

Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

***The True Story of the Roman Catholic Church***

*Joseph McCabe*

In Six Double Volumes

Volume 5

How People Were Made  
to Submit to Papal Power

Volume 6

The True Relation of Rome  
to the Revival of Art,  
Letters and Learning

**THE TRUE STORY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

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**Volume V**

# How People Were Made to Submit to Papal Power

Revolt and Bloodshed Enter the Story  
of Roman Catholic Despotism

Joseph McCabe

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## CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter I. The German Reform of the Papacy.....	5
(1) The Slow Recovery of Civilization. (2) A Reform of the Monks. (3) The Struggle at Rome.	
Chapter II. The Real Character and Work of Hildebrand.....	13
(1) The Vices of the Puritans. (2) The Pious Frauds of the Reformers. (3) The Imposition of Celibacy.	
Chapter III. The Speedy Relapse of Europe.....	22
(1) The New Vices of the Clergy. (2) The Continued Corruption of the Monks.	
Chapter IV. The "Reformed" Popes.....	30
(1) Rome's Greed for Gold. (2) An Era of Bloodshed. (3) The Papacy Strangles Democracy. (4) Continued Uselessness of the Papacy.	
Chapter V. The Greatest of the Popes.....	43
(1) The Character of Innocent III. (2) Diplomacy and Futility. (3) The Failure of His Work.	
Chapter VI. Europe Bludgeoned Into Obedience.....	50
(1) The Spread of Rebellion. (2) The Massacre of the Albigensians. (3) The Founding of the Inquisition.	

# HOW PEOPLE WERE MADE TO SUBMIT TO PAPAL POWER

## CHAPTER I

### THE GERMAN REFORM OF THE PAPACY

**I**N PASSING, as we are now about to do, from the Dark Ages to the later and brighter part of the Middle Ages, the chief point of serious interest is to discover what were the real influences which improved the character and the culture of Europe. The event with which we open this new era of Papal history is an abrupt change from the series of generally immoral and unworthy Popes which we reviewed in the last book to a short series of chaste and zealous Popes. The superficial writers on the Middle Ages whose works are now used in our colleges find here a more plausible agency of improvement than those which they attempt to discover in the Dark Ages. It is easy, in theory, to contend that the establishment of a spiritual monarchy in Europe ought to be a profound moral influence, but if we candidly study the facts, as we did, we find at once that this Papal monarchy was not only not spiritual but was so corrupt during nearly a hundred and fifty years that it is absurd to credit it with a moral influence. It is easy, again, to persuade one's readers that, since there were thousands of monasteries in which the refined and thoughtful might find refuge from the violence of the age, we must look to those monasteries for the preservation of culture; but the facts ought to make any historian ashamed to suggest it. Of thirty-two men who are named in a recent manual as distinguished for learning from the year 500 to the year 1100, and for the whole of Europe, twenty-two are completely unknown today except to experts on the period: the remaining ten are not now read by anybody, though their names are occasionally mentioned; and of these ten less than half were monks, though there were, literally, millions of idle monks in that stretch of time. Let me put it differently. A score of poets, historians, and essayists who are still read and esteemed had appeared in ancient Rome in two centuries, but only an expert now reads any book that was produced in the whole of Europe between 430 A. D. and the thirteenth century. If to this appalling sterility of Europe we add the almost universal illiteracy, the grossness of manners and morals, the sordid crimes and mutilations and legalization of ghastly torture, the general corruption of monasteries and prolonged degradation of Rome itself, we may consider "Dark Ages" a quite lenient expression.

That modern history has by no means altered its opinion of the Dark Ages will be seen by any man who consults the Cambridge Medieval History, the largest and most scholarly work written on that period in recent years. It consists of a series of volumes each

written by a score of the leading experts. It is as yet incomplete, but the fifth volume (1926) covers the period I now approach and opens with a retrospective glance. It begins with an essay on "The Reform of the Church," and the first words are: "The early part of the eleventh, as well as the tenth, century is often and rightly called a dark age for the western Church. **Everywhere** we find deep corruptions and varied abuses." The only alleviation of the darkness is that "**here and there, now and then**, could be found really religious houses." In his effort to be charitable the author says that "their influence often spread far and near," but he greatly weakens this consoling assurance by adding that "it was difficult for such individuals or communities to impress a world which was disorderly or insecure," that "the episcopate itself was corrupt," that "the spirit of the ascetic life seemed lost," and that "the whole of Roman society was corrupt." These truths about the Church and civilization are, of course, obscured in so large a work by a mass of detail about wars and dynasties, but the sentences I have quoted suffice to show that this most learned and most weighty of recent historical works passes the same verdict as I on the period I have already covered.

When, however, these writers go on to say that in the second half of the eleventh century the Germans reformed the Papacy and the reformed Popes began to raise the level of European civilization we must examine the facts with close and critical attention. It will occur at once to any thoughtful reader to wonder why a reform which starts from austere monasteries and is carried out by their pupils should lead to any other than a moral and religious improvement. To art, science, profane literature, and the production and distribution of wealth such reformers ought to be, and were, completely indifferent. We shall find that there was a very real advance in these elements of civilization from about the year 1100 onward, but the Papacy and the monks had nothing to do with this advance and we will examine and analyze it in the next book. Here we shall chiefly study the supposed moral improvement of Europe during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

I may at once point out that we shall find that there was no general or permanent improvement even of morals: either in the laity, the monks, the clergy or the Papacy. During this period we have two of the strongest and most austere of the Popes: Gregory VII and Innocent III. They are separated from each other by only one hundred years, yet we shall find Rome and the Church relapse in that period to the earlier condition. We shall find in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries just the same comprehensive charges of clerical and monastic corruption, the same passions wetting the streets and churches of Rome with blood; and we shall find that these great Popes introduce new vices into the life of Europe. If, therefore, I again reproduce from the semi-barbarous Latin of the ancient chronicles sordid stories of vice and violence, I have the same very serious reason. A totally false version of the history of the Roman Church is widely accepted, and it is accepted only because the significant facts about Roman life are concealed from the

reader. The problem of the serious and impartial historian at this stage is to explain why, although Rome now had the rare experience of finding two very vigorous and deeply religious Popes in a century, it still failed to help in the restoration of civilization.

The chief part of the answer will be that the Popes created a ruthless machinery of government which caused a passionate and bloody reaction in Europe; that they had no just title to half the powers they claimed and, like their predecessors, they resorted to fraud, forgery, and deceit in proving and exercising them; and that, when Europe did at last begin mentally to awaken, to perceive the usurpation and the sham, the Popes sought to stifle or to restrict the growing intellectual life, to defend their powers by the murder of any man or woman who questioned them. This is the next great fallacy of current historical literature that I challenge. It is said that by associating psychology with history we understand better the mind of the Middle Ages and see how it created and acquiesced in the institutions which seem to us so strange. And again we shall find that the theory ignores the facts or is a travesty of them. From the twelfth century, when the revival began, Europe to a very large extent rebelled against the Papacy, and it retained its power only by the murder of millions.

#### §1. THE SLOW RECOVERY OF CIVILIZATION

Let us be quite clear in our own minds when we speak of an advance toward civilization. There was in the eleventh century no artistic advance except in Germany, and we shall see later the economic and political conditions that explain this. There was little improvement of education except in France, and with this the Papacy had not the least connection; while the monks had so little to do with it that it had not much vitality or use until lay teachers arose in opposition to the monastic schools. There was no science except on the fringe of the Mohammedan world from which the Jews imported medical science; indeed every fragment of science that appears in Europe until the fourteenth century was, as you will read in any modern manual of science, borrowed wholly from the Mohammedans. To that also we will return in the next book. There was very little improvement of law, and its ghastly tortures of suspects, its sanction of the ordeal and duel, and its infamous penalties left it almost on the level of savagery. There was still no literature that any person cares to translate today, and the earliest fine literature to appear, that of the troubadours, is quite anti-Christian in its sentiments and is clearly inspired by the Mohammedans.

What, then, are the elements of civilization which we have in mind when we say that the Dark Ages closed about the middle of or in the second part of the eleventh century? We have only to state them to see once more how empty are the claims that the Roman Church at any time promoted the civilization of Europe. The theory now is, of course, that the last barbaric or semi-barbaric invasions from the north were over, and the Church had at last a

chance to show its beneficent influence. The Danes had settled in England and had been absorbed or exterminated; the Normans settled in the western provinces of France and in southern Italy. Here again some historians, who are so eager to make excuses for the Dark Ages, fail to notice the real lesson of history. Both Danes and Normans were initiated to the ways of civilization within a century, as the Goths, Vandals, and Lombards had been, and certainly not by the Roman Church, whereas it is claimed that the Roman Church did marvelous work in recivilizing Europe in six hundred years. But we have, as I said, only to state exactly what we mean by the restoration of civilization at the end of the Dark Ages to see that even here the Church of Rome counted for very little. The better features that now appear in the life of Europe are: an increasing number of schools, a higher development of art, the life and literature of the troubadours, chivalry, an increase of international commerce, a growth of towns, a middle class, some regard for cleanliness in the noble and middle class, and the gradual emancipation of the serfs and a considerable increase of skilled artisans and their organization in guilds. Let me add what we do not find: an improvement of morals (as the whole of this book will show), a humanization of law, a decrease of violence or of barbarism in war, a lessening of autocratic power, or a recognition of individual rights.

Now it is chiefly in respect of the latter features, in which there was no appreciable improvement, that we might look for the action of the Church. The stronger Popes rebuked a few clerical or princely sinners, but they had no influence on the general life of Europe, and their policy was such that the little good they did was lost in an immediate reaction. The popular Catholic writer tells his readers how even the guilds of the workers were created by his Church, but modern research on early references to the guilds has brought out the fact that for more than a hundred years after their first appearance, in the eighth century, the Church sternly opposed and tried to suppress them. They seem to have been revivals or survivals of the trade unions of the ancient Roman workers. Other Catholic writers credit the Church with a large share in the emancipation of the serfs, but here again in the modern literature of the subject we find the Church ignored. The emancipation of the serfs was part of the general political and economic development, and in so far as it was an act of piety or of justice it was negligible; while the Church was generally the last "capitalist" to emancipate its serfs. The slow improvement of Europe was overwhelmingly due, as I will show in the next book, to the increase of wealth and leisure in towns, instead of abbeys and bishoprics, and to the importation of higher ideals from the Mohammedan world.

## §2. A REFORM OF THE MONKS

These things belong to the general history of Europe, and it will be enough here if we turn directly to the claim that the monasteries were reformed and they reformed the Papacy. To the

reform of the monasteries we may trace the beginning of one of the better elements of European life: the opening of schools. The ideal or law of Christendom was, as we saw, that every monastery and every bishopric should have a school. Charlemagne had tried to enlarge the teaching but at his death the prelates and abbots had closed the schools for the laity. On the other hand, it was more than ever necessary to have schools for the monks and priests. Latin was no longer the everyday tongue. The French, German, English, Italian, and Spanish languages were developed, and it was necessary to teach monks and priests Latin if they were to understand their own ritual and prayer books. Even this had been generally neglected. Most of the monks were illiterate, and large numbers of the priests (as I quoted from King Alfred) knew little or no Latin. We can scarcely be asked to lose ourselves in astonishment and admiration when we read that the reformed monasteries and the monk-bishops who issued from them opened schools to teach monks and priests to read the dead language used by the Church. How lay teachers arose in opposition and a real educational activity began we shall see in the next book.

The reform of the monks began in 910, when a pious Duke of Aquitaine gave a house at Cluny, in France, to Benedictine monks who wanted to observe their rule strictly. The fame of this strict community spread, and by the end of the century there were hundreds of strict monasteries inspired by its example. I have not the least disposition to belittle them, though I do not exactly find it miraculous that out of twenty million Christians a few thousand really carried out the highest ideals of their Church. But let us keep a sense of proportion. An austere and isolated monastery did not of itself influence the world. The good it did was in training men to become bishops and archbishops, so that these in their turn would try to improve their clergy. We must not, however, imagine Europe, as some writers do, now filled with zealous monk-bishops raising the moral level of the population. They were few in number, and their work was often thwarted by nobles or by their clergy. The fact is, in any case, as we shall plainly see, that the general moral level of Europe was **not** raised, and local improvements did not last long. Moreover, we shall see in the next chapter that some of these zealous monks or monk-bishops or Popes from their very zeal wrought a great deal of evil in Europe.

We shall see in the third chapter that the reform of the monks was only partial and temporary. Statistics were unknown in those muddle-headed days, and no writer ever thinks of telling us how many strict and how many lax monasteries or convents there were in any particular region. We can say only that the majority were not at any time reformed, and that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we shall find many of the great reformed abbeys thoroughly corrupt once more and further charges of a quite general looseness or worldliness of monks and nuns. This development was simple and natural. As the rich noble neared the end of his wild or violent life he generally took out what we may call a fire-policy by leaving

wealth or estates to one of the strict monasteries, that prayers or masses might be said for his soul. Thus the abbeys founded in poverty soon became rich, often enormously rich for the time, and lower types of men intrigued for the office of prior or abbot, or princes gave the abbeys to relatives or favorites. From the eleventh century on new reformers had to arise about every fifty years. The chronic and general condition was laxity.

How this led to a reform of the Papacy is more important for our present purpose. It was, we saw, the German (or Roman) Emperor who came to Rome and put an end to the series of corrupt Popes by taking away from the Romans the right to elect them. I have not space for much detail but must tell a little as the details of history always make a mockery of the vague statements about the influence of the Church on a wicked world. Henry II was an invalid who had no inclination to the robust vices of most of his contemporaries. He was educated by reformers of the new school, and he became pious and eager to reform the Church. The idea that Germany was in advance of the rest of Europe is quite wrong; though we do well to remember that it had not suffered from the ravages of the Danes and Normans, like England and France. Nevertheless, says the Cambridge History, "among the clergy of every degree worldliness and neglect of duty, avarice and loose-living, were widely prevalent"; in fact, as the author can find only two or three exceptions, they were quite general. Henry had to begin by appointing bishops himself, and for this "Papal impotence left him a free hand." His son, Conrad, unfortunately let the reform languish and sold bishoprics, but the grandson Henry III, whose mother was a refined and educated woman, returned to the work of reform. This was the man who came to Rome in 1046, with some of his strict abbots and bishops, to put the Papal brothel in order, as we saw in the last book.

### §3. THE STRUGGLE AT ROME

Henry, as we saw, deposed the three rival Italian Popes and appointed the pious Bishop of Bamberg, as no other of the German bishops cared to attempt the forbidding task. The new Pope, Clement II, called a council to discuss reform, but it broke up in quarreling and disorder; and within a year Clement retired to heaven out of the struggle. Italy was in those days deadly with malaria, but there is ground to suspect poison: you may remember that one of the deposed Popes, Benedict IX, was familiar with every kind of vice and crime, and he was watching the new development from the provinces and had many friends in Rome. It was again difficult to get one of the pious German bishops to undertake the work, and the Pope elected was dead within a month: again with rumors of poison. Then Henry induced a relative of his own, a strict bishop, to become Pope Leo IX, and for six years he made a very vigorous effort to purify the Church. He traveled over Italy, France, and Germany, holding councils and deposing vicious prelates, but he wore himself out in six years. His successor did the same (or was

poisoned) in two years, and the next Pope lasted six months. As the Emperor was busy in Germany, the Romans (who had sworn never again to elect a Pope without his authorization) reasserted themselves and chose an Italian.

What follows helps us to understand how the "reform of the monks and the Popes" really did so little for Europe. There were now Italian reformers, monks or pupils of the monks; notably three fiery and fanatical leaders, Bishop Anselm, Cardinal Peter Damiani, and the famous Hildebrand. These had been the lieutenants or captains of Leo's spiritual army. They fled from Rome when the Romans elected a Pope (not a bad type of man), organized a military force in north Italy, and elected Pope Nicholas II. They bribed a number of the leading Romans and brought their candidate to Rome. They then hired Norman troops and attacked the Italian Pope Benedict. They pinned him up in an impregnable tower, and they at length induced him to yield and come to Rome on a promise of safe-conduct. Benedict knew the value of the oaths even of saintly reformers, and thirty Roman nobles were induced to give him a collective guarantee. He returned to Rome, resigned, and was living quietly with his mother, when "Saint" Hildebrand had him dragged to the Papal palace for trial. He was quite a decent man, but Hildebrand, to help the good work, wrote a list of imaginary crimes and forced Benedict to say that he was guilty of them. Then he was degraded and imprisoned in a monastery. Next Hildebrand, who throughout life did just whatever he thought fit, got a law passed that the election of the Pope in future belonged exclusively to the higher clergy of the Roman Church.

The Emperor had died, and a boy and his mother, Hildebrand felt, could be defied or cajoled, but both the Germans and the north Italians, who generally detested Hildebrand's ideal of celibacy for the clergy, were nervous. The reformers therefore turned to the Normans who had settled in south Italy and Sicily and had conquered the Saracen civilization. They were still imperfectly civilized. Their soldiers were the most ferocious in Europe, but their leaders were ambitious and eager for an alliance with the Papacy, which would sanctify their conquest. The Pope and Hildebrand declared (without any legal ground) that the province of Naples belonged to the Papacy but the Normans could keep Sicily and the rest of south Italy. So the Norman bandits were enlisted in the cause of virtue. The German prelates declared Pope Nicholas excommunicated and deposed, but he died soon afterwards. The reformers now elected one of their own select company, Bishop Anselm of Lucca, and as, under the name of Alexander II, he held the Papal throne for twelve years and was succeeded by Hildebrand himself we come at last to the real period of reform.

What the reform amounted to we shall see in the next two chapters, but unless we study the methods of the reformers we shall not be able to understand its limitations. The chief aim was to suppress simony (the sale of ecclesiastical offices) and the marriage or concubinage of the clergy. Let us say at once that Anselm and

Hildebrand made a very spirited fight and won considerable success; though it would take two centuries to enforce clerical celibacy in the Church (or substitute mistresses for wives); and simony would continue, and be practiced on the largest scale by the Papacy itself, until the Reformation. But what is even more important is that the benevolent historians again suppress every unfavorable detail and give an entirely wrong impression of what the reformers did for Europe. The true and acknowledged story—not a single detail of what I am to say in the next few chapters is disputed—of this reform of the Papacy and reform of the Church is in many respects a really loathsome story, and you will understand why Europe recovered so slowly if I tell it in detail.

The Romans and north Italians and Germans united against Pope Alexander and elected an anti-Pope, Bishop Cadalus. It was not a good choice, but when we read how Cardinal Damiani calls him "the sink of all vices" we need not take the slightest notice. Bishops and monks on both sides cursed and reviled each other with appalling fluency in the struggle of the next twenty years. Damiani, the most ferocious of the puritans, was one of the greatest masters of invective who ever put pen to paper. I will give you some specimens later. But the anti-Pope's champion, Bishop Benzo, was equal to him. There was hard lying, incredible slanging, bribery, deceit, and brutal conduct on both sides. Historians who imagine this "reform" refining the manners of Europe cannot have read the details of the struggle.

Benzo, by bribery and persuasion and invective, won most of Rome for the anti-Pope. Alexander came on horseback to a meeting in the Hippodrome, but the sharp tongue of Bishop Benzo and the jeers of the Romans drove him out. Hildebrand held the minority in Rome by zeal and bribery. Soon Normans, Romans, and Italians were at each others' throats, and the city was again littered with corpses. Just at this time came the news of a revolution in Germany. Ambitious archbishops had kidnapped the boy-emperor and accused his mother of adultery with her bishop-counselor. Hildebrand and the Pope hastened to send their blessing of this outrage, and they got the support of the new German court for Alexander. In short—to put the whole brutal business as briefly as possible—there were in three years three of these revolutions in Germany, engineered by ambitious prelates (who, obviously, were not in the least reformed), and the civil war continued in Rome during all that time. Nearly half of Alexander's pontificate was spent under these conditions. His war against simony and clerical marriage or immorality we will consider in the next chapter in connection with Hildebrand.

## CHAPTER II

## THE REAL CHARACTER AND WORK OF HILDEBRAND

**P**ROBABLY no Pope in the entire series is better known by name than the fiery little man, Hildebrand, who became Pope Gregory VII at the death of Alexander in 1073. His zeal for clerical chastity was a devouring passion, his energy was untiring, and the political circumstances conspired to give him an opportunity. There was a woman-ruler in Tuscany, and there was a boy-emperor in Germany; and until this imperial youth grew up and entered into deadly conflict with the Papacy Hildebrand had years of activity not checked by imperial power. He was the director of three Popes before he became himself Pope, and his pontificate lasted twelve years: which means that he had appalling power in Europe for a quarter of a century, and about his religious and ascetic enthusiasm there can be no dispute. He was determined to reform the Church and the world, and he used every weapon that came to his hand: he erupted anathemas daily, he bribed and cajoled, he used forgeries and untruths, he set swords flying and blood flowing without the slightest hesitation or regret.

But since the new fashion of history is to overlook the unpleasant details and argue from general principles, there is a tendency to make the work of Hildebrand a very important stage in the restoration of European civilization. A pupil at an English university asked my opinion on the effect of "the reforms of Hildebrand," on which she was to write a paper. I gave her two replies: first, the truth, secondly what her lady-professor would expect her to say. She unfortunately chose to tell the truth, and she was called to the bar and assured pompously that whoever had told her those things did not understand the Middle Ages as we understand them today. Seeing that, in order to write the section on Hildebrand in my "Crises in the History of the Papacy," I had read all his letters (of which this professor had probably not read a line) and all other relevant documents, I was amused at the academic rebuke. And I repeat that most of the stuff that is now written and taught by these minor professors about Hildebrand and his age and influence is fudge: it is not based upon the historical facts but is either a concession to Catholic educational authorities or a superficial deduction from general principles or (generally) both.

Hildebrand did one important and permanent thing: he waged so vigorous a war on the marriage of priests that, though the success would not be complete until long afterwards, we may say that he and his colleagues abolished clerical marriage in the Roman Church. But since this unquestionably made the clergy more immoral than they had been before, for the majority of them had been legally and decently married and this majority certainly did not

become chaste, we shall scarcely count it amongst the gains to European civilization. What else Hildebrand did, and how he mingled evil with good in almost everything he did and held that the end justifies the means, we shall now see. It seems to me that his policy of truculent and unhesitating violence and his indelicacy about the means to attain his ends put into the life of Europe evil elements that far outweigh the temporary good he achieved by rebuking high-placed offenders.

### §1. THE VICES OF THE PURITANS

Hildebrand, whose name suggests Lombard blood, was born of poor parents, in a Tuscan village. His uncle was abbot of one of the few strict monasteries at Rome, and he was sent there to be educated. It is doubtful if he ever became a monk, but he was familiar from his early years with the dark brooding of the monks over the corruption of the world and the Church and their mystic admiration of virginity. Sexual intercourse, in or out of marriage, he learned to regard with intense loathing. Lay folk might be permitted in their weakness to marry, since the world must go on, but the Lord's anointed must be quite free from this horrible contamination. All the impressive arguments about the wisdom of clerical celibacy which some historical writers now ascribe to him are Catholic inventions. He simply regarded all sexual intercourse as tainted and made it the chief work of his life to enforce the older Papal decrees against clerical marriage.

He began his pontificate with an illustration of the versatility of his moral principles. Fourteen years earlier a decree had been passed enacting that henceforward the Pope was to be elected by the higher clergy of Rome, the lower clergy and the people being merely summoned to shout their assent. It is, in fact, highly probable that Hildebrand was the author of the decree. But he was himself elected, as he says in the very first of his letters, by "popular tumult," and he never raised the question of illegality. He continued throughout life to show a carelessness about truth which alienated some of his reforming colleagues and brought heavy censures from some of the best prelates in Italy. He has, of course, nowhere said that the end justifies the means, but he is not far from it when he says in one of his letters (IX, 2) that "even a lie that is told for a good purpose in the cause of peace is not wholly free from blame," and he indulged or blest deceitful monarchs whenever they promised to be serviceable to Rome. There was hardly a country in Europe that he did not claim to be a fief—a feudal possession—of the Roman Church, and the ground given in his letters is often quite untruthful.

He claimed that England was such a Papal fief because, when William the Conqueror had invaded it, Hildebrand had induced the Pope to bless his enterprise and send him a banner. He claimed Spain, and said that even when the Moors had ruled nearly the whole of it the Popes had owned it. He claimed the kingdom of Naples on

no ground whatever. He claimed Hungary on the utterly untruthful ground that King Stephen had given it to Rome; and when a usurper ejected its king and flatteringly promised obedience to the Pope, Gregory blest his entirely unjust action. When this adventurer went on to seize Dalmatia, and the Dalmatians fought for their independence, Gregory denounced them as "rebels against the blessed Peter." His deliberate aim was to make a United States of Europe under his own presidency, and he regarded kings as puppets whom he could remove when he willed; and any adventurer who promised to be docile to "the blessed Peter" received his encouragement or even his military assistance. He was a man of unlimited ignorance outside Church matters and his attempts at statesmanship were childish. Some writers even describe him as learned. Yes, in forged decretals and the Bible. He does not otherwise show the slightest knowledge. In fact, all culture at Rome was then weird. His much more accomplished opponent, Bishop Benzo, actually says in a letter to the Emperor that St. Paul had conquered the Roman Empire by the sword and handed it over to the Greeks, who passed it on to the Gauls.

This plan of a unified Europe under the despotic authority of the Popes, in temporal as well as spiritual matters—Gregory expressly claims this—is said by some modern writers to be a lofty ideal. It was, in point of fact, a simple inference from the fiction that the Pope was God's representative on earth, and it had, as we saw, already been claimed by Nicholas I. But the modern writers who point out what a wonderful chance it would give to pacify and purify Europe have strange ideas of Gregory and the Middle Ages. Sheathing the sword or beating it into plowshares was the last thing in the world that Gregory VII wanted. One text of scripture that he approvingly quoted was, "Cursed is he that refraineth his sword from blood." He threatened King Alphonso that he would bring an army to Spain and fight him if he did not alter his ways, and he made a similar threat to the king of France. He summoned all Christian princes to come with their troops to Italy and he would personally lead them against the Mohammedans; and the quality of his "statesmanship" may be judged by his proposing that his tender friends, Beatrice, Duchess of Tuscany, and her daughter Matilda should be in the van with him, while his duplicity appears in one letter (1, 46) in which he confesses that he really wants these troops to take southern Italy for him from the Normans, and "perhaps" he will lead them to the east afterwards. The princes laughed at him—the story even went round that Matilda was his secret mistress—and he then asked the King of Denmark to send an army to conquer the Normans for him. And we shall find his life closing in sorrow and exile, when the Romans have angrily driven him out, because he brought these "vile heretics," the Normans, to fight the Germans for him, and they made a more horrible mess of Rome than the Goths had done. Europe was bad enough, but it would have become a bloody chaos if Gregory's "ideal" had been realized.

It was this "truculence," as his chief modern biographer, Bishop

Matth ew, calls it, which chiefly ruined his work and the city of Rome. It sickened his friend Didier, the virtuous abbot of Monte Cassino. In earlier years Didier had wanted to punish an abbot who had gouged out the eyes of a sinning monk, but Gregory had forbidden the punishment and he later made a bishop of the religious brute. It was in large part this quality which brought him into conflict with the Emperor Henry IV, destroyed his moral influence in most of Europe, and brought appalling desolation upon Italy. The story of the struggle is too long even to tell in outline here, but a few words must be said about it in order to explain the final collapse of Gregory's work.

Henry, the puppet in his boyhood of rival prelates, had grown up a strong, wilful, and loose-living youth. Gregory was within his right and duty in warning him and excommunicating some of his favorites. At last the Pope drew upon his fictitious powers and threatened to depose Henry. But the young Emperor had Germany and north Italy supporting him, and a synod of German bishops and abbots declared Gregory himself deposed. It is amusing to read that one of the grounds was adultery! Gregory now passed sentence of excommunication and deposition on Henry. There was a murmur throughout Europe when the Pope claimed that he could depose kings, and in a letter to the Bishop of Metz (VIII, 21) the Pope proves his power: on the basis of forged documents and falsifications of history. As Henry was threatened with a rebellion in Saxony and a dangerous movement of his nobles, he diplomatically did penance for his sins at Canossa, then resumed his wilful ways, and several years of war followed. It is the end that illustrates once more why even these Popes of great vigor and fanatical belief had so little influence on Europe.

