the abbot's own sovereign, was the first to give his consent. The independent dukes of Bohemia and Turin, and many nobles of less note on either side the Alps, followed his example ; and finally, the emperor Conrad reluctantly went with the stream, and marshalled an army of seventy thousand men for an adventure which his own strong intellect scarcely approved. The result of the enterprise was dolefully disastrous. Three hundred thousand men, with a large number of women of noble rank, who had formed themselves into an Amazonian phalanx to protect Eleanor, the queen of Louis, set forth on a journey through countries unable and unwilling to furnish them with food. Multitudes died of famine on the way, and when the wasted remains of this vast army arrived in Palestine, so dispirited were they by their fatigues, and so divided amongst themselves by petty jealousies, that they returned home as speedily as possible, without having struck one effectual blow.

Soon after this mortifying event, the pontiff, who had sanctioned the enterprise, died. Eugenius appears to have been a very sincere disciple of Bernard, and anxious, like him, to reform the manners of the clergy, and consolidate the papal power. But it was during his pontificate, and with his concurrence, that Bernard commenced his vehement declamations against the

sectaries, who now grew very numerous, and whose increase, however conducive to the interests of vital religion, was so opposed to Bernard's idea of the necessary unity of the visible church, that this well-meaning, and even great man, was too often hurried by his impetuous zeal to the very verge of persecution.

The successor of Eugenius was ANASTASIUS IV., whose short and turbulent reign is not worthy of much remark. His whole efforts were directed to gain and keep possession of the city of Rome, which still refused allegiance to the pontiffs in temporal things. By foreign aid, he succeeded in his object, and then at the end of a year left his seat and his quarrels to another. The heir to so undesirable an inheritance was this time an Englishman; the only Englishman who ever sat upon the throne of Rome. His original name was Nicholas Breakspeare, and his early manhood was passed in the abbey of St. Albans. By his intrepid spirit and winning address he had attracted the attention of pope Eugenius, who had made him his legate at the court of Denmark. Elevated to the papal throne in 1154, he assumed the title of ADRIAN IV., and resolutely prepared to hazard everything for the mastery of Rome, and the attainment of the other objects of papal ambition. Arnold of Brescia still governed the Roman citizens by his eloquent tongue. At his suggestion, they had elected a senate of fifty-six citizens for the management of their civil affairs, and while still acknowledging the pope as the

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head of the church, they declined to accept him as their king. But Adrian determined to effect by stratagem what he could not accomplish by force. Pretending entire satisfaction with the present arrangement, he confined himself for nearly a year to his ecclesiastical duties. But on a cardinal being either killed or wounded in some street affray, he promptly laid an interdict on the entire city; and attributing the unhappy occurrence to some of Arnold's associates, refused to withdraw the sentence until that powerful foe to papal domination, that advocate of popular freedom and of Scriptural religion, should be expelled with his whole party from the city.

CHAPTER X.

MARTYRDOM OF ARNOLD—ARROGANCE OF THE POPES
ADRIAN IV. AND ALEXANDER III.
A.D. 1155—1198.

AN interdict in Rome, at the very heart of the papal system, was an unprecedented event, and produced all the excitement and horror that Adrian desired. The suspension of priestly offices was deemed by the superstitious and priest-ridden Romans to be the very withdrawal of Divine grace, and the consignment of their souls to inevitable perdition. Alas! they had been sedulously kept ignorant of the great truth that the only *efficient* Priest is always accessible, and that whilst He alone is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God

by him," he also "ever liveth to make intercession for them." With cries and tears the terrified populace besieged the gates of the Vatican, and to gain at any price the pardon of the pope, they blindly consented to the sacrifice of their truest friend, the patriot and reformer Arnold. Then, and not till then, did Adrian relent; and then did the people of Rome expose the full depth of the moral degradation to which superstition had sunk them. For having first ungratefully banished their benefactor, they now flocked from every quarter to receive the blessing of their betrayer and their foe. The pope marched in procession through the streets of the city, and was everywhere greeted by the clamorous plaudits of his deluded victims.

The great Frederic Barbarossa had now succeeded to the imperial throne. By prompt and energetic coercion, he had chastised, and for the present subdued, the fast multiplying revolts among the vassals of the empire, and was in direct march for Italy, intending to bestow similar favours on his undutiful liegemen in Lombardy. Hoping to find sympathy for their misfortunes and for their cause in so noble and patriotic a spirit as Barbarossa's, the partisans of Arnold met the emperor on his journey, and appealed to him for aid, telling him that their efforts were inspired by the remembrance of the ancient Roman name. But Barbarossa was too thorough a German to feel sympathy even with a patriotic Italian party.

"Ancient Rome," he contemptuously replied, "and ancient Roman virtue no longer dwell with you, her perfidious and effeminate children, but with us, her hardy and true-hearted sons!"

One object of Barbarossa's in this expedition to Italy, was to receive the crown of the empire at the hands of the pope. And to so petty an ambition, wholly unworthy of so great a soul as Frederic's, the magnanimous Arnold was doomed to fall a victim. The pope represented to the emperor that Arnold was the chief promoter of sedition within the papal domains; and to afford Adrian a moment's malignant pleasure, the monarch consented to the death of a man who might have become his most efficient ally against pontifical aggressions. Arnold was sought out, and when dragged from his place of retreat, was ruthlessly

"Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday,"
after the approved papal fashion of an *auto da fé*.

Surrounded by the very men whom he had liberated from political thralldom, and whom he had incited by his eloquence to seek also religious freedom, the noble reformer and patriot was burned to death within sight of the city which he had constitutionally governed for the last ten years. And that the fickle Romans might not afterwards worship as a saint and a martyr the man whom they now abandoned to his fate, Adrian took the truly priest-like precaution of scattering his ashes on the waves of

the Tiber. It might be said of Arnold, as it has been of Wycliffe, whose ashes were treated with similar contempt, that he thus became the heritage and property of every nation whose shores are washed by the tides of the sea.

Between the proud emperor and the yet prouder pope, a contest almost immediately ensued, each claiming more homage than the other was disposed to concede. It had already become a custom for sovereigns who visited the pope to hold his stirrup when he mounted his horse. This token of submission was demanded by Adrian before he would consent to place the crown on the head of Barbarossa. For two days, Frederic resisted the demand, but at length reluctantly yielded. He held the stirrup as Adrian placed his foot in it, and then received the pontifical kiss of peace, and was crowned in due form. This dispute is a slight indication of the state of feeling subsisting between the emperor and the pope. From the days of Gregory VII. and Henry IV. the struggle for absolute supremacy had never ceased; nor had the treaty of Calixtus II. with Henry V. diminished the jealousy which seemed hereditary in these rival powers. In the time of Barbarossa and Adrian, these animosities gave rise to factions; the independent barons, counts, and margraves, ranging themselves under the Guelfic or Ghibbeline banners, as their predilections directed them, or more frequently according to the favour they regarded themselves as receiving from the emperor or from

the pope. The papal party was called Guelfic, from the ducal family of the Guelfs, who had taken up the old Saxon quarrel against the emperor, and were therefore generally found in alliance with the pope, and the imperial party styled themselves Ghibbelines, because this was the name of the last and most considerable possession added to the imperial estates. Henceforth the names of Guelf and Ghibbeline will occupy an important place in the history of the popes.

ALEXANDER III. was the immediate successor of Adrian ; but as it was known, from his character, that he would strenuously uphold, like his predecessor, the privileges of the church, the imperialists elected another pontiff, by the title of Victor III. Alexander was compelled to seek refuge in France, and there most of his long pontificate was passed. It was the firm determination of the emperor Frederic to control the growing spirit of insubordination against imperial rule, whether he discovered it among his vassals in Germany, or in the pope himself. Many years were spent in the prosecution of this object, and Italy was visited by four hostile armies under the warlike emperor's command. For a long time, the policy of Frederic kept the family of the Guelfs in close and friendly alliance. They marched under his standards, and fought by his side. But in his fourth Italian expedition Barbarossa was taken ill at Chiavenna. Taking advantage of his illness, Henry the Lion, the principal chieftain of the

Guelfic house, approached the couch on which the emperor was lying, and announced his intention of abandoning the imperial cause, except upon conditions which it would have been disgraceful for Frederic to have granted. In vain did the emperor represent the danger to himself of so great a secession, and even, falling upon the ground, embrace the knees of the cruel Guelf. Henry withdrew with all his forces, and from that period the cause of the pope and of the Guelf was one and the same. One spirit of enmity to the emperor was a sufficient bond of union. In this predicament the emperor sought a reconciliation with the pope. An interview took place between them at Venice, in 1177; and it is related, that when the emperor kissed the feet of the pontiff, the pope placed his feet on the bold warrior's neck, apostrophizing himself in the language of Scripture, "Thou shalt tread upon the adder and the lion!" whereupon the emperor indignantly replied, "Not unto thee, but unto St. Peter be this honour!"

It is conclusive evidence of the strong hold which the priesthood had now gained on the minds of men, that Alexander, though an exile from Rome, should have been able to contend even against sovereigns with absolute success. To Henry II. of England he displayed the same spirit of arrogance as he had shown to Barbarossa. Henry had discarded the hypocritical and impudent Thomas à Becket from one of the numerous offices which he held, and had

taken measures for repressing the crimes of the priesthood, which filled every mouth with scandal. For these just and honourable proceedings à Becket had the audacity to excommunicate the king, and denounce against him all those fierce maledictions which Rome only has the effrontery to forge and fulminate. The king's indignant partisans shortly afterwards murdered à Becket whilst he stood at the altar of his church, in all the grandeur of sacerdotal array. The crime was imputed to Henry, and the pope Alexander was about to lay the entire kingdom under interdict, when his wrath was appeased by messengers, who promised, on behalf of the English monarch, the most entire submission to the papal law.

It was this pontiff also who first gratified the pride of the Roman clergy, by parading the streets of Rome, having his horse led by two powerful monarchs, Henry of England, and Louis of France, who reverently held the bridle whilst the pope rode to his habitation; exhibiting a spectacle which, though the priests pronounced it "most grateful to God, to angels, and to men," will be regarded by most men as offensive to God and degrading to humanity. The vain arrogance of Alexander III. was, however, in some measure redeemed by his zeal for the promotion of learning. When, towards the close of his reign, he found himself firmly established on his seat, and could safely dwell in Rome, he sought out and rewarded men of a studious disposition, and took considerable

pains to advance the intellectual culture of the Italian priesthood. Yet it was he who sanctioned the persecution of Peter Waldo, the Lyonese reformer; and his persecution was chiefly instigated by Waldo's having caused the sacred Scriptures to be translated into French. So instinctively fearful is the Romish owl of the clear daylight of gospel truth; so completely does the spirit of caste tend to pervert even a cultivated mind; and that of priestly caste in particular, to extinguish the very feelings of humanity, and to silence the most audible dictates of the judgment and the conscience.

The names of LUCIUS III., URBAN III., GREGORY VIII., CLEMENT III., and CELESTINE III., which rapidly follow one another, are little else than names in the records of history. The periods during which they successively swayed the sceptral crosier of Rome was altogether only sixteen years, and was chiefly distinguished by another crusading expedition, in which Frederic Barbarossa led the way, and lost his life in attempting to ford a swollen stream; and in which also Richard Cœur de Lion, of England, performed those romantic exploits which have made his memory so famous and lasting. Celestine III., however, gave a striking proof of the increasing arrogance of the papacy which deserves recording. According to custom, the pope was performing the ceremony of coronation for the emperor, Henry VI., with all the usual solemnities. On the monarch's bending

his knee before the pope, the proud priest rudely kicked off the crown which he had just placed on the emperor's head, to show that he could with equal ease confer crowns and take them away : an instance of audacity to which history hardly furnishes a single parallel. To such a perfect contradiction had the popes arrived of the example of Him whom they pretended to represent, and who emphatically said, "Learn of me; for I am *meek and lowly* in heart!"

CHAPTER XI.

DOMINATION OF THE PAPACY UNDER INNOCENT III.

A.D. 1198—1216.

WE have now entered on the "noon-day" of papal power, which may be regarded as extending over the thirteenth century, or with more exactness from the reign of Innocent III. to that of Boniface VIII.

INNOCENT III. was elected by the unanimous voice of the cardinals, in 1198, and his pontificate lasted for eighteen years. So great was the ability, and so remarkable was the success of this pontiff, that no name in papal annals demands so high a place, with the exception of that of Innocent's great prototype, Gregory VII. Between Gregory and Innocent there was much in common, both in character and career, but the apparent achievements of the latter as far surpassed those of the former, as the effects of

the builder's toil are more obvious than those of the architect. For it was Innocent's aim to carry out to completion the designs of his great predecessor, and for doing this he had more signal advantages. Both of them, indeed, had full play for their genius during the minority of an emperor, but Gregory mounted the papal throne in old age, while Innocent commenced his pontifical reign in the very prime and vigour of manhood, having only just attained his thirty-seventh year.

