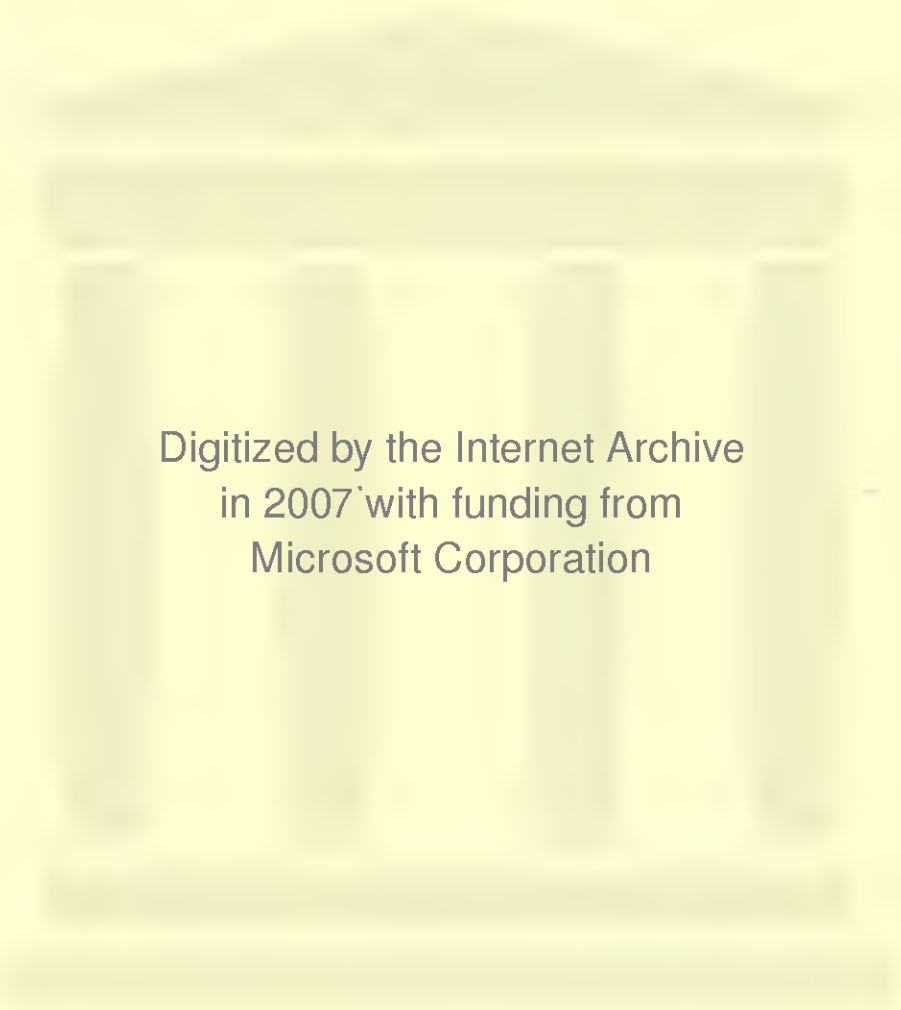

THE LIVES

OF

THE POPES.

PART II.

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

A.D. 1046—1431.

LONDON:

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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 thraldom 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 eastles 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 Ariald, 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 Ariald 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. Convoking 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 *Crœsus* 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 mummery 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. Abbeys 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 stanched 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 wofully 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 reconcilement 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, archdeacon 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

doms 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 reverenced 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 barbariar. 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 watch-word 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 Coblentz. 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 Spires.

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 trans-alpine 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 sedater 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 see. 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 cooperation 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

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 withdrawment 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 thraldom, 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 réign 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 Primislaus, 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 thraldom 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 RANKED 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 Brancaleone, 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 popedom, 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

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 Pardonere'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.

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 fever. 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 popedom 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 forcseen, 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."