In the spring of 1084 Gregory found himself besieged in the Castle of Sant' Angelo. The Emperor had conquered north Italy, and the Romans had opened their gates to him. Henry declared the Pope deposed by his prelates and set up an anti-Pope. But Gregory had, with his usual desperateness, summoned the Normans, and after two months Robert Guiscard came with six thousand knights and thirty thousand footmen. They were a mixed lot of Saracens and Norman adventurers, drawn by the promise of gold and the hope of loot. As soon as they had relieved the Pope and got his blessing, they spread over Rome, looting, raping, and murdering. Two days later, when they were off their guard, the Romans suddenly flew to arms and killed great numbers of the troops. The main body of the army now fell upon Rome in a terrible fury. All that remained of value was taken. The nuns were dragged from their convents and violated; the convents, monasteries, churches, and large numbers of the houses were burned down. The people were slaughtered as they came out from the burning houses. Women had their fingers cut off if they wore rings. The destruction was worse than any that had ever fallen upon Rome, and thousands of the surviving Romans, even noble women and children, were sold into slavery. Almost a new city had to be built later, and the old site of Rome was deserted.

Catholics frequently quote the last words of Gregory VII: "I loved justice and I hated iniquity, therefore I die in exile." They do not add that the "therefore" is his last lie. He died in exile because he had, in consulting the interest of the Papacy, brought upon his people one of the most tragic fates recorded in history. He dare not face the survivors. He went south with the retiring Normans, and he died a few months later in the abbey of Monte Cassino; and there were few in the world who mourned him. Such was the second greatest of the Popes. He had left only two permanent things in his life of Europe: clerical celibacy—an infallible source of the unhastily he hated—and the maxim that blood may be shed at any time in the interest of the Papacy.

## §2. THE PIOUS FRAUDS OF THE REFORMERS

We have seen in earlier books how the powers which the Popes claimed were based upon a steady accumulation of forged documents. First was the text in the gospel making Christ found his Church upon Peter and the legend that Peter established the bishopric of Rome. Then we found Leo I and other Popes altering the canons of Councils in favor of Rome. With the increasing ignorance of Europe, when it was found that the wildest and crudest of fictitious stories of martyrs were accepted without the least hesitation—for nearly a thousand years every "scholar" in Europe failed to see the slightest flaw in stories which contain incredible absurdities and anachronisms—the Popes and their clerks became bolder. They flattered the greatest and most enlightened monarch in Christendom, Charlemagne, with gross forgeries like the Donation of Constantine. It was, we saw, generally under the "good and great" Popes that these forgeries appeared, and the last such Pope we studied, Nicholas I, adopted the Forged Decretals which appeared in France in his time and which, it is fairly clear, he knew to be forgeries. Now we come, not merely to a great Pope, but to a whole regiment of reformers and a mighty zeal for virtue, and, significantly enough, another flood of forgeries is let loose.

I have given a few instances in the last section of Gregory's inscrupulousness in quotation, but the old Catholic scholar Döllinger, who in disgust left the Roman Church (but claimed to remain Catholic), has shown in his "Papstthum" (unfortunately not available in English) that Gregory and all his puritan colleagues lied and forged to an amazing extent. He gives twelve pages (ch. II, §2) of examples. Early in the campaign against simony and marriage Hildebrand urged Anselm, a nephew of Pope Alexander II and later bishop of Lucca and Pope, to compile a sort of manual of Church law showing the real powers of the Popes, and three other prelates of the reforming party also devoted themselves to this work. They made extensive use of the Forged Decretals, though, naturally, we cannot say whether they suspected that these were forgeries, but even these did not go far enough for them. Hildebrand not only wanted powers that no Pope had hitherto dreamed of claiming, but he wanted it proved that the Popes had always enjoyed and exer-

cised these powers. Knowledge of history was then so poor that the work was safe enough, and the most dishonest use was made of documents and facts.

When, for instance, Gregory wanted a precedent for the most novel of all his claims, the power to depose kings, he said that Pope Zachary had deposed the Frank king Childeric in 753! He had not, of course; he had merely approved the deposition of that king by Pippin. Some Roman deacon had once rhetorically said that the Pope shared the holiness of St. Peter, and the Forged Decretals had invented two synods which were supposed to have endorsed this. Gregory used this and other forgeries as one of the bases of his claim to authority over all the world in all things: sharing the holiness of St. Peter, the Popes were holy and infallible. He repeatedly called himself "the blessed Peter on earth," and on one occasion he, like a predecessor, used a letter forged in the name of Peter. He in one place (VIII, 21) quotes a passage from Pope Gelasius, and he omits an essential part of it and alters a few words, and he thus makes it say exactly the opposite of the original. In such matters as this the falsification is clearly deliberate and personal. Anselm found a passage in which St. Augustine says that the canons of Scripture which are kept in the apostolic churches are the most authoritative. He turned this into a statement that the letters of the Popes are on a level of authority with the Scriptures. Cardinal Deusdedit found a decree in which Pope Agatho in 680 ordered the Anglo-Saxon bishops to observe certain regulations which the Popes had laid down for their Church. He converted this into a statement by Pope Agatho that all bishops in the world were to receive all orders of the Popes as if they came from the blessed Peter.

These are only a few of the inventions and falsifications of history and law which were used to find precedents and justification of Hildebrand's inflated claims of Papal power. Against the great prelates of Germany and France, who watched his progress with bewilderment and anger, he needed to quote such authority and precedent; and it tells us something about the culture of the Middle Ages, of which we now hear so much, that very few of the false statements were questioned. Even such a fiction as that Peter had founded all the apostolic sees in the east and all the important bishoprics in the west was admitted all over Europe. No question was raised when it was said that the Nicene Council had laid it down that no synod could be held without the authorization of Rome, or when St. Cyprian, who had sternly checked the Papal ambition, was made to admit the Papal claim as formulated by Hildebrand. Thus was the "spiritual" monarchy of the medieval Papacy established, for these things were later embodied in Church Law, as I will explain presently; and not a word is said about these forgeries in recent manuals of medieval history.

### §3. THE IMPOSITION OF CELIBACY

There is a third very important aspect of the time which is discreetly ignored in our modern fanciful descriptions of the Middle

Ages. One is given to understand how the great Pope sat serenely on his throne at Rome and by the sheer force of his spiritual weapons induced the clergy who were still married to bid a tearful farewell to their wives and embrace the austere ideal of the Church. On the contrary, the work was done by a fifty years' campaign of brutality and trickery, and it was not really complete a century later. The "profound piece of ecclesiastical statesmanship" was a ferocious campaign in which greed and passion were enlisted on the side of virtue, intense misery was inflicted upon hundreds of thousands, and a new era of immorality was brought upon the Church. Let me give a slight outline of the real imposition of celibacy on the clergy in the eleventh century.

No vow of celibacy was at that time included in the ordination of the clergy, and in the middle of the eleventh century most of the priests of Europe were still legally married. The cities of north Italy were, as I said, much more important than Rome, and highest and most cultured of them all was Milan. The archbishop of Milan was himself married, and he claimed that the great apostle of his Church, St. Ambrose, consented to the marriage of priests. Nearly every priest in north Italy was married. Then about the middle of the eleventh century priests and deacons who had been trained in the new monasteries began to agitate for celibacy. There were three of them at Milan, but only the very poorest, who were easily inflamed by rhetoric about the wealth of the clergy, would listen to them. Their work was at first confined to the old-clothes quarter of Milan, the *pataria*, so they were known as the Patarenes. After a time they had a mob-following, armed with sticks and even knives, and they began to drag priests out of their churches and wives and children out of their homes. The archbishop excommunicated them, and the Pope, instigated by Hildebrand, sent representatives to inquire into the matter. If ever there was a case of pouring oil on the troubled fires it was here, for the representatives of the Pope were Hildebrand and Cardinal Damiani.

From my description of his character you can guess the language of Hildebrand, but Damiani was the great artist. To a ferocious loathing of sex in any form he added a candor of expression that no other saint ever equaled. We have still a work of his called "The Book of Gomorrah" in which he describes the sexual sins of monks, priests, and bishops in every variety and with such detail that no country in the world would now permit us to publish a translation of it. A polite historian has said of the book that "nothing in Aristophanes, Athenaeus, or Petronius gives a picture of more bestial depravity than the one drawn by a prince of the Church of the manners of his clerical contemporaries." When Damiani gave sermons on behalf of the new purity campaign, this is the way he apostrophized—I translate the Latin fairly literally—the poor wives of the priests:

"I address myself to you, you darlings of the priests, you tit-bits of the devil, outcasts of Paradise, poison of

minds, daggers of souls, aconite of drinkers, bane of eaters, stuff of sin, occasion of destruction. To you I turn, I say, you gynecaea of the ancient enemy, you hoopoes, vampires, bats, wolves, leeches. Come and hear me, you whores, you wallowing beds for fat swine, you cubicles of unclean spirits, you nymphs, you sirens, you harpies, you Dianas, you wicked tigresses, you furious vipers . . .”

When they quoted St. Ambrose, Damiani quoted one of the new forgeries which made Ambrose acknowledge the supremacy of Rome. The archbishop of Milan was old and tired, and he yielded to the energetic apostles and banned the married clergy, but the storm of anger forced him to withdraw. When a Roman Council ordered the priests to surrender their wives, the archbishop refused to have the decree published in Lombardy. One of his bishops published it, and he was nearly torn to pieces.

When, in 1061, Anselm of Lucca of the reform party became Pope—set up by Hildebrand in spite of the solemn decree of two years earlier—and the Lombards elected an anti-Pope, the fight became more furious; especially as the Patarnes of Milan now had an even more violent recruit, a noble named Herlembald whose betrothed had been seduced by a priest. This man led armed troops against the married clergy, and, as he paid his troops by confiscating the property of the priests, he soon had a mob of looters. If a priest had no wife, they would put feminine dress in his house, discover it, and beat and rob him. Priests were dragged to the theater and branded. In many places they were castrated. Their wives and children were barbarously treated, and the suffering was appalling. Large numbers of the women were forced to take to prostitution. Again the archbishop excommunicated the puritans, and Rome excommunicated the archbishop, and there were murderous fights on the streets. One of the puritan leaders was caught and taken before the archbishop's niece and she made her servants pull his tongue out by the roots. Herlembald won back his power and elected a new archbishop, for Hildebrand was now Pope, and he thoroughly supported the puritan ruffians. Churches went up in flames. Ears and noses were cut off by both factions. The fight went on furiously in Milan for twenty years, and there were times when few of the churches had priests.

Milan was the chief center of resistance, but there were fights in all the towns of north Italy, and in other parts of Europe. Near Florence was the strict monastery of Vallombrosa, and the monks, with the support of Hildebrand, invaded the city and began on the streets to shriek abuse of the bishop and clergy. The crowd, as usual, divided, and the streets were full of disorder. The monks accused the bishop of simony and, without the least check from Rome, demanded an ordeal. One of the fanatical monks agreed to walk through fire: if he was uninjured the bishop was guilty. A crowd of five thousand witnessed the ordeal and, as by some extraordinary means, the monk was unscathed, the puritans won. So the fight

went from country to country. Prelates who were themselves strict or who wanted the Pope's support enforced the law. Many refused, and the Pope encouraged the laity to do the work themselves. They were forbidden to attend the mass of a married priest, and they tore them from the altars. There were places where they flung the consecrated bread and wine of married priests into the mire. Brutality, blasphemy, and sacrilege were seen in all parts of Europe, yet, as we shall see in the next chapter, large numbers of the clergy in nearly every country remained married a hundred years later; and the orgy of violence was, as one would expect, followed by an orgy of vice.

## CHAPTER III

## THE SPEEDY RELAPSE OF EUROPE

**H**AVE explained that Hildebrand, the sternest reformer amongst the Popes, really ruled the Papacy for a quarter of a century. If, then, there is any truth in the statement that the Popes promoted the restoration of civilization in Europe, we should particularly expect some evidence of their beneficent influence during the hundred years that elapsed between the death of Gregory VII and the accession of Innocent III, the next strong Pope. Probably the facts which I have just given will caution my readers not to anticipate much progress, and the more favorable facts in the life of Hildebrand which I seem to have omitted would not materially alter our estimate of his life and character. Whenever he heard of a sinful prince or prelate he wrote censuring or threatening letters. That general statement dispenses me from going into detail, and there is nothing more to be added. Probably not very many of the hundreds of letters of Gregory which survive were written with his own hand. The Papacy had now a very extensive clerical staff, and, as the Roman art of shorthand had perished, most of the letters must have been written by secretaries. Yet we will give Gregory the full credit for the letters. They show his concern for virtue covering his entire world from the archbishoprics of York and Canterbury to those of Poland and Hungary.

Instead, however, of assuming that twenty or thirty years of this drastic moral censorship must have contributed greatly to the improvement of Europe, let us inquire whether in point of historical fact there was such an improvement. I reserve for later treatment such elements of civilization as art, letters, and education. No one will, in any case, ask us to believe that Gregory VII promoted these. He did not care the toss of a coin about them. Such work as he desired to do was possible only in a world of profoundly ignorant docility. For social justice he cared nothing; for refinement and gentleness of manners he had not the least regard. He used his enormous power to fight simony and unchastity. We need not say much about the former, as it notoriously remained the chief vice of the Roman Church down to the Reformation. The Popes succeeded in time in preventing princes from selling sacred offices; and they then secured immense wealth by selling sacred offices themselves. It is not clear to me that that is progress, but we will confine our inquiry to the question of morals upon which Hildebrand spent thirty years of white-hot energy.

## §1. THE NEW VICIES OF THE CLERGY

Mr. Lea has in his large work, "The History of Sacerdotal Celibacy," collected a mass of evidence about the persistence of priestly marriage for more than a hundred years after the death of Hilde-

brand, and as I have found him quite correct and conscientious in the hundreds of references of his that I have verified, I will give a short account of the facts as he describes them. He quotes a Council of Paris of the year 1074 at which the French Bishops and abbots refused to comply with Gregory's decree of celibacy, saying that it was impossible to observe it. An abbot of the stricter school who spoke in favor of it was severely beaten. A synod of Lillebonne of the year 1080, held under the auspices of William the Conqueror and the Archbishop of Rouen, speaks of a practice of bishops of exacting money from priests "on account of their women"; and this evasion, by which priests paid the bishop not to enforce the decree, is traced in various parts of Europe and persists long afterwards.

The Churches of Normandy and Brittany stubbornly resisted the new law: which ought to be kept in mind when we read how the Normans purified the English Church. In the year 1070 the Archbishop of Dol was publicly married. Gregory apprised William the Conqueror that he had excommunicated the prelate, and the king refused to recognize his censure. The bishops of Rennes, Vannes, and Nantes were openly married. The bishopric of Quimper remained in the same family for three generations: father, son, and grandson being bishops in succession. The law was gradually enforced and abuses multiplied. In the year 1100 one of the chief officers of the archbishopric of Sens publicly married two women with whom he had lived, and he passed without reproof. The archdeacon (the official who ought to watch the morals of the clergy) of another French church had a harem of women and children, yet he was made a bishop. The archdeacon of Angoulême seduced a nun, and his bishop, to whom it was reported, dismissed the charge with a salacious joke. I may add that Abelard, the most famous French scholar of the twelfth century, married Heloise, although he was certainly a cleric and canon of the cathedral at the time. From their letters we learn that at that time, about 1120, marriage merely prevented advancement at Paris to the higher dignities of the Church. The Council of Troyes (1107), the Council of Rheims (1119), and other councils let us see that there were still marriages even of bishops. In a book entitled "The Opinions of Abelard," and probably written by a pupil who gives the teaching of the master, it is said that a priest is free to marry. No general council had yet forbidden it.

The puritans of the Church now called all wives of priests "whores" or "concubines," so that we begin to find it difficult to distinguish between legal marriage and looseness, but for both in France we have ample evidence in addition to that collected by Lea. The Catholic Dubois, in his weighty "History of the Church of Paris," says of the moral state of Europe in general toward the close of the eleventh century:

"The condition of the Church at that time was unhappy and wretched . . . nearly all the clergy were infected with the vice of simony . . . lust and shameful pleasure were everywhere rampant."

Dubois says that the condition of his own church, that of Paris, was better, but we are accustomed to these untruthful loyalties. Cardinal Jacques de Vitry, who studied in Paris about that time, says of that city in his "History of the West":

"The clergy [probably the scholars in minor orders] saw no sin in simple fornication. Common harlots were to be seen dragging off clerics as they passed along to their brothels. If they refused to go, opprobrious names [charge of unnatural vice] were called after them. School and brothel were under the same roof, the school above, the brothel below . . . And the more freely they spent their money in vice, the more were they commended and regarded by everybody as fine, liberal fellows."

Pederasty was so common that the archbishop had to forbid the canons to lodge students. In Father Denifle's "Chartularium," a collection of contemporary documents, we read (No. V) of a priest of Rheims who, when some scholars laughed at him for dancing in a tavern on a Sunday, half-murdered them—and then excommunicated them! Cardinal Jacques de Vitry tells us many stories. In one place the lady of the manor ordered the priest to dismiss his mistress and, when he refused, crowned the woman as "priestess" before the whole village. In another place, he says, a priest told his bishop, with tears, that if he must choose between his church and his mistress he chose his mistress. Ordericus Vitalis, the Norman historian of the time, and all the sermons and councils tell the same story. The king lived notoriously with the wife of one of his nobles, and, when a council of a hundred and twenty prelates at last met to pass censure, the Duke of Aquitaine and his soldiers broke in and scattered the bishops with the flat of the sword; and the Pope, it is said, took no action because it paid him better not to do so.

I take all these things from my "Peter Abelard," which gives a detailed picture of the violence and vice of the period just after Gregory VII. It is appalling, both as regards simony and unchastity. Pederasty grew, and prostitutes and private mistresses multiplied, in proportion as celibacy was enforced. Lea shows that the struggle continued through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In 1170 the Pope tells of a house of canons in which some are married and the others have mistresses. And it was much the same all over Europe. In 1094 the Council of Constance had to impose a fine on any who attended the mass of a married priest. In 1099 we find the primate of the Hungarian Church advising moderation in the application of the decree. A German council of the year 1131 speaks of numbers of married priests. In 1135 the Bishop of Liège allowed his priests to marry openly, and so, says the pious chronicler (in a "History of the Monastery of St. Lawrence at Liège") they no longer kept concubines in secret. The wicked bishop was deposed. In 1175 we have the archdeacon of Salzburg complaining that he is quite unable to keep his priests moral: they even take the wives of their parishioners and have their sons ordained priests. In 1128 the Archbishop of

Treves was driven from his See for trying to enforce the law. A Council of Ratisbon in the thirteenth century says that there are few priests who have not concubines and children in their houses. Synods of Spalatro (Dalmatia) of 1185 and 1199 apprise us that most of the priests there are still married. A Council of Vienna in 1267 shows that marriage is still common. We have the same indications all over Europe: Flanders, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, etc. All through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Spanish councils hammer at "the concubines of the priests," and in the works of Bishop Pelayo of the fifteenth century we have a remarkable account of clerical vice. He says that the bastards of priests are almost as numerous as the children of the laity.

The authorities for all these statements will be found in Lea and need not be reproduced here. Lea's critics have fought shy of his terrible book on Sacerdotal Celibacy. He shows that St. Dunstan's campaign in England lost nearly all effect soon after his death. The Council of Enham in 1009, at which the king presided, tells us that the priests are still generally married, and that "it is the custom for some to have two, some more wives." No punishment is assigned, and the Council is content to say that those who dismiss their women will have great merit in heaven. Under the Danish kings we find the same situation: the priests hold that monks alone are bound to be celibate. General opinion was so naive that we find at this time a bishop credited with miracles though he openly had several mistresses. Of the state of the Saxon clergy at the time of the Conquest the Norman historian Ordericus Vitalis gives a terrible picture; and we cannot appeal to Norman prejudice, for we find much the same in William of Malmesbury. Ordericus, speaking ("History of the West," Part II, Bk. IV, Ch. 10) of the demoralization caused by the Danes, says: "This dissolution had relaxed both clergy and laity and had impelled both sexes to every kind of lasciviousness."

The Norman conquerors, Ordericus naturally claims, reformed all this; and the Conquest, it will be remembered, coincided with Hildebrand's campaign and was blessed by the Pope. Yet within a generation the Anglo-Norman prelates were amongst the worst in Europe. In 1102 we have a Council of London complaining of married priests, but the reformer Anselm fought as his namesake had done in Italy. Anselm's pious biographer, however, the monk Eadmer, writing about 1122, admits that the law is no longer observed (thirteen years after Anselm's death), the bishops and archdeacons permitting the priests to marry. They were wise, for Eadmer himself naively admits in his Latin "History of Recent Events in England" (at the close of the fourth book) that under Anselm's pressure "the priests became worse" (immoral instead of married) and were "violators of their relatives, even their sisters and daughters." In 1139 we read of a wife (it may mean a mistress) of the Bishop of Ely defending his castle, in his absence, against the king's troops. We are told that when a woman asked the Bishop of Lincoln what she ought to do, as her husband was impotent, the bishop said, "We'll make a priest of him, and he'll soon be potent." The story

at least reflects the general sentiment, and it is very freely expressed in the popular songs of the thirteenth century. The marriage of priests was generally suppressed in England in the second half of the thirteenth century. It lasted in Ireland, where morals were just as gross, until the fourteenth, and in half-barbaric Wales until the fifteenth century.

I have chosen as far as possible broad or general indications, not isolated cases of vice, as the Catholic writers choose isolated examples of virtue. Numbers of other statements might be quoted, but I will close this long section with a few references to the state of the Church as Pope Innocent found it at his accession. Any reader of Latin who cares to run through the volume of this Pope's letters will see that Lea has collected only a tithe of the evidence of clerical disorder, but I will confine myself to the letters of a single year and I have not thoroughly searched these.

In 1204 Innocent writes (VII, 75) to the abbot of Citeaux, his Legate, that he must proceed against the Archbishop of Narbonne for his vices. For thirteen years, it seems, he has not visited his clergy; and there are other prelates just as bad, some of them rarely approaching the church. The archbishop sells bishoprics, allows his clergy to live immorally, and refuses to excommunicate a duke who is plundering the monasteries. Innocent goes on:

"The members draw such corruption from the malady of the head that many monks and regular canons and other religious men throw off the habit of religion and keep mistresses openly, some of whom they have torn from the embraces of their husbands. They practice usury, gamble, hunt, act as attorneys and judges in secular courts for pay, and practice medicine. From which example of perdition the laity take heart and many adopt adulterous women while their wives still live; and certain ecclesiastics, to the scandal of their people and the joy of the heretics, do not hesitate to admit them to the procession."

A week later Innocent writes to the archbishop himself, but, apparently, he merely took an abbey from the prelate and told him to confine himself to his church. A few days later is a letter to another French archbishop, saying that one of his bishops has been suspended for gross conduct and takes no notice of the censure. A few weeks later is a letter excommunicating the Bishop of Constance for his evil ways, and a little later a letter to another French archbishop, expressing satisfaction that he has deposed his archpriest and several canons for vice. Later is a letter urging a Swedish archbishop to correct the morals of his clergy.

In 1215 Innocent summoned a great council at Rome, the Fourth Lateran Council, to reform the Church and suppress heresy. The sermons which the Pope delivered to the prelates, and which are prefixed to its records (in Mansi's Collection, Vol. XXII), paint a dark and dismal picture of the state of Europe; and Innocent had then been thundering anathemas at it for seventeen years:

“Faith perishes, religion is deformed, liberty is confounded, justice is trodden underfoot, heretics swarm, schismatics are insolent, the wicked rage, the Saracens triumph.”

He says that “the whole corruption of the people comes chiefly from the clergy.” So the canons of the Council wearily stamp out vice once more—on paper :

XVII. We grieve to say that not only certain of the lower clergy but even some prelates of churches spend—to say nothing of other matters—half the night in improper banquets and conversations . . . There are others who celebrate mass scarcely four times a year and, what is worse, refuse even to attend it.

XXXI. In order to abolish the vile corruption that has become customary in many churches we firmly forbid that the sons, especially the bastard sons, of canons be made canons in secular churches in which their fathers hold office.

And so on. Innocent was near death, and the great Pope gives a very different account of the result of his work from that which we read in some modern historians. Innocent knew. Forty years later we shall hear Pope Alexander IV bemoaning in the same way that the priests who ought to reform morals corrupt morals. It is the monument of Hildebrand.

## §2. THE CONTINUED CORRUPTION OF THE MONKS

As the chief efforts of the reformers were directed to the secular clergy I need not deal at any length with the monks and nuns. We have already seen that the reform brought about in England by St. Dunstan was quickly undone after his death. The Norman historian, Ordericus Vitalis, tells us that when the Normans came in 1066 they found the Saxon monasteries generally corrupt. The monks were idle, gluttonous, and immoral, and they differed little in their life from the laity. The strict abbots and bishops whom William the Conqueror brought are supposed to have reformed the monasteries, but we get a remarkable ray of light on them in a letter of Pope Alexander III a century later (1171). He orders two English bishops to make an inquiry into certain charges which have been sent to Rome. The abbot-elect of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, one of the most important abbeys in England, is a monster of iniquity: he has seventeen bastards in one village, he ridicules the idea of chastity, and he is so perverse that even his lusts do not satisfy him unless they are indulged in public. The abbess of the Abesbury convent has, it seems, three children, and her nuns are worse than she. We learn later that the abbess has been humanely compelled to retire on a pension, and the wicked nuns who refused to reform have been replaced by nuns from the austere convent of Fontevraud in France;

and, says the chronicler, Abbot Benedict (in his "Deeds of King Henry II"), these were soon as bad as their predecessors.

France was during this period the great center of monastic reform. There the abbey of Cluny had begun to purify the world in 910; and by 1110 we find several new zealots arising to form new foundations apart from these now degenerate monasteries. I happen, in connection with my work on Abelard, to know a good deal about the state of French monasteries and nunneries about this time, and it will be enough to deal with these. Quite clearly they were generally corrupt, for we have several contemporary witnesses who agree in the statement besides Abelard. Simony, twenty years after the great campaign of Hildebrand, was almost universal, and those who bought bishoprics and abbeys were not likely to be zealous about morals. A writer of the time speaks of one such noble, "of no letters and of unchaste life," who bought a bishopric and said that he was going to Rome to "buy the Curia [Papal court]." But that Rome was, within a generation of the death of its "great reformer," the worst center of simony and greed in Europe I will show in the next section. The practice of paying for bishoprics and abbeys was quite general once more, and no one in such circumstances will look for more than a strict monastery "here and there," as the Cambridge History says.

The Catholic writer Rangeard says very temperately in his "History of Brittany," which is based upon a remarkably industrious research into ancient documents, that at the beginning of the twelfth century the lax monasteries were more numerous than the strict in France. Abelard, who lived at that time and became a monk, says that "nearly all the monasteries" of the time were corrupt. The first he entered, one of the greatest of France, that of St. Denis near Paris, exhibited "a most disgraceful life," the abbot being the worst of all. It was a typical medieval abbey, as far removed as anyone can conceive from the sketch of "the life of the monks," which is usually given in our modern manuals of history. Wine and song—the abbey had its own troops of musicians, jesters, dancers, conjurers, etc., as well as maid-servants—were more conspicuous than prayer, and the abbot would send out a troop of armed monks to fight for his rights. This was about 1120, and a strict abbot reformed the abbey a few years later, for a time, but we are told that this great abbey had been lax since the end of the tenth century. It is interesting also to notice that one source of corruption was that the abbey had a school for educating young nobles. Strict monasteries generally distrusted schools for outsiders and did little for education.

From St. Denis Abelard went to the abbot of a monastery on the coast of his native Brittany, and I commend his description of this to those who want to describe "the life of the monk." All the monks had "wives" and families, and, when they found that the new abbot wanted to reform them, they put poison in the wine he used at mass and hired a gang of cutthroats to waylay him. They attempted so persistently to murder him that he had to fly. We read of no reform of monasteries of this type in the Middle Ages. In the twelfth

century Bernard of Clairvaux and other strict monks started new reforms, for that of Cluny had spent itself long before, but all through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we get the same story. I have told how it was left to the Pope to take proceedings against the abbot-elect of the greatest monastery in England, the man who had seventeen bastards in one village and boasted of his looseness. Hildebert, Bishop of Le Mans, found the great abbey of Euron just as bad. There were crowds of women with the monks and they "spent their days in iniquity and their nights in infamy." Albero, Bishop of Verdun, had to evict the monks from an abbey in his city for their vices. The monks took up with enthusiasm the new troubadour movement, and Latin songs, especially in praise of wine and intoxication, composed in the style of the hymns of the rituals (and probably sung to the same airs), passed from monastery to monastery, from England to Hungary.