Innocent evidently entered on his task with a settled resolution to make the papal authority paramount and supreme both over the clergy of the whole church, and over the monarchs of the world. His was no ordinary ambition. It was the exact image as it was the progeny of Hildebrand's. His first object was to direct the strong religious, or rather superstitious feeling of the age, in channels that would render it subservient to papal domination. He, therefore, denounced the censures of the church upon heretics on the one hand, and against infidel Turks, on the other. The spirits of persecution and fanaticism were invoked to aid the popedom in enslaving mankind. Six trusty ecclesiastics were despatched to the south of France to ascertain the precise tenets and character of the sectaries that abounded there as well as in the valleys of Piedmont. From this odious employment of spying into private affairs, and the most secret opinions, these priests received the name of *Inquisitors*, a word

which has since become justly infamous in papal history. They found that a people had resided in those districts for many generations, in all probability for centuries, who, without formally separating themselves from the Romish church, had perseveringly testified against her growing corruptions. Whence they originally sprang was a mystery to all, though the tongue of slander had not failed to report a connexion between their creed, and that of the ancient Manicheans. The single point of resemblance, however, was in the severe morality of their lives. Paulicians, Catharists, (or Puritans,) Albigenses, and Waldenses, were only a few of the names by which these sectaries were known. They met in the night time, with closed doors, and in a chamber lighted by lamps. They devoutly studied the Scriptures, and sought the Divine blessing in extemporaneous prayer. If a novice were introduced to the society, the members gathered round him in a circle, when the president, or pastor, holding a copy of the Gospels in his hand, first addressed him with fit exhortations, and then gave him the fraternal kiss. Each member afterwards saluted the novice in turn, who was then affectionately commended to God, and formally received as a brother. With these simple rites of worship they united a genuine Christian spirit, so that even their bitter enemy, the abbot Bernard, had confessed that they were excellent members of society. Some of them, doubtless, held errors of a comparatively harmless kind, but

the only marvel is, that in so dark and corrupt an age, a community could be anywhere found whose creed and practice were so exempt from blame. Their zeal in perusing the Scriptures was their talisman of safety. But these reformers, admirable as they were, could effect little or nothing openly to stem the wide-rolling tide of iniquity. Living in isolated companies, and belonging almost wholly to the poorer class, their contempt for masses and images, fastings, and penances, and other superstitions of the church, only roused against them the vindictive malice and powerful persecutions of a worldly priesthood. The pope was resolved on wholly exterminating a race who were secretly undermining the very foundations of the papal structure.

To give colour to the dark design he called it a *Crusade*, and promised to all nobles and princes who would take arms in the cause, for only forty days, seats of honour in paradise, and the full remission of their sins. "We exhort you," said this bull of Innocent's, "to destroy the wicked heresy of the Albigenses, and do this with *more rigour* than you would use towards the Saracens themselves. Persecute them with a strong hand, deprive them of house and land, and put true Roman Catholics in their places."

With a cruel exactness were these fierce orders obeyed. Animated by the hope alike of temporal and eternal gain, multitudes of fanatics rushed to the field of rapine and blood. The cities in which Albigenses were known to

reside were devoted to destruction. Beziers, Carcasson, and a number of other places were taken by storm, and the inhabitants put to the sword, without distinction of sex, or age, or rank. The forty days appointed were found far too brief a space for the direful work. The "crusade" lasted indeed as long as Albigenses or heretics of any name could be discovered in France. No fewer than a million of lives are said to have been sacrificed, and thousands who escaped the sword, were compelled to flee from the homes of their childhood, and endure the horrors of poverty, with perhaps new forms of persecution in a foreign land. By this inhuman persecution of the followers of Christ, Rome gave additional proof that she bore the mark of Antichrist, being—"drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."*

From the heretics, pope Innocent turned to the infidels. His powerful mind was not slow to perceive the immense impulse which was given by crusading expeditions to the growth of superstition, and the vast influence thus accruing to the priesthood. Several crusades were accordingly undertaken by his instigation and aid. Indeed, every year of his pontificate witnessed a new emigration of fanatical adventurers, who hoped to purchase salvation by imperilling their lives in defence of the sepulchre and the cross. The popes never wanted a fit agent to serve as an incendiary for this

* Rev. xvii. 6.

object, and in the person of a repentant debauchee named Fulk, Innocent III. found a preacher of sufficient enthusiasm and energy to rouse the too torpid passions of the people. Imitating Peter and Bernard, this man traversed the cities of Italy, France, and Germany, and succeeded in engaging in the cause many of the second-rate princes, with vast masses of the lower orders. But just as the armament was on the point of receiving the pope's blessing, and starting on its career, certain Greeks arrived in Italy, as delegates from the Greek emperor, entreating that the force might be employed in the first place, to rescue him from a dungeon into which he had been thrust by the treason and cruelty of a brother. Count Baldwin of Flanders, who had assumed the office of general to the crusaders, received the delegates with much favour ; for his objects were plunder and military fame, quite as much as the honour of the cross. The offers of the Greek emperor were moreover very alluring, for he pledged himself to support the crusading army and fleet for a whole year, and to reward them in addition with a gift of two hundred thousand silver marks. In a few days the entire expedition had embarked for Constantinople.

On hearing of its altered destination, the pontiff was overcome with vexation and rage. In the height of his anger, he placed the whole crusade under excommunication, and forbade any other to join so impious a band. Reckless, however, of his rage, the crusaders continued

stedfast in their purpose, and after taking Constantinople, remained in the east of Europe for two years without one contest with the Mohammedan foe. The tale of this Greek war is a lamentable recital of cruelties, barbarism, bloodshed, and lust. The splendid architectural relics of the Roman empire were heedlessly defaced or destroyed, or at the least carried off as a part of the spoil. The tomb of the famed Justinian was broken open, and even his body stripped of its royal attire. The four bronze horses that now adorn the square of St. Mark in Venice, were part of the booty of this war, and whilst the Italians plundered Constantinople of its wealth to enrich their own cities, the less polished crusaders from France broke statues of the finest marble into atoms, and melted down into money or utensils of base use, the precious colossal bronzes that had been saved from the wreck of ancient Rome, and preserved in the new metropolis. But the atrocities of this war, although exercised against art, against humanity, even against his own interdict, were all mitigated in the eyes of the pontiff, by the amount of wealth and influence which it conferred on Italy, and chiefly on himself. His excommunication was soon withdrawn, and even his blessing solemnly pronounced. The real purpose of the expedition, however, had been entirely thwarted, and the crusaders of the Fifth Crusade returned to their homes richer rather than holier in the esteem of that superstitious generation.

In the year 1212, the crusading mania had probably reached its height, and it was then that the almost incredible "Crusade of the Children" took place. Two hypocritical priests, in league, it is said, with the Saracens, preached throughout France that the Holy City would only be given by God into the innocent hands of young children. Whether Innocent III. encouraged the wild design is not recorded, but he certainly applauded the enthusiasm which it kindled. "These children," said he, "are a reproach to us of riper age. While they hurry to the defence of Palestine, we are asleep." And if to be surpassed in the race of fanaticism can be a reproach, he spoke undeniable truth, for these beardless warriors flocked in crowds from all parts of France, and both banks of the Rhine. A boy of Cologne, named Nicholas, undertook the leadership of seven thousand, and led them across the Alps to the walls of Genoa, when so many had perished by fatigue and hunger, that the remainder were persuaded to settle in that city, or else return to their homes. But the fate of another army, amounting to about thirty thousand children, of both sexes, was much more calamitous and doleful. Two Marseillaise merchants, engaged by the wretched priests who had stirred up this strange enthusiasm, inveigled the youthful multitude to embark in ships which they had prepared for the purpose, and which steered, as soon as under weigh, not for the shores of Palestine, but to the coast of

Africa. Some of these vessels were wrecked by a tempest, and the whole of their passengers were drowned ; but others reached the place of destination, and in accordance with the original design for which they had been entrapped, the poor children, many of whom were of noble blood, were sold into perpetual slavery to the exulting Saracens. The disastrous results of these various enterprises had not yet, however, shaken the confidence of men in the goodness of the cause ; and so greatly had they contributed to swell the authority of the popes in foreign lands, as well as to enrich their treasury, that Innocent III. now dared to assume supreme dominion over all countries whatsoever ; and though former pontiffs had perhaps been equally arrogant in their pretensions, none had so successfully maintained them.

About the same time that Innocent ascended the papal throne, the imperial crown had passed to Frederic II., the infant grandson of the great Barbarossa. But neither was the young emperor able to assert his title, nor was the pontiff inclined to wage war in his defence ; so that for the present Germany was embroiled in civil war by the contests of two pretenders, who sought and obtained, by turns, the countenance and sanction of the pope. In 1215, Frederic, whose early life had been spent in Italy, under the guardianship of Innocent, was invited by his German subjects to assume the imperial crown ; and with the pope's reluctant assent, he crossed the Alps for that purpose. His

right was still disputed, and thus the divided state of Germany, combined with the regard which Frederic personally felt for his guardian, caused the war-cry of Guelf and Ghibbeline to be unheard during Innocent's life-time, and left him unassailed by the hereditary and most powerful foe of papal pretensions. Enjoying such singular advantages, Innocent well knew how to turn them to account. Almost immediately on assuming the tiara he had declared, with especial reference to sovereigns, that "it was not fit that any man should be invested with authority who did not serve and obey the holy see." On another occasion he asserted, that "as the sun and the moon are placed in the firmament, the greater as the light of the day, and the lesser of the night, so are there two powers in the church, the *pontifical*, which, as having the charge of souls, is the greater; and the *royal*, which is the lesser, and to which only the bodies of men are entrusted." One of the earliest examples he gave of his resolution to enforce these lofty pretensions was his interference with the marriage of Philippe Auguste, the king of France. That monarch, for some unknown cause, had divorced his wife, a Danish princess. The act had received the express permission of pope Celestine III., but, nevertheless, Innocent revoked the license, and insisted on the king's restoring the queen to her conjugal rights. Philippe naturally demurred to this imperious judgment, but he was soon brought to terms by the imposition of a terrible

interdict. All the rites of religion were suspended — marriages were unsolemnized — the dead remained unburied. The French king was no coward, but he found it most compatible with prudence to bend before the storm, and he complied with the papal mandate.

Whilst he sturdily contended for mastery with the chief potentate of Europe, this haughty pope was condescending and patronising to those of inferior note. Three vassal lords had made themselves wholly independent of their feudal chiefs, and on these the pontiff graciously conferred the title and insignia of royalty. These princes of pontifical manufacture were Premislaus, duke of Bohemia, John, duke of Bulgaria and Wallachia, and Peter II., of Aragon. But the most despotic act of Innocent's whole pontificate was, undoubtedly, his claim of fealty from king John, the weak and wicked monarch of England. John's effeminacy had already excited the ambitious hopes of the French king, who looked with hungry eyes on the English estates in Normandy; and his cruelty had sown broad-cast the seeds of rebellion amongst his baronial vassals, when his pride brought him into collision with the subtle and determined pope. The archbishopric of Canterbury had become vacant, and John had nominated one of his favourites to the see, and sent him to Rome to receive the pontiff's confirmation of the gift. But Innocent chose to elevate another to the post, and Stephen Langton, the object of his choice, was obediently recog-

nised by the Canterbury chapter as the canonically-appointed archbishop. The king's wrath was unbounded. He immediately despatched an armed band to drive the monks from their home, and expel them from the land. Entering the cloisters with drawn swords, these knights exclaimed, "Begone, you traitors, or we will set fire to these walls, and burn you and your convent together." All that were not too infirm fled into Flanders, and their effects were confiscated to the crown. For this outrage, pope Innocent determined to receive the most ample compensation. He threatened to lay the kingdom under interdict if John persisted in refusing his demands. The interdict was in fact imposed, and it continued a whole year without reducing the king to submission.

The deadliest thunderbolt of all was then hurled from the papal arsenal. In 1213, Innocent pronounced sentence of deposition on John, and formally handed over his kingdom to Philippe, the French king, with the promise of full remission of his sins, if he should succeed by the valour of his arms in rescuing the British islands from the infidel hands of their sovereign. Philippe hardly needed any other incentive than what his own ambition supplied, and he soon raised a considerable army to invade the English shores. But now John's obstinate spirit discovered its innate cowardice, and he earnestly craved a reconciliation with the pope. A legate, named Pandulph, was accordingly sent, and by him a treaty was drawn up, and a

public ceremony contrived, as creditable to his own astuteness, as they were both degrading to the honour of the English king. The scene of papal triumph took place in the church of the Templars, at Dover. There John, surrounded by his nobles, bent humbly on his knees before the legate, and took the same oath of fealty to the pope as vassals always took to their lords. He then placed in Pandulph's hands a charter, by which he surrendered to the pontiff the kingdoms of England and Ireland, and engaged to hold them for ever as fiefs of the Holy See. He further promised an annual tribute of a thousand silver marks. As a token of his sincerity, he then placed the royal crown in the legate's hands, together with a sum of money. Pandulph contemptuously trampled the gold beneath his feet, and after retaining the diadem for a few minutes, returned it with an air of condescension. Great was the rejoicing of the priesthood at this scene, so humiliating to all temporal sovereigns, and so glorious, as they esteemed it, to their spiritual head.

This was one of the last, as it was certainly one of the greatest, of the proud Innocent's triumphs. He died in 1216. In this brief account of his life, it has been necessary to omit many, and to touch lightly upon the events of his remarkable career. His efforts were not much less laborious or successful to control the priesthood and bring them under complete subjection to the pope, than to curb the pride and power of monarchs and nobles.

It was Innocent who imposed the first tax upon ecclesiastics, which received the name of the *Saladin tax*, because it was levied under pretence of furnishing the means for a great crusade, when that renowned warrior, Saladin, held Jerusalem under his power. It was Innocent who first dared to set aside the bishop elected by a chapter for a nominee of his own, as in the case of Stephen Langton. It was Innocent who first dispensed with canonical usages in cases of marriage and divorce, superseding them by special rules of his own. And it was Innocent who first authorized the digestion of all former papal bulls and letters, receipts and synodal decrees, into a regular code, which henceforth was known by the name of the *Canon Law*. So that from the days of Innocent III. we must date the most prosperous period of papal Rome, and the establishment of that wide-spread tyranny by which the papacy has kept in base thralldom the intellects and the souls of men.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MENDICANT ORDERS: ST. DOMINIC AND ST. FRANCIS—
PAPAL POMP—GUELF AND Ghibbeline.

A.D. 1216—1254.