Nunneries were as bad or worse, and often the lax monastery and convent were conveniently near to each other. Cardinal Jacques de Vitry, whom I have already quoted, a contemporary of Abelard, says that there were in France at the time no nunneries "fit for a decent woman" except those of the Cistercian order (his own). This was one of the recent strict foundations, and we might expect its fervor to last some time, but Abelard implies that very few convents of any order in France, where there were probably thousands, were strict. Only three miles from the royal abbey of St. Denis was the royal nunnery of Argenteuil, and the reforming abbot of St. Denis discovered, he says, that this was totally corrupt. As the saintly man wanted the property of the nuns (and got it from the Pope) one may suspect exaggeration, but Cardinal de Vitry's account of nunneries makes it probable enough. There was a convent of Benedictine nuns in the center of Paris, near the palace, and the relations of the nuns with the courtiers were so flagrant that the bishop had to close it in 1107. Later in the century, as I have already said, we find nuns from a strict French convent sent to replace the gay ladies of an English nunnery and at once adopting their loose ways. You need to be able to read medieval Latin, as so few of our modern panegyrists of the monks and nuns seem able to do, to understand the strange mentality of those times.

To any person who does read Latin and can consult the works of Abelard I recommend two short documents. One (and, in fact, this may be read in English, though most of the translations are fantastic) is a letter of Heloise, who was then the abbess of a quite virtuous nunnery, to Abelard glorying in the fact that she had been his mistress and still maintaining that she would rather be his mistress than his wife. The other is the twenty-ninth of Abelard's sermons, preached to Heloise and her virtuous sisters on the theme of chastity. It is a very rare virtue, even amongst nuns, the preacher says. He tells them that in most convents there are a few elderly retired prostitutes who initiate the younger to evil ways. The language is to us almost unintelligible. He tells these pious nuns how priests administer the sacraments to women "with hands with which

they are accustomed to play with their breasts or their obscene parts." This is the real Middle Ages: the heart of the period that lies between the two greatest of the Papal reformers, the age when, as you read in pretty stories, men and women yoked themselves to carts, with penitent groans or joyous hymns, to bring stone for the building of the beautiful cathedrals. It is folly to imagine that you can apply modern psychology to this period. You have to read its detailed chronicles and other intimate documents.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE "REFORMED" POPES

**R**OMAN Catholic writers have so severely attacked Mr. H. G. Wells for the statements about the medieval Church in his "Outline of History" that some may fancy that it contains a quite candid account of the life of the Church. It is, on the contrary, in some respects very far from candid. We appreciate his reminder that "while Europe in the ninth century was still a weltering disorder of war and pillage, there flourished a great Arab Empire in Egypt and Mesopotamia, far more civilized than anything Europe could show"; though it is feeble to add that "even in Spain and north Africa there was a vigorous intellectual life," for the Arab civilization was at its finest in Spain and Sicily, not merely in the ninth century but for several centuries, and it had an educative effect on Europe which Mr. Wells has not realized. On the other hand, while he devotes two pages to a flattering account of the first Crusade, he dismisses the hundred and fifty years of degradation of the Papacy in three lines, merely mentioning that John XI and John XII were "abominable creatures"—he is wrong about John XI and there were several others as bad as John XII—whose lives "few writers can be found to excuse."

But he is still more misleading when he goes on to say that "the heart and body of Latin Christendom had remained earnest and simple, and the generality of the common priests and monks and nuns had lived exemplary and faithful lives." I have said enough about the life of the priests and monks and nuns. Wherever we find a really religious archbishop or bishop we have a very saddened confession of the state of his diocese. I have taken little notice of isolated instances of vice on the part of priests and monks, though a collection of very picturesque stories could be made, and have given general descriptions as far as possible. If even these do not seem numerous enough to cover the whole period, remember two things. First, the majority of the prelates were not sufficiently concerned about the moral condition of their dioceses to leave us any report on the matter. Except in short periods when a strong Pope controlled the hierarchy for a few years or a really religious and strict-living king appeared—which was rare—it is literally true that the majority of

the bishops and archbishops were just feudal nobles who had their troops of entertainers and hunters and let the religious life of the diocese drift. Secondly, no historian has yet collected all the indications of the morality of the Middle Ages that are available. Mr. Lea has been the most industrious collector, but, as I have just shown in the case of France in the early part of the twelfth century, there are large numbers of indications of clerical and monastic vice that can be added to those he gives. I give enough in this work to show that looseness, coarseness, and violence were the normal features of life.

No historian should in such circumstances look for a virtuous laity, and Mr. Wells's belief that the people were "earnest and simple," and shocked at the conduct of the clergy and Popes, is not based upon any historical evidence. We have a few works in which strict bishops draw up series of questions for their priests when they are making a moral inquiry into the conduct of the people, especially the women. Many of these I cannot reproduce even in general terms. I do not know if I may venture to say that one is, for instance, to ask the women if they have been accustomed to chop up certain parts of the anatomy of bitches and put a little in their husbands' beer to make them more passionate. There were far worse questions. The crudeness of life was unbelievable. In some districts the most treasured relic was the dried sex-organ of a saintly bishop—more probably the man was originally a bishop of robust passions—which the women kissed. Wax models of the organs were frequently included amongst the votive offerings at a shrine, just as little wax arms or legs were offered by men who had been healed in those members. Nine-tenths of the people were serfs, later peasants, the whole family living and sleeping in one room. At the hostels, where the better class would spend a night on a pilgrimage, both sexes slept and undressed—there were no such things as night-dresses—in a common large room. Over and over again we read of misconduct in the churches themselves, even by the Papal officials and pilgrims in St. Peter's. In some places if a woman called another by a certain ugly name she was compelled to walk in the next religious procession in her shift while the other woman walked behind her with a needle. We read in the theologians of the time discussions as to when a woman might be called a prostitute—how many different men she must have intercourse with; and one authority for some reason put the number at 23,000. Sex was the joke of Europe, but, as there was no improvement whatever in this respect, I will return to the subject in a later book. Instead of being shocked at the morals of the clergy the people sang very gay songs about them. Except where the fanatics for celibacy came to persuade them that the ministrations of married priests were of no religious value, they generally preferred to have the priests decently married.

The first condition of improvement, apart from education, of this turbulent and vicious world was that the bishops and archbishops should be men who would not only set a good example but would see to the morals of their priests and see that the priests strictly

watched their people. The strict Popes maintained that the root of the evil was that the secular princes appointed the prelates, or sold the wealthy bishoprics and abbeys to them, and the Papacy fought the princes for a century, during which hundreds of thousands were slain in war, to take this right from them. We shall see how it all ended in a simple compromise that might have occurred to a wise man much earlier, but the fact is that the hierarchy was not improved, and so there was no improvement in the general condition, when the right of investiture was won for the Papacy. The fundamental cause of the corruption of the Church was, as Mr. Wells rightly says, its wealth. Europe was incredibly poor in those days, yet abbeys and bishoprics became extremely rich. So there very naturally grew up the practice of selling them, which the Church calls the sin of simony. The reformers particularly addressed themselves to this, and we may begin the next phase of the history of the Popes by considering what was the result of their efforts. Let me first, as usual, state a general truth, which you will find fully substantiated by the evidence I give: simony not only did not cease, but it grew worse and worse in Rome itself during the next three centuries.

#### §1. ROME'S GREED FOR GOLD

Gregory VII had died in misery and despair, in 1085, and to the friends who criticized his violent and violence-provoking methods he had replied that simony must at all cost be suppressed as a first condition of moral reform. Thirty-five years later, or in the year 1120, Peter Abelard proposed to go to Rome to seek justice, and we find his friend Prior Foulques writing to him:

“O pitiful and wholly useless proposal! Hast thou never heard of the avarice and impurity of Rome? Who is wealthy enough to satisfy that devouring whirlpool of harlotry? Who would ever be able to fill their greedy purses? . . . For all those who have approached that See in our time without a weight of gold have lost their cause and have returned in confusion and disgrace.”

In the Migne collection of early Christian and medieval works from which I generally quote, the letter of Foulques, a well-known monk and writer of the time, is given without this scorching indictment of Rome, but no one now disputes the genuineness of the passage. In fact, in the Migne collection itself more than one work of the time says much the same about Rome. The famous Abbot Sager to whom I have referred as the reformer of St. Denis (and stealer of the nunnery of Argenteuil) says in his “Life of Louis the Great” that when he and his companions had completed a certain mission to Rome, “we escaped the avarice of the Romans and took our leave.” He is not referring to “hotel-keepers,” as some ingenious modern suggests, for he tells how later Pope Paschal II came to France and lodged in St. Denis, in 1106, and how “contrary to the custom of the Romans, he expressed no affection for the gold, silver, and precious pearls of

the monastery." As a matter of fact, the Pope was then seeking French sympathy and aid against Germany, and did not venture to levy the customary blackmail. I have already said that the abbey of St. Denis was not reformed until 1127, so the Pope genially visited it during its most dissolute days, under the scandalous Abbot Adam. From one of the German Emperors we learn that Papal Legates used to take with them on their missions blank certificates, signed by the Pope, authorizing them to appropriate objects. When they noticed something very desirable, they filled up a certificate and produced it.

It was the same Pope Paschal whose court, Matthew of Paris tells us, a dissolute noble spoke of "buying" when he wanted a bishopric; and it was the same Pope, the same author tells us, who refrained out of love of money from censuring an adulterous king or the duke and his troops who dispersed with their swords a group of bishops who wanted to censure the king. And Paschal II is offered to us as a particularly good Pope. Another writer of the time (also in the Migne collection), Bèrenger, speaks of "a Roman who had learned to love gold rather than God in the Roman court"; and yet another, the strict monk Bernard of Cluny, says that "Rome gives to every one who gives Rome all he has." Thus one generation after the reforms and wars of Hildebrand Rome was notorious throughout Christendom for greed and simony; and we shall find it in this respect growing worse and worse until the earthquake of the Reformation chastens it.

## §2. AN ERA OF BLOODSHED

No northern prelate now wanted the chair of Peter which Gregory had left vacant. The climate of Rome seemed to be unhealthful, and the once famous city was a heap of smoking ruins amidst which the tattered Romans nursed their fierce hatred of the Hildebrandians, while an anti-Pope, Clement III, held most of the churches. Hence the reformers with great difficulty persuaded the Abbot of Monte Cassino to become Victor III. In four days, before he could be consecrated, he was driven out by the Romans, and he resigned and retired to his abbey. Another Hildebrandian became Pope Urban II, and Victor now returned with a Norman army; and the supporters of the three Vicars of Christ fought savagely once more in the churches and on the streets. Victor won and was consecrated, but he was a comparatively decent man (a saintly man, of course, in Catholic literature) and he fled again from the blood and hatred. The saintly Matilda of Tuscany brought him back with her troops, and, as the feast of St. Peter was near, the three rival bodies fought a more savage battle than ever to decide which Pope should have the honor of saying mass in St. Peter's on that day. Clement and the Romans won, and next day Victor and the Normans won; but, in short, the good man had had enough, and he went back to Monte Cassino to die.

That left only two Popes, one of them, Urban, a monk of the strict type; but he fought truculently, and blood flowed daily. There

were six years of anarchy. Then, in 1094, Urban II came back with an army of Imperial troops and took possession of St. Peter's. The Lateran palace was unfit for human habitation, and Urban had to borrow money to rent a house. But as it is Urban who preached the First Crusade, and as you will wonder how a fanatical supporter of Hildebrand came to have imperial troops, let me tell the story shortly.

The pious Matilda of Tuscany, almost the only ruler in Europe who supported the reformers, had lost her husband, and on the reform-theory of life, ought to have preserved a chaste widowhood, especially as she was over forty. But they persuaded her, for the good of the Church, to wed a young noble of eighteen so as to secure a new political alliance. She and some of the clergy then entered upon one of those loathsome intrigues which were hardly less repellent than the chronic bloodshed. The Emperor's son Conrad, a sensitive youth who resented his father's coarse ways, was encouraged to rebel, and Henry's wife was encouraged to desert him and make the foulest charges against him. An ecclesiastical assembly, presided over by the Pope, solemnly heard the charges against the Emperor—that he had tried to compel his wife and son to commit incest, that he had forced the Empress to submit to the embraces of his soldiers, etc.—hastily concluded that they were true, and exhibited him to the whole of Christendom as a monster of viciousness. That broke the power of Henry IV in Italy, and Urban II cleared Rome with his Norman troops. For five further years he ruled the ragged and, in the main, bitterly hostile and murderous population of the city. And all that you read as a rule about Pope Urban II is how from his august throne in Rome—as a matter of fact, neither the Vatican nor the Lateran palace was at first fit to live in—the austere and saintly Pope summoned the devout knights of Christendom (most of whom were as devout as modern gunmen and less clean) to rescue the Holy Places from the infidel. There was one bright side to it. The "infidel" had a splendid civilization and he gave the knights of Europe a few lessons in courtesy and in the use of soap and clean linen.

Paschal II, another "strict and virtuous monk," succeeded Urban in a few years (1099). He is the Pope who surprised the monks of St. Denis by not laying hands on their treasures and who let his Legate be chased out of the room by the soldiers of an adulterous prince. He is the Pope who, when the Emperor's second son was induced to rebel, called his act "an inspiration from God" and approved the son's imprisonment and barbarous treatment of his father. But the new Henry was worse than the old, and Papacy and Empire were soon in the old passionate antagonism. The Popes, quite naturally, to complete their campaign against simony wanted to deprive secular princes of the right to appoint or invest bishops; the Emperor, just as naturally, refused to have their prelates, who were feudal nobles like any others, appointed by a foreign power. This "right of investiture" was the chief ground of the quarrel of the next fifty years in the course of which, directly or indirectly, hun-

dreds of thousands were slain, and it ended in a simple compromise in 1122. But passion was to flame at white-heat over it for another dozen years before the wisdom of the Popes found that solution or their arrogance would admit it. Henry V came to Rome in 1110, and his knights with drawn swords intimidated the Pope and his bishops in St. Peter's. And again the infuriated Roman people flung themselves against the troops and there was another horrible butchery. The Emperor was knocked off his horse, and a German count who dismounted and gave Henry his horse was torn to pieces by the Romans and his flesh was thrown to the dogs. The regular troops prevailed, and what was left of Rome was looted once more.

A few months later the Pope ratified the treaty for which the Emperor had pressed, and he swore a solemn oath that he would take no revenge for the imperial intimidation and would not send after the Emperor a bull of excommunication. But the terms of the treaty surrendered the right to invest bishops to the Emperor, and the reformers, when the troops withdrew, gathered furiously round the Pope and demanded that he should repudiate it and ignore his oath. There were now turbulent scenes in the sacred palace, the most religious of the reformers charging the Pope with cowardly surrender and even heresy. Paschal certainly resisted the pressure for a long time, and he to the end refused to excommunicate Henry, but otherwise he, to the horror of many prelates, repudiated his oath and annulled the treaty. Other prelates, however, pressed for excommunication, and a Council of Vienne, which the Pope confirmed, passed the censure of excommunication. A further complication was that the pious Matilda of Tuscany died and left her principality to the Pope, though it was regarded as part of the Empire. Henry marched into Italy once more, and Pope Paschal fled and ended his stormy pontificate in exile.

Another Hildebrandian Pope, Gelasius II, was elected. He and his cardinals met in a monastery, and a Roman noble of imperialist sympathies broke into it with his men. He knocked the Pope down with his fists, trampled on him, and then took him in chains, with many of the cardinals, to his castle. But some of the cardinals had escaped, and they summoned the Normans and the Papalist Romans and rescued the Pope. German troops at once returned to Rome, and the Pope fled in a vessel on the Tiber with every circumstance of romance. The German archers shot their arrows—the Pope says that the arrows were poisoned, but we may doubt this—at the boat from the banks and threatened to set fire to it. Henry set up an anti-Pope, and Gelasius crept back into Rome. But the imperialists discovered him as he rode to one of the churches, and there was another battle. Hours afterwards they found the Pope sitting in a field, sobbing, with a few sympathetic women round him. To this pitch had Hildebrand's great campaign brought the Papacy.

Gelasius fled to France and died there the next year, and a French archbishop of noble family and austere views became Pope Calixtus II. One of the great and virtuous Popes Calixtus was, say

the Catholic writers; but I am not so sure about the description when I read how, as no one disputes, he captured his rival, the anti-Pope, and brought him to Rome mounted derisively on a camel, his face to the tail, clad in a shaggy goat-skin. Certainly he held a great council at Rheims, and repeated all the old condemnations of vice and simony and violence. I should, in fact, like to admire him for his denunciation of war and his demand that at least the Truce of God—a few weeks of abstinence of fighting at certain holy seasons—be properly observed. He has also the merit of bringing to a close the long and ghastly struggle over investitures which had for fifty years paralyzed the action of the Papacy. By the Concordat of Worms (1122) the clergy were to elect abbots and bishops in the presence of representatives of the Emperor: the Pope was to “invest” them with ring and crozier, the symbols of their spiritual power, and the Emperor was to confer their secular powers and properties on them by a touch of his royal scepter. But, instead of giving you a colored picture of the great event and showing what a mighty advantage it must have been to the life of Europe, let me just remind you, curtly, that there was no improvement of high clerical morals and no decrease of simony, so it was all futile.

Calixtus did not spend two years in Rome, and he had barely begun to apply his reforming zeal to the city when he died. Of his successor the serious historian has really nothing further to say than that he was Pope for six years. How little impression he made on Rome was at once made clear. The various factions were waiting with indecent eagerness for the news of his death, and they flamed out in a violent quarrel and elected two Popes. The genuine Pope was Innocent II, and he went to France and enlisted the interest of the great monastic reformer, Bernard of Clairvaux, who was then the strongest man in Europe; and Bernard brought him back and put him in the Papal chair, and they held a great council in the Lateran, with a thousand bishops and countless abbots, and decided that all this vice and simony and murder must really cease; and it was all just as futile as ever. Innocent, it seems to me, did not set too inspiring an example. He had the anti-Pope brought before him, and with his own white hands he snatched the Papal garments from the man’s shoulders. But I am not going to describe at any length the very impressive discourses of the Pope and the bishops and abbots about the incessant broiling and warring that made a hell of Europe. Because in the very next year Rome went to war with the rival city of Tivoli, which it hated, and to the mighty anger of the Romans the Pope induced the Tivoleses to surrender to him personally, not to the Roman army, and swear fealty to him. As a result of which the Romans made a more serious and more interesting rebellion than ever and told the Pope that they would henceforward rule themselves, in the ancient Roman style. Threats, entreaties, and bribery failed to move the Romans, and Innocent died, like so many of his predecessors, in despair. The great pacifist, as some represent him to be, had spent eight out of the thirteen years of his pontificate outside Rome, in exile or leading military expeditions.

## §3. THE PAPACY STRANGLES DEMOCRACY

This latest development at Rome, the claim of self-government or the virtual restoration of the ancient Republic, introduces us to another feature of medieval life which is too rarely noticed by modern historians. It has become a convention of history that these turbulent times needed the despotic authority of a Pope and a king, or that spiritual and temporal monarchy was quite in harmony with the best sentiment of the age. As far as the spiritual monarchy is concerned I shall show in the last chapter that, on the contrary, as soon as the men of the Middle Ages began to think they rebelled very extensively against Rome, and during the next three centuries, until the time of Luther, the Popes had to use a truculent and savage machinery, putting several million to death, to maintain their power. Rebellion against the temporal monarchy, which always had its knightly parasites and its immense armies, was naturally very restricted. But there was in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a widespread desire of self-government or democracy, and the Popes, acting in their own secular interest, were the most deadly enemies of this aspiration. For a hundred and fifty years the Romans tried to cast off the temporal rule of the Popes and restore the ancient Republic.

At the Lateran Council of 1139, to which I have referred, the bishops condemned as "schismatical" a man named Arnold of Brescia who deserves to be far better known and honored in our day, yet the brutal execution of him by the Papal officials is rarely even mentioned. There is no work on him in the English language, but he was in his way as remarkable as Peter Abelard. Both were pioneers of a new spirit, the first of practical and religious and the second of intellectual reform, and both were hounded over Europe by the St. Bernard of Clairvaux who figures so honorably in our manuals, and crushed by the Papacy. Arnold was the son of a poor priest of Brescia. He was a cleric, though probably not a priest, and many hold that he was not even a monk. Of his personal virtue, religious zeal, and stern asceticism no one has ever raised any doubt; and he was a man of considerable learning for the time and of rare eloquence. He grew up amidst the fights of the Patarenes which I described in the last chapter, and at an early age he felt a strong disgust at the wealth, luxury, and looseness of prelates, priests, and monks. He seems to have preached a good deal in the open air and to have had a large following, for the Bishop of Brescia reported him to the Lateran Council. The prelates seem to have been embarrassed by the task of finding heresy in his pure Christian faith, so they pronounced him a schismatic, or severer of the people from the clergy, and banished him. For a time he worked with Abelard in France, and he even taught at Paris, for the French king was for the moment hostile to the Pope. But Bernard of Clairvaux got him exiled, and, wherever he went, Bernard's fierce letters followed. Bernard quite acknowledged his virtues but affected to find heresy in his attacks on the higher clergy. He was, said Bernard, "externally an angel of

light but internally an angel of the devil." He was, in fact, a Luther of the twelfth century, and we shall see presently that there were hundreds of thousands ready to listen to such preachers.

There was a Cardinal Guido, a Papal Legate, who recognized the purity of Arnold's life and teaching and protected him, for some years, on a mission in Bohemia, from the fanatical hatred of St. Bernard, one of the most reactionary influences of the twelfth century. Guido returned to Rome just about the time when the Romans set up their own government, and he brought Arnold and induced the Pope to pardon him. As it was an essential part of Arnold's doctrine that the Church ought to surrender all its wealth and temporal power, he was to this extent in entire agreement with the Romans, but in view of his recent reconciliation with Rome, and indeed in view of his own purely religious principles, he probably confined himself at first to the negative statement that the Church of Christ should attend only to spiritual matters. Papal writers later found heresy in his teaching, and imperialist writers made him out to be a political anarchist. The Cambridge Medieval History and the latest writer on Arnold, Antonino de Stefano ("Arnaldo da Brescia e i suoi tempi," 1921) rightly deny these things. But as Bernard continued to egg the Pope against him, he probably identified himself with the Republic and was protected by it. At last a cardinal was killed in one of the tumults, and the Pope intimidated the city by placing an interdict on it. The complete suspension of Church life brought the Romans to his feet, and he demanded the banishment of Arnold. He fled to the country, where he found a protector, but the new Emperor, who came to Italy for coronation, obligingly captured him for the Pope, and he was hanged, and his body burned, by the Pontifical Prefect of Rome. His ashes were thrown into the Tiber lest the Romans be tempted to venerate them as those of a saint and martyr. Rome had opened its bloody war against critics and reformers, and it was, though so few historians mention it, the beginning of an historic development of great importance.

The appearance of democracy and a republic in the heart of the Middle Ages surprises many, but it was only one indication of a broad movement. Trade and industry were, as I said, increasing, and larger areas of Europe were brought under peaceful cultivation. Towns were growing rapidly, and they were purchasing charters of self-government from the nobles or bishops who had hitherto governed them. In north Italy and France, especially, there was a considerable growth of the democratic spirit, and some of the north-Italian cities, always far in advance of Rome, became independent of feudal rulers. A writer of the time, Otto of Freisingen, says that many Italian cities of the time "imitated the wisdom of the ancient Romans in the organization of their cities and the preservation of the republic." It did not require great learning in Rome to know that the city had once been the center of the greatest republic in the world's history, though how far Arnold of Brescia helped to restore the ancient forms we do not know. It is not necessary here to describe the long conflict of the Popes and the Roman democracy. In

some form or other the Senate which the Romans established on the ancient Capitol lasted more than forty years. There was no more inclination of the Romans themselves to submit to the temporal sovereignty of the Popes than of the Popes to recognize the people's right of self-government. But the weakness of the Roman democracy was that, as the city depended so largely on the wealth which the Church drew from the rest of Europe, there was not, relatively, as large an artisan population as in the cities of north Italy. Year after year the Popes fought the republic, by bribery, intrigue, and open hostility, and in the thirteenth century they, as we shall see, completely destroyed it.

#### §4. CONTINUED USELESSNESS OF THE PAPACY

I have in describing this struggle of the Popes against the promising aspirations of the Roman people reached the fifth Pope from the Pope Honorius who had presided over the great Lateran Council in 1139, but there is very little to be said about them. At the death of Honorius the See fell, in some curious way, to the Cardinal Guido who had protected and esteemed Arnold of Brescia, but he survived his election less than six months. His successor Lucius II declared open war on the republic, led his troops against the Capitol, and fell mortally wounded in the attack. The next Pope, Eugenius III, astonished everybody. He was a devout and, apparently, simple-minded monk, a friend of St. Bernard, and the Romans seem to have hoped that he would be too spiritual to renew the secular claims of the Papacy. St. Bernard himself is curiously embarrassed in his letters. He rejoices that so saintly a man has the triple crown, but he hardly succeeds in concealing his opinion that the Pope is a fool. He speaks of the Pope as "a rustic" and trusts the Lord will give him intelligence. To the surprise of all Eugenius announced that he was going to win back the city by force of arms and, gathering troops in the provinces, he for a time succeeded. The Romans hated him, and he spent most of his time in exile, while St. Bernard ruled the Church. Naturally that saint must have another Crusade, a really grand and pious and final Crusade, against the Turks, and it was with great joy that he saw the mighty army assemble. He did not very loudly murmur even when, before they left Europe, they perpetrated horrible and extensive massacres of the unarmed and inoffensive Jews of the cities. But this Crusade was almost the worst failure of the series. It did practically nothing, but it cost the lives of thirty thousand men; and Bernard must have reflected that it was a singular comment on the results of his own life-crusade when he confessed that it was the luxury and license of the Christian knights that were responsible for the failure. He died, heavily depressed, soon afterwards. Hardly one of these medieval reformers did not end his life with a melancholy sense of complete failure, yet the Catholic historian points jubilantly to the great work they did in furthering civilization. To the real advances that were taking place they were completely indifferent and contributed nothing.

In 1154 an Englishman, Nicholas Breakspeare, became Pope Hadrian IV. He was the son of a poor priest, but study in Rome filled him with the Papal ideal in its most arrogant and aristocratic form, and, as he was also a monk of strict life and some learning, the cardinals elected him. It was he who drove Arnold of Brescia from Rome and then induced the imperial troops to bring him back to face his horrible death: a fate which, we read, he met with a noble serenity. Another notable act of the "great" Pope was that he handed Ireland, which he claimed to be a Papal fief, over to England and inaugurated the long series of bloody conflicts and suppressions in that country. As a reward of his generosity, of course, England was to secure for the Papacy from Ireland the payment of the annual tribute which was known as Peter's Pence.

The secular interests of the Papacy, in fact, perverted the principles of nearly every religious man who was elevated to the throne and unfitted him to have much moral influence on Europe. The new Emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, was crowned in St. Peter's, and to their great indignation the Romans were excluded from the solemnity and the festival. From the city side of the river they watched the proceedings until at last they hurled themselves against the barrier of imperial troops on the bridge. In the fight which followed it is said that a thousand Romans were slain. But the Pope derived little satisfaction from his new agreement with the Emperor. Either from distrust or from hope of greater profit—which was now the chronic motive of action of the Papacy—he entered into alliance with the King of Sicily, whom the Emperor regarded as a usurper, and the ancient quarrel broke out with new bitterness. Frederic's characterizations of the Papacy in his letters reflect the cynicism of half of Europe. The Popes were "insatiable clutchers of gold," were full of "pride," and so on. Attempts at reconciliation failed, and both sides prepared for a new war when the Pope died, after five unprofitable years of "haughty humility."

The ensuing election shows us that there was not the least improvement in the character of the Papal court. Of the seventeen cardinals fourteen were of the anti-imperialist faction, and they elected Cardinal Roland, who took the name of Alexander VI. What followed might be considered amusing if it were not for the solemn pretensions of those concerned. Cardinal Roland murmured the customary and totally insincere remark that he was unworthy of the great honor, and, to his pained astonishment, one of the three imperialist cardinals said that, if such was his feeling, they ought not to compel him to assume the dignity. His two colleagues joined and said that he was the proper person to be Pope. They clothed him with the purple cape or mantle and saluted Pope Victor IV. A senator who was present angrily plucked the cape from his shoulders and kept it, but they had another in reserve, and Victor hastily donned it—so hastily that he put it on inside out and provoked a jeer—and was conducted by soldiers with drawn swords to be presented to the people. Rome was divided and violent once more,

and both Popes fled from the city and excommunicated each other in the usual style. The emperor naturally supported Victor, but he never found it possible to return to Rome and after three years' direction of rather less than half of Christendom from the Italian provinces, he went the way of all Popes. His rival Alexander had the allegiance and the gold of France and England whose touching loyalty was sustained by their hatred of Germany. He lived in France for five years, and with French gold he successfully paved the way back to Rome. Whereupon a small German army rushed to Rome, tore down the gates of St. Peter's with their axes, and cut their way through the Papal troops which filled the church. Dead and dying lay all over the floor of St. Peter's, and the blood, we are told, smeared the pavement and walls as far as the steps of the high altar. It is in this case no use for any historian to attempt to contrast the behavior of rude soldiers and saintly clergy. The two ablest leaders of Frederic's troops were fighting archbishops.

The German anti-Pope was now installed, and Rome prepared to renew its faction fights. But once more circumstances which neither Pope nor Emperor controlled stepped in to decide the issue. From the poisonous marshes which had once been the smiling cornfields of the ancient Romans an epidemic entered the German camp, and Frederic made a rapid retreat to Germany. It is said that he lost two thousand knights, nobles, and bishops, besides the common soldiers. Rome was, however, still dangerous for Pope Alexander, and he remained away from it for ten years. Barbarossa, then lost his power and made peace, and the Romans, impoverished by the long absence of the Papal court, implored Alexander to return. He held another great Lateran Council, on which I need not dwell as it did no more than its predecessors, and he died a few months later.

This brings us to 1181, a century after the pontificate of Gregory VII, a century of remarkable progress from the secular point of view but of no progress whatever in the moral and religious sense, in spite of the epidemics of fervor which here and there accompanied the building of the great Gothic cathedrals. Such outbursts were usually, we must remember, spasms of repentance for vice and violence and had no permanent results. One would have thought that at least the Romans would have been sobered by their experiences and the long absence of the Pope, but we find them behaving much as they had done in the tenth century. Within six months they drove the new Pope, Lucius III, out of Rome, and returned to self-government. Their second ancient rival, the city of Tusculum, now attracted their hatred and we read that they cut out the eyes of twenty-six prisoners of war. They selected one, in some barbaric sense of humor, whom they blinded in one eye and crowned with a tiara, and they sent him to the Pope bearing the inscription "Lucius III, Traitor." Lucius spent six months of his long pontificate in Rome, and his successor, Urban III, a fighting Pope who wore himself out in a two-years struggle with the Germans, never entered it. The next Pope lasted a few weeks, and a more subtle and diplomatic Roman noble became Pope Clement III. He undermined the re-

public by gold and intrigue and returned to Rome, but he lived only two years.

Celestine III, the next Pope, does not make a pleasant impression on historians. He pleased the Romans by getting for them from the new Emperor, Henry VI, whose troops guarded it, the rival city of Tusculum, and he remained silent while the Romans wreaked a quite barbaric vengeance on the city. "They," says a chronicler of the time, "slew many and mutilated nearly all either in the feet or hands or other members." Every building of the city was utterly destroyed and the surviving inhabitants were dispersed throughout Italy; and the Pope stipulated that all the property confiscated should go to himself. He is praised by some modern writers for his pious zeal in redeeming captives, but he prudently refused to interfere in the case of the most scandalous detention of the age. Richard the Lion-Heart, King of England, was seized by the Duke of Austria as he returned from the Crusades and was kept in prison for nearly two years. It was very patently a case for Papal intervention, but until Richard had been released the Pope refused to do anything, although Richard's mother, Queen Eleanor, wrote to him piteous appeals and finally most scorching letters. Milman translates long passages of these, and I may quote a few lines:

For trifling causes your cardinals are sent in all their power even to the most barbarous regions; in this arduous, in this lamentable, in this common cause you have not appointed even a subdeacon or an acolyte. It is lucre which in our day commissions Legates, not respect for Christ, not the honor of the Church, not the peace of kingdoms, not the salvation of the people. . . Restore me my son, O man of God, if thou art indeed a man of God, not a man of blood.

It was not in the Papal interest, and Celestine refused to move until the king was free, when he scattered a few cheap anathemas.

It took a more fearful outrage to draw genuine anger from the Pope. The new Emperor, Henry VI, was worse than his predecessor. He ignored the Pope and passed by Rome when, in 1194, he came to subdue southern Italy. His character, cruel to the verge of savagery, was known, and all submitted to him. He then produced letters—forged letters, some chroniclers say—which were supposed to prove that there was a great conspiracy against him. An appalling number of bishops (including several archbishops) and nobles were executed or mutilated. Some were hanged, some burned alive, while "blinding and castration were the mildest punishments." The Pope excommunicated Henry, but he did not condescend to feel the censure. It was the tradition of his house to be excommunicated. The terrible weapons of the Church were blunted by too frequent and too indiscriminate a use, and royal sinners trembled no longer at the threat of their use. So the world approached the thirteenth century of the Christian Era and the pontificate of one who is generally regarded as the greatest of the Popes.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE GREATEST OF THE POPES

**I**NNOCENT III was the hundred and seventy-eighth Pope to occupy what was poetically called the chair of Peter. Not more than half a dozen of these in twelve centuries had been men of impressive personality; far more than that number had been murderers or adulterers; and certainly at least fifty of them had been quite unfit to occupy the position of head of Christendom. Only a small minority of them had the strength or the equipment even to attempt to make an impression on the life of Europe. The suggestion that they in any way promoted the restoration of civilization in Europe is one of the most wilful and unfounded that any historian could make. We have their records or their letters, and any person who attends to facts can see that from the year 400 to the year 1200 there had not been ten Popes who had even attempted on a large scale to curb the passions of their lawless subjects or foster any element in the life of Europe that made for the restoration of civilization.

The writer who wishes us to pay any serious attention to this fiction of the beneficent influence of the Papacy must therefore invite us to study the action of the half-dozen strong and really religious Popes whose collected letters show that they did actually attempt to effect a moral improvement in the life of Europe. Of these Gregory I, Gregory VII, and Innocent III are clearly the greatest; and I may say at once that no Pope to compare with them in strength of character and depth of religious feeling arose after them until the second half of the sixteenth century, if indeed any later Pope can be put on the same level. The claim that the Popes helped civilization, which is the most serious issue for any historian of the Papacy, stands or falls with the influence of these Popes. I have therefore examined with great care the work of Gregory I and Gregory VII, and we will now give the same dispassionate consideration to the pontificate of Innocent III.

Since there is so much confusion of ideas, so much vague rhetoric, in most of what is written on this subject, let us once more keep clear in our own minds. These Popes never attempted to influence any element of the life of Europe that can be connected with what we call its civilization except morals. They were too sincerely religious to care a straw about nine-tenths of what we call civilization: art, refinement of sentiment, intellectual culture, general education, science, the distribution of wealth, wise law and legal procedure, the maintenance of peace, and so on. They censured crime only because it was a sin, and they paid not the least attention to the gross injustice of the social and political order and the position of

woman. No modern sociologist before whom you put a full and genuine account of their work would grant them any constructive social interest. It was men's eternal, not temporal, interests they sought to consult. Above all they sought to check sexual license, and in order to reduce this in the Church they tried to abolish simony.

We shall find that Innocent III fails as signally as Gregory VII did in his two chief aims: the abolition of simony and the correction of morals. I have already quoted his own words near the close of his life, in which he confesses his failure. The note of his sermons and his later letters is, not triumph, but profound melancholy and despair. Gregory VII had ended on the same note. Within little more than half a century of his death we shall find the Popes themselves organizing simony, for their profit, on a portentous scale; we shall find the new life of the troubadours and the courts of love leading to, if it is possible, a greater sexual license, in clergy and laity, than before. Thus in what these great Popes attempted they obviously failed; and in what they succeeded they positively checked and retarded the civilization of Europe. Gregory I had won great wealth for the Papacy and degraded it. Hadrian I had won a temporal dominion for it and exposed it to further degradation. Nicholas I had won spiritual power for it by forgeries and led to worse strife. Gregory VII had added bloodshed to untruth and had brought about a flaming reaction of hatred. And now we shall find Innocent III using the bloody weapon of Gregory to extinguish intellectual inquiry as well as political revolt, to bury finally the emerging idea of democracy, to fetter the reawakening intellect of Europe, to sterilize the science that is imparted into it. What real advance the world now made we shall see in the next book, but it was won in spite of all the ideals of the Popes.

### §1. THE CHARACTER OF INNOCENT III

Let us first, as in the case of Hildebrand, be quite clear that Innocent was a profoundly and sincerely religious man, for in both cases it was the intensity of fervor and faith that made the Popes mischievous. The word civilization is not in the vocabulary of such men. We shall later find Popes with a zeal for art or culture; sensual Popes like Nicholas V or Leo X or frankly immoral Popes like Alexander VI and Julius II. To such things or to what we now call social interests men like Innocent were contemptuously indifferent. Art somehow led to luxury and immorality; culture led to heresy: both therefore led men to hell. The emancipation of the serfs was in Innocent's time leading to the first great measure of justice to the workers since the fall of Rome. Innocent, and all the other Popes, were indifferent to this movement as a whole. In Innocent's time there was still, as we saw, a very remarkable and persistent attempt to win the right of self-government, of democracy, and the Pope was its most deadly enemy. In his time the first universities were being founded. The only interest he took in them was when some teacher was accused of heresy.

To think otherwise of such a man as Innocent III is a sheer anachronism. His servile biographers praise his high culture and remind us how he studied at the best universities; theology at Paris, law at Bologna. He came of a noble family. But when he came back to Rome, in his later twenties, he was already a Churchman of the very strictest, the fanatical type. He became a cardinal, but one of the minor revolutions in Papal politics put him out of office for a few years, and he used his leisure to write a large book which he called "On Contempt of the World." I doubt if any other young man of thirty ever wrote with such withering scorn of the world and its pleasures and of that contemptible little creature, man, who runs after them. For the rest, the "culture" of the book is on the intellectual level of Gregory I. It is a tissue of myths and absurdities. Theology and Church law were the only things worth learning.

The "register" of Innocent III contains more than five thousand letters. His pontificate lasted eighteen years, and there was scarcely a movement in Europe, unless it was purely cultural or secular, that did not come under his notice. He was "lord of the world" from Ireland to Armenia. He was fond of comparing the secular rule of that world to the moon, which borrows all its light from the sun (the Papacy). He was an ultra-Gregory; the omnipotent and omniscient ruler of the United States of the World. He encouraged charity and philanthropy, for that was a religious duty. He rebuked princely sinners, when it was prudent, and lax bishops and monasteries and nunneries. But why need we dwell on these things? To say that he thus gave the world supreme lessons in justice and temperance is entirely futile in the face of the fact, which he virtually acknowledges, that even in these respects he left the world no better than he found it, and it soon became worse.

## §2. DIPLOMACY AND FUTILITY

The genuine study of Innocent the Great is therefore a study of his failure; and the reasons are plain enough. He had no need to resort to trickery and forgery as Gregory VII had done, for the simple reason that the whole of the foundations of the Papal claim had now been forged and were accepted. I explained how Gregory VII set his lieutenants to compile summaries of the powers ascribed to the Popes, or said to have been exercised by the Popes, in earlier documents: Papal-letters and decrees, decisions of councils, and so on. There was at the time no codified Church Law, or Canon Law as Catholics call it. By the middle of the twelfth century the earliest and fundamental part of this Canon Law was ready, and Innocent had the whole of his powers and the methods of procedure plainly stated for him. All the forgeries that I have described in earlier stages of this history were incorporated into it. One may doubt if so fraudulent a code was ever in any other place associated with religion. But of genuine history Innocent knew nothing, and he thoroughly believed that he had the power to depose kings and interfere, if he would, even in secular matters all over the world.

In the exercise of these powers, however, he, like his greater

predecessors from Leo I onward, came very near to, if he did not actually adopt, the maxim that the end justifies the means. Some of his work will be examined in the next chapter, and this charge will then be fully vindicated. It applies especially to the policy of putting men, and even masses of men, women, and children, to death for their opinions. It was chiefly Innocent III who inaugurated this ghastly policy of the later Middle Ages. It remains a principle of the Canon Law of the Roman Church today, and it is one of the most tragic and pernicious errors ever associated with religion since human sacrifices were suppressed. It is inconsistent with the elementary principles of civilization, and the action of Innocent III in introducing or developing it is one of the chief reasons why I say that he and his successors, and he above all, actually retarded the recovery of Europe. But in very many of his public actions we find a tortuous diplomacy, a duplicity and compromise with principle, which in the end always bring discredit on the authority which stoops to their use.

Take his relations with the secular authority in Italy. The widow of the Emperor Henry VI ruled Sicily and South Italy in the name of her boy, Frederic. North Italy was held by a number of German barons and generals, nominally for the boy, though they were really independent dukes and counts. Innocent regarded nearly all Italy as Papal territory, and he was as determined as any of his less pious predecessors to secure it. This mythical temporal dominion had been almost the chief curse of the Papacy for four centuries. Innocent turned to the weak and ailing mother. He would be the guardian of her boy; on condition that she made the kingdom of Sicily a Papal fief. Women rarely resist Popes. There is a charge that he then financed a French adventurer who claimed the kingdom, but there is little evidence and I pass it over. But when the boy's uncle in Germany claimed the crown which a boy—his mother was now dead—could not wear, the Pope gave his support to a rival claimant; a man who had not the ghost of a title to it but he promised to be docile to the Papacy. He thus supported a very brutal civil war which lasted seven years, excommunicated German prelates and nobles who would not support an unjust usurper—and they told him in very strong language to mind his own business—and even informed the supporters of the usurper that they were released from obligations to the boy Frederic because an oath to an unbaptized child was not binding! We are not surprised that when the cynical adventurer at length got the crown he contemptuously ignored the Pope and his censures; and that the boy Frederic, later Frederic II, the greatest monarch of the Middle Ages, became a skeptic and a bitter enemy of the Papacy.

It is not history to admire the beneficent action of the Pope in censuring even kings and ignore his compromise with principles; nor is it history to admire his ideal of a united Italy when he had (as his book shows) a contempt of social interests and sought royal power for the Papacy not the welfare of the people. We see the same contempt of social principles, the subjection even of moral

principles to the interests of the Papacy, in his relations with England. We may assume that he was acquainted with the condition of clerical morals in England, but he did not interfere; and there was no anathema from Rome when King John had Prince Arthur foully murdered. He permitted John, who was a cruel, dissolute, and unscrupulous monarch, to dismiss his wife, and when the king went on to appropriate a lady who was betrothed to a French knight he was content to impose the ridiculously light penance of confession and the equipment of a hundred knights for the Crusade. War with France followed, and, when the bishops of Normandy, which the French took, expressly consulted the Pope if they must submit, Innocent refused to give an opinion.

But when the English king refused to recognize the new Archbishop of Canterbury, whom the Pope had imposed on him, Innocent took the most drastic action. To lay an interdict on the whole of England was quite legitimate—on the basis of the forged decrees of the Canon Law—but to invite any king who cared to invade England and, after a ghastly war, seize it, on the ground that it was a Papal fief, as Innocent did (after eloquently denouncing a war which the French king waged without consulting him), was one of those abuses of power that made his work futile. What followed was worse. Innocent's Legate in England was a pompous and mischievous disturber of the peace and a supporter of the brutal and unscrupulous king. When the nobles rebelled and extorted the famous charter of rights, the historic Magna Charta, from John, Innocent excommunicated them and ordered King John to refuse to carry out his promises! The historians who speak of this remarkable political achievement of the Middle Ages, the forcing of the Magna Charta, do not add, as they ought, that the "great" Pope denounced it as a document "inspired by the devil." He excommunicated the Archbishop of Canterbury for siding with the English people in a purely political matter, and he, who had a few years before urged the French king to invade and conquer England, now threatened to excommunicate that king if he or his son accepted the crown which the English nobles offered them. From beginning to end he sought neither justice nor social interests but a recognition of his claim that England was a feudal possession of the Papacy.

In quite a large number of his major acts we similarly find him, not an austere judge impressing a sense of justice on a lawless world, but compromising with principle in the interest of the Papacy. As John of England had got his marriage dissolved, Philip of France followed his example, but here there was not the same interest of the Papacy, and an interdict was laid on France. When the circumstances changed, when the Papacy was involved in a quarrel with England and Germany, Innocent found that there were good reasons for making an inquiry into Philip's claim. King Pedro of Aragon married the wife of a French knight, but he went to Rome and swore fealty and an annual subsidy to the Papacy, and so Innocent accepted his personal assurance that the count had had two wives living when he had married the lady. The King of Leon did

not flatter the Pope, so an interdict was laid on his kingdom because he married his cousin; and the king and his clergy ignored the censure. The kingdom of Castile was involved in the interdict, but the Pope lifted it when he was told that it promoted heresy; and he then threatened to excommunicate the king because he permitted the Jews to accumulate wealth.

It was natural that so sternly religious a man should lash Christendom to a Crusade against the Moors of Spain and the Turks of the east. Their Christian neighbors had learned to respect their superior civilization and were on friendly terms with them, but we quite understand that this filled the Pope with genuine horror. There are, however, features of his Crusade which, again, help to explain the futility of his work. Very few in Europe wanted a Crusade, and the Pope's fiery letters and censures were ignored for years. He then declared that he canceled the debts of any knight who joined his Crusade. Still it languished, and the Pope saw that it was necessary to raise a large sum to finance it. This led him to invent a pious trick which was soon to develop into one of the most demoralizing abuses of Christian Europe: the sale of indulgences. In one of his letters we find that a bishop has asked him if he can absolve a man who has killed a priest for seducing his wife, and the Pope replies: yes, if the man pays to the Crusade fund the money which it would cost him to make a pilgrimage to Rome. He raised large sums in this way.

When, on their way east, his Crusaders took a Christian Hungarian city for the Viennese (to pay for ships), Innocent first excommunicated and then excused them. When, however, they next took Constantinople from the Greek Christians, Innocent temperately blamed the excesses they committed in the Churches—they had committed fouler outrages than the Goths and Vandals—but he fully approved the seizure of the Greek capital; he hoped that the Greek Church would now be compelled to submit to him. The rest of his correspondence with the leaders of the Crusaders, who made a kingdom for themselves out of the Greek world and refused to move against the Turks, should be read by any man who wants to know why even the greatest of Popes was so futile. Men despised them because they so transparently put the interests of the Papacy above everything and bent every principle of religion and statecraft to those interests.

### §3. THE FAILURE OF HIS WORK

I will in the next chapter quote one of Pope Innocent's letters in which he expressly recommends the policy of deceit to his Legates in the interest of the Church, and we shall see there also how he met the growing revolt of Europe against the Papacy by murder and massacre. It was in this alone that he was successful, for a time, but his success was bought by one of the foulest outrages of the Middle Ages until the massacre of St. Bartholomew and it inaugurated the era of the Inquisition. In all his other grand aims Innocent completely failed. He had spent mighty energy and made

painful sacrifices to launch a Crusade against the Turks, and it ended so selfishly and ignominiously, stained only with Christian blood, that two years before he died the despairing Pope sent a letter to the Mohammedan Khalif asking him "in all humility" to restore Palestine to the knights who were too selfish and sensual to fight for it. The greatest aim of his life was a total failure, and his acrid censures were ignored.

His second great aim was the moral purification of the Church. From the way in which the history of this period is usually written one gets a confused impression that there was a wonderful renovation of the moral and religious life of the world. We read of the rise of new and rigorous orders of monks, the bare-footed followers of St. Francis and St. Dominic: of the glorious Gothic cathedrals which the piety of bishops and faithful erected in nearly every part of Europe: of the splendid intellectual vitality of the schoolmen, the genius of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, the science of Roger Bacon and Albert the Great: of the new poetry that culminates in Dante and the new painting that begins with Cimabue. It certainly was an age of remarkable advance, and we shall examine the progress and the causes of it in the next book. But we must first set aside the vague claim that the Papacy or the Papal Church was responsible for the progress.

The experience of Innocent in regard to his Crusade should warn any man that the real religious fervor of the thirteenth century was found only in patches, and the most terrible weapons in the arsenal of the Papacy failed to influence the majority. The Greek Empire was, it is true, in a state of pútescence, but it was the promise of pay from the Venetians and loot from the immensely wealthy Greek capital that diverted the Crusaders from Palestine to Constantinople. The Christian soldiers and priests dragged carts into the cathedral and stripped it bare, while the loose women who clung to them sang obscene songs in the sacred buildings and the filthiest outrages were committed. The Greek nuns and married women and their daughters were raped on the streets, and nearly half the city was burned down, and the whole of it was looted and barbarously treated. No threats of the Pope could dislodge these Christian knights and princes from their new possession. Many returned home with their loot, and the rest set up new principalities for themselves on the ruins of the Greek world.

We do not wonder that the Pope confessed failure, and, if he could have foreseen the future, he would have been even more melancholy. There were to be fifty further years of deadly conflict with the Emperors, and at the end of that time the Papacy would become an ignoble and shameless dependency of the French crown. A new line of sensual and frequently immoral Popes would begin, and simony would be organized as the normal procedure of ruling the Church. Neither laity nor clergy nor monks improved morally, nor was there the least moderation of the violence and chronic bloodshed that still kept Europe half-barbaric. A Positivist writer, an historian of that religion which has, from its admiration of Rome,

and the Middle Ages, been called "Catholicism minus Christianity," has pronounced the thirteenth century, the century which Innocent III inaugurated, "an age of violence, fraud, and impurity such as can hardly be conceived now." We shall prove this in detail later. The purity campaign of Innocent was as futile as that of Gregory. He contributed nothing to the civilization of Europe; and his money, pardons (or indulgences), his casuistic discovery of ways in which royal marriages could be dissolved without divorce, and his executions for heresy, were fresh elements of degradation.

## CHAPTER VI.

### EUROPE BLUDGEONED INTO OBEDIENCE

**I**N THE ideal of Innocent III we find much prominence given to an aim of which we have almost lost sight since we left the Popes of the fourth and fifth centuries. This is the suppression of heresy. In the dark survey of the world which Innocent made near the close of his long pontificate we found the new note, "heretics swarm." Very little notice is taken of this in histories of the time, yet it is a matter of the greatest historical importance. In America today even Catholics are so ashamed of the Inquisition and the executions for heresy in the history of their Church that they explain these things as medieval blunders or attempts to meet social conditions which we, with our separation of Church and State, can hardly understand. Here, almost for the first time (for it prudently avoids, on the whole, the degraded history of the Papacy), the "Calvert Handbook of Catholic Facts," which is the chief popular manual offered to "fair-minded Americans," deals with my subject. It could not very well fail to notice the Inquisition or answer the question whether Catholics think today that men who will not subscribe to their beliefs should be put to death. The few pages it devotes to the subject are amongst the most untruthful in the book.

On page 43 the authors of this "short compendium of authoritative documents" ask: "Is the Catholic Church intolerant of other religions?" The answer, of course, is "No," and it is said that "Catholic dogma may be abundantly cited to show that Catholics tolerate those who honestly hold to opinions other than their own." The authors then fail to quote **one single word of Catholic dogma** and merely throw dust in the eyes of the reader. They quote a few vague passages from the Catholic Encyclopedia and an irrelevant

passage from a letter of Pope Pius IX: not adding, of course, that this is the Pope who officially and drastically condemned the principle of toleration in the Syllabus of 1864. They impudently call the policy of intolerance "the policy of Reformation times"—we have seen that it was adopted by the Roman Church as soon as it obtained power in the fourth century—and call the real Catholic policy the tolerance which was for certain reasons (as we shall see in due course) adopted in Maryland. They quote the rash words of Bancroft that this Maryland policy "gave religious liberty its first home in the wide world"; whereas any educated person today ought to know that, apart from Buddhist Asia and even Rome, the fine civilization of the Moors of Spain had adopted the most complete religious liberty six centuries earlier.

On a later page (66) the authors expressly ask: "Were the Catholic Church to attain power in the United States, would it mean the revival here of persecution of heretics, the Inquisition, or another Massacre of Saint Bartholomew?" No, of course not: "Should Catholics attain a numerical majority of the population and control the government, the return of the violence of Reformation times is no more possible than it is today." We shall come to present-day questions in the last volume, but I may anticipate to the extent of saying that this statement, and all such assurances on the part of responsible priests—the Catholic layman is himself completely hoodwinked—are not merely untrue but deliberately untruthful. For all these writers and speakers know perfectly well that the Catholic policy is laid down, not in the Catholic Encyclopaedia or any modern writer, but in the Canon Law, of which they dare not quote a single line: for it still, in its latest edition, says that the Church may and must put heretics to death, and no Pope or Council has ever annulled this law. I will fully substantiate this at the proper time and will here briefly notice the historical excuses for the "earlier" policy, as they call it.

One is, as I have just quoted, to call it "the violence of Reformation times." As most people will be aware that the Catholic Church had butchered millions during several centuries before the Reformation, and the Protestants merely for a time used laws which the Roman Church had forced the civil government to adopt, this is too blatant to be called mendacity. But when the authors say that heretics in the Middle Ages were really executed for "treason" and that "in almost all the more horrible instances now quoted to us politics bore a far larger share of responsibility for the horrors than did religion," they lie outrageously. The only one of these "horrible instances" they venture thus to explain is the St. Bartholomew massacre, and they are, as we shall see, wrong even there. Secular authorities did not put heretics to death on a charge of treason. I shall show presently that they were compelled by the Popes, under pain of excommunication or interdict, for most of them were reluctant, to put to death without further question, within five days, men who were condemned as heretics by the Inquisition. It is a deliberate lie that "such persons were turned over to the civil au-

thorities for punishment for the crime of treason." That "Catholic martyrs" in England were often executed for treason is true; and they were guilty of it. But that the charge of treason was brought in the case of the millions whom the Roman Church killed before the Reformation, that political considerations had anything to do with the executions, or that the civil authorities regarded heresy as a crime against the State, are modern Catholic fabrications; and priests who make such statements know that heretics are condemned to Death, as heretics, in their Canon Law today.

These Catholic fabrications have forced their way into ordinary historical manuals, sometimes under pressure of the Catholic control of schools, often because many professors do not realize that Catholic propaganda systematically lies. I decline to use any softer term, for the facts are too patent and numerous. We now read, therefore, not only that the Roman Church and its monks preserved and re-developed civilization in Europe—which is a travesty of the historical facts—but that the men of the Middle Ages were devoted to their religious institutions, and that these were entirely suited to that phase of human development. Many writers actually choose the thirteenth century as an illustration of this statement; and it is quite ludicrous. The thirteenth century opened with the massacres of an entire population, probably numbering hundreds of thousands, for revolt against Rome: it set up the Inquisition, the most bloody and loathsome instrument of tyranny ever invented: it created, solely under Papal pressure, the ghastly laws against heretics which the Roman Church would use for five hundred years and the Protestants inherit and abandon within a century. From the moment when intellectual life was renewed in Europe, after six centuries of mental torpor, there was a most extensive revolt against the sordid Papal system, and Europe had to be bludgeoned into subjection.

### §1. THE SPREAD OF REBELLION

The attempt of modern Catholics to introduce social and political considerations into this question, and particularly to connect the policy of persecution with the Reformation, is impudent in its assumption of ignorance. It is one of the most notorious of historical facts that, as we saw, the Church induced the Emperors of the fourth century to enact the death-sentence for heresy and suppressed all rival religions by violence. The chief of these rival sects were Mithraism and Manicheanism. The first, which in the time of Constantine had spread more than Christianity, was rather absorbed than exterminated, for much of it reappears in the ritual of the Roman Church. The second, which was definitely anti-Christian and was based on the old Persian belief in an almost infinite principle of evil as well as a God, was much more obstinate. It is rarely mentioned in manuals of history yet it has had a remarkable career. It spread far over Europe in the early Middle Ages, and it supplied the main ideas of the religion of the witches which had an extraordinary success in the later Middle Ages.

In some way this creed survived on the fringes of the Greek

Empire, and the corruption of the Church and people—which was quite as bad as in Europe—led to the appearance of a devout and ascetic sect which combined primitive Christian and Manichean ideas. It became so numerous that in the ninth century an Empress had a hundred thousand members of it put to death. Yet in the next century an Emperor had to transplant about two hundred thousand members to the desolate Balkan region, the “No Man’s Land” between the Latin and Greek Churches. From there the sect captured the Bulgarians and at one time threatened, in spite of savage persecution, to become the national religion. These strict and earnest Bogomils (Friends of God), as they called themselves, sent apostles over Europe, and we soon hear of “Manicheans” in Germany, France, and Italy. As early as 1017 thirteen canons and priests of one French diocese, besides laymen, were burned alive for that heresy. Other batches were executed in Germany and Italy.