INNOCENT'S sun had gone down in glory, and the radiance gilded the rising of his successor, HONORIUS III. In the last months of his life, Innocent had convened a general assembly of the clergy, and the Fourth Lateran Council was

so magnificently attended, as to attest the universal homage or fear which was felt towards the pontiff. All the principal monarchs of Europe were represented there; and many of the inferior princes attended in person. The patriarch of Constantinople, for the first time since the schism, joined his brethren of the west, brought, however, much more by the policy of his sovereign than by a spirit of reconciliation; the patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem were also present, with more than four hundred bishops and eight hundred abbots and priors; and of the inferior clergy, such a multitude that they could not possibly be numbered. By this assembly, the doctrine of transubstantiation was for the first time authoritatively fixed as the orthodox doctrine of the church; and every subordinate question being settled, a decree was ordained that all Europe should once more hasten to the rescue of the Holy Land, and a sixth crusade be forthwith commenced.

Honorius announced, the very day following his election, that the death of Innocent would by no means affect the plans of the pontifical government. He accordingly gave orders for the crusade to be immediately preached throughout Germany, Hungary, and the adjacent countries. A cardinal, Robert de Courçon, accepted the post of inflaming the minds of the people, and though far inferior to Bernard in genius, and to Peter the Hermit in enthusiasm, he met with considerable success in France, Austria, and

Hungary. Women and children, the old, the blind, and lame, as well as warriors of stalwart frame, flocked to his standard, while the wealthy contributed money, and Philippe Auguste gave the fortieth part of his entire annual revenue. The crusaders had now learned by experience, that a voyage to Palestine was less perilous than a march, and as soon as the vast multitude could be embarked, they set sail for Cyprus, and then for Ptolemais, the modern St. Jean d'Acre. In 1220, the emperor Frederic II. having seated himself firmly on his throne, resolved on visiting Italy, and receiving in ancient form the papal coronation. Honorius, however, exhibited great reluctance to comply with Frederic's desire. The emperor, he thought, was too independent and ambitious, and he jealously wished to guard against his becoming more powerful. But on Frederic's engaging to favour the cause of the crusades, and even to raise an army for the purpose in his German dominions, Honorius yielded, and the emperor had the satisfaction of being crowned in the metropolis of Christendom. His promise respecting the crusade Frederic faithfully kept, but the result was disappointing, if not to himself at least to the pope, for the army he had gathered was destroyed by a raging pestilence, before the troops had found time to quit their native land.

But by far the most important event of this pontificate was the establishment of the Mendicant orders, or the begging friars of St. Dominic

and St. Francis. This institution appears to have originated in some spirit of reform. The clergy's wealth and depravity caused them, of course, to neglect their spiritual functions. Man cannot be without the forms of religion; and the purpose of the founders of these new orders was to supply to the people the rites of religion which their professed pastors neglected to minister. By the fierce Dominic, (who was one of the six inquisitors appointed by Innocent III.,) and by the enthusiastic, but almost insane Francis, the corruptness of the clergy and the monks was deemed the sole cause of the irreligion of the times. They, therefore, established with the pope's permission, new orders of monks, to whom it should be expressly forbidden to accumulate property, and whose whole livelihood was to depend on the alms of the faithful. The begging friars soon became, indeed, as corrupt as the rest, but while this shows the great mistake in judgment committed by Dominic and Francis, it does not impeach their motives. The virtue of courage in preaching their doctrines these men undoubtedly possessed. Impelled by a hardly rational zeal, Francis went on a mission to the Mussulmans of Egypt, and gaining access to the presence of the Soldan, exhorted that fierce tyrant to become a Christian. His death was occasioned by his severe self-mortification, and after his death, five wounds were found on his body, which he had himself inflicted in imitation of the wounds left by the nails of the cross on

the person of our Saviour. Of Dominic also, Dante says, that he was devoted to Christ's service by his mother.

“She was inspired to name him of his Owner,
Whose he was wholly ; and so called him Dominic.
The loving minion of the Christian faith,
The hallowed wrestler, gentle to his own,
And to his enemies terrible. * * *
Forth on his great apostleship he fared,
Like torrent bursting from a lofty vein ;
And dashing 'gainst the stocks of heresy,
Smote fiercest where resistance was most stout.”

Par. cant. xii.

The new order of preachers soon became popular. Their attire was mean, and a cord encircled their waist to denote the subjection in which they kept their bodies. Travelling from place to place, they preached in the public streets, and administered the communion from a portable altar. Their denunciations of the secular clergy made their sermons the more palatable to the people, who, blinded as they were by superstition, could not escape seeing the ridiculous opposition between the professions and the practice of their priests. In a few years, the begging friars were welcomed to every hearth, and whilst the parish churches were well nigh deserted, crowds hung on the lips of these rude instructors.

GREGORY IX. succeeded Honorius in 1227. He was a relation of Innocent III., and inherited all that pontiff's pride. In an account, given by a contemporary, of the life of this pope, there is a description of the pomp and ceremonial of his inauguration, that well illustrates the degree of grandeur and state assumed by the

"Sovereign Pontiffs" of the thirteenth century. After robing himself in the pallium and other robes of his office, he said mass at St. Peter's, and then marched at the head of a long train of prelates to the palace of the Lateran, all glittering with gold and jewels. On the following Easter Sunday, he celebrated mass at Santa Maria Maggiore, and returned with a crown on his head. On Monday, having said mass at St. Peter's, he assumed a double crown, mounted a richly caparisoned horse, and surrounded by the cardinals in their purple vestments, paraded the city. The streets were spread with rich tapestry, brocaded with gold and silver, the most gorgeous productions of the Indian and Egyptian looms, and so highly scented as to perfume the air. The people chanted hymns, and their songs were accompanied by the sound of trumpets. The judges and officers shone in gilded robes and silken caps. A countless multitude in procession carried palm branches and flowers, and the Greeks and Jews celebrated the pope's praise, each in his own tongue. On one side of his horse, and holding his bridle, walked the Senator of Rome; on the other side, the Prefect discharged the same office. And thus was he conducted to the palace of the Lateran.

Between this pope and the emperor Frederic II. there was perpetual enmity. Soon after his accession, the pontiff urged Frederic to fulfil his promise of aiding in the crusades. The emperor renewed his promise, but was prevented from

speedy action by an attack of illness. Not improbably, also, he was adverse to the task. The hasty pope, discrediting the story of his illness, anathematized him as a traitor to the church. The emperor felt it no longer needful to dissemble that hatred to the papacy which he had always secretly cherished. "This bloodsucker," said he, "deceives with her honied words. She sends her ambassadors, wolves in sheeps' clothing, to every land, not to sow the word of God, but to fetter liberty, to disturb peace, and to extort gold." And to give sensible effect to his animosity, he caused his emissaries to stir up such a sedition in Rome that Gregory was obliged to flee. The papal historians retaliate on the German monarch for his hard words about the pope, by charging him with tyrannical cruelty, and even with such barbarity as putting his captives to death by inclosing them in leaden shrouds, in which they were horribly burned. Even Dante gives currency to this story. Describing the Hypocrites who are groaning out their never-ending sufferings in the sixth chasm of hell, he says,

"Cloaks had they on— * * * *
 Outside, with dazzling gold they glitter'd bright,
 Inside, with pond'rous lead were they so lin'd
 That Frederic's cloaks compared to them were light."
 Infern. cant. xxiii.

But Dante revered the papacy whilst he hated the popes.

In 1228, the emperor performed his promise, and a large expedition of Germans set sail for Egypt, which had become the chief point of

attack with crusaders, as being the head-quarters of Saracenic strength. Gregory had now an opportunity of discovering if the rescue of the Holy Land were really so dear to his soul as he ostentatiously professed. Had he been sincere, he would doubtless have released the emperor from the excommunication he had pronounced. But so fierce was his personal hostility to Frederic, that he now actually repeated the sentence, and included the whole army that had followed him to the east. He further sent messages to the patriarch of Jerusalem not to hold communion with the anathematized emperor. And although Frederic succeeded in his enterprise, and triumphantly placed the crown of Jerusalem on his own head, the only rewards which the pope's servile vassals would bestow on their deliverer were ungrateful insults, and intrigues against his life.

During the emperor's absence, Italy was distracted by continual conflicts between his adherents and those of the pope. The cities of Northern Italy now began to range themselves under the hostile banners. Milan was inhabited by Guelfs, Pisa by Ghibbelines, and many of the cities, like Florence, were divided against themselves. In such places the rancour of party strife was exasperated by personal animosity. On Frederic's return from the east, his veteran soldiers poured down the Alps into Lombardy, and quickly established his preeminence in the north and south. The city of Rome itself was closely invested by the imperial

forces, when Gregory died, in 1241, at the advanced age of ninety.

CELESTINE IV. died within a few days of his election, and was followed by the cardinal Sinibaldo, who was chosen by the cardinals in the hope of conciliating the emperor, because he had formerly been his friend. Sinibaldo assumed the title of INNOCENT IV. The very name which he selected, however, seemed to indicate a spirit of enmity to imperial rule; and when Frederic was congratulated on the choice that had been made, he shook his head, and observed, "Instead of remaining my friend, he will become my enemy. No pope can be a Ghibbeline." Nor was the emperor deceived. Innocent soon showed himself his most implacable foe, for escaping to Lyons, he there summoned his cardinals around him, and renewed the anathemas pronounced upon the emperor by Gregory in yet severer terms. The assembled prelates turned their torches and candles towards the ground and extinguished them, whilst Innocent exclaimed, "So may the emperor's glory and prosperity vanish for ever!" It was at this council of Lyons that the pope first conferred the red habit on the cardinals, as a sign that it was ever their duty to shed their blood in defence of the church.

At this council, also, Innocent solemnly pronounced Frederic to be deposed from his throne, and another was nominated in his place. But this farce produced no other effect than that of

involving Italy and Germany in quarrels and bloodshed during the whole life of the reigning emperor. Frederic continued to be acknowledged by all the sovereigns of Europe, and when the news was brought him of the pope's extreme sentence, he scornfully bade all his crowns to be placed before him, and then exclaimed, "I still possess them all, and no pope shall deprive me of them."

The pope's hostility was, however, sufficiently potent to add vehemence to the strife between Guelf and Ghibbeline; and Frederic's life was worn out in the fatigues and reverses of a military life, until death ended his earthly troubles in 1250. When Innocent received the welcome tidings of the emperor's death, his joy knew no bounds. "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad," were his words to the clergy of Sicily, "for the tempest and the thunder which have so long threatened your heads are changed by the death of that man into refreshing breezes and fertilizing dews."

The death of Frederic had removed the chief obstacle to Innocent's ambition. He forthwith prepared to bring into subjection the whole south of Italy; nor did he cease until he had seized upon Naples, and compelled Manfred, the son of Frederic, and the real heir to the throne, to lead his horse by the bridle as he crossed the Garigliano. But this pontiff's aspiring course was cut short by death in 1254, and he expired in the well-grounded conviction that

he died the most powerful prince who had ever filled "the throne of St. Peter."

CHAPTER XIII.

POLITICAL AMBITION OF THE PAPACY—THE POPE RANEEED
AMONG EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNS.

A.D. 1254—1281.

IT is evident that the main object of papal cupidity had quite changed since the days of Gregory VII. It was his chief aim to free the church from the domination of a secular power; and he and his immediate successors were not unwilling to sacrifice mere temporal estates in order to gain this paramount end. Their object was to establish the spiritual supremacy of the pope. But the crusades had fully accomplished this end; and the quarrels of Innocent IV. were the fruits not of spiritual, but of temporal ambition. It was no longer the *church* of Rome, but the *court* of Rome that sought to establish and increase its dominion. And with such a perfect disregard of all Christian or even moral obligations did Innocent pursue this end, that the expressions of the sultan of Egypt in reply to a letter of Innocent's seem fully justified: "We have received your epistle, and listened to your envoy. He has spoken to us of Jesus Christ, *whom we know better than you know, and whom we honour more than you honour!*" Surely the ostentatious "vicar of Christ upon

earth" must have blushed as he perused this rebuke of the Mussulman chief!

ALEXANDER IV., the next occupant of the papal throne, was a man of like disposition with Innocent, but without his abilities. His whole pontificate was a scene of turbulence. The Lombard cities had been for some years persecuted by Eccelino, a powerful noble of the Ghibbeline party. The atrocious cruelties of this tyrant rendered his name a byword in Italy for many generations. The citizens of Rome had sought to protect themselves from such usurpations, which now began to grow common with the overgrown baronial chieftains, by committing the government of their city to a noble of another city, (not being able to trust their own,) who was styled, *Senator of Rome*, and inherited the powers which had formerly been vested in the senate. The senator at the time was Brancalone, a virtuous Bolognese noble, who was so resolute in the enforcement of order, that he rased to the ground no fewer than one hundred and forty citadels within the walls of Rome, which were occupied by ringleaders of sedition. He even exercised his authority against the pontiff himself, by compelling him to dwell quietly within the proper limits of his see. It was thus that in the ambition of the feudal lords, and the still more aspiring spirit of the popes, those factions originated in northern Italy which paved the way for the fall of the numerous free republics that had preserved their liberties, under nominal

subjection to the emperor, for several centuries. But the chief transaction of Alexander's pontificate was his attempt to repeat the subjugation of Naples and Sicily to the papal yoke. To effect this, he waged war almost incessantly with Manfred, the reigning prince, but was eventually defeated by that noble's courage and warlike skill. On the whole, Alexander added nothing to the power or the dignity of the papal office, whilst the corruptness of the clergy steadily increased. He died in 1257.

The rapidly growing power of Manfred greatly alarmed the Guelfic party, and led them to look to France for succour. Louis ix., now the king of that country, was so devoted to the interests of the church, that he has been canonized as a saint, and it was not unreasonable to expect that so faithful an auxiliary would render efficient help in the present emergency. It was probably with a view of increasing the sympathy of France for the prosperity of the papal power that the patriarch of Jerusalem, a Frenchman by birth, was now elected to the pontifical dignity. The new pontiff, URBAN IV., well understanding the grounds of his elevation, commenced his reign by undisguised acts of hostility towards the quarter from which danger was apprehended. He first of all summoned Manfred of Naples to appear before his tribunal, to answer for the many crimes with which he stood charged. Upon Manfred's refusal, the pope next excommunicated him, and then wrote to the French

court, desiring assistance to compel "this usurper" to descend from the throne. To make the temptation irresistible, he solemnly pronounced sentence of deposition on Manfred, and conferred the crown upon Charles of Anjou, brother of the French king, on condition of his undertaking the expedition. On this palpably unjust and unwarrantable procedure of the pontiff's, did the house of Anjou base their claim to the Neapolitan crown ; and in defence of such a shadowy title was Italy tormented by many French invasions, and repeatedly deluged with the blood of her bravest sons.

But while Charles of Anjou was making preparations for the invasion of Naples, pope Urban died. Yet, that the plans of his pontificate might be steadily followed up, the conclave elected another Frenchman in his room, who assumed the title of CLEMENT IV. Soon after the new election, Charles of Anjou entered Italy, and on passing through Rome was cordially welcomed by the pontiff, who crowned him in St. Peter's as king of the Sicilies. The question between Charles and Manfred was decided a few weeks later at the battle of Grandella, near Benevento, when Manfred defended his cause with the noblest valour, but finding the day going against him, threw himself at last despairingly into the thickest of the fray, and quickly fell, covered with wounds. Charles, with the bigotry and cruelty characteristic of his nature, refused the dead warrior an honourable burial, on the pretence of heresy ;

but his humaner soldiers, touched by the gallantry and beauty of their fallen foe, cast each of them a stone upon his body, which was, by this means, buried beneath a hillock, still known by the natives as The Rock of Roses. The cold-hearted pope, however, sternly bade the bishop of Cosenza to exhume the body, because it was laid in church land; and so Dante makes the shade of Manfred exclaim—

“ Cosenza’s shepherd, by pope Clement sent
 To hunt me down,—had he but read aright
 The Holy Scriptures, for his guidance lent,
 My bones had still their former bed possess’d,
 Near Benevento, at the bridge’s head;
 And, guarded by the mound, had been at rest.”
 Purg. cant. iii.

In the wars which Charles was obliged to wage perpetually, in order to retain possession of his ill-gotten territory, he received constant aid from Clement iv., who has left behind him a disgraceful reputation for worldly ambition and wanton cruelty. His last act was one of his worst; it was to countenance the Neapolitan king in his sanguinary treatment of the emperor Conradin, Barbarossa’s last descendant, who was captured when asserting in battle his right to the crown of the Sicilies. He was dragged by his bloodthirsty victor to the market-place of Naples, and there beheaded on a scaffold as a traitor to the realm. Conradin was so youthful that his fate excited the pity of even the French soldiers who had taken him; and when the touching cry escaped him—“ Oh, my mother, how dreadful is the grief that

awaits thee for my fate!" a shout of indignation arose from the crowd of spectators. But the tyrant's vindictive spirit was not to be mollified, and the emperor's wife, sister, and children, with nearly all the Ghibbelines that could be seized, shared his unhappy fate. It may be hoped that the statement is true, that Clement felt so much remorse for the part he had borne in this outrageous crime, that his end was greatly hastened by sorrow.

Thus terminated the long struggle between the popes and the emperors, which, commenced by Hildebrand and Henry iv., had continued, with scarcely an intermission, for more than two centuries. The pope had gained a complete victory. Aided much by that devotion to papal authority which the crusades had generally diffused, but much more by the intestine divisions of the empire, arising naturally from the feudal system, the pontiffs had at length triumphantly succeeded in trampling under foot the successors of Charlemagne. Henceforth Germany was no longer united under a single head. "Emperors," indeed, there were, but the empire had ceased to exist, and the German rulers became mere puppets of the pope. To avert the danger of one prince in Germany rising to predominant power, these princes all consented to accept the pontiff's nominee, and style him emperor, that so no real monarch might control or thwart them in following their own ambitious aims.

By the death of Clement iv., a vacancy was

created not easily supplied. The mutual jealousy of the conclave, every member of which now aspired to the tiara, occasioned a contest which lasted for nearly three years ; but at length, in 1272, they agreed to elect Theobald, a native of Placenza, who assumed the title of GREGORY X. The new pontiff had recently returned from the Holy Land, indeed, at the time of his election he was yet absent, and he so deeply sympathized with the oppression endured by the Christian inhabitants of that country, that his first effort was to excite once more a crusade in their defence. His earnestness in the cause alone gave him success, for the motives of the popes in stirring up a crusading spirit now began to be better understood, so clearly had these expeditions brought advantage and emolument only to them. But Gregory's evident sincerity attached some value to arguments intrinsically worthless. His impassioned appeals to the European monarchs prevailed, and the kings of France, England, Aragon, and Sicily, agreed to engage in the enterprise. A more active, because a more interested ally, was Rudolf, the new emperor, who offered to command the expedition. Rudolf, although only a petty count and mere military adventurer, had been raised to the imperial throne by the mutual consent of the pope and the barons of Germany, partly because of his warlike habits, which insured his sturdy opposition to the ambition of other German princes, and partly because, as

a hearty Guelf, he was a safe instrument for the pope. He had agreed, if elected, to yield unconditional obedience to the Roman see, to renounce all claim upon Italy, and to enter into alliance with the house of Anjou. And that he might further be deprived of any pretext for a visit to Rome, Gregory hastened in person to Lausanne, and there, receiving the rich prize of an emperor's homage, bestowed upon him the far cheaper benedictions of the church.

During Gregory's pontificate, a council was held in the city of Lyons, in which the pope's first object was to forward his projected crusade. He also enacted various decrees for regulating the election of bishops, for the management of the lower ranks of the clergy, and for checking the growth of the mendicant orders, which already began to display an unruly and turbulent spirit. But the most remarkable decree of this council was that for the proper election of popes, by which it was ordained that the cardinals should be shut up in one chamber, which they were not to leave until their choice was finally made. If in three days they had not arrived at a decision, their food was to be limited to a single dish at each meal, and, after the fifteenth day, they were to receive nothing but bread, wine, and water. These regulations have continued, with but slight modifications, to the present day, and have proved so efficacious, that for seven hundred years there have been few instances of a long disputed election.

In returning from this council, Gregory passed through the cities of Tuscany, and anxious that no domestic dissensions should interfere with his darling project of uniting all parties in another crusade, he spared no pains to harmonize the fierce strifes between Guelfs and Ghibbelines, which in every part of northern Italy grew more intensely bitter, now that the unquestionable triumph of the pope caused them to assume a local rather than a political character. In this good design, however, he met with but indifferent success. The passions which had been constantly fed with fresh fuel for successive generations, were not to be quenched in a day. Florence feigned submission, and then immediately renewed its quarrels, for which the indignant pontiff laid it under an interdict. But Gregory himself gave a singular proof soon afterwards of the levity with which the papal censures were now employed. Being compelled to cross the Arno by the bridge of Florence, he restored his benediction to the city while he travelled through it, and excommunicated it again as soon as he had passed the gates; "because," says the historian, "it was not decent for a pope to pass through a city under interdict." The preparations for Gregory's crusade were all complete, but "before one galley had departed, or, perhaps, one soldier embarked," the pontiff fell sick and died. "From that moment," says Sismondi, "the kings into whom he had inspired his enthusiasm renounced their

chivalrous projects; the Greeks returned to their schisms, and the Catholics, divided afresh, turned against each other those arms which they had consecrated to the deliverance of Palestine."

INNOCENT V. succeeded Gregory, but died immediately after his consecration. ADRIAN V., his successor, died before that ceremony could be performed; and JOHN XXI., who followed next, was killed about three months after his election by the falling in of the roof of his apartment.

NICHOLAS III. is, therefore, the next pontiff of whose life we have anything to record. He ascended the throne in 1277, and, short as was his reign, proved, by his consummate artifice and policy, that he was well qualified for a post which was now become notorious for the grasping ambition and unscrupulous craftiness of its occupants. The tyrant of Naples, Charles of Anjou, had been promoted to that crown in the hope of his continuing a staunch defender of the church. The same expectation had led to his being appointed vicar-general of the Roman see. But the unbounded rapaciousness of that prince developed itself anew as new opportunities arose, and he now laid claim to the government of Tuscany and Lombardy, as protector of the estates belonging to the church. Nicholas, however, with the most refined diplomacy, played off the emperor Rudolf against Charles, and then Charles against the emperor. He incited Rudolf to

threaten an invasion of Italy, to recover to *imperial* rule the ancient fiefs of the empire on the south of the Alps, taking care to make him first of all promise to restore to the church all the lands which had been bequeathed to her from the days of Constantine the Great to those of the countess Matilda. Then, whilst the Neapolitan king trembled at the threatened vengeance, the wily pontiff engaged to avert it on condition of Charles's renouncing his claims upon any part of Italy lying north of the boundaries of Naples. It was, therefore, by this cunning and fraudulent procedure that the popes became enrolled among the sovereigns of Europe; for, until the time of Nicholas III., the pontiff had always been in the anomalous position of a titular monarch without a fixed territory—of a ruler without any defined population of subjects whom he might indisputably claim to rule.

The brief reign of Nicholas III. thus becomes an important epoch in the history of the papacy. It lasted hardly three years, but he contrived in so short a period to place the popedom on that lofty eminence to which it had always aspired; and, at the same time, and by the same step, to prepare the way for its future decline. For no sooner had the pope taken his place among ordinary sovereigns, than he began to lose that moral power which he had formerly exercised over all who professed the Christian faith. Christ's sole vicar upon earth, and the great head of the universal church, gradually

sank in general esteem, till he came to be regarded as merely the second-rate sovereign of a petty Italian state.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PAPACY CULMINATES AND DECLINES UNDER
BONIFACE VIII.

A.D. 1281—1303.

To Nicholas succeeded MARTIN IV., whose pontificate is made revoltingly memorable by the tragical event known in history as the "Sicilian Vespers." The cruelty of Charles of Anjou had provoked amongst the Sicilians a spirit of deadly revenge, which broke out at last in the most awful of all forms. On the evening of Easter Monday, 1282, while the citizens of Palermo were moving in procession to hear the vesper service, a young maiden of rank and beauty was insulted by one of Charles's French soldiers. The Sicilians seized the moment of excitement to avenge themselves for all former provocations. While the vesper bell was yet tolling, a massacre of the French began, which did not cease in Palermo till every Frenchman had been slaughtered; and spreading from that city to the rest of the island, included among its victims no fewer than eight thousand, before the demon of revenge was satiated with blood. Of Martin himself it is enough to know that he was a confederate and ally of the execrable

Charles, and that he bore such inveterate enmity to the German nation, that he did not hesitate to say openly that "he wished Germany were a pond full of fish, and he a pike, that he might swallow them all!" Such was now the spirit of the men who still blasphemously dared to call themselves "Christ's vicars upon earth." O sacred name of the meek and lowly Jesus, how hast thou been abused!

HONORIUS IV. and NICHOLAS IV. were neither of them extraordinary men, nor did their pontificates produce any very remarkable events. The one reigned only three, and the other but four years; for the popedom had now become so rich a prize that old age and decrepitude were regarded by the conclave as the most desirable qualifications for the post. None but the most aged were elected, with a view of shortly renewing the election. CELESTINE V., however, who wore the tiara during the year 1294, is worthy of some notice, not, indeed, for the events of his brief reign, but for the singularity of his character. The cardinals had been for some time divided respecting the choice of a successor to Nicholas IV., when one of their number announced that Peter, the hermit of Murrone, had received a solemn revelation from heaven, whilst bowing at midnight before the altar, announcing that some awful calamity would happen unless their election was made within the four following months. The mention of the hermit's name introduced a discussion of his character. His austerity

and self-denying manner of life, his numerous virtues, and his fame for miraculous powers, were all recounted. At length, notwithstanding the mocking sneers of Benedict of Gaeta, the cardinals resolved that no better pontiff could be found than Pietro da Murrone. The deputation who waited upon him abandoned their steeds at the town of Sulmone, and commenced on foot their ascent of the mountain Murrone, on the side of which the hermit's solitary abode was fixed. The path was rugged, the scene desolate and bleak. The embassy found Peter in his cell, a natural cave in the hill-side, and not being allowed to enter, communicated their business through an iron-latticed window. The old man listened in astonishment. His wan and furrowed countenance flushed strangely at the news, and his emaciated frame trembled violently, and at last sank upon the flooring of his cave. After spending a few moments in prayer, he replied, "I accept the pontificate; I dare not resist the will of God, or be wanting to the church in her necessity." He then hastened to quit his cell, and shortly afterwards descended the lonely mountain where he had dwelt so many years, riding on an ass, the bridle being held by two princes, the kings of Sicily and Hungary. Arrived at Rome, he was greeted by the conclave, and assumed the title of CELESTINE V.

But this transition from a cell to a palace, from solitude to the active business of the pontificate, was too sudden and too vast a change

for Celestine's intellect to bear. Naturally of weak understanding, wholly uncultivated by study, and as simple as a child in the manners of the world, he became the butt of Roman ridicule, instead of an object of veneration and homage. His simplicity tempted and rewarded deception, and he was guilty of the most extraordinary errors in the discharge of his easiest duties. Under the subtle influence of the Sicilian king, he took up his abode at Naples in preference to Rome, and it was a natural complaint of the Romans that he should prefer being entertained as a guest to reigning as a monarch. And when, at length, at Charles of Anjou's request, Celestine added seven Frenchmen at once to the college of cardinals, the murmurs of the priesthood could no longer be restrained, and they gave open expression to their displeasure. To Celestine himself the honours of the popedom had been only a grievous burden, and its business an irksome task. He sighed for the quiet solitude of his hermitage, and even had a cell constructed in the midst of his palace, whither he might occasionally retire for meditation and prayer; so that he was quite prepared for the suggestion of the cardinal Benedict of Gaeta, that he had better resign a post for which he was so obviously unfitted. With far greater joy did he relinquish the tiara than he had felt in assuming it, and after only five months of power he quitted the papal throne, to spend the remainder of his days in his beloved solitude.