All this was in virtue of the old law against Manicheans and has nothing whatever to do with politics or the later conflict of the Reformation. The state of Christendom was repulsive, and large numbers, instead of being content to sing ribald songs about the vices of the monks and the Papacy, of which there were large numbers, fell back upon the teaching of Jesus and Paul, as some earnest cleric expounded it to them, and sometimes blended this with the stricter ideas of the Manichees. In the early part of the twelfth century we read of the German bishops burning alive certain “Poor Men of Christ”: their “treason” was that, instead of entering corrupt monasteries, they tried in the world to carry out the ascetic teaching of the gospels and censured the sensual luxury of the bishops and abbots. By the middle of the twelfth century there were batches of heretics in almost all parts of Europe. Even amidst the corruption of North Italy, perhaps we should say as a reaction against the clerical corruption of Italy, there was a very extensive heretical sect, and the name indicates its character. The members called themselves the Cathari (the Pure), or followers of the pure doctrine of Christ. But precisely because they wished to be faithful to the teaching of Christ they were heretics to Rome; they were compelled to reject its sacraments and ritual, its relics and bishops, its monks and nuns. Innocent III tells us, with great indignation, how these early Protestants, as we may call them, were so numerous in the Italian cities that some of them obtained the highest civic dignities. It was these who first inflamed his zeal against heretics and led to the policy of violent suppression.

In order to understand this very extensive spread of heresy in the twelfth century we must bear in mind the fact that, as I said, it was the period when Europe was recovering in virtue of its own economic forces and the inspiring example of the Mohammedans. In spite of the incessant wars, in the course of which an army on the march would quarter itself on any town and commit all sorts of outrages if it were in hostile territory, the towns were increasing in size and wealth. There were in Christendom no cities like those of Spain and Sicily, with a population of from a quarter to half a

million, but in north Italy and Germany, especially, the towns rapidly grew in size and luxury. The burgher and professional class increased. Far more money was in circulation, and merchants, especially Jews, brought novelties from the famous workshops and bazaars of the Mohammedan world. Mental interest was reawakened. Schools, as we shall see in the next book, multiplied very rapidly, and, with the appearance of brilliant and independent teachers like Abelard, thousands of pupils passed afoot from one great school, or university as it was beginning to be called, to another.

## §2. THE MASSACRE OF THE ALBIGENSIANS

These conditions were particularly realized in the beautiful provinces of southern France. The region had not been wasted by the Normans, as western France had been, and had not been the theater of conflict of the Imperial, Italian, and Papal forces. It was close to Spain and was in close touch with the Moors of Seville and Cordova. Their very superior industries and agriculture were adopted, and the provinces had a prosperity that was almost unknown in the rest of France. The sunny climate and beautiful country also disposed the inhabitants to welcome the gay spirit of the Moors, who cultivated music and song and art as much as they studied philosophy and science. When the apostles of the Bulgarian heretics reached this part of Europe they found a particularly favorable soil for their teaching, and before the end of the twelfth century the great majority of the people in the towns and cities were completely severed from the Roman Church. In the year 1167 we read that the head of the sect in the east came to the city of Albi, in the south of France, held a synod, and consecrated five new bishops.

As Pope Innocent himself boasts that his Crusaders took five hundred towns and castles from these heretics, and we know that an army of more than two hundred thousand men failed, after several years of war, to exterminate them, we are safe in saying that there were hundreds of thousands of rebels against Rome in the south of France alone; and the sect, in various shades and varieties, spread over Switzerland and north Italy to the Balkans and into Spain and Germany. It was growing so rapidly that one is inclined to believe that, if it had been left free to hold its services and convert others, half of Europe would soon have thrown off the yoke of the degenerate Papacy. The piety and docility of the Middle Ages were nothing like what they are now often represented to have been, in spite of the general illiteracy.

As early as 1139 the Popes began to implore Christian princes to root out heresy, but we read of very little action as long as it was left to secular authorities. I ask the reader to pay particular attention to this point in my narrative, because one of the meanest subterfuges of the modern apologists for the Papacy is to throw the blame on the princes and people and represent that their piety was so outraged by these critics of the faith that they spontaneously

demanded the death-sentence. You would think it an impossible feat of insolence for any historian to represent the Church as really protecting the heretics from the fury of the devout, but so wanton is the modern practice of letting Catholics write the history of their Church that this is actually done in one of the most recent and most weighty of our encyclopedias, "The Dictionary of Ethics and Religion." With remarkable simplicity, or in a desperate effort to win the subscriptions of Catholic libraries, the editors entrusted the article on the Inquisition to the Catholic Canon Vacandard, and he has had the audacity to insert in that erudite work such statements as this:

"From the twelfth century onward the repression of heresy was the great business of Church and State. The distress caused, particularly in the north of Italy and the south of France, by the Cathari or Manicheans, whose doctrine wrought destruction to society as well as to faith, appalled the leaders of Christianity. On several occasions, in various places, people and rulers at first sought justice in summary conviction and execution; culprits were either outlawed or put to death. The Church for a long time opposed these rigorous measures . . . The death-penalty was never included in any system of repressions."

It would be difficult to tell more untruths in eleven lines. For a full discussion I must send the reader to my Little Blue Book (No. 1134), "The Horrors of the Inquisition," and must here give only the essential facts. The statements that the death-penalty was never laid down in law—it is, as I said, still laid down in Canon Law—and that the Church for a long time, or ever, opposed rigorous measures are so ludicrously false that one almost wonders whether the translator of the French canon's article was intoxicated. And if you ask a properly instructed Catholic—consult, for instance, Mgr. Mann's History of the Popes—how on earth the doctrine of the heretics was "destructive of society," and therefore concerned the State, you will get a remarkable answer. You will hear that they recommended voluntary poverty and virginity! Rome, as I have said elsewhere, slew several hundred thousand men and women in twenty years because **they were genuine Christians**. In point of fact, these were counsels for the elect, not the way of life of the majority. The regions in which these heretics lived were the happiest and most prosperous and best-behaved in Europe. Apologetic meanness touches its lowest depth when it makes this excuse for the massacre of the Albigensians. Pope Innocent, who slew them, made not the least such suggestion.

As to the action of "people and rulers," I may say, summarily, that secular rulers were with great difficulty induced by the Church to proceed against heretics, and that in this particular case of the Albigensians the secular princes brought tragic ruin upon themselves because they refused to prosecute. The Papal decree of 1139 urging secular rulers to prosecute for heresy, of which I have spoken,

seems to have been almost universally ignored. Heresy thrived amazingly, and we read of very few executions. In 1179 Pope Alexander III renewed the decree, and he now gave secular princes the right to confiscate the property of heretics, and soldiers two years' remission of penance if they would "take up arms" against heretics. I admit that after that decree, which the historians forget to mention, some of the "people and rulers" began to show a little zeal against heretics. But the Count of Toulouse and other princes of southern France contemptuously ignored this appeal to greed and refused to interfere with their heretical subjects.

The chief city of the heretical region was Albi, and this has given the name of Albigensians to the whole body of the heretics in southern France, but we must realize that there were entire provinces in which the Catholic churches were deserted and the inhabitants were almost all heretics. As soon as he became Pope, Innocent sent two Cistercian monks and famous preachers to convert them; but they made no impression and they were replaced by two monk-legates with extraordinary powers. They were not subject to the jurisdiction of the bishops but could themselves depose bishops who refused to take action against the heretics. A special regiment of Cistercian monks of the poorest and strictest character was organized in the region. But the heretics smiled at the subterfuge and the arguments, and the legates had to confess that in eight years they made no impression on the country. The prince of the chief heretical province, Count Raymond of Toulouse, was excommunicated, but he was not the kind of noble to be distressed by spiritual censures. The campaign was a complete failure.

In the ninth year Innocent begins in his letters to speak of coercion, and there was only one kind of violence that could be used. He must call for a Crusade against the heretics and drown them in blood. Toulouse was an independent principality, and the King of France was not unwilling to lead a Crusade if there were any hope of annexing the country. Count Raymond was alarmed, but before he could take any action some of his angry followers slew one of the Papal Legates, and the Pope sent out the fiery cross. Philip of France, who was not a model of virtue, now found himself described by the austere Pope as "exalted amongst all others of God" to lead in the holy war. His ambition was checked, but French, Burgundian, and other knights were quite ready for a campaign of loot in the rich provinces of the south, and the army began to assemble.

Count Raymond sent representatives to Rome to assure the Pope that he submitted, and Innocent's letters at this juncture would be enough of themselves to justify every harsh word I have said about the degeneration of even deeply religious men when they had to consult the interests of the Papacy. Raymond complained that the bitterness and intolerance of the Pope's chief Legate, the Abbot of the strict monastery of Citeaux, made his task difficult, and Innocent sent a milder man. But we have his instructions to this man that he is to act entirely on the advice of the Abbot of Citeaux, who would not be visible in the negotiations, and his assurance to the

abbot, that the apparently peaceful envoy is merely "the bait to conceal the hook of thy gacuity."

I know few documents so really disgusting, considering the religious character of Pope Innocent, as the letter he wrote to his Legates (XI, 232) Raymond had abjectly submitted as the terrible armies prepared to invade his dominion. He had been punished and had promised to lead troops against his own subjects. But Innocent tells his Legates that he will "decide in accordance with the interest of the Church." He expressly tells them to deceive Raymond: to let him think that he is to be granted reconciliation so that he will stand aside while they destroy his nobles separately and then they can more easily destroy him. Gregory VII had been pitiful enough in his plea that there was not much harm in a lie told for a good cause, but the deliberate advice of Innocent, the greater Pope, to his Legates, at a time when there is question of a particularly ghastly war of extermination, is a quotation of the words of Paul (II Corinthians, xii, 16): "Being crafty, I caught you with guile." Paul's meaning was, of course, quite innocent, and it was sheer blasphemy for a Pope to quote them in such a sense. "Such guile is rather to be called prudence," he nauseously says, and he makes his policy quite clear. They must pretend that they regard Raymond as quite sincere in his submission and, "deceiving him by prudent dissimulation, pass on to the extirpation of the other heretics."

The excuses of the modern Catholic writer are as loathsome as the conduct of his great Pope. I have explained the gross untruthfulness of Canon Vacandard's statement that the heresy "wrought destruction to society"—a childish pretext, seeing that the heretical provinces were the most prosperous and orderly in Europe—and it is just as false to say that, when Raymond submitted, it was too late for the Pope to hold up the Crusade. Innocent never mentions such an idea, for he knows well that his power of excommunication and interdict would soon check any prince who was reluctant to turn back from the prospect of loot. On the contrary, the Pope expressly ordered the Crusade to proceed, and the first butcheries of Raymond's allies began. Innocent sent his blessing to the ferocious Simon de Monfort, who took the leading part. All that we can say for him is that he was not quite so bad as the saintly abbot of Citeaux. This man, corrupted by his hatred of heresy and the atmosphere of a medieval camp, tried to goad Raymond into rebellion. Innocent refused to allow him to adopt certain extreme and unscrupulous measures, but Raymond was at length confronted with terms that every historian regards as impossible—terms that were expressly calculated to drive him to revolt—and he refused. He was excommunicated and his dominion was declared the property of the Papacy. It was to yield the Popes an annual tribute on which Innocent is very explicit.

The butchery proceeded for two years, and, as the army is said to have numbered two hundred and twenty thousand, we get some idea of the extent of the heresy. From the contemporary Catholic writers, who wrote jubilant accounts of the massacre, we gather

that the Crusaders used to kill every man, woman, and child in a town when they took it. The story was current not long afterwards, and we have no serious reason to doubt the truth of it, that when the first large town was taken the abbot, who led in the fight, was asked how the soldiers could distinguish between Catholics and heretics, and he said that it was unnecessary. "Kill them all," he is reported to have said; "God will know his own." The chronicler tells us that they then killed all the survivors, including women and children, to the number of forty thousand. Captured knights were hanged in batches of seventy or eighty. Noble ladies and their daughters were flung down wells, and large stones were thrown upon them.

So large was the number of the heretics that after two years of this slaughter the vast army had not completed its work. But the Pope seems for a time to have listened to his elementary feelings of humanity and he bade them end the campaign. It is the sense of justice of Pope Innocent that the historians who admire him chiefly claim, but we find none in his perpetration of this crime. For he now admitted that there had been no trial of Raymond, no judicial proof that he was guilty of heresy or the murder of the Legate, and that even if he were deposed his principedom ought to pass to his two sons. It is not clear what had happened in Rome, but Innocent's letters show that he now saw clearly that Raymond had been treated unjustly and his people visited with appalling brutality, yet he yielded to the sanguinary or avaricious demands of his Legates. Another hundred thousand Crusaders were summoned, and the slaughter continued until the fairest provinces of Europe were a ghastly desolation. And your modern Catholic excuses this terrible outrage by finding that, as nobody suspected at the time, these heretics held socially mischievous doctrines, and that Popes restrained princes and peoples as long as possible from falling upon heretics, and that we know better than the contemporary chroniclers how many were killed, and so on.

### §3. THE FOUNDING OF THE INQUISITION

In the north of Italy and Switzerland a large body of "heretics" known as the Waldensians were exterminated with little less brutality. The only heresy of these was that they preferred the teaching of Christ to the system of ritual and dogma and wealthy hierarchy which the Popes had so incongruously built upon it. In the twelfth century several good Christian laymen in Switzerland (and other parts of Europe) discovered that Christ had recommended, not wealthy abbots and bishops, but voluntary poverty. One of these, named Valdes or Waldo, had a large following, and he and his associates became known, as they wandered about preaching, as the Poor Men of Lyons. From Switzerland, where they chiefly settled, the new doctrine spread as far as Spain, England, and Germany. The Waldensians, as they came to be called, absorbed survivors of the sect of Arnold of Brescia and many of the Italian Cathari. Evangelical Protestantism was, in a word, spreading rapidly when Innocent

III came to power. Upon these also he fell truculently and they scattered over Europe. During the thirteenth century we still hear of batches of them being burned alive (a Spanish king now introduced this historic cure for heresy) even in Spain and Germany; yet an Inquisitor of the fourteenth century complained, no doubt in exaggerated terms, that there were still eighty thousand of them in Austria alone. The sect is found today in the Vaudois of Switzerland, and its followers maintain that they are the genuine survivors of the primitive Church.

I shall deal more broadly with the character of the "wonderful thirteenth century" in the next book, but it should be noted that the various developments which I record in this book bring us into the first quarter of that century. In other words, it is quite true that the period we have reached is one of great and in many respects admirable vitality: it is the time when the beautiful cathedrals of France and England were rising, when the first universities were being founded and the school-life of the Middle Ages was at its greatest intensity, when chivalry and song and music refined the manners of the nobles and knights, when the guilds of the workers were at the highest pitch of their usefulness, when the serfs were being emancipated most rapidly. But it was also the age of this almost unprecedented slaughter of an entire population because of its religious creed, the age when an Emperor could perpetrate barbarities as repellent as any of the Dark Ages and the greatest of the Popes could employ deceit and injustice of the most terrible character to gain his ends, when the clergy were more immoral than ever (for the wives of the great majority were replaced by mistresses or worse indulgences), when Europe rang with ribald songs about its clergy and hundreds of thousands of decent-minded people regarded the Papacy as an abomination.

For the violence which the Popes now employed might extinguish the lives of vast numbers of people, but it drove further vast numbers to cherish their heresies in secret. The result was the Inquisition, which means literally the Search or Inquiry. The most absurd of the excuses which Catholics and a few other writers now make for the Inquisition is that heretics were so obnoxious to their fellow-citizens that princes and peoples alike used impulsive violence against them, and the Popes set up this tribunal of the Inquisition to see that they should have a proper trial. The tribunal was set up on a principle which is almost the reverse of that of the secular court. Its main business was to search for offenses that were purely internal, hidden heresies, and therefore could not affect the social order or be obnoxious to anybody; and the institution was gradually created by the Church precisely because secular princes and civic authorities refused to concern themselves with heresy. I have referred on an earlier page to a Canon Vacandard who has been permitted to say disgracefully untrue things about the Inquisition in the "Dictionary of Ethics and Religion." The article was entrusted to him because he is the author of a fairly candid history of the Inquisition. No Catholic historian is, of course, ever quite candid, but one of the

truths which Vacandard is forced to make quite clear is the general and prolonged reluctance of secular authorities to proceed against heretics and the way in which successive Popes forced them, with the direst of spiritual penalties, to take up the work; and then Vacandard says just the opposite in this article in the Dictionary! Professor A. S. Turberville, who has written the best popular account of the Inquisition ("Medieval Heresy and the Inquisition," 1920), and Mr. H. C. Lea in his large History of the Inquisition, make this point quite clear.

I have described how the Popes began in the twelfth century to demand that the secular authorities should punish heretics. One of the silliest of all apologies for the Church in connection with the Inquisition is that it never put any man to death: it merely, as was its duty, found him guilty of heresy and handed him over to "the secular arm" for such punishment as that authority thought proper. If the Canon Law of the Roman Church today holds, as it does, that the Church has "the right to use the sword," in its own language, or the right to inflict the death-sentence, we can imagine what its sentiments were in the Middle Ages. But one has only to reflect on the circumstances to see the absurdity of the Catholic claim. In Rome, and at different periods in several of the provinces of Italy, the ecclesiastical and secular powers were both in the hands of the Popes. The Roman Inquisition, the records of which the Vatican still refuses to allow any scholar to consult (while it pretends that it has thrown open to scholars its Secret Archives), was Papal both in its inquiries and in its tortures and executions. Arnold of Brescia, of whom I have spoken, was murdered by a Papal official at the command of the Pope; and so were all the victims of the Roman Inquisition down to the murder of Giordano Bruno in 1600. In other parts of Europe the Church naturally and necessarily handed over heretics to the secular arm. Does anybody imagine that Henry of England or Philip of France or Barbarossa of Germany would tolerate any alien court in their dominions with power to execute their subjects? England refused even to admit the Inquisition as a court of inquiry.

In Europe generally this court was created and enforced by a long series of drastic Papal measures. We saw that the Lateran Council of 1139, under the lead of the Pope, decreed that the various secular powers must prosecute heretics. There was almost no response, though the heresies I have described spread rapidly and openly, having their own churches and ministers. The Lateran Council of 1179, under Pope Alexander III, repeated the decree, and added the very dangerous incentive that the secular authorities were permitted to confiscate the property of the heretics they prosecuted. Still little was done, for the heretics were in France and Italy and Switzerland so numerous and well organized that procedure against them was difficult. In 1184 Pope Lucius II—you may remember this "Holy Father" as the one who led his troops in person against the democrats of Rome and died in the fight—laid down that secular rulers who refused to proceed against heretics—which meant prac-

tically all the secular rulers of Europe—should be punished with excommunication or interdict, and that the penalties they must inflict for heresy were exile, confiscation, or loss of civil rights. He took also an important step toward founding the Inquisition as such. Up to that time the rule had been that when a man was denounced for heresy the bishop must try him in his court. Lucius ordered the bishops to seek out heretics: to make an “inquisition” or inquiry. Very few rulers or bishops paid any attention to these decrees, and then Innocent III adopted his horrible policy of a Crusade.

Apart from this, Innocent took two further steps in the making of the Inquisition. He ordered the bishops to appoint special officials or “inquisitors” to make the search for heretics, and he, plainly enough, demanded the death-penalty; though this had, in fact, been laid down by the Papacy when Arnold of Brescia was executed. Canon Vacandard himself quotes this principle from the letters of Innocent III:

“According to civil law criminals convicted of treason are punished with death and their goods are confiscated. With how much more reason then should they who offend Jesus, son of the Lord God, by deserting their faith be cut off from the Christian communion and stripped of their goods.”

Thus it was the Pope, not secular princes, who demanded that heresy should be regarded as treason and punished with death. The first secular prince to adopt this, expressly basing his law upon these words of Innocent III, was Frederic II. It is at first sight curious that a skeptical monarch, a man who thoroughly despised the Papacy, should be the first to adopt a law against heretics, but we have seen plenty of instances of princes yielding under political pressure to the Popes. We shall see in the next book that this was the position of Frederic. He never applied the law, and his court was full of heretics, artists, scholars. But Pope Gregory IX then took up this law and demanded that the secular authorities of all countries should adopt it. Nearly all parts of Europe except the Republic of Venice, which was always far from docile to the Popes, gradually adopted it. The new friars of the order of St. Dominic specialized in the work of Inquisitors, and the work of murdering people because they would not profess to believe in the fraudulent powers and fictitious doctrines of the Church went on everywhere. We have continuous and abundant proof that secular rulers needed to be goaded to the work. In 1245 Innocent IV complains of neglect, and in 1252 he has to return to the matter and issue a most formidable bull. Secular rulers were now to take a solemn oath at their coronation that they would prosecute heretics, and they were to incur excommunication and interdict if they failed. The magistrates of towns were, within three days of their appointment, to form committees, including several friars, to search out heretics. Torture was to be used to make heretics confess and to compel them to accuse others.

Then the condemned heretic was to be handed over to the secular powers. The Church "recommended mercy," the Catholic writers say. Yes; and at the same time told them that in virtue of this bull of Innocent IV, repeated by Alexander IV and Clement V (which shows that secular rulers were still reluctant) they would incur excommunication or interdict on their city if they did not put the heretic to death within five days. Ten Papal bulls in a century lashed the secular authorities to the work; and now we are assured that it was the princes and peoples who were so savage and the Popes restrained them.

From the full account which I have given in one of my Little Blue Books (No. 1134) I must select a few details to complete my subject, but I request any reader who has not the little book in question to send for it. Here I must very summarily correct three other current lies about the Inquisition. One is that it had far less victims than used to be supposed. This is particularly said of the Roman Inquisition: in fact, one now reads sometimes that it never put any man to death. We know of numbers of men (Giordano Bruno is a famous instance) who suffered death under the Roman Inquisition, but we do not know how many for a simple reason. In the last century Pope Leo XIII astonished the world by his liberality in throwing open to research-students the Secret Archives of the Vatican; but the most distinguished recent Catholic historian, Dr. L. Pastor, tells us that when he sought the records of the Roman Inquisition he found that they had been removed. Of the Spanish Inquisition, which was founded much later and will be discussed in a later book, an ex-secretary of that institution gives, from the archives, the number of its murders as 341,042, and I have shown that the attempts of Catholic writers seriously to reduce this figure are frivolous. We cannot give any sort of estimate for Europe generally, but when we read of one Dominican monk, Robert le Bougre, burning one hundred and eighty heretics (including the bishop) in a small French town in one day, we get some idea of the scale of operations. Including the Albigensians, something more than half a million men and women, or more than two hundred times as many as the genuine martyrs in three hundred years of the Roman Church, must have been murdered for their high-minded and conscientious beliefs in the thirteenth century alone. I will try later to estimate how many millions the Roman Church slew for their religious beliefs in the few centuries after the "great" Pope Innocent inaugurated this method of safeguarding his interests.

The second lie is that, compared with ordinary juridical procedure at the time, the Inquisition was a model and humane tribunal. It was below the level of the civil courts, and that was lower than had yet been known in the history of civilization. I have space here for only a few points the evidence for which I give elsewhere. Witnesses were never examined or even named to the accused. There was supposed to be a sort of local jury—at least some Catholics have the insolence to compare the group with a modern jury—of "good and experienced men," but Vacandard admits that it was the

common practice to conceal the names of the accusers even from these men. The Jesuit writer in the Catholic Encyclopaedia quotes a Papal bull which enjoins that the accusers must be named to the accused, so that he may know if it is the spite of an enemy, and he carefully omits to tell that the Pope orders this only where there is no danger of the accusers suffering. The Inquisitors, as Vacandard admits, held that there was always such danger. Two men could secretly accuse one of their fellow-citizens of heresy: in practice one was often taken to be sufficient. The man was brought before the tribunal, and he either confessed that he was a heretic—in which case he got off with a heavy fine, a long fast, or a pilgrimage—or he denied it and was burned as a heretic. He never saw the witnesses, he had no lawyer (the Popes forbade lawyers to help such men under suspicion of heresy), and, since going to church was held to be no proof that he was orthodox, he could offer nothing in the nature of proof. He could bring no witnesses—they would at once be suspected—and there was no sort of argument with him such as Mr. G. B. Shaw imagines in the farcical trial in his "Saint Joan." If he denied the heresy he was tortured; if he persisted in denial he was burned. A grosser caricature of justice could hardly be imagined. Yet American readers are now assured (by the Catholic Encyclopaedia) that "the Inquisition marks a substantial advance in the contemporary administration of justice and therefore in the general civilization of mankind." I should add that the victims were tortured until they named others as heretics.

Finally, the property of a man who fled to escape the Inquisition or who was condemned to life-imprisonment or to death was confiscated. For the lighter penances of those who confessed, the Inquisitors could impose a heavy fine. The enormous wealth thus obtained was divided between the secular authority, the Papacy, and the local bishop and Inquisitors. "The Inquisition was invented to rob the rich of their possessions." That was written by a Roman Catholic writer of the sixteenth century, Segni. He is wrong in saying that it was invented for that purpose, but because of the stubborn reluctance of princes and peoples to prosecute heretics the Popes gave the machinery of the Inquisition that complexion. It became a sordid scramble for gold in a charnel-house. There is no feature of it which the Catholic writer is so eager to keep out of sight, but no man can hesitate to see how it would work, and we have ample evidence that it did so work. Vacandard quotes the Legate Eymeric complaining that the "princes" are again lax because "there are no more rich heretics." Thus was the beautiful thirteenth century inaugurated. We shall see in the next book what good the Church won by all its concessions to the more barbarous principles of that dreadful age.

**THE TRUE STORY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

**Volume VI**

**The True Relation of Rome  
to the Revival of Art,  
Letters and Learning**

**Contemporary Evidence That Europe  
Awoke in Spite of the Papacy**

**Joseph McCabe**

**HALDEMAN-JULIUS PUBLICATIONS**

**Girard, Kansas**

CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter I. The Beautiful Thirteenth Century.....	3
(1) The Outcome of Nine Centuries of Faith. (2) Causes of the Failure of the Papacy. (3) The Southern Civilizations. (4) The Growth of Cities.	
Chapter II. The Real Advance of Europe.....	11
(1) The Great Cathedrals. (2) The Schools and Universities. (3) The Progress of Law and Government. (4) The Age of Chivalry.	
Chapter III. The Continued Futility of the Popes.....	18
(1) The Struggle With Frederic II. (2) Papal Passion Disgusts Europe. (3) The Popes Summon the French.	
Chapter IV. How Rome Checked the Progress of Thought.....	28
(1) The Hostility to Science. (2) The Sterilizing of Philosophy. (3) The Fight Against Heresy.	
Chapter V. The Clergy and the Monks in the Thirteenth Century.....	34
(1) The Immorality of the Clergy. (2) The New Friars and the Old Monks. (3) The Nunneries.	
Chapter VI. The Popes of New Babylon.....	41
(1) The New Patron of the Papacy. (2) The Babylonian Captivity of the Popes. (3) The Return to Rome.	
Chapter VII. The Sale of Sacred Things Organized.....	50
(1) The Sale of Sacred Offices. (2) The Development of the Sale of Indulgences.	
Chapter VIII. The Church Again Reforms Its Popes.....	55
(1) The Beginning of the Great Schism. (2) The Fighting Popes. (3) The Papal Scramble for Gold.	

# TRUE RELATION OF ROME TO REVIVAL OF ART, LETTERS AND LEARNING

## CHAPTER I

### THE BEAUTIFUL THIRTEENTH CENTURY

**I**N THE early part of the last century there spread over Europe and into America a new fashion in art and letters which is known as the Romantic Movement. It was in its essence based upon an admiration of the Middle Ages. Ever since the revival of ancient Greek and Roman ideals in the fifteenth century there had been an increasing disposition to despise the Middle Ages. "Medieval" became, and still is, a word of contempt. History was not in those days the full and accurate description of past ages which it is now supposed to be, and men were very apt to make general statements which were not wholly correct. They saw how the freedom, enlightenment, and prosperity of Greece and Rome had disappeared in the drastic despotisms, almost universal illiteracy, and very poor and scanty learning of the Middle Ages: how great literature had almost perished and art degenerated. But the fact that they went on to call the beautiful architecture of the later Middle Ages "Gothic," or worthy of the Goths, shows that they overlooked something.

This something, the elements of real value and beauty in the later Middle Ages, the Romantic Movement rediscovered. It, of course, exaggerated them, as all such new movements do, and artists and literary men turned in time to new fashions. But this praise of the Middle Ages just suited the Roman Church, and it has been trying ever since to force it upon the world. It is only in the Middle Ages that the Romish Church was in any sense the Catholic (which means Universal) Church, and then only as regards Europe. The eastern Churches, as we saw, always contemptuously rejected the idea that they were in any sense subject to Rome, and the Greek Church and its Balkan and Russian extensions have remained independent all through the Christian Era. But most of Europe lay at the feet of the Popes for this thousand years which we call the Middle Ages, and it was a matter of deep reproach to the Popes that artists and historians and literary men should find it during that period dark and barbaric.