But grateful, as the resignation of Celestine was to the cardinals, it was regarded as shameful by all who thought the spiritual duties of the popedom of more consequence than its temporal advantages, and its honour of greater moment than its emoluments. Dante has indignantly placed the recreant Celestine in his imaginary hell amongst the spirits who, stung by wasps and hornets, are condemned to follow for ever, in giddy whirl, the movements of an incessantly revolving flag—

“* * * * * When some of these I recognis’d, I saw
And knew the shade of *him*, who to base fear
Yielding, abjur’d his high estate.”

Infern. cant. iii.

The persuasions of Benedict of Gaeta had not been disinterested. In fact, he had only removed Celestine to make way for himself, and he now ascended the papal throne with the title of BONIFACE VIII. In him the spirit of Gregory VII. and of Innocent III. lived once again. Arrogant and audacious as either, he was more selfish and avaricious than both. He was just the man to strain the pretensions of the papacy beyond all endurable limits; and this he so effectually accomplished, that it is from the days of Boniface VIII. that we trace the gradual decay of the papal power. Boniface commenced his pontificate by asserting his right to adjudicate in all matters whatsoever in every part of the world. Albert, of Austria, had slain his competitors for the imperial crown, and thereupon sent to the pope for the

customary confirmation. Boniface replied to the messenger by putting the crown upon his head, and exclaiming, "It is I who am Cæsar—it is I who am emperor!" And from that time it became usual for the pontiffs to wear a *double* crown, indicating their temporal as well as spiritual supremacy, until the conceit of a later pope added a third diadem to the bauble.

There seemed literally no limits to the arrogance of Boniface. As if he were more than human, he pretended to give and take away crowns and sceptres by the mere expression of his will. Sardinia and Corsica he bestowed on James of Aragon; Hungary, on the grandson of Charles of Anjou. The crown of Scotland he asserted to be his, and imperiously ordered the English conqueror of that country, Edward I., to withdraw his troops. These ridiculous pretensions were fruitful indeed only of discord; but they show to what a degree this pope was prepared to indulge his monstrous appetite for power.

On the decline of the Empire, the French monarch had found himself by far the most potent in Europe; and Philip the Fair, who now occupied the throne, was not disposed to submit to the offensive dictation and absurd claims set up by pope Boniface VIII. The jealousies of these two men soon led to a quarrel, the results of which secured to the French nation some lasting protection from the encroachments of the pope, and at the same time discovered to the world the essential weakness

of the papacy, notwithstanding its boastful and swaggering demeanour. This quarrel prepared the way for a series of struggles, which eventually brought about the great Reformation. Boniface had heard that the king had levied taxes on the clergy of his realm, as well as on the laity, an act which the pope regarded as a presumptuous infringement of his rights. He therefore pronounced sentence of excommunication upon all who should afterwards exact such impositions, and even against all who should pay them. To this bull Philip replied by an edict forbidding the export of any money or jewels from France, thereby preventing the pope from obtaining the tribute which the French clergy were in the habit of sending.

It was, probably, through lack of supplies, owing to this edict, that Boniface invented a new method of replenishing the papal exchequer. The year 1300 was at hand, and Boniface bethought him that the plenary indulgences which had formerly been bestowed on crusaders might, now that the crusading spirit was wholly extinct, be conferred, with great profit to himself, on all who should, once in a hundred years, make a pilgrimage to Rome. The *jubilee* was therefore proclaimed. So great was the success of this ingenious conception, that no fewer than two hundred thousand foreigners were estimated to be in the city at one time, by an eye-witness of the scene; and as many as two millions were said to have visited Rome in the course of the year. The

offerings of so many superstitiously devout strangers at the various shrines of the city were so large a source of revenue, that we need not be surprised that the jubilee came ultimately to be celebrated every twenty-fifth year. The only wonder is, that the fertile invention of the pontifical genius did not discover some excellent reason for renewing it yet oftener.

In 1301, the French king took another step which offended the pope, who regarded it as a slight, if not an insult to himself. A bishop had committed treason, and had therefore been imprisoned, and Philip wrote to the pontiff desiring that the culprit might be suspended from his office. Boniface immediately published a bull, convening all the clergy of France to an assembly at Rome, and replying to the king by insisting that the bishop should be instantly released, because no layman, not even a king, had power to incarcerate a priest. "God," said the imperious pope, "has set me over the nations and kingdoms, to root out and pull down, to build and to plant in his name. I give you to know that you are our subject both in spirituals and temporals." The king contemptuously replied to this nonsense, "We give your foolship to know that in temporals we are subject to no man." The bull of pope Boniface was publicly burned in the city of Paris, and Philip immediately convoked a parliament, before which he laid the whole question between himself and the pope. The barons took part

with their king ; and even the clergy felt that they owed a divided allegiance, and petitioned the pope to be exempted from attending his projected assembly. But the pope would not listen to their prayer. He rebuked them for their faithlessness and cowardice, and urged them to hasten to his presence. A few of the clergy complied ; and in the council which followed, Boniface issued another bull, in which he asserted that there was but one head of the church, namely, Peter, and Peter's successor ; that in the power of the chief are two swords, the spiritual and the material, the one to be used by the church, and the other for it ; the former in the hand of the priest, the latter in the hand of the soldier, but at the nod and sufferance of the priest ; and that, " therefore, we declare, define, and pronounce, that it is absolutely essential to the salvation of every human being that he be subject to the Roman pontiff." To this audacious bull Boniface appended a sentence of excommunication against all kings, emperors, or others, who should hinder those who desired to present themselves before the Roman see.

Such astounding assumptions as these could only be met by a full and unqualified denial. But the king of France hesitated awhile before he decided in what way the denial could best be enforced. At last he resolved on having recourse to stratagem, and determined to surprise the pontiff in his own dominions. Boniface had excited much hostility towards himself in

Rome by his harsh treatment of the ancient and noble family of Colonna, whose possessions he had seized, and one of whom, Sciarra Colonna, he had compelled to take refuge in France. This Colonna, in conjunction with De Nogaret, an eminent French civilian, undertook the hazardous task of punishing Boniface for his presumptuous and insolent behaviour.

Proceeding to Italy, they first secured the services of a troop of armed men, and then hastened to Anagni, the birthplace and usual residence of the pope. There, Boniface was preparing to issue, within a few days, another bull, declaring that "as Christ's vicar he had power to govern kings with a rod of iron, and to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." But his dream of ambition was suddenly broken when he heard the horsemen of Colonna and Nogaret galloping through the streets of Anagni, and shouting, "Success to the king of France! Death to pope Boniface!" The intruders easily became masters of the pontifical palace, and gained admission to the presence of the pope. Boniface was not destitute of courage, and like Gregory VII. he could sustain adversity with composure and dignity. "Since I am betrayed," said he, "I will at least die like a pope." Then clothing himself in his official vestments, placing the tiara on his head, and grasping in his hands the keys and the crosier, he seated himself in the pontifical chair. In this posture, Colonna and Nogaret found him when they burst into his apartment, and they

were so far awed by his venerable aspect, (he was now eighty-six years of age,) that they laid no violent hands on his person, but contented themselves with keeping him in close confinement. Nogaret and Colonna remained longer at Anagni than prudence would have suggested. The inhabitants of the town were in the course of a few days incited by the cardinals to attempt a rescue, and the attempt succeeded. The French intruders were either expelled or killed, and Boniface was restored to freedom.

But so proud a spirit as his could not brook the insult it had received. Like Gregory VII. he pined away with a broken heart, but in Boniface this excess of grief produced insanity. He hurried to Rome, panting for revenge. But his passion overpowered his reason, and he was soon incapable of any active exertion. His countenance grew haggard, his mouth was continually white with foam, and he gnashed his teeth in obstinate silence. He refused all food, and was too restless to sleep, so that his strength rapidly declined. Finding himself near death, he insisted on his attendants quitting the room. That haughty spirit would have no human witness of its death-agony. And when at length, apprehensive of the awful reality, they burst into the apartment, they found him dead, cold, and stiff. In his hands he still grasped his staff, which bore the evident marks of his teeth, and was covered with foam. His white locks were stained with blood, and his

head was closely wrapped in the covering of the bed, so that it was concluded by all that he had died a violent death. What can possibly teach more affectingly than these death-throes of the wretched Boniface how indispensable for peace in the dying hour is the renewed nature which the gospel exhorts us to seek? In Boniface, the natural passions of the heart continued uncurbed and rampant to the end, and a death of horror was the result. Had he spent but a tithe of the labour which he lavished upon schemes of worldly ambition in a sincere effort to *know* that Saviour whom he pretended to serve, he might have borne the pressure of adversity with calmness, and in his dying hour might have rolled that heaviest burden of all—the burden of his sins—upon Him who “suffered, the Just for the unjust,” and who said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

It was, happily for the world, the mistake of Boniface to misunderstand the times in which he lived. When he engaged in the struggle with Philip the Fair, it was without duly calculating the strength of his foe. Apparently, the authority of the popedom was greater than ever when Boniface ascended the throne; but in truth it was already much undermined by the advancing labours of civilization. It was the age of Dante, who held the torch to that noble band of literary pioneers whose toils prepared the way for the overthrow of papal domination. No wonder, then, that Dante

himself was an object of hatred to Boniface. The spite of the pontiff caused the poet to be banished from his beloved Florence, and Dante makes frequent allusion to the proud and avaricious pope in the course of his great poem. Boniface was still alive when the "Divine Comedy" was composed, so that he could not with propriety be included among the wretches of whose miseries the poet makes himself in the allegory a personal eye-witness. But his coming fate is foreshadowed when the seer represents himself as accosted in the third gulf of hell by pope Nicholas III., who mistakes him for Boniface, just arrived at these abodes of torment. The writhing and gasping Nicholas exclaims,

"——— Already standest there?

Already standest there, O Boniface!

So early dost thou surfeit with the wealth
For which thou fearedst not in guile to take
The lovely lady,* and then mangle her?"

Infern. cant. xix.

Elsewhere the poet styles Boniface "Chief of the New Pharisees," and indeed it was a common saying respecting this unhappy pontiff, that he "gained the popedom like a fox, lived in it like a lion, and died like a dog." Powerful as was the sceptre of the church when held in his hands, and fully as he developed the true spirit of the papacy, not even Rome has dared to include Boniface VIII. amongst the number of her saints.

* The Church.

CHAPTER XV.

THE POPES RESIDE AT AVIGNON, AND GROW AVARICIOUS.
A.D. 1303—1350.

"THERE is," says the philosophical Hallam, "a spell wrought by uninterrupted good fortune, which captivates men's understandings, and persuades them, against reasoning and analogy, that violent power is immortal and irresistible. The spell is broken by the first change of success." Very strikingly is the truth of this remark illustrated in the history of the popes who followed Boniface VIII. From that pontiff's reign the decline of papal power can be distinctly traced. He had truly "strained his authority to a higher pitch than any had done before him," and the reaction which set in upon his death proves how really baseless was the vast edifice which his predecessors and himself had taken such unwearied pains to construct. Without foundation in justice, the sole creation of superstition, it began to dissolve away like a palace of enchantment as soon as the charm was dispelled. And, besides the growing influence of literature, the successful violence of Philip, an excommunicated prince, in imprisoning, insulting, and eventually depriving of life the mightiest potentate in Christendom, or indeed on earth, was enough to undeceive mankind, and very quickly produced the most disastrous results to the papacy.

BENEDICT XI., who succeeded Boniface, immediately sought to conciliate the French king. Of his own accord he rescinded the sentence of excommunication under which that monarch lay, and would doubtless have proceeded further in the same direction but for his sudden death, which took place only nine months after his election. It was said that he died by poison, and that the king of France bribed two cardinals to commit the murder. Without vouching for the truth of this statement, the popular estimation of the priestly and royal character of that age is sufficiently disclosed by the existence of such a report.

Philip the Fair had now enough influence in the conclave to secure the election of a pope wholly favourable to his own views. The admission by Celestine v. of so many French subjects into that body, had given to French interests a very decided preponderance, and at the suggestion of Philip, the archbishop of Bordeaux, Bertrand de Got, was the next occupant of the papal throne. CLEMENT V., which was the title assumed by the new pope, had not obtained his elevation without first promising important concessions to the king of France. He also performed his promise with greater fidelity than so simoniacal a proceeding might have justified Philip in expecting. The bulls of Boniface were wholly withdrawn, and several privileges were surrendered, which gratified the pride, if they did not really strengthen the position of the French king. But the most

important of these advantages consisted in the resolution to which Clement came of not crossing the Alps to take up his abode at Rome. He resided chiefly at *Avignon*, and the example of Clement was followed by his successors for no less than seventy years. That period has been called by Romanist writers, "The Babylonish Captivity of the Church." One of Clement's first public acts was to summon a council at Lyons, and the cardinals, however reluctant, were compelled, by their vows of obedience, to repair to a foreign city, instead of issuing the decrees of the church from what they regarded as its true metropolis. The canons of this council reveal at once the deplorable state of morals prevailing among the clergy, and the inefficient, indeed, the only half-earnest attempts which were made to reform them. The superior orders were unmolested in their vicious practices and worldly pursuits. Even the lowest class were but faintly admonished, and their more flagitious immoralities gently suppressed. How could a pontiff who did not scruple to enrich and indulge himself, venture to reprove others, or to insist on an effectual reform?

The greatest stain upon the character of Clement is the aid which he gave to king Philip in his destruction of the "Templars." That order of Knights, which had originated in the crusades, and had been organized for the purpose of defending the "Temple," or, in other phrase, the Church of the Sepulchre, at Jerusalem, had now become so powerful and wealthy as to

endanger the authority of the sovereigns of Europe. Half monk, half soldier, the Templar had a double claim upon the reverence of the people, and, like all other classes of the clergy, generally employed his whole influence for his own aggrandizement, and that of his order. The Templars who resided in France had often given offence to the monarch, particularly by their opposition to his repeated debasement of the coinage, and Philip was now bent on their utter extermination. Clement became his too willing confederate, tempted by the immense wealth which the Templars possessed. Plausible accusations were not wanting against men who combined in one character the cunning of the monk with the licentiousness of the soldier. Charges of a monstrous and incredible kind were fabricated, and all the horrors of the "Inquisition" were directed against these victims of avarice rather than of justice. At the instigation of the pope, the sovereigns of other countries united with Philip in this crusade of vengeance; and in England and Spain, as well as in France, the estates of the Templars were confiscated, the order itself abolished by law, and multitudes were put to a cruel death. Many were burned at the stake, and the grand-master of the order, De Molay, together with the knight-commander of Normandy, was among the last of them who underwent this barbarous sentence, being put to this horrid death on one of the islands of the Seine in the year 1314.

Clement shortly afterwards died, leaving

immense wealth. The moment it was known that he was dead, all the inmates of the palace rushed with one consent to the treasury ; and so eager were they in their search, that they quite forgot their deceased master. The lights surrounding his bed were thrown down, and set fire to the furniture, and even to the body as it lay in state. The flames were extinguished, but so completely had the palace been sacked of its wardrobe, that no better covering than an old cloak was left to shroud the blackened corpse of the richest pope that had yet governed the church.

Italy and Germany were now wholly distracted by the strife between the Guelfs and the Ghibbelines—a strife not so much of parties as of factions. The kings of Naples strove with the emperors of Germany; throughout Lombardy, Tuscany, and the other northern and central provinces of Italy, city strove with city, and cities were divided against themselves. JOHN XXII., who took the chair which Clement's death had left vacant, therefore followed the example of his predecessor, and chose to thunder forth the threatenings of the church from the secure asylum of Avignon, rather than from the more splendid but less tranquil halls of the Vatican.

The lust of wealth had now grown to be the predominant vice of the popes, and was manifestly the chief characteristic of this pontiff. Sprung from a low origin, he had raised himself from rank to rank, until he reached the highest and most lucrative post in the church.

And when once arrived at the pontifical chair, he abandoned himself without restraint to the love of "filthy lucre." He zealously promoted the sale of indulgences both to clergy and people, affixing a specific price to every possible sin. A deacon or sub-deacon might thus be absolved for *murder* by the payment of twenty crowns, and a bishop for three hundred livres: so cheap in comparison of gold was the estimate now set on human life, and so far had avarice triumphed over religion and morality in the hearts of the venal priesthood. From the clergy especially, because over them he had more direct control, did John seek to extort contributions to the papal treasury. He laid taxes on the several orders of priests, permitted them to compound with money for the discharge of their official duties, and ingeniously contrived, when a see became vacant, to make it the occasion of some half-dozen translations, that from each bishop thus promoted he might receive the customary fee.

For a moment, however, the attention of the pontiff was diverted from these mercenary aims to the struggle now pending for the imperial throne between Louis of Bavaria and Frederic of Austria. John refused to confirm either of the pretenders, asserting in a bull, that "God had confided the empire of the earth as well as that of heaven to the sovereign pontiff." Eventually, Frederic was defeated and taken prisoner, and Louis was acknowledged in Germany as the rightful emperor. But in Italy, the Guelfs had

gained advantages over the Ghibbelines, and Louis, whose claims the latter supported against the king of Naples, hastened across the Alps to the aid of his partisans. At Milan, he was crowned with the iron crown of Lombardy, and advancing to Rome, the ceremony of coronation was there repeated with still greater pomp and solemnity. To retaliate upon the hostile pontiff, the emperor now resolved to appoint a new pope, and gave to a friendly ecclesiastic the name of Nicholas v. The end of the contest was that neither the pope nor the emperor gained much advantage, though the preponderance was in favour of the latter. The anti-pope Nicholas was not accepted by the world, and it is said, that, going to Avignon to implore pardon, he was put in chains, and imprisoned for life. But the emperor convened a council at Milan, which pronounced pope John guilty of heretical depravity, so that Louis now dared to tread in the footsteps of Philip the Fair, and even call in question the infallibility of the pope. These political quarrels of the pontiff, however, occupied only brief intervals of time. His life was mostly passed in amassing treasure, and he seems to have devoted considerable attention to that delusion of the age, alchymy, with the same object in view. In the money which he issued from the papal mint, he counterfeited the florins of Florence, and yet to prevent competition with himself, he published several edicts against alchymists and adulterators of coin. When, at length, in the year 1334, death snatched him

from his cherished pelf, it was found that he even surpassed in riches his like-minded predecessor Clement the fifth.

Another Frenchman succeeded to the pope-dom, with the title of BENEDICT XII. Like John, he was of low extraction, and although he had by some means attained a cardinal's hat, he was regarded as the least eminent of the entire college. The mutual jealousies of the conclave, and not their wish to promote Benedict, led to his election. Meaning to throw away their votes, they each of them voted for Benedict as the least likely to succeed; and so little was he ambitious or expectant of the honour, that on hearing he was chosen, he reproached his brethren for having elected "an ass."

Doubtless it was this comparatively modest disposition that rendered Benedict XII. quite a paragon of virtue among the popes of that corrupt age. Although he dared not attempt, and perhaps had not the genius to devise innovations on the established system of governing the church, he made some efforts to improve the working of that system. Unlike his predecessor, he refused to grant dispensations to the indolent clergy, and dismissed from the papal court a multitude of idlers, who preferred the splendour and the vices of Avignon to the labours of their parishes. The pomp of the court was also somewhat diminished; investigations into the condition of the monasteries and of the clergy in general were commenced; literature was encouraged; and it is not among the

least of Benedict's praises that he entertained at Avignon the poet Petrarch, that great reviver of learning in Europe, and the most popular poet of his age. But along with these commendable efforts, which, however abortive they proved for checking the tide of corruption, are still sufficient proofs that Benedict was far better than the majority of his class, there were other deeds of a very questionable nature, evincing that either the system was too bad to be mended, or that, diverse as the pontiffs may appear in some respects, they all held the same radical errors. Benedict died in 1342.

CLEMENT VI., who succeeded, was of a character more in accordance with the ordinary pontifical type. Fond of ease and splendour, he entirely passed his short career in the gaiety and voluptuousness which had now become the prominent features of papal state. But Clement carried these vices to more than the usual height. He was both licentious himself, and encouraged it in others. His companions were the most abandoned people he could find, and so eager was he to enrich his own relatives, that, however dissolute they might be, if they pleased him, a cardinal's hat, a bishopric, or a baronial estate was their certain reward.

About the time that Clement received the tiara, the Roman citizens had arisen at the instigation of a patriotic plebeian, named Rienzi, and either expelled the turbulent and tyrannical nobles, or else obliged them to submit to wholesome laws. Rienzi, like another Arnold, was constituted

chief magistrate, assuming the popular and ancient title of *Tribune*. On the accession of pope Clement, the Romans deputed a number of their leaders, amongst whom were Rienzi and Petrarch, to wait upon the pontiff, and request certain favours at his hands. They urged him to return forthwith to Rome, offered him the office of senator with the government of the city, and begged him to appoint the jubilee, held first by Boniface VIII., to be renewed at the *fiftieth* year, which was now approaching. The deputation was graciously received, and those of its requests were granted which tended to benefit the papacy, whilst the first, which was supremely important to the Roman people, and the most obviously binding on the pope, was decidedly refused.

Whilst Rome was distracted by the animosities of its nobles, Naples was thrown into confusion by the crimes of its monarch; and the latter city, as well as the former, preferred its accusations at the tribunal of the pope. Joanna, the queen of Naples, was charged with having been accessory to the murder of her husband, who had been decoyed from his bed in the dead of night, and being seized by assassins at the door of his chamber, was first strangled, and then suspended by a silken cord from the balcony of his palace. The citizens, indignant at the deed, clamoured loudly for justice, and Joanna was obliged to undertake a journey in person to Avignon to vindicate her cause; for, loose as were the morals of

Clement VI., he was too politic to allow so notorious a crime to pass without rebuke. By enforcing the semblance of justice—and he cared for nothing more—he would at once be humbling a monarch, and gaining a reputation for virtue, both luxuries which a pope would not readily forego. When Joanna appeared at Avignon, she found it easy to satisfy the pliable pontiff, although so clear was the evidence that she was privy to the murder, that she could only plead she was under the influence of sorcery. That wretched plea, however, was amply sufficient when she offered the pontiff the full possession of the city of Avignon, which belonged to her as countess of Provence, at the cheap price of thirty thousand florins. Thus the queen returned to Naples with a very seasonable supply for her pressing emergencies, and the pope added an important city to the patrimony of St. Peter, without troubling himself with the thought that it was “the price of blood.”

The jubilee which Clement had promised the Romans was celebrated in the year 1350. It was proclaimed a year beforehand, in a bull which declared that the church possessed an “infinite treasure of merits, the dispensation of which was confided to the pope.” To receive a share of this precious wealth, multitudes resorted to Rome. During a severely inclement winter, the roads of Italy were thronged with travellers, who were sometimes compelled to sleep by the way-side, and were always exposed to the pillage of freebooters, and the extortions

INNOCENT VI.

of the inhabitants. The streets of Rome presented for months the spectacle of a vast moving multitude, a tide incessantly flowing and inexhaustibly renewed. The churches were crowded, the houses of the citizens were converted into inns, the prices of provisions were artificially raised, and the Romans, not content with the natural increase of wealth produced by an influx of more than a million visitors, tried every expedient which the ingenuity of avarice could devise, to impoverish their guests and enrich themselves. It is hard to decide which should excite the greater disgust, the lying hypocrisy of the bull which authorized the jubilee, or the sordid passions and reckless immorality which accompanied its celebration.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE POPES AT AVIGNON—THEIR RETURN TO ROME—
PETRARCH, WYCLIFFE, AND CHAUCER.

A.D. 1350—1378.

To Clement succeeded INNOCENT VI., a man of kindred spirit with Clement's predecessor, Benedict XII. His reputation at the time of his election was unstained, yet the crime which he committed to attain the tiara shows that his moral sentiments were not very refined. Upon oath, he agreed that the pontifical power should be placed under certain limitations; but on gaining the crown he forfeited his oath, and set the agreement at defiance. Innocent's whole

history is that of a weak man, whose good intentions are subverted by what he considers the duties of his position. In private, he repressed vice, yet he could be guilty of gross iniquity in his public capacity. He frowned on the extravagant splendour and the avaricious greed of the clergy, setting a pattern of moderation in his own expenditure; yet, when he fancied the interests of the church were involved, he could be as grasping as a Boniface VIII. or a John XXII., and actually followed the example which the latter had first set, of demanding that half of the revenues of all vacant benefices should be *reserved* for the papal treasury. A character composed of such contrary qualities could not engage in great transactions, and the papacy was transmitted by Innocent to his successor in much the same plight as he found it.

That successor was URBAN V., who commenced his pontifical career in 1362. The most remarkable event of his reign was his attempt to transfer the papal court from Avignon to Rome. To four pontiffs in succession had the patriotic Petrarch addressed his earnest petition that they would return to their proper see. Eloquently had he described the destitute condition of Rome, and the evil results to the whole church of papal non-residence. But as yet his appeals had been in vain. John XXII., Benedict XII., and Clement VI., had listened to the eloquent orator, but were all of them, either without the power, or devoid of inclination to comply with his entreaties. At length, in 1369, Urban V.

resolved to make the experiment; turning a deaf ear, for once, to the command of the French monarch, and the solicitations of the cardinals, who, now mostly Frenchmen, dreaded the change as a sort of exile; and in the words of a somewhat severe, but very accurate historian, "were attached to the language, manners, and climate of Avignon, to their stately palaces, above all, to the wines of Burgundy."

By the Italians, Urban was welcomed with joy, and every imaginable demonstration of gladness was made on his arrival. The emperor of Germany held the bridle of his horse as he entered the city of Rome, and approached the church of St. Peter's. Queen Joanna of Naples, the emperor John of Constantinople, and the king of Cyprus, all paid him visits of homage and friendship; and it was probably on this occasion that Urban transformed the *double* into the *triple* crown, still worn by the popes, and symbolical, it is said, of the three provinces which compose the states of the church. But Rome was not comparable to Avignon in the eyes of the cardinals. Her baronial palaces had been laid in ruins by a century of domestic feuds. The whole city had a desolate and dismantled aspect; and the services required of the clergy were necessarily more frequent and more burdensome at home than abroad, in the metropolis of the church than in a distant province. So that, after three years' absence from France, pope Urban returned to Avignon, and soon afterwards died, without having

accomplished anything that effectually strengthened or weakened the papal chair.

Although GREGORY XI., who succeeded Urban, was also a native of France, yet several motives combined to induce him to accomplish what his predecessor had only attempted. Avignon was no longer a secure retreat. A set of lawless banditti were in possession of the district in which the city stood, and showed especial resolution to make the wealth of churchmen their prey. Italy was also clamorous for the return of her spiritual chief. A female fanatic, who has since been canonized under the title of Saint Catherine of Sienna, visited the pope, and pretending to have had a revelation from heaven, exhorted him to remember the duty which he owed to the tomb of the apostles, and the chair of his mighty predecessors. Whether the persuasions of mere superstition would have been effectual with Gregory cannot certainly be known, as he soon afterwards received intelligence that the Italians were in actual revolt against his legates ; that they were resolved on electing a pope of their own unless he speedily returned ; and that they had already made proposals for that purpose to a monk in Monte Cassino. This intelligence at once decided the pontiff's course, and he lost no time in removing his whole establishment to Rome.

The papal court, therefore, finally forsook Avignon in 1377. On arriving in Rome, Gregory applied himself with energy to the work of harmonizing the feuds which had so long subsisted,

and of extinguishing the glowing embers of rebellion which had been kindled by the absence of any confessedly supreme authority.