So with the revival of Romanism in the English-speaking world which resulted from the spread of the Irish, the Italians, and others from their poverty-stricken lands, praise of the Middle Ages increased. With the growth of wealth and the improvement of transport hundreds of thousands of Americans traveled in Europe, and they saw with their own eyes the surviving monuments of the Middle Ages: the superb cathedrals, the wonderful sculpture and painting, the ancient abbeys, the impressive ceremonies, the stately universities. Surely there was something wrong about this long contempt of the Middle Ages! Surely one could reasonably entertain

the Catholic claim that from the year 400 to the middle of the eleventh century civilization was indeed ruined in Europe by successive torrents of invading barbarians which no force in the world could withstand but that, in its sanctuaries and monasteries, the Church preserved the ancient culture and, as soon as the invasions were over, it gave this culture once more to the world and inspired a brilliant restoration of civilization.

Any serious history of the Papacy must be written with special and very careful reference to that claim, especially since, as we saw, it is now very common in new manuals of the history of the Middle Ages to say that that stretch of history has been heavily libeled and we discover much more of value in it than men had supposed. I have therefore in this first half of my work kept in mind throughout this theory, which has its practical application to our own time, that the Church of Rome was and is a civilizing agency, a beneficent social influence. I have, I think, abundantly proved two important points. First, modern history has not in the least altered the estimate of the medieval Papacy and the Middle Ages which was given in the great historical works of the last century; secondly, modern history has made no new discoveries of elements of value in the life of the Middle Ages. Instead of the older historians concentrating on the darker features of the Middle Ages and closing their eyes to the better elements, it is these new history-writers who neglect the masses of repulsive facts and concentrate on, and exaggerate, the few brighter features. Not a single expert has attempted to show that there is any serious error in the mass of facts given by Hallam, Milman, Gregorovius, Creighton, and Lea about the corruption and perversion of the Papacy and the Church generally, and it is only because they refuse to reproduce these facts that modern writers can plausibly say that the Popes or monks were calculated to help civilization. On the other hand, it is false that recent experts have found anything of material importance in the Middle Ages that was not known to, and included in, the works of the older historians.

For final proof, before we turn to the later and more progressive part of the Middle Ages, let us glance at a recent work of one of the most distinguished American historians, a scholar who is without prejudice or subservience to other people's prejudices. I mean "The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century" (1927) by Professor C. H. Haskins of Harvard. Professor Haskins begins by saying that he is going to give an account of the twelfth century which is very different from the "widely prevalent" idea, even the idea of "many who ought to know better." He rebukes the people who use the word "medieval" in a disdainful sense and who make the phrase Dark Ages "cover all that came between, let us say, 476 to 1453." We saw before that it is now common for those who reject the phrase Dark Ages to suppose that it covers a thousand years, from the fifth to the fifteenth century. I can only retort, in Professor Haskins's own words, that they ought to know better. Scarcely any writer does that. These new critics are singularly reluctant to name the older historians whom they are supposed to be correcting, but I find that

one of them mentions Thomas Buckle, author of a once famous "History of Civilization in England." Looking over the 1869 edition of Buckle's work I find that he uses the expression Dark Ages once, and he says in the plainest English (Vol. II, p. 108) that he means a period of "about five hundred years" beginning "toward the end of the fifth century, when the Roman Empire broke up." He finds a recovery "in the tenth and eleventh century" and says that "by the twelfth century there was no nation now called civilized upon whom the light had not begun to dawn." Thus the one older historian cited as wrong about the Dark Ages says just what we say today.

Professor Haskins next says that even the period 800-1300 (he ought to say 800-1100) was not uniformly dark—no one says that it was—but was relieved by a Carolingian Renaissance, an Ottonian Renaissance, and the Renaissance of the twelfth century about which he writes his book. But no one ever failed to notice the work of Charlemagne and of Otto; it is these new writers who fail to tell how, when they died, the Church refused to sustain the work. As to the Renaissance of the twelfth century, it has always been admitted that the recovery of Europe began after the year 1050. The elements which Professor Haskins enumerates are: the development of a great architecture, the efflorescence of poetry in the vernacular (new European) languages, the rise of the great cathedral schools and universities, the formation of Canon Law, the cultivation of philosophy, and the appearance of a very rare interest in science, the collection of small libraries, a zeal for the Latin classics on the part of a few score men, and an improvement in the writing of history. Not a single point is new: not one good feature is shown to be more extensive than writers like Milman supposed. I should say that the short appreciation of the twelfth century in Gregorovius's *History of Rome* is just as flattering. And if you care to turn back to my last book and see how these few and very restricted brighter features which Professor Haskins describes coexist with an appalling general grossness of manners and morals, with the infliction of horrible mutilations and tortures even by prelates and nobles, with chronic war in which loot and rape (often even of nuns) were habitual, with all the other sordid things which Professor Haskins does not notice, you see how misleading these selections of a few virtues are. The world was horribly dark even in the twelfth century, but here and there it was lit by the dawn of a better age, and we are now going to see how little the Roman Church had to do with the new light.

### §1. THE OUTCOME OF NINE CENTURIES OF FAITH

It was in the year 312 that the Emperor Constantine marched in triumph into Rome and brought, not merely liberty, but imperial prestige and resources to the scattered and impoverished Roman Church. It was on the ninth centenary of that glorious inauguration of the era of religious liberty, or in 1212, that the greatest of the Popes, Innocent III, looked out from Rome over the bodies of some hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, the victims of the bloodiest massacre ever perpetrated in the name of religion, and the squalid devastation of the happiest and most prosperous region

of Europe. No sophistry should be permitted to soften the verdict of conscience that a prelate who summons the scum of a continent to plunder and slaughter on such a scale when his preachers fail to convince people, had barbaric ideals. Catholics do not perceive that the conceit they often express, that their religion is so sacred to them that such outrages committed by their Church may be understood if not condoned, is a mere trick of their priests to cover the more repulsive features of the history of their Church. To all of us our ideals are as sacred, as beneficial to the race, as are his peculiar doctrines to the Catholic. And when it is said that the medieval Church merely acted on the received principles of the age, we retort that at least in regard to such ghastly outrages as these the plea is wholly false. I have shown that it was the Popes, especially Innocent III and his successors in the thirteenth century, who forced those principles on the reluctant princes and peoples of Europe.

That the age was half-barbaric we have seen and shall further see. The knights and footmen of France and England who fell with such savagery upon the Albigensians needed no spiritual compulsion. They neither knew nor cared what the "heresy" was, and they were, as we shall see presently, as ready to sack St. Peter's and fall upon the Papal troops as to sack the cathedral of Albi and murder its priests. They were impelled solely by a lust of blood and booty and rape. Ten years earlier, we saw, another such army had sacked the Christian cathedral of Santa Sophia at Constantinople with inconceivable brutality and filthiness and dragged the Greek nuns from their convents to rape them on the streets. A few years earlier Christian troops had splashed the floor of St. Peter's with blood as far as the high altar. If the knights and nobles countenanced and joined in such outrages, what shall we assume to have been the sentiments of the ninety percent of the population of Europe who had not the slightest tincture of education or refinement, who were still serfs or peasants only a few steps removed from serfdom? Each family lived and bred in a small hut with earth-floor, with no chimney or window, no washable undergarments, no table cutlery or earthenware, no sanitary arrangements of any description; and all but the youngest worked, Professor Thorold Rogers shows, three hundred and eight full days, from sunrise to sunset, a year, and from their miserable earnings they, directly or through the landowners, supported (in England, for instance) thirty thousand fat priests and monks to less than three million people. One can only describe them in the classic phrase: Manners beastly, morals none. War swept ruthlessly over them every few years. Nobles appropriated their wives and daughters when they willed. Disease was so rife that the population took four centuries to double.

To attempt to divert our attention from the general sordidness of this world by inviting us to consider how one abbot or bishop in a thousand read Cicero and Pliny, how one monastery in a thousand really observed the vows it took, how Popes who ruthlessly pitched nation against nation in the horrors of war to protect their property occasionally (if the Papal diplomacy permitted) rebuked a noble or a

prelate, is like asking us to admire how gunmen sometimes love their mistresses or children. The world had quite clearly not returned to anywhere near the level of the old civilization by the end of the twelfth century. And let me finally remind you that the downpour of barbarians from northern Europe does not explain this long delay in the recovery of Europe. The most enlightened efforts to restore civilization were made by Teutonic princes—Theodoric, Charlemagne, Otto, Didier, etc.—and the greatest contribution of all was made by a bitterly anti-Roman monarch, Frederic II, who was half German and half Norman. The Popes opposed nearly all of them and helped none.

## §2. CAUSES OF THE FAILURE OF THE PAPACY

Let me further summarize the reasons why the Popes failed to help in the recivilization of Europe. The first is that the more religious the Popes were the more indifferent they were to the influences which needed strengthening if civilization were to be restored. Every sociologist recognizes today that intellectual development is one of the primary conditions of social progress. It is mainly to the great extension and improvement of education in modern times that we owe the general betterment of character. We have so far found only one Pope in nearly two hundred showing any concern about education; and he was stimulated to do so by a secular monarch, and his very small scheme of reform was not carried out. We have found another, and a far more influential Pope, explicitly condemning the opening of schools. No Pope ever tried to enforce the educational ideal of Charlemagne, that every monastery and bishopric should open a school for other pupils besides monkings and clerics, which was the only possible ideal in the early Middle Ages. No Pope ever recommended that priests and prelates should devote themselves to such culture as was available, and very few Popes knew anything beyond Church law and history, which were full of falsehood and absurdity. Rome remained during nearly the whole of these nine centuries intellectually the most backward city in Europe. Every fine thing that developed in the new Europe came from some other city or cities than Rome. The school-plan and the Romanesque architecture came from Germany, the Gothic architecture from France, the medical art from Sicily, philosophy and science from Sicily and Spain, the study of law from Bologna, the new painting from Florence, and so on. The Papacy thrived on the ignorance of Europe and did not wish to see it altered; and that ignorance was the chief cause of its barbarism.

The second chief reason is the wealth and temporal power of the Popes. We may here enlarge our statement and say that the general corruption and futility of the hierarchy was mainly due to the wealth of the abbeys, bishoprics, and archbishoprics, which no Pope rebuked. When a man, Arnold of Brescia, pointed out this truth, the Popes hanged and burned him. As far as the prelates and abbots are concerned we must take into account the economic and political conditions of a feudal age, which cannot be done here, but such considerations do not apply to the Papacy. It attracted unworthy men,

who fought and intrigued for it, as soon as it became wealthy. It was, however, still free to devote itself, when it would, to its moral and spiritual work until, by gross fraud, it obtained a secular principality. After that even the most religious Popes wasted half their time, lowered their moral standards, incurred the anger or contempt of their subjects, and enormously restricted their moral influence, by entangling themselves in political alliances and inspiring wars to get back "the domain of the Blessed Peter." The chronicle of the Papacy is steeped in blood, shed for this purpose, from 800 to 1500. The city of Rome was sacked, burned, pillaged, or reddened by civil war literally hundreds of times in that period.

A third chief cause was that, partly or largely because of this concern for its temporal power, the Papacy repeatedly corrupted the life of Europe by its bad example. It created its ecclesiastical power, as it obtained its secular power, by lying and forgery. It repeatedly compromised with its own principles by flattering or indulgently treating royal sinners or dissolving their marriages when they were docile or generous to the Blessed Peter; as other royal sinners were not slow to notice. Its casuistry in representing countries as fiefs of the Holy See stank in the nostrils even of the Middle Ages. It entered upon a campaign against simony, or the sale of sacred offices, only to discover how profitable simony was, and from the twelfth century to the sixteenth we find its "greed of gold" a thing of contempt throughout Europe. It created impediments to marriage only to sell dispensations from such impediments; it sold spurious relics by the million and forged lives of martyrs to accredit them; and we shall in this and the next book find it organizing the most comprehensive and impudent sale of sacred offices.

Against all this we can place little more than the letters and other documents in which we find many of the Popes rebuking vice or crime. There was, we have seen, a rich opportunity, but the historians who imagine a succession of strong and virtuous men controlling Europe in this sense for a thousand years pay little attention to the facts. In the first place, they did not in fact improve the morals of Europe: they were at least as bad in the thirteenth century as in the fifth. Secondly, only a small minority of the Popes devoted any large part of their time or resources to correcting the crime and vice of Europe. During most of the time we have covered the chair of Peter was occupied by Popes of inferior character, weak Popes, short-lived Popes, or rival Popes. During most of the remainder of the time the Popes were fussing about their temporal power. Moreover, the Popes who seriously felt it their duty to watch Christendom made so hasty and so selfish a use of their most drastic powers, excommunication and interdict, that they often lost their force or brought odium on the Papacy. We shall again in this book find, as we found in the case of Gregory VII and others, half of Christendom severely condemning its Pope. Finally, if we regard the social interests of Europe, the moral code of the Popes was false. They regarded unchastity as the supreme sin; and they not only did not reduce it but in the case of priests they made it worse by abolishing marriage.

To justice in the social sense they paid little attention: to cruelty none: to violence and war a few applied their censure while the majority employed them. In short, the Popes not only did not promote the recovery of civilization in Europe but they actually retarded it by checking culture, encouraging war and political unscrupulousness, stifling democracy, and diverting men's minds to false ideals.

### §3. THE SOUTHERN CIVILIZATIONS

No history of the Papacy and few general histories properly appreciate a fact to which I have so repeatedly drawn attention that some of my readers may be weary of it. But if we are to call our modern history scientific we must use scientific methods even in estimating the relation of the Papacy to civilization. In science we check one observation by others under varying conditions. We can easily do this in regard to the Middle Ages because Europe was not the only part of the world to be overrun by barbaric tribes. The Arab followers of Mohammed, for instance, were, when they quitted Arabia, just as barbaric as the Goths and Vandals, Lombards and Normans. They spread over Mesopotamia, Persia, Syria, Egypt, North Africa, and Spain. There was no Papacy to "hold their passions in check": there were no monks to "preserve the elements of culture." Further, the Arab outpour was just two hundred years later than the Teutonic downpour. So, if it took the Papacy eight centuries to civilize (partially) Europe, how long did these barbarians who had no Papacy to help them take to become civilized? That is scientific history. And the answer is that within less than two centuries the Arabs had a wonderful and brilliant civilization: that, though they started from the barbaric level two centuries after the Goths and Franks and Anglo-Saxons, the Arabs had already, during that ghastly tenth century which I described, a civilization of the highest culture and art and wealth, with cities of from a quarter to half a million inhabitants, with immense libraries and zeal for every branch of knowledge and general education.

I will not again go into detail. Any of my readers who have not seen it should get my Little Blue Book No. 1137, "The Moorish Civilization in Spain." This civilization, in many respects quite up to the ancient Greek and Roman standard, was at its best in Spain, Sicily, and Syria; and, while it hospitably welcomed Christian scholars in its great colleges in Spain, its culture in Sicily was taken over by the Normans (whom it quickly civilized) and through the Norman-German Frederic II was conveyed to the cities of north Italy, while the Crusaders brought Europe into contact with it in the east. It is essential, when we reflect on the beginning of the restoration of Europe in the twelfth century, to bear in mind that this advanced civilization, with high ideals, great cities, and a most efficient agriculture, industry, and commerce, existed in Spain and Sicily in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The history of the beautiful island of Sicily would alone warn any man against these claims that are made for the Papacy. It was highly civilized under the Greeks; it sank into savagery under the Popes; it rose again to a very high civilization under the Arabs and the skeptical Frederic II; it sank again to

barbarism and still remains below the normal level of civilization under the Popes and their allies. The history of southern Spain tells much the same story.

This historical comparison is so important if we want to obtain a sound estimate of the Roman Church as a civilizing agency that I will extend it. The Arab civilization stretched from the Atlantic Ocean (Portugal) to the Persian gulf: a crescent of light shone all along the southern fringe of Christendom. But this civilization stretched also across Asia as far as the coast of China, and even Japan, and there was a brisk exchange of ideas and commodities from Spain to China. And here we have another illuminating page of history. For the barbarians of central Asia, as low in culture as the Huns who had invaded Europe, poured upon this Asiatic civilization, and within two generations they were themselves civilized. The great Tatar monarchs, Kublai Khan and Timur, did more in a century than the Popes did in eight centuries. Samarkand, the Tatar capital, rose in a century from a village to a great and beautiful city of a hundred thousand souls, while Paris and London took many centuries to rise to thirty thousand inhabitants. It is not customary to introduce these things into a history of the Popes, but they are most important for a correct estimate of that history. They very strongly confirm our suspicion that Papal rule actually retarded the recovery of civilization in Europe.

#### §4. THE GROWTH OF CITIES

One other point of general history must be noticed before we try to estimate the share of the Roman Church in "the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century." Some historians feel so strongly that the rise of cities or the growth of towns is the most significant feature of the time that they speak of it as "The Age of the Cities," succeeding to and making an end of the Dark Ages. This rapid growth—comparatively to the earlier period—of towns in the twelfth century will easily be understood to have had a large share in the recovery of Europe. It meant the rise of a middle-class of merchants, officials, and lawyers, a great increase of skilled workers or artisans, a spread of wealth over a large group of laymen instead of its earlier concentration in the bishopric or the noble's castle, a demand for the multiplication of luxuries, an extension of education and demand for secular culture, a general quickening of intelligence in a larger number of people, a stimulating increase of travel and exchange of ideas and commodities.

I am going to show that this and the influence of the southern civilization which I have just described were the two chief reasons for the slow recovery, or at least improvement, of Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the Roman Church had nothing to do with either. The fact that the city of Rome itself remained so backward is proof enough of this. The cities of north and of south Italy were superior to it in the thirteenth century, and until the fifteenth century the northern cities were far in advance of Rome. All the great Italian art and culture of the later Middle Ages belongs to the northern cities until, in the fifteenth century, a series of sensual

or degenerate Popes, extorting a tainted wealth from the world by the sale of indulgences and offices, made Rome a center of art. The Popes had, in fact, resisted the changes which brought about this new city-life and its civilizing influence. They had been the slowest to emancipate the serfs in the Papal dominions.

One of the great changes of the time was this conversion of the peasants, who were about ninety percent of the population of Europe, into what were called free workers. This "freedom" was sold, as a rule, to batches of serfs by bishops, nobles, and princes who wanted money, or given in return for military support. We must not exaggerate the improvement of the condition of those who remained on the land, but numbers flocked to the towns and swelled the ranks of the skilled workers. These and the increasing middle-class then demanded self-government. They bought charters which made them free to rule or administer their cities, and, as we saw, this led in turn to an extension of the democratic ideal. Many cities, especially in northern Italy, became entirely independent, and some in time acquired territory and other towns and became republics. I have told how the Popes fought this tendency for more than a hundred years and insisted on ruling Rome by means of a (generally corrupt) clerical staff. We cannot here go into all the causes and effects of this civic development. Briefly, it created a demand for a larger and richer life and thus, apart from the natural growth of a supply to meet the demand, it provided a market, generally with the Jews as the middlemen, for articles and ideas from the more advanced civilization in the south. I want to show, again very briefly, how all the **general** brighter features of the thirteenth century—an isolated strict monastery or learned abbot does not interest me—arose in this way, as an antidote to the vague claim that the Roman Church recivilized Europe. Then we shall see what the Popes of the thirteenth century were really doing while Europe was recovering in spite of them.

## CHAPTER II

### THE REAL ADVANCE OF EUROPE

**W**Henever, either in history or science or even social theory, we start a new idea, there is a strong tendency to exaggerate it. This applies particularly to the discovery of so many Renaissances in the history of Europe. At one time, especially in the early nineteenth century, there was an exaggeration of the importance of the Renaissance in the original sense: the rebirth of Greek and Latin literature in the fifteenth century. Now, as I have explained, historians talk about a whole series of Renaissances from the time of Charlemagne onward. Probably before long some learned person will find that there was a still earlier Renaissance, perhaps several. And the plain man will begin to ask himself what all these Renaissances amounted to if it is a fact that, as we shall see, by the beginning of the nineteenth century the civilization of Europe had scarcely got back to the ancient level. At all events we are going to find the life of Europe still barbaric enough at the end

of the thirteenth century. These "Renaissances" do not mean that we have discovered new facts but that we have invented new phrases.

There clearly was, however, an advance in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and we must see whether, or to what extent, this may be attributed to the Popes or to the Roman Church in the wider sense. The five sections into which I have divided this chapter show the chief aspects or elements of such general improvement as there was. I have carefully considered what Professor Haskins finds in the twelfth century, as these developments continue and culminate in the thirteenth, and all other studies of the recovery of Europe. I ignore references to individuals or to isolated communities. You will find such things in every age, for it would be absurd to imagine that at any period there were not a few with some feeling for refinement or learning or virtue. I also attach very little importance to the rise of the friars, the founding of the monastic orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic. If they have any historical significance it is as evidence that the old monastic orders were again generally corrupt and selfish, and a new type of monastery had to be built for those Christians who, in every age, sincerely wished to cultivate poverty and chastity. They in turn soon became corrupt and, while a number of individual Franciscan friars had their share in the new learning, the orders as such do not interest us. We shall, in a word, find that with the real advances that were now made in Europe the Popes had nothing to do, the monks very little, and the clergy in general little.

### §1. THE GREAT CATHEDRALS

I take first the artistic advance because it is the most conspicuous and at the same time the most religious in its aspect. The beautiful Gothic cathedrals, especially of France and England, which every visitor to Europe rightly admires are the first things to which the Catholic appeals against what he calls the calumny of the Middle Ages. That the Middle Ages were nearly over before the great cathedrals were built, that there were buildings just as beautiful (in a very different style) in Moorish Spain long before, that the Greeks had had much finer temples fifteen centuries earlier, he is, of course, quite unaware. He just has a hazy idea that this Roman faith inspired people to raise glorious buildings which nobody else could build. He never even asks himself how it is that this faith gave this inspiration at one particular and limited period and, though the faith remained the same in many countries and the wealth increased, the inspiration ceased. He does not ask how it is that Rome had no share in this great artistic development until the Papacy became very corrupt, and why, when the Reformation compelled the Popes to reform their court, the "inspiration" at once ceased!

It will occur to any thoughtful person that with the growth of cities and increase of wealth in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was bound to be a great development of church architecture. It will further be found quite natural that this should begin in central Europe, since this part of Europe (Saxony and the valley of the

Rhine) had been the longest sheltered from uncivilized invaders and had been the central part of the Empire of Charlemagne and his successors. Ancient Roman art had been best preserved in the north of Italy because the Goths and Lombards, not the monks, had appreciated it, and some think that it was chiefly these enterprising cities of north Italy that started the new development of architecture. They were, in any case, part of the Empire and were in close communication with the cities of Germany. So after 1050 large and beautiful churches began to rise in the German cities, and from Germany the zeal spread to France and England. The art was, and is, called Romanesque, which is merely the medieval way of saying Roman (ancient Roman). It was just a normal feature of civic life. The wealthy bishops and new large towns wanted the best churches they could build. But the abbeys, which were independent of the bishops, were also very wealthy, and they joined in the movement and soon had bodies of monks building the noble abbey-churches of which we have many ruins. A dissolute abbey was just as eager as a strict abbey to have such a church.

The Gothic style, which is familiar in the great cathedrals of France and Germany, grew out of this earlier style. All sorts of fantastic theories of its origin have been written, and we still find a poetic author occasionally telling us how it expresses "the soaring spirit" of the Middle Ages. On the contrary, the artists of the Middle Ages were, as a rule, the least "soaring" or spiritual of the people. They were simply artists, whose business it was to realize church ideas beautifully, because at first the churches were the only rich employers (apart from castles and palaces, but these had to be heavy to resist siege at any time). With the growth of the towns and the rise of civic authorities with civic funds the architects did just as beautiful work on municipal buildings (Brussels City Hall, Ypres Cloth Hall, etc.). Even when they built cathedrals they often carved on them details (gargoyles particularly) which imply anything but a religious mood. It is true that in some places the whole of the inhabitants joined in the work in an epidemic of fervor, but we must not confuse these mere carriers of lime and stone with the architects and sculptors.

This finer or "Gothic" art was very slowly and gradually developed out of the Romanesque in the central district of France (Paris, Rheims, Chartres, etc.) in the second half of the twelfth century. How much monk-architects had to do with it in the early stage we do not know, but the picture I gave in the last book of the royal abbey of St. Denis, and of Parisian clerical life generally, in the twelfth century, does not suggest the inspiration of piety. Modern architects, in fact, find no inspiration, but a slow working out of technical problems during a century. In any case, the work was soon taken out of the hands of the monks, and it was then that the art became great and "inspired." It is mere confusion of ideas to talk of these cathedrals as monuments of the simple piety of the later Middle Ages. It is, in fact, stupid when we reflect that precisely this period of the development of Gothic art (1150 to 1250) was, as

we saw, an age when heresy was spreading rapidly over Europe and morality was very low.

## §2. THE SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

In the case of the art of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we have a very obvious connection with religion, since the churches, which held as much as a fourth or even a third of the entire wealth of a country, were the chief employers. When we turn to the second brighter feature of the period, the intellectual life, we have a very different situation, and it is quite absurd for Catholics to boast of this as a distinction of their Church. Art could serve religion, not merely in a spiritual sense, but by drawing streams of pilgrims and their money to the great cathedrals, and it was therefore encouraged by the Church, but a growth of intellectual life threatened to foster heresy and undermine the Church, so it had to be jealously watched and soon checked and sterilized.

The Catholic again boasts in a crude vague way how "the Church" opened great schools, some of which became universities, and thousands of scholars trod the roads of Europe feverishly seeking the best centers of learning in the monastic and episcopal schools. It is—or would be on the Catholic theory—again singular how the city of Rome lingered behind the rest of Europe in the intellectual development. Central France took the lead, and the movement began in schools that were opened by abbots and bishops who really appreciated intellectual development and were ashamed of the ignorance of Europe. The type of Churchman who actually did something for culture in Europe was the abbot or bishop who was neither sensual nor ascetic, religious but not too religious; but in any particular generation you can count these men on your fingers. These and some of the stricter abbots opened schools, as they had been supposed for four centuries to do, in the latter part of the eleventh century. But, compared with the vast general ignorance of Europe, this was a very poor affair. The real school life began when the bishops opened schools in the cities and permitted lay teachers to open subsidiary schools: when brilliant men like Abelard, compelled against their will to become clerics (though not priests) but thoroughly secular in spirit, began to attack the stodgy traditional teaching and turn the school into a gladiatorial arena.

This was a very promising development, and thousands of scholars of all nations were attracted to Paris and other centers of distinction. Preparatory schools (grammar, rhetoric, etc.) multiplied in the smaller towns. We must not exaggerate. Even at the height of this scholastic fever in France it is not likely that five per cent of the population ever learned to read or write, whereas in Moorish Spain at the same date there were schools for all and the intellectual activity was immeasurably greater than in Europe. Moreover, the Church soon interfered. The gloomy St. Bernard, a quite anti-human ascetic, had Abelard and others ruined on the charge of heresy, and the school-life was thus directed into very narrow channels. Everything was subordinated to theology, and the time was wasted on the most frivolous and futile of theological

speculations. When, therefore, we say that some of these episcopal schools grew into universities in the thirteenth century we must remember that we do not mean anything like a modern university. We have the works in which the great friar-teachers—for the new monks at first (and in flagrant violation of the ideal of St. Francis) took a very keen part in the school life—show us what they taught in the universities, but even priests now scarcely ever read Thomas Aquinas, the Dominican, or Duns Scotus, the Franciscan, the two ablest of the schoolmen.

The first real universities, though they were enlarged medical schools, were founded at Salerno in south Italy and Montpellier in southern France, and they were both conspicuous examples of the borrowing of science from the Arabs. The next grew out of the law school at Bologna, in northern Italy; and Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge later developed their great theological schools. In no case had the Papacy any share in the development of them, and it was ages later when Rome itself had schools of any distinction. We may say, in short, that the school-system of the Middle Ages was quite apart from the work of the Popes: that it was at first, if we consider it as an enlargement of the few small episcopal and monastic schools, a natural expression of the larger and freer life of the time which I have described: that the Church at once checked the freedom of teaching and speculation and kept everything subordinate to a barren scheme of theological hair-splitting: and that it never affected more than a few percent of the population of any country.