But far greater troubles were in store for the papacy than those of mere domestic sedition. A spirit of disaffection had been engendered by the gross corruptions of the clergy that was spreading through all countries, and found its most congenial home in the noblest souls. In Italy, the writings of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and a host of their disciples, had given a suppressed utterance to this discontent in allegorical language, which soon found clearer expression on the lips of the people. In Germany, the Beghards and Lollards were parties that had arisen from the necessities of the times to supply by voluntary exertions the posts abandoned by the corrupt and indolent priesthood. In England, the same professions of zeal were yet made by the mendicant friars; but these orders, instead of fulfilling their professions, proved at last the most sordid and hypocritical of all. Carrying with them the pope's authority, they entered whatever parishes they pleased, usurped the pulpit and the office of the priest, and so drained the purses of the people, that they well deserved the name which they received of "the pope's beadles and tax-gatherers."

It was the insolence and depravity of these men that first aroused the indignation of our great reformer Wycliffe, and the poet Chaucer, and led them to inveigh so vehemently against

the growing corruptions of the church. Wycliffe had been sent by king Edward III., at the head of a deputation to the court of Gregory XI., before it had quitted Avignon, and he had there seen a yet profuser display of the vices of the priesthood. He brought back with him a rooted determination to oppose these evils in England, and to enlighten the people by translating the Scriptures into the English tongue. Chaucer also had gone abroad. He had visited Italy, and had there made the friendship of Petrarch and Boccaccio, whose sentiments and style, both on literary and religious topics, he transferred to his own writings. Wycliffe declaimed from the pulpit, and in his lecture-room at Oxford, against the degeneracy of the church; and growing bolder as he found his doctrine popular, at last went the length of denouncing the pope as "that Anti-christ, the proud, worldly priest of Rome, the most cursed of clippers and purse-kervers," (cut-purses.)* Chaucer was less declamatory, but more satirical. He makes one of the mendicant friars confess in "The Pardoner's Tale," by what impostures he deluded the people, and defrauded them of their wealth,—

"By this gaude I wonnen yere by yere
An hundred mark, since I was pardonere.

* * * * *
Of avarice and of swiche cursednesse
Is all my preaching for to make hem free
To yeve hir pens, and namely unto me;
For mine entente is not but for to winne,
And nothing for correction of sinne."

* See "Life and Times of John de Wycliffe," in a former volume of this series.

GREGORY XI.

Thus the labours of both Chaucer and Wycliffe were directed to the same end, and alike conduced to effect the moral reform of the people, and the overthrow of papal tyranny.

Whilst these great men, both in Italy and in England, were zealously pursuing the noble objects they had proposed to themselves, the pontiff Gregory became painfully convinced that Rome was no pleasant residence to one accustomed to ease and safety. The Florentines were becoming a warlike people; and, in their zeal for liberty, they made war upon all the tyrannical nobles of Italy, especially directing their hostility against Rome, because of the treatment they had received from the papal legates. Gregory was already beginning to repent of his migration to Italy, when he suddenly died, in 1378.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE GREAT WESTERN SCHISM.

A.D. 1378—1410.

A REMARKABLE period in the history of the popes commences with the death of Gregory XI. The election of a successor was a matter of so much difficulty, that eventually two were chosen by the contending parties. Thus the great western schism was created, which lasted for fifty years; and by which the authority of the popes was greatly diminished, the necessity of a reformation made more apparent, and

all even of its plausibility taken away from the ridiculous claim for papal infallibility. Of the sixteen cardinals who assembled in conclave to elect a new pontiff, twelve were Frenchmen, and it was their ardent desire to promote another of their countrymen, in order that the court might be once more transferred to Avignon. Aware of this disposition, the Roman people gathered tumultuously around their place of meeting, and shouted loudly, "A Roman, a Roman for pope, or at least an Italian!" And when they found the conclave unwilling to proceed under terror of their threats, they burst rudely into the chamber. The cardinals now perceiving that there was no escape, elected a Neapolitan, the archbishop of Bari, by the title of URBAN VI.

The populace were content; but the behaviour of the new pontiff soon gave displeasure to that body which had elevated him to the chair. Zealous for reform, and sternly harsh in his temper, Urban vehemently denounced the vices of the church, and in full consistory charged the cardinals themselves with urging on the general corruption. One he accused of being a sacrilegious thief; another, he called a fool; and the whole body he restricted to the use at their meals of only a single dish. The French cardinals disguised their anger, but took the first opportunity, under pretence of the summer heats, of withdrawing from Rome: retiring to Anagni, they plotted measures of resistance.

The result of their conference was the election

of another pope, who, assuming the name of CLEMENT VII., immediately hastened to Avignon, and thence thundered forth bulls and excommunications against Urban, which the latter as liberally returned. The monarchs of France, Savoy, and Naples; espoused the cause of Clement, while the rest of Europe continued obedient to the spiritual government of Urban. Both issued bulls and decretals; both conferred livings and sees; so that not only much confusion was created for a time, but, as the schism continued for half a century, if there had ever existed a connected chain of ordained priests from the days of the apostles, it must now be inevitably broken.

Urban exercised his divided authority with as much despotism as Boniface VIII. could have used. Indeed, to that pontiff he has often been compared. He resembled him in arrogant and insufferable pride, and in violence of temper, which in Urban amounted to frenzy. He spent little of his time in Rome, having a long nurtured attachment for the kingdom of Naples, of which he was a subject by birth. But his haughty temper would not permit him to live at peace even here. Quarrelling with the queen Joanna, Urban invited Charles of Durazzo to take the crown, and performed the ceremony of coronation when Charles passed through Rome at the head of his Hungarian troops. Joanna was conquered and put to death; and then the proud pontiff denounced Charles as a traitor to the holy see, because he had not

performed all the conditions of investiture. Charles, however, marched an army against Nocera, where Urban resided, and every day the angry pope might be seen parading the walls, and, at the sound of a bell, discharging his impotent anathemas against the king and his troops encamped before the town. Some cardinals who, having long adhered to his cause, began at last to chafe under the caprice and obstinacy of the pontiff, were the next objects of his vengeance. While residing at Nocera, he caused them to be seized, imprisoned, and tortured; and the historian reflects with just indignation on the hypocrisy and cruelty of the tyrant, who "could walk in his garden and recite his breviary, whilst he heard from an adjacent chamber the groans of his victims on the rack." On leaving Nocera, he took these cardinals with him in chains, and on arriving at Genoa had them privately executed. Some say that they were thrown into the sea in sacks; others, that they were strangled in prison. Urban ended his career in 1389.

After the death of pope Urban, it was generally hoped and expected that all parties would unite in acknowledging Clement, who still held his court at Avignon, and received the homage of a considerable part of the church. But the schism was not destined to terminate so soon. The cardinals assembled at Rome elected another Neapolitan, who assumed the tiara with the title of BONIFACE IX., and recommenced with fresh vigour the strife with the

rival pontiff. Boniface was so illiterate, that even his panegyrists confess that he was unskilful in writing, and not proficient in any one branch of learning. But he was amply endowed with the cunning of avarice, a far more essential accomplishment in a pope of those days. One of his first measures was to announce a jubilee for the year 1390, which was to recur every thirty-three years, and be entirely distinct from the jubilee already established. Notwithstanding the divided allegiance of Christendom, multitudes were found to flock to Rome to obtain absolution for their sins. Boniface next granted to the cities of Cologne and Magdeburg the power of holding similar festivals, to the manifest disparagement of Rome as the shrine of universal pilgrimage, although to his own present and peculiar advantage. But as neither of these means sufficiently satisfied the cupidity of the pope, he afterwards sent friars throughout all countries, offering plenary indulgences to all who would buy. When one of these indulgence-mongers entered a city, he first displayed at the window of his residence a flag, emblazoned with the arms of the pope, and the keys of the church. He then placed tables in the cathedral church by the side of the altar, covering them with rich cloths, after the manner of the bankers, to receive the purchase-money from those who bought his profane and blasphemous wares. And if any of the local clergy ventured to exclaim against this unjust infringement of their

own rights, or possibly against the immorality of the proceeding altogether, these audacious monks did not hesitate to anathematize and excommunicate them like the pope himself.

Scandalized by a schism which had given rise to so much animosity, and had fostered the worst vices of the age, many leading members of the priesthood, both in France and Italy, began to devise means for re-establishing unity. So earnestly did the university of Paris take up the subject, and so heartily were they favoured by their sovereign, that the anti-pope Clement was so violently alarmed as to be taken with a fit of apoplexy, of which he almost suddenly died in the year 1394. But the cardinals resident at Avignon were in no wise disposed to make concessions, or even to comply with the mandate of their monarch, who desired them to refrain for the present from electing another pontiff. Meeting in full conclave, they hastened to a decision, and chose one of their own number to the high office, under the title of BENEDICT XIII. But when Benedict, refusing to listen to the admonitions of his sovereign, asserted that he was the true and only pope, and would maintain his authority in spite of any king, duke, or count, Charles invested the city of Avignon with troops of soldiers, and kept Benedict a close prisoner in his own house for nearly four years.

Meantime, the partisans of Boniface were growingly anxious that some reconciliation should take place. So strongly did a feeling in

this direction manifest itself in Germany, that the citizens of Rome began to tremble lest they should lose their spiritual father, still more dreading the loss of the emoluments that might be expected from the approaching jubilee in 1400. They therefore besieged the pontiff with prayers that he would be stedfast, and assured him that from them he should meet with unalterable devotion. Boniface replied, "Take courage, my children ; rest assured that I will continue to be pope ; and however I may play off the king of France and the emperor of Germany against each other, *I* will never submit to the will of either." In the year 1403, Boniface died, and, at almost the same time, the anti-pope Benedict escaped from his confinement by disguising himself in the garb of a menial. He had no sooner regained his liberty than he re-asserted his claim to the papal dignity, and with his rising assurance his party began to rally once more around him.

On the death of pope Boniface, the Italian conclave elected another native of Italy, who bore the name of INNOCENT VII. ; but the occurrences of his short pontificate, which lasted only two years, require no narration, as they had no material influence on the current of events.

In 1406, GREGORY XII. ascended the papal throne, having first bound himself by oath, in common with the whole conclave, to resign all pretensions to his seat if the welfare of the church should require it. The ripe age of seventy seemed a sufficient guarantee for the utter extinction in Gregory of mere selfish aims

and worldly views. But alas for papal veracity! The pontiff was hardly seated in the chair before he gave proof that neither promise nor oath would be sacred in the eyes of a pope, when the prize of power was to be secured. After his escape from surveillance, Benedict had apparently laid aside all his ambitious purposes. He steadily professed to desire nothing so much as the union of the contending parties in the church. An agreement was consequently entered into between the two pontiffs, to hold a meeting in which the differences of their several parties should be composed. The meeting was to be held at Savona, and Benedict was faithful to his promise, and presented himself at the appointed time. But Gregory, the aged and honourable Gregory, could not be prevailed on by the most earnest and repeated solicitations to fulfil his oath. The partisans of Gregory, indeed, accuse Benedict of equal insincerity, and say that Savona was not the place of appointment mutually agreed on. One of these writers, who seems very honestly to deplore the schism, condemns both the pontiffs alike. "If one pope advances," says he, "the other retreats; the one appears an animal fearful of the land, the other a creature apprehensive of the water. And thus, for a short remnant of life and power, will these aged priests endanger the peace and salvation of the Christian world."

But the business of reconciliation had proceeded too far to be abandoned now, and it was therefore seriously taken up by the cardinals of

both colleges, who resolved to call a general council of the church, to assemble at Pisa, in 1409. At this council both the pontiffs were deposed, and a new one was elected, in the person of Peter, cardinal of Milan, who forthwith assumed the title of ALEXANDER V., and by acknowledging whom, as the rightful successor of Peter, the Romanist writers virtually confess the paramount authority of a general council. Yet the two deposed pontiffs by no means resigned their pretensions. Benedict resided in Spain, and still received the homage of that portion of Christendom. Gregory, however, was compelled to escape from his enemies by taking the disguise of a merchant. Hastening across the Alps, he was kindly received by the king of Hungary, and continued to be treated as the true pontiff by most of the German race. Thus *three popes* once more divided between them the sovereignty of the church; but this time there was no master-spirit like Hildebrand's to educe strength out of weakness. The division was a real peril to the papacy, and the consequences were felt ere the century had fully expired.

Alexander's career was very brief, yet it was distinguished by one circumstance very important in the eyes of a Protestant. In the hope of reconciling all parties, he solemnly decreed that the benefices which had been held under either of the rival pontiffs should be confirmed to their possessors, and that all censures and excommunications should be annulled. So that *two* distinct claims of apostolical succession

were recognised by this pontiff, notwithstanding the anathemas which had been heaped on each other by the rival popes, and under which hundreds, if not thousands of the priesthood had both lived and died. It is hard to conceive how Romanists themselves can, in the face of such facts, attach much importance to either Direct Succession or to Papal Denunciations.

The weakness of Alexander's character caused him to fall entirely under the guidance of one of the cardinals, Baltazzar Cossa, a man of singular qualities; by birth a noble, by training and taste a soldier, and by profession a priest. To the machinations of this daring and ambitious man the pontiff's death is ascribed, which took place by poison in the year 1410.

CHAPTER XVIII.

COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE.—MARTYRDOM OF HUSS AND
JEROME.—END OF THE SCHISM.

A.D. 1410—1431.

NOTWITHSTANDING his suspicious connexion with the cause of Alexander's death, Baltazzar Cossa, to the astonishment of the world, was immediately chosen successor to the popedom, under the title of JOHN XXIII. His notorious licentiousness, and his avowed inclination for a military life, were comparatively slight disqualifications in the esteem of men who chiefly desired energy and determination of character. These latter were qualities that would afford some hope, in spite of many drawbacks, of a settlement of the strifes which had so long distracted

the church. Indeed, one of the cardinals said openly, that "the church had become so bad, that a good pope would be out of his sphere, and that she could be only ruled by miscreants."

On the dissolution of the council of Pisa, it had been arranged that another should be called in three years, and John therefore shortly summoned a general council, which the emperor Sigismund insisted should assemble at Constance, very much in opposition to the pontiff's secret wish. This Council of Constance assembled in November, 1414, and continued its sessions for the space of four years. The emperor Sigismund acted in it a very conspicuous part, which he commenced by making his entry into Constance by torch-light, and so riding to the church, where, with the imperial crown on his head, he served as deacon to the pope whilst reading mass. The number and importance of the members of this council made it appear rather the *states-general of Europe* than a mere ecclesiastical assembly. The four greatest European nations, the German, the French, the Italian, and the English, were all fully represented there. Almost all the great vassals of the empire, and ambassadors of all the sovereigns who professed Christianity, were also present, even including those of Russia and Greece. Of spiritual dignitaries, besides pope John and the legates of the anti-popes Gregory and Benedict, there were three patriarchs, thirty-three cardinals, forty-seven archbishops, one hundred and twenty-four abbots, eighteen hundred priests, and an innumerable crowd of monks. So large a concourse

made it necessary to enact sumptuary laws for the occasion. The pope was restricted to the use of twenty horses, and each of the cardinals to ten; yet, notwithstanding these regulations, no fewer than thirty thousand horses are said to have been maintained for that immense and august assembly.

The first object of the council was to settle the question of the popedom. They could not, indeed, but acknowledge that John was the legitimate pope, but as this was not admitted by a considerable part of Christendom, they judged it desirable that they should repeat the measures of the Council of Pisa, and have the whole question referred to their authority. With this view they required the immediate abdication of all pontifical functions and claims from each of the three popes, Gregory, Benedict, and John. The legate of Gregory expressed his master's willingness to submit providing his competitors did the same. John personally acquiesced in the decision, though not without discovering much mortification and disappointment. But the legate of Benedict stoutly refused to make the least concession.

The jealousies of these three claimants of the tiara exhausted many tedious months; and, in the hope of conciliating Benedict, the emperor Sigismund took a personal journey to Perpignan, where that pontiff dwelt. To occupy the interval, the council turned its attention to other matters, and in particular to the heresies which had lately sprung up in Bohemia. The queen of Richard II. of England was a Bohemian

princess, and her residence in England had brought her into contact with the disciples and doctrines of Wycliffe. After the death of her husband, she had returned to Bohemia, carrying with her the writings of that great reformer ; and these fell into the hands, and under the blessing of the Holy Spirit changed the heart of John Huss, who, although of obscure origin, had raised himself by his talents to a professor's chair at Prague, and had been chosen confessor to the queen.

Roused by the doctrines of Wycliffe, Huss soon began to preach openly against the corruptions of the church, and many of the students in the university adopted his tenets. A spirit of reform was excited among the people, and on some Englishmen painting upon the wall of an inn a picture representing Christ on the one side, meek, and lowly, and poor, entering Jerusalem mounted on an ass ; and the pope on the other, proudly prancing on a high-mettled steed, and glittering in purple and gold, the populace came in crowds to the inn, eager to see the sight. The writings and preaching of Huss at length created so much agitation, and so much hostility to the priests, that pope John xxiii. had cited him to appear at Rome as soon as he had ascended the throne, a citation which Huss had refused to obey. The Council of Constance now repeated the citation, and acknowledging its authority, Huss immediately complied, first obtaining, however, a safe-conduct from the emperor Sigismund.

On arriving in Constance, Huss was thrown

into prison, and immured in a narrow dungeon on the banks of the Rhine, where the common sewers emptied themselves. The pestilential atmosphere speedily engendered a féver. He suffered many other indignities and hardships, but at last was summoned to appear before the council, and answer to the accusations preferred against him. As Huss entered the assembly, a solar eclipse darkened the air. Addressing the emperor, he thanked him for the safe-conduct he had granted. The blood rushed to the face of the monarch, who made no reply, well knowing that the fate of the reformer was already decided. The Spaniards had clamoured loudly for the death of the heretic, and it was of the first importance to conciliate them in order to secure unanimity in the election of a pope. An emperor's word, and the life of an innocent man, were slight sacrifices to policy, when the craft of the priesthood was in danger.

The articles of accusation were read. Huss was charged with nothing immoral in practice or unscriptural in doctrine, but he was accused of "being tainted with the leprosy of the Waldenses ; of asserting that the pope is on a level with the bishops ; that there is no purgatory ; that prayers for the dead are a vain device of sacerdotal avarice ; that images ought not to be worshipped," with some other kindred doctrines, too familiar to Protestant ears to need repetition. Huss offered to speak, but his voice was silenced by the clamour of the council, and the command of its president, who ordered him simply to recant. Passages were read from his

writings, commenting on the criminal lives of the priesthood, which excited vociferous laughter from those who should have hung down their heads in shame. At length, Huss explicitly refused to recant, "except he were better instructed by the council." But it was no part of the council's intention to instruct, and they finally sentenced him to suffer as a heretic.

Sigismund, seated on his throne, presided over the council that condemned Huss to death. The martyr was first deprived of all the vestments and insignia of the offices he held, and then crowned with a paper cap, an ell in height, on which three devils were painted, and this inscription, "The arch-heretic." The noble confessor calmly observed, "Christ wore a crown of thorns." The elector of the Palatinate headed the procession to the place of execution, where Huss was bound to the stake, the misguided populace heaping up the fuel. On seeing a peasant engaged in this task, the Christian sufferer exclaimed with true compassion, "O sacred simplicity!" a touching counterpart of his Divine Master's, "They know not what they do." The pile was kindled, and the martyr's voice was heard singing a psalm until he was stifled by the flames. His execution took place on his forty-second birthday, and on the 6th of July, 1415.

One of the most faithful and attached friends of Huss was Jerome Faulfisch, commonly known as Jerome of Prague. The doctrines which Huss taught from the pulpit, Jerome inculcated, and it is said with greater eloquence,

from his chair in the university. He was accordingly destined to tread in his companion's footsteps. Summoned to Constance, his resolution at first forsook him, and he recanted, but he soon entreated to be heard again, when he boldly retracted the recantation which only his fears had extorted. Condemned like Huss to the stake, Jerome suffered with equal constancy, and when the executioner would have kindled the faggots behind his back, he bade him do it before his face; "for had I dreaded fire," exclaimed the courageous Christian, "I should not have been here." This tragical event followed the former in less than a year.

With such awful displays of the malevolence of bigotry did the Council of Constance beguile the time, until the three contending pontiffs could be brought to submission. The emperor's visit to Benedict had proved very unsatisfactory. He found him deaf to all remonstrances, and resolute not to abandon the bark of St. Peter, the helm of which, he said, had been confided to him by God. Although seventy-eight years old, Benedict argued his own cause before the emperor and an assembly of nobles and doctors of the church, for seven successive hours, and with such fervid impetuosity as to fill his audience with amazement. John also soon repented of the concessions he had made, and quitting Constance in military disguise, escaped to the castle of Fribourg, where the duke of Austria engaged to protect him.

But the tide of fortune had turned in favour of the council, and of its efforts to establish

peace. Benedict's friends deserted him one after another, and John's protector betrayed his guest into the hands of the emperor. John was brought before the council, and charged with the most monstrous crimes, almost any one of which would have brought a common offender to the scaffold, and to none of these charges did he offer denial or defence. His humble deportment probably saved him from death, but he was solemnly deposed from the popedom, and spent many subsequent years in prison. The sentence of deposition was also pronounced upon the absent Benedict, and the abdication of Gregory was formally registered. The council then proceeded to the election of a new pontiff. Otho Colonna, a member of that noble Roman house, and cardinal deacon of St. George, was the unanimous choice of the college, which had first been carefully re-composed, so that there should be an equal number of representatives in it of each nation belonging to the council. The new pontiff assumed the title of MARTIN V.

The first duty which devolved on Martin was to preside over the remaining sessions of the council, which now turned its attention to the general condition of the church. There was a party in it that sincerely desired a general reformation; and well knowing that the weight of the papacy was always thrown into the scale of corruption, they had strenuously deprecated the election of a new pope until the necessary reform should at least have been commenced. Defeated in this by the election of Martin v.,

they gave up the cause as a lost one ; for though a committee of reform was appointed, and their plans for regulating the conduct of the clergy, and restraining the acknowledged abuses of indulgences and dispensations, were approved by the council, in filling up the vacant pope-dom that assembly had cast away the only opportunity they had of carrying such plans into effect. The reformation was indefinitely postponed.

The actually effective decrees of the Council of Constance were rather new impulses to the march of error than checks to its progress. One of its canons restricted the laity to the use of bread only in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at the same time confessing, with truly popish effrontery, that it was a deviation from the practice of the primitive church. The power that dares to set itself in such defiant opposition to the commands of Christ, cannot possibly be cleared from the brandmark of the *Antichrist*, whose coming was announced by the inspired pen of the apostles. Another of its decrees was as barefaced a violation of the commonest rules of morality. Referring to the base treachery of the emperor in breaking his compact with Huss, respecting the safe-conduct, the council adopted the principle of the act, affirming that, because of his heresy, Huss was unworthy of any privilege, and that no faith or promise ought to be kept with him to the prejudice of the Catholic religion. We cannot wonder that "No faith with heretics" should have become the watchword of a party whose

teachers and leaders could solemnly ordain it as a principle of morals, not hesitating to put evil for good, and darkness for light.

Martin v., as was foreseen, took the earliest occasion of dissolving an assembly which claimed an authority paramount to his own; and the Council of Constance—the most memorable that had been held for ages—was accordingly dismissed in the spring of 1418. Before it separated, however, it decreed that another general council should be called in five years, a second seven years later, and that afterwards they should recur every ten years—a decree which the pontiff took good care should never come into operation.

The pontificate of Martin was chiefly occupied in attempts to recover possession of the States of the Church, which, in the long absence of the popes, had been the prey of every invader; of the Hungarians first, and then of the Neapolitans. In these attempts he succeeded, and then devoted himself to the amassing of wealth and the aggrandizement of his family. He was also the first pontiff who resumed the royal prerogative of coining money, after it had been exercised by the senate or the senator for nearly three hundred years, and in the series of extant papal coins the image and superscription of Martin v. is the first in order.

The reforming party were far from content with the results of the Council of Constance, and anxiously looked forward to the meeting of another general council, by which the abuses of the church should be thoroughly discussed,

and some effectual remedies applied. But Martin was too politic to permit any such opportunity of undermining the authority of the popedom. In compliance with the *letter* of the decrees of the former council, he summoned another in 1423, but fixed its place of assembling at Pavia, knowing that their jealous and well-founded apprehensions of papal influence would quite deter the transalpine clergy from attending. He summoned another at Basil, in 1431, but before its proceedings commenced the pontiff himself had passed away from the stage of human life.

A second cycle in the history of the Romish church and its pontiffs has now passed before us. We have yet, indeed, to see to what a depth of depravity and corruption the current of events was now bearing the pope. But already we can perceive the symptoms of coming reform. While the darkness is thickening there are occasional coruscations of light, and the bright, although somewhat meteoric career of an Arnold, a Huss, a Jerome, and a Wycliffe, proclaim the advancing DAWN OF THE REFORMATION.

One obvious lesson to be learned from the foregoing narrative, and applicable alike to individuals, nations, and systems, is *the utter futility of a mere outward reformation*. Such was the reformation of the church attempted by Gregory the seventh. It soon became apparent that nothing was accomplished beyond *an exchange of vices*. Ambition, which wore the cloak

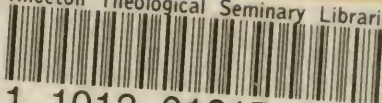
of sanctity in Gregory and in his immediate successors, became undisguised and rampant arrogance and pride in Adrian IV., Alexander III., and Innocent III.; and ultimately brought back the priesthood (as we shall hereafter see) to the very same point of corruption from which the pseudo-reformation had started, when the avarice, licentiousness, and cruelty of a Benedict IX., discovered their hideous features once again in Sixtus IV., Innocent VIII., and Alexander VI.

A second truth which this history suggests is *the absurdity of the claim set up by the Romanist for the unity and infallibility of his church*. The anti-popes, who thundered their curses against the popes, were often as fully entitled to do so, by *canonical law*, as the accepted pontiffs themselves. Twice were the rival claims so nicely balanced, that nothing less than a general council could settle the strife. Popes have thus belied one another while alive; and perhaps as often have the decrees of a deceased pontiff been repealed or contradicted by the decrees of his successor.

One other fact important to be noted is, that new excrescence of the papal system which disgraces its second era—the *plenary absolution of sins by indulgences and jubilees*. The great want of the human soul is the forgiveness of its sins. It is the deepest want of humanity. For this “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together.” For this the Divine Redeemer is the “Desire of all nations.” Richly in his word has He provided for this want of

the human family. "Repentance and remission of sins" are the great truths of the gospel. The Saviour's invitations are still addressed to the children of men—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink"—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"—rest by faith in His atoning sacrifice from the stings of a guilty conscience—rest by an interest in his justifying righteousness from the claims of a violated law—rest by the indwelling of his regenerating Spirit (freely imparted to all who seek it aright) from the debasing bondage of sin and corruption. Such is the gospel provision. Woe to that system which has dared to corrupt the fountain of Divine truth, and which has presumed to mock the craving of man for the forgiveness of sin, by supplying him with the polluted streams of human inventions, instead of the "living waters"—to tantalize and deceive him with cunning devices and fraudulent mummeries! Human nature may thus be abused and deluded for a time, but God's righteous providence will discover the foul imposture, and the impostors themselves will become a byword of reproach. And the hour of discovery was now at hand. Ere long the voice was to be heard that should shake the world, as with the blast of a trumpet, and announce that popes are nothing, priests nothing—that besides the name of Jesus "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

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