### §3. THE PROGRESS OF LAW AND GOVERNMENT

A third advance of the period was in the codification and improvement of law. In so far as this means Church or Canon Law, we must keep a certain reserve in speaking of it as an improvement, for we saw that it began in more than suspicious circumstances. First there was a spurious collection of decrees of Popes and Councils, the Forged Decretals, which I described in an earlier book. Then, as we saw, Gregory VII and his friends wanted a legal basis for the very inflated powers which they ascribed to the Papacy, and they added new forgeries and perversions of texts to the collection of genuine and spurious decrees which already existed. That all these were at last brought together in a formal code of Church Law does not seem to me so much a great achievement as a most remarkable illustration of the intellectual poverty of Rome before that time. It was, in any case, in the cities of northern Italy, not at Rome, that the work was done.

There was more progress in the field of civil law, but this clearly has so little to do with religion that we need scarcely consider it here. It was an obvious requirement of the new and larger economic life of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that law should be clearly defined and extended to meet the new problems. The new conditions demanded lay lawyers. In fact the Church repeatedly at this time forbade monks and priests to plead in court for gain, and a caste of lay lawyers was necessarily developed. In all

these developments we really see an advance because something—art, teaching, law, etc.—is taken out of the hands of the monks and entrusted to lay experts. Just where the Church might be expected to intervene in the procedure it fails to do so. The crude old method of settling guilt or innocence by a fight, by throwing the suspect into deep water or making him walk on fire, or any other variety of the ordeal, as it was called, now fell off, and secular courts with lay attorneys and judges met the needs of the new towns. But the procedure was still half-barbaric in many ways: especially in the use of ghastly tortures and horrible or even obscene punishments. Abelard maintained that when he had been castrated by the uncle of Heloise he had a legal right to have the same punishment inflicted on the canon. As late as the year 1500 I found cases at Rome of men who were discovered masquerading as women being sentenced to walk through the streets holding their skirts high above their middle. In laying down the procedure of the Inquisition Rome actually confirmed and prolonged the worst brutalities of the system nor did the Popes say one word against the grave injustice to women and serfs.

That there was a simultaneous improvement in government goes without saying, but the worst evils remained and were encouraged by the Popes. They were themselves autocrats and they co-operated with the monarchs to sustain autocracy. I have earlier described how the Pope denounced Magna Charta, the first check on the autocracy of a monarch, as a document inspired by the devil: how they claimed to have the power to dispose of kingdoms or plunge them in the horrors of civil war at any time: how they fought the democratic idea to the death and executed its great apostle. They were too busy with the struggle for their temporal possessions, too thoroughly in sympathy with the prejudices of their age, to perceive even the gross injustices of the legal and political order to the workers and to women: which means more than ninety-five percent of the people of Christendom. Both law and government were immensely more just and enlightened in the Moorish and Sicilian civilization.

Against these painful general truths the Catholic usually pleads that, under the patronage if not by the inspiration of the Church, the workers were organized in powerful guilds. Several modern historians and sociologists have paid particular attention to these guilds, and they soon made an end of the claim that the Church inspired them. Taking up the clues which I found in these writers I once made some research into the earliest references to the guilds in early European literature. I give the result in my little book "The Church and the People." Briefly, the first reference is a decree of Charlemagne (or his council, largely of clerics) in the year 779, which severely forbids the workers to "conspire together in guilds." This is repeated several times in Church Councils, and in the end supported by savage penalties, during the next hundred years. One decree (of Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims in 852) speaks of priests attending the banquets or suppers of the "guilds or confraternities"

and getting drunk and singing obscene songs there. The guilds are represented as "pagan," and from this experts recognize that they were just survivals of the ancient Roman "colleges" or trade unions of the workers. But the Church could not destroy them, and what it cannot destroy it consecrates in its own interest. It gave the guilds a religious complexion, in its own interest, leaving the workers to look after their economic interests themselves. We must remember, in fine, that these were merely unions of skilled workers in the cities. The great mass of the workers, on the land, had no protection.

#### §4. THE AGE OF CHIVALRY

Some historians include as part of the Renaissance of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the beginning of chivalry and of the poetical movement which is best known through the songs of the Troubadours (in Germany called Minnesingers or "Singers of Love"). The two movements go together as they were confined to the aristocratic order, though the minstrels who accompanied the noble troubadours were of the lower order. From end to end of Europe the castles of the nobles now resounded with joyous songs, finer dresses and more courteous forms were introduced, and the ladies of the nobility were flattered and idolized. Chivalry was a corresponding refinement of the conduct of the nobles and knights in war or the tournament. Even this world of the nobles had been up to the latter part of the eleventh century unbelievably crude and dirty, and it was certainly a great and lasting gain to Europe that this refining of life should begin.

But it is one of the last improvements that any man would think of connecting with the Papacy or the Roman religion. It was in both respects—the song and the chivalry in fighting—so plainly derived from the Mohammedans that no one disputes its origin. It was also profoundly immoral and it seems to have positively promoted immorality amongst the women of the aristocratic order. The larger and better known ballads and epics that came of the movement belong to a later date, and the later poets were not so free, but, as I have shown elsewhere, the earliest songs of the troubadours reflect a most remarkable looseness of sexual morals, an actual aggressiveness on the part of the women. As abbesses were commonly of noble extraction they figure not infrequently in this literature of love. It is an imitation of the amorous poetry of the Arabs and Persians. As to the chivalry, it was to a great extent a refining of murder. The jousts and tournaments, the fights of two or more knights in the arena, while the fairest ladies looked on, were really not much better than the gladiatorial displays in ancient Rome, except that the combatants were willing. They fought to kill each other, we must remember. There is a worm at the heart of every rose of that gorgeously colored life of the Middle Ages.

I postpone to a later chapter, on account of its special importance, the revival of philosophy and science in the thirteenth century. Let me just say here, to round off this list of the advances that were made in the thirteenth century, that the philosophy of

Aristotle that began to be discussed in the universities was derived, as no historian of philosophy questions, from the Moors of Spain, and that it is now proved—Professor Haskins has written one of the most valuable works on the subject—that all the science that appears in the works of a few men (Roger Bacon, etc.) in the thirteenth century was borrowed from the same Moors of Spain. The only other improvements that I find claimed for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are that a slightly larger number of monks and priests read such Latin classics as were available—there was nothing like a complete collection anywhere—and that the writers of contemporary history have a better style and a higher historical sense than they had in the Dark Ages. It is, therefore, quite clear that all the progress that was made in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was due to the two causes which I assigned: the economic development which necessarily accompanied the rise of larger towns and the presence of a much more advanced civilization to the south and east of Europe.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE CONTINUED FUTILITY OF THE POPES



HIS important conclusion about the causes of such real advance as was made in Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries must now be confirmed by considering what in point of fact the Popes did and what was the effect of their work. If I turn aside occasionally to glance at the general history of medieval Europe and the way in which modern historians analyze the slow progress of its recovery, it is because all the fallacies about the supposed share of the Roman Church in the development of European civilization arise from the divorce of secular and ecclesiastical history. My occasional criticism of recent manuals of medieval history must not give the idea that the writers of these manuals describe and analyze the progress that was made otherwise than I have done in the last chapter. They are quite sound on that point. They never attempt to trace any particular advance amongst those I have enumerated to religious inspiration, much less to the action of the Popes. But they occasionally repeat the vague and conventional reminder about the beneficent action of the Popes without any attempt to show in detail what any particular Pope did and how his action had definite social consequences. Even if they do take a few details from religious history they remain vague about the application to the general history of Europe. They may tell us how zealous for learning John of Salisbury or Bishop Grosse-teste was, how strict and picturesque the life of the first generation of friars was, and so on, but how these few cultivated clerics with their very narrow spheres of influence or how the self-torture of Francis of Assisi assisted in the recovery of Europe we are not told.

It is this vagueness which enables Catholics to assert that historians are now quite favorable to their claim that the Papacy was, in the highest sense, the great molding influence of the Middle Ages and therefore responsible for the progress which at this period ended

the Dark Ages and slowly prepared the way for modern times. This claim is historically grotesque. The Popes were not even flies on the wheels of the chariot. They were in the rear of it. They had created for themselves such overweening power, religious and secular, and Europe was so full of revolt against it, that they were overwhelmingly occupied in defending it. It is not paradoxical to say that the chief use that the Popes made of their mighty power was to vindicate that power. In the century we are now going to review we shall find nearly all the energy of the Popes absorbed in a titanic struggle against the Emperors, and, whatever vices of the Emperors may be alleged, the real reason is that the Popes want territory in Italy which the Emperors will not grant. In the end, we shall find, the Popes turn to France for aid, drown the last Italian imperialists in blood, and bring upon themselves a French influence which ruins Rome and leads to another prolonged degradation of the Papacy. It is more futile than ever to speak of the Papacy as a civilizing agency just at the time when Europe is really returning toward civilization.

#### 51. THE STRUGGLE WITH FREDERIC II

The last Pope whose activity we studied was Innocent III, the greatest of the Popes, yet the organizer of the most repulsive of the Crusades, of the most terrible religious massacre in history, and of the murderous policy which soon culminated in the Inquisition. Amongst the many acts of his which illustrate how the consciences of even profoundly religious Popes were perverted by the Papal greed for territory and power we noticed his conduct in securing the kingdom of Sicily as a fief. Sicily had under the Saracens become a wonderfully prosperous country, and the Normans had, in conquering it, sustained its prosperity and its high culture. Henry VI, the Roman (German) Emperor, had married the Norman princess Constance and had thus inherited the kingdom. At his death he left her in Sicily with a boy, Frederic, heir to the kingdom and the Empire. Innocent induced her to make him the guardian of the boy; and for this service he exacted a fee of thirty thousand gold pieces a year and the acknowledgment that Sicily and Naples were fiefs of the Papacy and must pay annual tribute and render feudal service (or supply the Pope with an army whenever he called for one). In addition to perpetrating this fraud on a boy of tender years he, only three years later, supported Otto of Brunswick in his baseless claim to Frederic's Empire and materially assisted him to win it.

Germany at last summoned Frederic II to take over his imperial heritage, and he proved the ablest and most enlightened monarch of the age. "The Wonder of the World" he is called by contemporary writers. But the spirit and culture of the Saracens still lingered in the court at Palermo, the capital of Sicily, in which Frederic was educated, and his keen and strong intellect soon learned to contrast the learning and refinement and gaiety of the sunny south with the ignorance, the coarseness, the heavy quarrelsomeness of the bleak north. He learned to speak Arabic, and he absorbed all the philosophy and science, as well as the love of poetry and music, of

the Norman-Saracen world. He clearly perceived the truth which we perceive today: that the boorish Roman world needed friendly contact with and tuition from the Mohammedan world it affected to despise. His character is still in some ways obscure, for he was several centuries in advance of his time and he was compelled to do some things (condemning heretics, for instance) from policy which were repugnant to him. But two things are clear. He became a thorough skeptic—probably a Theist—and he loathed the Papal system which fought for its supposed rights with blood and trickery; and he wanted to extend the southern culture—its science and philosophy, its freedom of life and thought, its prosperity and its gaiety—over the whole of Europe. He did in fact render a mighty service in establishing this culture in the cities of north Italy and to some extent in Germany, but his ideal of life no less than his territorial claims necessarily brought on a deadly clash with the Papacy.

Innocent III died in 1216, and the four Popes who followed him until the death of Frederic in 1250 spent themselves in the struggle against him. Honorius III had been Innocent's chamberlain, and he inherited his stern policy and spirit. There must be a new Crusade, and Frederic must join it. Frederic knew how much the Pope could do to wreck his plans and he temporized for some years. It was under this pressure of circumstances that he obliged the Pope by decreeing sentence of death against heretics, and he surrendered a good deal of territory in central Italy to the Papacy. He received the imperial crown from the Pope in 1220, and they seemed very friendly. The chroniclers of the time speak of it almost as a miracle that at the coronation Romans and Germans mingled without drawing swords on each other. The only quarrel was one about a dog—and it led to a small war—between the envoys from Pisa and Florence. But the Pope presently pressed Frederic to prepare for the Crusade. Frederic was busy organizing his Empire and he got one delay after another. At last the Pope pinned the Emperor to a date in 1227, but he died just before the date fell due. There is not much more to be said about Honorius. He quarreled with the democrats of Rome, and on one occasion they drove him, as they had driven so many Popes, out of the city. He controlled Europe sternly, but, the moral side of his influence was so weakened by his exactions of money that he was spoken of with bitterness over half of Europe. In England the Pope's bulls were trodden under foot, and one of his nuncios was murdered.

The struggle began under Gregory IX, a second Innocent, though not of so great an ability. He was eighty years old and had hitherto seemed friendly with the young Emperor. But three days after his coronation he wrote sternly to Frederic to prepare at once for the Crusade, and he reproved him for his sensuality and vice. Frederic had, in oriental style, quite a harem at Salerno, and there were even Mohammedan ladies in it. Probably the Emperor cursed the Pope, for nearly all Europe was weary of the call to fight in the east, and Frederic believed that, as the Mohammedans were far less intolerant than the Christians, the quarrel could be peacefully

settled. The two Sultans in the east were deadly enemies, and the ruler of Egypt, with whom Frederic had friendly and commercial relations, offered to give up Jerusalem if the Emperor would help him against his rival. But Frederic dare not yet challenge the stupid policy of the Pope, and he set sail. We are told, and the fact is not disputed, that, as the Pope had gone into the provinces for the summer, the Roman clergy appointed a Vicar or substitute, and this man openly sold to Crusaders who came to Rome on their way to join Frederic dispensations from their vow to go and fight.

A few days later Frederic's vessel was back in port and, sending word that he was ill, the Emperor retired to his court. I do not see why some historians wonder whether Frederic merely pretended to be ill seeing that an epidemic of fever broke out at Brindisi, from which they sailed, and carried off thousands of knights and soldiers. But Gregory made no inquiry, and he just gave the rein to his violent temper: a thing always permissible in the cause of virtue. In a public address he charged Frederic with every variety of vice, real and imaginary, and excommunicated him. Frederic retorted by drawing together the anti-Papal elements at Rome and when, at Easter 1228, the Pope again excommunicated him in St. Peter's, the Roman people broke into an angry roar, and the Pope fled in alarm to the provinces. Frederic at first sent a troop to capture him, and then, shrewdly changing his policy, actually set sail for the east; and I may add that by wise and friendly negotiation he secured Jerusalem, with free access of both sects to their sacred places, without shedding a drop of blood.

The Pope's conduct at this stage—and Catholics count Gregory IX as one of the "great" Popes—is so stupid and mischievous that many historians believe, and it seems indisputable, that Gregory was really fighting Frederic for the domination of Italy. We can imagine the feelings of the Emperor when the news came to him in the east, in the midst of his enlightened negotiations, that Gregory had publicly denounced his Crusade as an act of piracy and had again excommunicated him. Indeed, by a supreme piece of stupidity and perfidy, the Pope now summoned all Europe to a Crusade against the south-Italian kingdom of Frederic, and, as there were always adventurers ready for a campaign with such a prospect of loot, a Papal army invaded Frederic's territory and began to annex it. One of the most sacred and most admired of the rules of the Popes was that other nobles or princes were sternly forbidden to attack the lands of an absent Crusader, and Europe was astounded to hear that this was what the Pope had done. It was not only an infamous act, but it was a deadly blow at the aim of the Crusades. No German prince or noble would henceforward take the cross. When Gregory went on to denounce the treaty which made Jerusalem Christian—it was to be won by the sword not by "a deal with the devil"—and again excommunicate Frederic, half of Europe openly murmured against him. So Pope and Emperor made peace, and in the following years Frederic even helped Gregory to keep in check the constantly insurgent democrats of Rome.

It is curious that, although he was eighty years old at his accession, Gregory IX had one of the longest pontificates of the age (fourteen years), and it is one that best illustrates and explains the futility of the Popes. Frederic, in these years of peace, went on with the work of introducing some of the culture of the Saracens into benighted Europe, and in the improvement of law of which I have spoken he had the greatest share. But the Pope continued to intrigue against him, and when north Italy rebelled and Frederic truculently suppressed it, Gregory again excommunicated him and thundered his vices over Christendom. It was on this occasion that he accused Frederic of calling Moses, Christ, and Mohammed "The Three Imposters," and, as a book later circulated in Europe with that title, it has been very doubtfully imputed to Frederic. He was, however, certainly skeptical, and cynical sayings of his circulated throughout Europe. But when the moral censorship of Popes in such matters takes the form of offering Frederic's imperial crown to the ambitious king of France and so inaugurating another long and ghastly war we are not surprised that it completely failed. The Pope died in the middle of the war.

Frederic gave every facility for an election, but the new Pope died in a few weeks, and the cardinal-electors were so furiously divided that the See remained vacant for two years. In 1243 Innocent IV appeared, and Frederic made very substantial concessions to get peace. But the Papal policy was incorrigibly selfish and insatiable. In a short time the Pope complained that Frederic was violating the treaty, and he fled to France. At Lyons he convoked a great Council—the French were, of course, quite willing—and violating every canonical form, without judicial inquiry or inviting any defense, he declared Frederic excommunicated and deposed for his crimes and vices. All through the struggle these moral censors of the world and models of justice accepted and endorsed every bit of scandalous gossip about the Emperor that was reported to them. Frederic's reply was a bold and significant appeal to the monarchs of Europe to sweep away this bastard Papal system of religious profession and worldly power and greed. I take a few sentences from Gregorovius' translation of his letter:

Those who now call themselves priests oppress the sons of those fathers on whose alms they fattened. If your credulous simplicity were not ensnared by the hypocrisy of these Scribes and Pharisees, you would recognize and shun the hideous vices of the Curia, vices of which a sense of shame forbids us to speak. They extort, as you well know, great revenues from several kingdoms. This is the source of their insane arrogance. . . . These priests who serve the world, who are intoxicated with sensuality, despise God, because their religion has been drowned in the deluge of wealth. To deprive such men of their pernicious possessions, to remove the burthen of their condemnation, is in truth a work of love, and to this end we and all other powers should diligently lay our hands in order that the clergy should

be deprived of all superfluity and, content with modest possessions, should conform to the service of God.

Some historians have absurdly suggested that Frederic aimed at uniting the spiritual and temporal rule of the world in his own person. He had too good a sense of humor to dream of transferring his Sicilian harem to Rome. But the liberality of his life and opinions quite unfitted him to reform the Church, and his scheme, which would strip all the bishops and abbots of Europe as well as the Pope, was too ambitious for that ignorant and superstitious age; besides that the French were only too eager to side with the Pope and get Frederic's dominions as a reward. There was, however, little horror at the Emperor's words, for the same things were being said and sung in every country, but the war went on, and in the course of it, in 1250, the great Emperor died. He had done more for the recivilization of Europe than all the Popes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

## §2. PAPAL PASSION DISGUSTS EUROPE

The behavior of Gregory IX had been heavily criticized, but the way in which his successors carried on the war until the last of the great Hohenstaufen dynasty was scandalously executed on a public scaffold did even more to lower the prestige of the Popes. Innocent IV returned to Rome and began at once to intrigue to get possession of the kingdom of Naples. Frederic's son Conrad maintained the struggle, but he died in three years, leaving an infant son, Conradin, and a half-brother, Frederic's brilliant bastard son Manfred: a youth who had all the enlightenment, though not all the ability, of his father without his faults. Manfred assumed the regency, and he temporized with the Pope, but the war soon broke out afresh, and two years later the Pope died. Another "great" Pope, of course; but, in addition to the sanguinary policy I have described, he provoked deep anger in Europe by his demands for money, and he so promoted his own relatives at Rome that he made still worse the passionate feuds which continued to enliven the city.

Pope Alexander IV (1254-1261) followed in the path of blood traced by his predecessors. As the Papal troops could not hold Naples, which Manfred had under pressure of his difficulties yielded, the Pope offered the crown to an English prince and called for an English Crusade against Manfred and immense sums for the Papal treasury. But the nepotism of these religious Popes had further inflamed the Romans. Some of the Pope's relatives were taken and hanged, and the Romans allied themselves with Manfred, who retook Sicily. This was the period, about 1260, when the religious epidemic of the Flagellants occurred. To those who lived in those days the thirteenth century seemed, not the beautiful and enlightened age which our Catholics represent it, but so dark and vicious and violent that men and women walked in procession through the streets, scourging their naked shoulders until the blood ran to the ground. The sight had an almost hysterical effect on spectators, and they joined the procession until crowds wandered from town to

town. An attempt has been made in modern times to explain the movement as connected with sex-life, but, although a few scandals naturally occurred, the movement as a whole was a genuine penitential expression of the comprehensive viciousness of life in the thirteenth century.

The next Pope, Urban IV, was the son of a French shoemaker, whose obscure origin had long before been obscured by his progress in the clerical world. He it was, especially, who conceived the policy of pitting France against Germany. He created seven French cardinals and offered the crown of Sicily (under the Popes) to King Louis or his son. Louis accepted it for his brother, Charles of Anjou; and no supernatural light revealed to the Pope that the invitation to Italy of that unscrupulous adventurer would bring fresh horrors upon Rome and Italy and demoralize the Papacy itself. But Urban died in three years and left the burden of his policy to his successor.

### §3. THE POPES SUMMON THE FRENCH

It had now been the custom for some time for the election of a Pope to be confined to the cardinals of the Roman Church, as I described in an earlier book, and the mixture of nationalities in this body, as well as the hostility of cardinal representatives of the various Roman factions, turned the "conclave," as the meeting to elect a Pope was called, into, as a rule, a passionate struggle of conflicting hatreds and intrigues. Urban had secured that the French cardinals should have the decisive vote, and another Frenchman, Clement IV, was elected. He hated all Germans, and in particular Manfred, whom he described in his message to Christendom as a Saracen. He appealed for a Crusade of all Europe against him, and Charles of Anjou was able to bring so formidable a force that at the first pitched battle Manfred was beaten and killed. It was fought near Benevento, and the new "sons of St. Peter" quickly showed their virtue. Entering Benevento, the French and Papal soldiers made a general massacre of the peaceful citizens of both sexes and all ages. Once more the Churches were desecrated and looted, and the women and nuns were raped. Charles moved on to Naples, where his officers and soldiers looted and raped as the Normans and Saracens had done in their earliest barbaric years. Those who are tempted to fancy that the superb cathedrals, the great schools, and the pious friars of France at this time seem to indicate a general improvement of character should read the loathsome details of this French campaign in and government of Italy. The Pope added a feeble protest against the brutalities of his chosen instrument when he wrote him a letter of jubilant triumph over the downfall of the noble Manfred, but Charles ignored his protest and settled down to wring the last coin and the last drop of blood out of southern Italy.

The horrible tyranny provoked a revolt, and Conradin, though only a youth of sixteen, came forward as the deliverer of Italy. The Pope declared him excommunicated—like almost every single ruler of the Hohenstaufen line—and called again upon Europe to extin-

guish the hated house. But Conradin had too feeble a force. He was captured, and, after a travesty of justice, he was, to the horror of all the monarchs of Europe, publicly beheaded. The Pope's attitude at the time of this outrage is obscure. Some writers of the time say that he advised the execution, but it is improbable. It is, however, certain that he made no effort to save the royal youth, though he had time to do so, and it is probably true that he expressly refused to intervene when he was asked. Charles made harsher than ever his government of Italy; and I may add here that in 1282 this led to the appalling massacre which is known as the Sicilian Vespers. The Italians rose against the French and avenged their injuries with a ferocity that made Europe shudder. Two thousand French soldiers and officials were slain, and the French nuns were treated in the customary way of the Middle Ages. Even Sicilian women who had been raped by French soldiers were ripped open so that every relic of the hated race might be destroyed.

Pope Clement had not lived to see the tragic consequences to Italy of the new Papal policy for the recovery of the temporal power. In fact, although the quarrels of the French and Italian cardinals had kept the Church for two years without a Pope, six Popes occupied the chair of Peter in the next sixteen years, and we need not inquire what they did for Europe. The last fifteen years of "the beautiful century" were almost the most appalling that Rome and Italy had known for ages, yet in the next century Rome was to sink still lower. And these were the people who, while they let loose upon each other barbaric hatreds which the Popes made little effort to check, and often exasperated, showed some zeal for the persecution of heretics. We have, as I said, not been permitted to see the records of the Roman Inquisition, but a document telling of one of its acts came to light in the last century. In 1266 a Roman noble was condemned by the Inquisition for sheltering heretics. The bones of his wife and father were dug up and burned, and his family was declared "infamous" (incapable of civic rights) to the third degree.

Nicholas IV, though a terrible nepotist, had been the best of the six short-lived Popes in the last part of the thirteenth century. He died in 1292, and the twelve cardinals fought long and bitterly in the election chamber until the annual outbreak of fever drove them from Rome. That city was still divided between Guelfs (or Papalists), at the head of whom were the Orsini nobles and cardinals, and Ghibellines (or Imperialists), headed by the Colonna nobles and cardinals. Their followers plunged Rome again into the wildest disorder. Pilgrims were slain and churches looted repeatedly. It was more than a year before the rival cardinals could be induced to sit in the same chamber, and they then continued their bitter feud for eight months. The astute Cardinal Gaetano then proposed that they should bring a pious hermit who lived in a cave in a wild part of Italy. The simple man was dragged from his cave and brought to the city of Aquila, which he insisted upon entering on an ass, to the great joy of all monks and hermits. But his stupidity suited King

Charles, and he was soon induced to create thirteen new cardinals, seven of whom were French. In alarm the Italian cardinals now regretted their action, and it was presently announced that Pope Celestine wished to abdicate and return to his cave. The gossip of the time represented that Cardinal Gaetano had a sort of speaking tube fitted into the wall of the cell which the Pope made for himself in the palace and breathed into his ears a message from heaven that he must resign. Christendom buzzed for a time with a discussion as to whether a Pope could resign, but the able and unscrupulous Gaetano soon displaced the rustic hermit and became Boniface VIII. It is certain that he later sent men to capture and imprison the unlucky hermit, as the monks were seething with anger and disappointment, and he died soon afterwards, but we should hardly be justified in taking seriously the charge of the monks that Boniface had him murdered.

It was, at all events, a strange, and ambiguous type of Pope who now sat in the chair of Peter. In a later chapter we shall see that some years after his death he was charged—and many of the witnesses were devout monks or clerics—with the most cynical blasphemies about religion and with every variety of vice and greed, but he opened his pontifical career with high-sounding appeals for the purification and pacification of Christendom and a new Crusade against the Turks. He soon exchanged this lofty attitude for a passionate demand of a Crusade for the extinction of the Colonna family, whose cardinals had prevented his earlier election and were now openly accusing him of vice and trickery. He ruined them with his troops, confiscating the property of the entire family, and at the survivors who fled abroad he flung a malediction that would have made men shudder if they had not long since grown accustomed to these things. He heard that the monarchs of France and England were exacting money from the Churches of those countries, and in a solemn bull (which was publicly burned in France) he declared church funds all over the world inviolable, or only subject to Papal levies. Then, with the advent of the year 1300, he announced a "Jubilee"—the first institution of that famous Roman festival—and millions of pilgrims visited Rome to win the indulgences which he announced. It is said that at one time there were two hundred thousand pilgrims in Rome. A contemporary tells us, from his own observation, that two priests with rakes were busy night and day in St. Peter's drawing in the coin; and vast funds were obtained by the sale of relics and other pious fakes, dispensations, etc. The Inquisition had killed off the rebels. England and France had recently submitted a quarrel to the Pope for arbitration. The whole world was prostrate at his feet. . . His enemies maliciously said that Boniface donned an imperial mantle and golden sandals.

The year 1300 is the highest mark of Papal power, though it had already been undermined by those abuses of the power which I have described. From that year it begins to decline, and Europe moves in the direction of the Reformation. The immediate cause of decline was the quarrel with France which the election of Boniface

had provoked. The Pope heard that the French king was still extorting money from the clergy and listening to the libels of the fugitive Colonnas: the king complained that the Pope did nothing to redeem his promise to get the imperial crown for his brother. But we need not go into detail. In 1303, after an acrid quarrel for two years, Boniface excommunicated Philip, and the French States General (or Congress), at the request of the king and with the consent of the clergy, drew up a scandalous indictment of the Pope. He did not, they said, even believe in immortality, to say nothing of Catholic doctrines; he flouted moral law and had two bastards by his nephew's wife (and rewarded the nephew with a cardinal's hat): he was guilty of murder, avarice, simony, and so on. The French called for a General Council of the Church to try these charges, and Christendom, which had almost worshipped him three years earlier, was astounded.

Boniface was spending the summer at Anagni, and a noble of the Colonna family invaded the town and raised a revolt. There was the usual sacking of churches and general orgy of violence, and the Pope was baited and threatened with death in his palace. But some of the cardinals had escaped through the town sewer, and a Roman army came to the Pope's rescue. They severely blamed him, however, and demanded that he should pardon the Colonna, but the appalling experience had broken the Pope's spirit—the Colonna had taken him round Anagni on a horse with his face to the tail—and he died. Europe now reeked so much with scandalous gossip, in spite of that "improvement in the writing of history" which our modern authors admire—there was not a writer in Europe worth calling an historian until two centuries later—that the end of Boniface is hidden in a cloud of myths. He was murdered; he committed suicide; he hurst a blood-vessel in a fit of temper. We will assume that the steep fall from 1300 to 1303, from idolization to being represented over all Europe as a monster of unbelief and vice, was enough to kill him.

Benedict XI, a well-meaning man, succeeded, but he found such a formidable situation confronting him that he died in a few months, and I will resume this pretty story of the moral autocrats of Europe, the shapers of civilization, in a later chapter. We are going to find almost two centuries of degradation. What truth there was in the charges against Pope Boniface we consider later, when we come to some sort of trial. I may say at once that, although many details are incredible and are mere gossip, there is serious evidence that Boniface was skeptical, cynical about the superstitions of the Europe he duped, immoral and unscrupulous. The French king was no better. He was thoroughly unscrupulous, as we shall find, even debasing the coinage of his impoverished people. With these two dominant and representative figures the beautiful century came to a close. One wonders whether, after all, we ought not to extend, not abandon, the phrase, the Dark Ages. But we shall move into a still darker phase presently.

## CHAPTER IV

## HOW ROME CHECKED THE PROGRESS OF THOUGHT

**W**HILE I was writing the preceding chapter I received a clipping from (apparently) the San Francisco Chronicle which gives half a column of a sermon recently preached by a Roman Catholic priest. It deplores "the attitude of mild contempt" toward the Church which is found in America, and in America only. The anti-clericals of Europe hate the Church, it seems, but "they know better than to charge her with ignorance, surrounded as they are on all sides by the monumental evidence of the Church's love of learning, her patronage of the arts and sciences, her encouragement of all seekers after knowledge." The American Catholic is, of course, unaware that this is just the reverse of the truth. In no other country in the world in which Catholics are in the minority are the fraudulent claims of the Church of Rome so respectfully treated in press, periodicals, and literature as in America. The strongest objection of the anti-clericals of Europe to that Church is that it retarded the recivilization of Europe by its complete indifference to learning and general education in the first half of the Middle Ages, its hostility to science and its sterilizing of knowledge in the second half of the Middle Ages, and its extraordinary poverty, in proportion to its numbers and resources, in real culture even in modern times. But the Catholic is forbidden to read these anti-clericals and learn what they do think, so the preacher, who merely says what is being said to Catholics and reproduced respectfully in the press all over America—neither in England, France, nor Germany would any reputable paper publish such a sermon—can safely make this audacious and preposterous statement:

There is hardly a subject taught in American universities, from anatomy and geology down to mathematical science, that does not owe its origin to the protection of the Roman Catholic Church. Had the Catholic Church not gathered the accumulated knowledge of the ages against the ravages of the barbarian invasion, races of untamed savages would still be ruling the earth.

There you have the essential element of the claim that the Catholic Church preserved culture and saved civilization. Whether the monks did or did not preserve the Latin classics is a secondary matter. No one can seriously claim that the preservation of copies of Plautus and Terence, of Vergil and Cicero, in a few monasteries saved civilization; or, if any person were inclined to claim this, we should at once point out that these rare types of monks and bishops were reading the Latin classics in the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, yet it does not seem to have had much effect on the barbarism of Europe. It is much more serious to claim that the Church preserved "the accumulated knowledge of the ages," especially the science of the Greeks and the Alexandrians. But what

the preacher says, what he borrows from the literature of his Church, which is as mendacious today as were its lives of martyrs, Donations of Constantine and Forged Decretals, is as wild a travesty of the historical facts as any man could perpetrate.

First notice the fallacy involved in this use of the phrase "the Catholic Church." By the year 450 the Bishops of Rome had forcibly suppressed every other religion and compelled the whole of civilized Europe to be subject to Rome. Therefore if any good thing was preserved or created after that date anywhere in Europe it was "the Catholic Church" that did it. It may have been the Irish monks who scorned the pretensions of Rome or the Lombard kings who despised the Popes, it may have been bishops or abbots who defied Pope Gregory's orders to shun profane literature, but it was, of course, the Catholic Church. It may have been rebels like Scotus Erigena or Abelard or Arnold of Brescia, but even if the Church broke or burned them it now takes the credit for their contributions to civilization. What was done in the way of preserving knowledge in these Dark Ages was done, as we saw, in defiance of the ideals of the Pope and the monks. But that does not matter. All Europe was Catholic, so the Catholic Church did it. There are three meanings to the phrase: the Pope and the hierarchy, the whole body of the clergy and monks, and the clergy and laity together. And your Catholic apologist does the three-card trick with them whenever he touches this subject.

Next reflect how strange it must seem that the line of Popes we have so far considered, down to the year 1300, should have been zealous to preserve culture. I defy any Catholic to quote a single word from the whole two hundred of them which expresses any concern about "the accumulated knowledge of the ages." The idea would have astonished them. The ablest and best of them would have considered it blasphemy. All knowledge of value was contained in the Scriptures, the Fathers, and the decrees of Popes and Councils. Gerbert was the only Pope who knew anything about science or philosophy, and they purified the Papal palace when he died. He was the most futile of all the Popes. As to the great majority of them, you will smile; and to these you may add the enormous majority of the bishops and abbots and monks.

But the most deadly reply to this most essential claim by any man who wants to persuade us that the Catholic Church saved civilization is to tell the historical facts. Can we state them in an uncontroverted form? Certainly: I shall say here only what you will find in any modern manual of the history of science or philosophy. That is why I am compelled to call this claim grotesque, preposterous and untruthful. The facts are not in dispute. The connection of the later medieval Church with art requires careful analysis. The preservation of the Latin classics is a matter to be settled by laborious research and is often obscure. But there is no obscurity about the preservation of science and philosophy. The fact that it was the Greeks, not the Romans, who cultivated science and philosophy, and that the Middle Ages had no Greek literature

or knowledge of Greek, ought to warn any man against making such stupid statements. Europe owed its science and philosophy entirely to the Arabs and the Greeks.

### §1. THE HOSTILITY TO SCIENCE

The preacher whom I have quoted, and I quote him only because it is a customary and typical Catholic claim, based upon the works of Walsh and Zahm and other supposed Catholic experts, expressly mentions anatomy, geology and mathematical science. The appalling crudeness of these people will be perceived at once if you reflect that even the Greeks never cultivated geology, so there was nothing in this department to be preserved; and mathematics was tabu throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, as it was identified (through a blunder of the Romans) with the "black art." Anatomy, further, was unknown, and even the so-called medical men had the grossest ideas of the structure of the body, until the last part of the Middle Ages. Anatomy began to be cultivated in Europe (apart from Spain and Sicily) in the twelfth century: mathematics, physics and chemistry in the thirteenth: astronomy (on paper) and some rudiments of geology in the fifteenth. And no expert now questions that Europe owed its science almost entirely to the Arabs of Spain and Sicily!

I say almost entirely, and, to meet Catholic trickery, we must see what had been preserved of ancient knowledge in Europe. From the Latin classics (chiefly the "Natural History" of Pliny, which was a poor compilation of Greek science) an obscure African writer of the fifth century, Martianus Capella, the Roman Cassiodorus of the sixth century (a monk in later life but living the best part of his life at the Gothic court), and Archbishop Isidore of Seville (also of the sixth century), compiled certain rough compendia of all knowledge. The work of these three men is all that "the Catholic Church" did in the way of preserving ancient knowledge. Their books are such jumbles of fact and fiction, of myths and crude history and science, that in spite of them men remained throughout the Middle Ages grossly ignorant of both science and history. Not a single man was stimulated to observe for himself: not a single item was added to knowledge. It was fossilized stuff, and, if one man in two centuries—very few ever even read it—did begin to think and try to correct the prevailing stupidity he was silenced by "the Catholic Church." There was a Bishop Virgilius in the eighth century who concluded, after reading one of these books, that the earth was not a level plain. He was forced to recant. There was an Irish monk, John Scotus Erigena, of the ninth century who made an enlightened attempt to restore the old knowledge in a living way, and he was condemned as a heretic.

At last, at the end of the tenth century, Gerbert or Pope Sylvester II, showed a real scientific spirit and knowledge. But the only dispute about Gerbert is whether he got his science from Spain (where he was first educated) or Moorish Sicily. In any case "the Catholic Church" regarded his learning with horror and concluded that he had dealings with the devil. The first real students of

science of the Catholic Church appear in the twelfth century, and in the thirteenth we get the famous Albert the Great and Roger Bacon. As to the origin of their science there is no dispute whatever. Not a scrap of it had been preserved by the Church. Our authorities are agreed that it all came from the Arab civilization. From Spain to Persia the Mohammedans were now cultivating every branch of science, especially medicine, chemistry, physics, mathematics and astronomy, but also botany, zoology and even geology, with brilliant success. They had magnificent instruments for astronomy and their libraries ran up to 600,000 volumes, while not a monastery in Europe had 10,000 manuscripts (nearly all religious). They welcomed Christian scholars, and from England especially (see Professor Haskins's learned work "Studies in the History of Medieval Science," 1924) scores of Christians went to their great colleges in Spain, learned Arabic, and began to translate their scientific works. There was a group of these students of science at Oxford and there Friar Roger Bacon learned all his science. Catholic preachers might at least consult their Catholic Encyclopaedia.—The facts about Bacon are now so notorious that it has to say: "It would be difficult to find any other scholar who shows such a profound knowledge of the Arabic philosophers [no: scientists] as Bacon does."

This Arab origin of all European science is a commonplace of the history of science. The only important thing which we may trace to the earlier books I have mentioned is that it was probably after reading in Martianus Capella the opinion of some of the ancient Greeks that the earth traveled round the sun, not the sun round the earth, that Copernicus in the sixteenth century concluded that that was the sounder theory. Otherwise these early medieval works, which the Church preserved, were mostly trash. Greek science (especially Alexandrian science) and philosophy were preserved mainly, though not further developed, in the libraries of certain Greek heretics in the east. From these the Arabs derived them, richly developed them, and passed them on to Europe. The finest thing they passed on was not the dead knowledge but the spirit of science, the wish to observe and experiment and learn the truth. This Cassiodorus and Isidore and the Church had completely failed to inspire, and, when it arose in the thirteenth century, the Church vigorously opposed it.

For details I must send the reader to the summary in my Little Blue Book No. 1142, "The Truth About Galileo and Medieval Science," in which the utter untruthfulness of Catholic works like those of Dr. Walsh and Father Zahm is exposed. It is now admitted that Roger Bacon was closely confined to or imprisoned in a monastery and deprived of books, instruments, pens and paper for more than twenty years. Albert the Great happened to be a noble as well as a monk, and he was silenced with a bishopric. When two Italians of the next century, Cecco of Ascoli and Peter of Abano, followed Bacon, the Catholic Church burned the first at the stake (1327) and proposed to murder the second, but, as he died in the

dungeons of the Inquisition, it had to be content to burn his body. The students of chemistry were (sometimes) a little more fortunate; because they were all alchemists, and promised bishops and nobles that they could make gold. Although bishops, and sometimes even Popes, had their astrologers, and although the Arabs had made wonderful progress in astronomy, the Church kept the science out of Europe. Copernicus was afraid to publish his timid book until he was dying, and the Inquisition took care of Galileo. We shall see this later. Even medicine and surgery, in spite of their obvious usefulness and the zealous cultivation of medicine in Spain, were checked by what so liberal and distinguished an authority as Sir T. Clifford Allbutt calls "the reactionary ferocity of the Church" ("Historical Relations of Medicine and Surgery," p. 51).

## §2. THE STERILIZING OF PHILOSOPHY

So much for science in the Middle Ages. It is sheer impudence to ask people in these days of public libraries to believe that the Catholic Church preserved the accumulated knowledge of the ages. Even the San Francisco public library, which I have often used, contains hundreds of books that would have told this preacher that he was speaking the reverse of the truth. And Catholics are just as recklessly caricaturing the truth when they say that ancient philosophy was preserved by the Church and developed by the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages. This point is not so important as the preceding, but it is interesting, if we take the word philosophy in a broad sense, to see what happened.

The discussions which filled the schools in the early part of the Scholastic period, which did not begin until the end of the eleventh century, were a sheer waste of time. Abelard had tried to give some vitality and liberality to them, and had been condemned, but even his works are very dreary reading. Instead of the Church having preserved the wisdom of the ancient world, men like Abelard found themselves so thoroughly isolated from it that they had to begin the work of philosophical speculation, on which the Greeks had spent four centuries, all over again. One early Latin writer, Boetius, a layman, whose orthodoxy is strongly suspected, had left Europe a single poem in which he gave his version of the ideas of Aristotle. This and the translation of one Greek work on logic was all that the early Schoolmen had of all the magnificent work that the Greeks had done. Plato was to them a mere name—one of the most learned monks of the thirteenth century, Albert the Great, calls Plato a Stoic, whereas the founder of Stoicism was not yet born when Plato died—and of all the other and saner Greek thinkers these learned men of the Middle Ages did not even know the names.

Philosophy came to Europe, like science, from the Arabs. No one disputes that. If people choose to take their ideas about the history of thought from ignorant preachers they pay the penalty. The Moors of Spain were the greatest students of Aristotle's works, which they brought from the east, that the world has ever known. When Dante speaks of Aristotle as "the master of those who know"

he also makes it clear that his knowledge of the great Greek thinkers comes entirely from the Arabs. Even in the thirteenth century Europe knew nothing about the mighty efforts of the Greeks except these works of Aristotle. The Roman Church had preserved nothing and was completely indifferent to ancient wisdom. It was the destruction of the Greek Empire by the Turks in the fifteenth century which drove Greek scholars, with what survived of the ancient learning, to Europe. And when men like Pomponazzi then began to speculate on the lines of Plato's philosophy, the Roman Church truculently persecuted them. When a monk, Giordano Bruno, profoundly studied all that was known of Greek wisdom and gave the world the soundest philosophy of nature it had yet known, the Roman Church burned him alive.

The philosophy of Aristotle was studied in Europe by men like Thomas Aquinas because it was the basis of the general skepticism of the great Arab scholars, and this skepticism was spreading to Europe, and the Schoolmen had to refute it. We now know that even the Arabs had not a correct version of Aristotle's philosophy. They used Arabic translations of Syriac translations of the Greek text. The Latin translations of these still further corrupted the philosophy, and it is a bastard Aristotelism that Thomas Aquinas uses or abuses in the interest of theology. Moreover, the best part of Aristotle was his science, and this was totally neglected. It was his worst theories about nature which the Schoolmen set up as oracles, and they thus checked the advance of science very disastrously. Here the Catholic writer plays his three-card trick again. When we read how the Aristotelian professors at the universities checked the progress of science we are reminded that that was the professors, not the Church: when we read how, in spite of all this, Galileo and Torricelli made some discoveries, we are told that that was the Church: and we are not told that the Church fully supported its university professors and persecuted in one way or other nearly every one of their scientific opponents.

### 83. THE FIGHT AGAINST HERESY

Hence all that the Schoolmen, chiefly Thomas Aquinas, of the thirteenth century succeeded in doing was to lodge in the new universities of Europe a philosophical dogmatism, the authority of Aristotle and some of his worst ideas, that very materially hindered further progress. The few men who like Bacon wanted all this Scholastic rubbish swept aside and the Arab science cultivated instead were invariably silenced. The little English school which had produced Bacon was completely extinguished, and Europe would have to wait three centuries for the second Bacon. In Italy alone science got a footing in the universities because, as we have already seen, Frederic II and his successors wanted to extend the enlightened culture of the Saracens to Europe. At Palermo, Naples, Salerno, and even the northern cities, the new study was taken up with zeal. Frederic II not only permitted, but ordered, the dissection of bodies, which the Popes forbade—so at least a Bull of the year 1300 was interpreted—and the universities severely restrained.

But we have seen what happened. The work of Frederic was destroyed by the Popes and the French whom they introduced. Only in the independent cities of northern Italy was a slight interest in science preserved. Rome was as sterile scientifically as it was artistically.

When the Catholic objects that it was natural to oppose a science which led to heresy I agree with him. That is just what he ought to say instead of making the ridiculous claim that the Church fostered science. Every student of Dante's famous poem, which represents the culture of the north-Italian cities at the end of the thirteenth century, will have noticed two things. It shows that there was a good deal of Arabian science in Florence about 1300, and it tells us also that there was a great deal of skepticism. Dante packs one circle of hell with Florentines of the second half of the thirteenth century who, like Frederic II, did not believe in a future life. It seems to me highly probable that, as some recent students have concluded, Pope Boniface VIII shared this skepticism which Frederic had imported. Albert the Great was extremely cautious in introducing science into his works: Bacon was, except for a few years when a frivolous cardinal patronized him, imprisoned almost for life by his order: Nicholas of Cusa was silenced by ecclesiastical promotion.

That is the plain reason why the medieval Church was hostile to science. On what principle of the Roman religion can any man expect that it would patronize science or preserve the learning of the pagan world? At the best it ought to be religiously indifferent to such culture, and in Rome it was. But since this culture led, as the facts repeatedly show, to heresy in dogma or a sharpening of the wit that threatened to discover the fraudulent bases of the Papal power, the Church was naturally hostile to it. Chemists who promised to make gold, astrologers who promised to warn a bishop against dangers and medical men who could cure gout, got a little encouragement here and there. That is the only patronage which "the Church" gave to science until in the sixteenth century the world began to grow wise in spite of its Popes.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CLERGY AND THE MONKS IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY



FEW of my readers may not appreciate what the world missed by the hostility of the Church to science in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but the majority will have read what I have elsewhere written about the prosperous, enlightened, happy and orderly civilization of the Arabs, which was based on science. One illustration of what the medieval world missed will suffice. In the fourteenth century a plague known as the Black Death ravaged Europe for three years (1348-1351), and historians estimate from the various accounts that it carried off, after terrible suffering, twenty-five million people, which must have been more than a third of the population. Ships with their entire crews dead and rotting with plague drifted upon the shores of Europe and

helped spread it. A religious mania spread and stark insanity seized thousands of the survivors. They fell upon the Jews, and so savagely that in one German town alone twelve thousand Jews, men, women and children, were murdered. Europe was beside itself with terror. Yet if the admirable sanitary and medical science of the Arabs had been adopted in the previous century this monumental tragedy could not have occurred.

We may say that to all this the Popes, being only the moral and spiritual guardians of Europe, were necessarily indifferent. But when we ask once more in what precise respect their moral and spiritual guidance made itself felt we get merely the usual vague assurances that they were a most beneficent influence. There was, apart from the few years of terror and repentance when the plague in many countries swept off, literally, half the members of every large town and made the face of the world ghastly, no improvement whatever of the morals of Europe. There was no diminution of war and violence. There was no new measure of social justice. There were in fact, as we shall see in the next chapter, events such as the torture and suppression of the Templars, with the express connivance of the Pope, which would put a stamp of barbarity on any age. But the chief test of the moral action of the Roman Church is its success in enforcing its ideal of sexual virtue. It will be admitted that if it failed to improve the morals of Europe the claim of beneficent influence certainly falls. And the answer is that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there was no improvement whatever of European morals. We shall in the next chapter find the Papal court in the fourteenth century more degraded than it had ever been except in the tenth century, and as regards the mass of the people no historian has ever attempted to show an improvement. But it will be enough here to prove that clerical and monkish morals remained generally as irregular as ever, and of this we have ample evidence.

#### §1. THE IMMORALITY OF THE CLERGY

I have previously quoted the Positivist writer James Cotter Morison saying in his "Service of Man" that the thirteenth century—the fourteenth he ignores as not worth moral consideration—the period when, as he ironically says, some historians imagine that "the Church exerted a calm and serene sovereignty over the kneeling nations," was in reality "an age of violence, fraud and impurity such as can hardly be conceived now." He tests this by examining the "Record of Visitations" of the Archbishop of Rouen, a strict prelate, a Franciscan monk, who ruled his diocese from 1248 to 1269: that is to say, in the age of St. Louis, the most pious king that France or any other country ever had. Most of the French prelates were not at all strict. In an earlier chapter I described how Pope Innocent IV and his court were compelled to remain in France for seven years. A writer of the time, Matthew of Paris, tells us that, when the Papal court left Lyons, Cardinal Hugo genially told the citizens that when they had arrived in Lyons they had found only three or four brothels and there was only one when they left it, but that one,

he added, "extends without interruption from the eastern to the western gate of the city." A good story, perhaps, but when, twenty years later, Pope Gregory X held a Council in the same city of Lyons, he told the assembled French prelates that they had "brought ruin upon the world" by their example. Between these two dates we have the assurance, in 1259, of Pope Alexander IV, that all the evils of that terrible age were brought upon it by the impurity of the clergy; and we have already had the same assurance from Innocent III at the beginning of the century. We may salute in passing the isolated figure of a St. Louis or a St. Francis, but these general characterizations of the age are historically of much greater importance.

However, Archbishop Rigaud was a really pious and strict prelate, and he has left us a detailed picture of clerical morals in his diocese. He complains a great deal of drunkenness and playing dice in taverns, where, he quaintly says, the drunken priest "some times loses his clothes." Immoral priests occur on nearly every page of the volume. Here is a continuous passage in the record of one year (which Morison discreetly leaves in Latin):

Likewise the priest David of Mesnil is disobedient and has his two children living with him and his concubine elsewhere: likewise two women were found in his house and they fought each other. Likewise the priest of St. Richar is accused of sin with a married woman, one of his parishioners. Likewise the priest of St. Remy, who is notorious for drunkenness, does not wear his robe, plays dice, frequents the tavern, and is often thrashed there. Likewise Master Walter, priest of Grandcour, is reported for relations with his own niece and for drinking too much.

The priest of Nesle has a mistress and has fought a duel with swords in a ring of his parishioners. The priest of Gonnetot has two mistresses. The priest of Wanestavilla has had a mistress, a married woman, for eight years, drinks and plays dice in the tavern, and hunts with a hawk. The priest of Bray-sur-Seine has left his presbytery to go and live with a woman. The priest of St. Just drinks in the tavern till he is "full up to the throat." The priest of Longueil has a married mistress and a son. The priest of Panlyu has three mistresses and two sons, is a notorious drunkard, and likes to make his parishioners drunk. The priest of Auberville has quite a number of ladies. And the Archbishop tells us that he was content to warn them that if they did not mend their ways he would punish them.

Altogether a touching and strictly authentic vignette of clerical life in one region, about the middle of the thirteenth century, under a saint-king. Drinking, gaming in taverns, hawking, fighting and sex are common features of clerical life. If this is life under a strict archbishop, what was it likely to be under Henry, Bishop of Liege, who ruled his diocese for twenty-seven years and owned to the paternity of sixty-five children, and who boasted in a public banquet that he had begotten fourteen children in twenty-two months? We

are almost edified that we find the Pope intervening, in 1274, after quarter of a century of this kind of thing, and persuading the bishop to retire; though the bishop may have been rude, for it was not long since the strict English Bishop Grosseteste had said of the Papal court that "all the harlots in the world would not sate its lust." For Germany we have a dozen Councils of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries forbidding priests to leave their property to their mistresses and children; and in 1416 we have the Synod of Breslau complaining that it is still done. In Livonia the state of things was so bad that Innocent IV had in 1248 to abolish the rule forbidding the children of priests to become priests. In Switzerland in 1230 the secular authorities tried to compel the priests to dismiss their mistresses, and the citizens formed a league to enforce this; but the Bishop of Constance threatened to excommunicate the leaguers, and learned canonists decided that the civil law could not touch the women as they belonged "to the family of the clergy." The Bishop of Lausanne tried to enforce clerical chastity, and his priests so persistently tried to kill him that he fled.

Frederic II had in some respects legitimized the children of priests in the kingdom of Naples. In 1300, however, the civil authorities imposed a fine on them for keeping mistresses, but the priests appealed to court and got decisions in their favor. Still less was there any secrecy or reticence about clerical concubinage in Spain. The annals are full of the complaints of councils. In 1262 the king permitted the priests of Salamanca to leave their property to their children. We have the usual councils every few years forbidding them to keep female relatives or to come up to the city too often for debauches. The Council of Valladolid in 1322, presided over by a Papal Legate, shows us how futile it all was: it finds immorality prevalent from the highest ranks of the clergy downward, and complains that in many places the laity, to protect their own wives and daughters, compel the priests to have mistresses. In 1335 Pope Benedict XII repeats this in letters to the Spanish clergy and king; and the "Annals" of Cardinal Baronius, which reproduce the letters, remark that "in Castile impurity had infected both clergy and laity." But it was all useless. A Portuguese bishop and pious writer of the fourteenth century, Alvar Pelayo, tells us in his book, "The Complaint of the Church" that in Spain "the sons of the laity are only a little more numerous than the sons of the clergy." The confessional, he says, is grossly abused for immoral purposes, and priests take oaths in public to be loyal to the women, even noble women, whom they choose.

Dean Milman observes that the records in England show just the same low moral tone and "fully vindicate the truth of Langland, Chaucer, and the Satirists against the English clergy and friars in the fourteenth century" (IX, 37). Lea, as usual, gives us the concrete evidence and references, if anybody needs them. In 1202 we have King John, who is trying to prevent the election of a certain man to the bishopric of St. David's, ordering his officers to seize the women of the members of the Cathedral chapter who support

the man. In the same year the Bishop of Essex complains to Pope Innocent III that the sons of priests seize the positions of their fathers and declare, if they are ejected, that Rome has confirmed them. Innocent forbids the custom, but two years later we find him complaining that it continues. This is, of course, the period when wives are being displaced by Roman law. Councils deny them Christian burial or rights of inheritance and inflict all sorts of penalties, yet in 1237 we find a Papal Legate at the Council of London complaining of married or concubinate priests. The popular songs, which are particularly numerous and jovial in England at this time, bitterly satirize the "reforms" of Bishop Grosseteste and the Puritans and say that they have simply replaced wives by mistresses or one woman by many women. Clerical immorality was clearly a standing joke at the time. In 1279 we find the Archbishop of Canterbury reporting to Rome a bishop with a mistress and five children.

## §2. THE NEW FRIARS AND THE OLD MONKS

Of all this comprehensive evidence that the general condition of the clergy, and we shall add the monks and nuns, was one of loose morals few manuals of medieval history say a single word. On the other hand they give prominence to the appearance of the bare-footed friars, the sons of St. Francis and St. Dominic, as symptoms of the great piety of the thirteenth century. These testify, on the contrary, like many of the heretical bodies of the previous century, to the general corruption of the Church and the older monastic bodies and the fact that a few everywhere sincerely wished to live in voluntary poverty and chastity. There had been a dozen reforms of the monks and nuns in three centuries yet every few decades a new order had to be established for the small minority of men and women who wished to embrace what the Church described as the highest ideal of life with the richest reward in heaven. The history of these reforms was invariable. When the genuine piety of the new monks was seen, wealthy people poured wealth on them so as to get the benefit of their prayers and services, and within fifty years the wealth generally corrupted the new monks. It will be enough to show this in the case of the Franciscan friars.

Francis of Assisi, or Giovanni Bernardone—"Francesco," which simply means "the Frenchman," is a nickname of his gay youth—turned in early manhood from sin to virtue and, being a very simple-minded man, he understood that the Gospels strongly recommended voluntary poverty. He and a few companions, therefore, rejected all property and ownership and decided to serve their fellows and live by begging. The "rule" which Francis wrote has been carefully destroyed by his later followers, but experts think that it probably consisted merely of the texts in the Gospels about poverty. The last thing in the world that Francis wanted was to found a monastic order, for they were all largely corrupt. The men who wished to imitate him must preserve their poverty and chastity individually and not form an organization. But there had already been several such bodies, and the Church, feeling that these ideas reflected on its own wealth, truculently persecuted them. There

was the difference in the case of Francis that he avoided criticism of prelates, and, after a struggle, he got Papal recognition. They would wander about helping people and preaching to them; in fact, they were just like the wandering Essenian monks in ancient Judea. But the lack of prescribed forms and authority soon led to disorder, and Francis wrote a second "rule." The Pope had given the new body a cardinal "Protector," and we see this man's work in this longer and more formal rule. Meantime Francis, who was very dreamy, had come to rely on a more business-like brother named Elias, and this man saw the possibilities of the new organization. In conjunction with him and the Roman authorities Francis wrote his third and existing rule; in which there is not much of Francis. In fact, Francis then wrote a Testament, which is in effect a pathetic protest against the development of his order. It forbade any further alterations, any appeals to the Pope for interpretations or privileges. Within ten years Francis saw his order, as he intended it, corrupted. He withdrew to live almost the life of a hermit, and in a few years he died in a mood of melancholy and foreboding.

The next development is more important, and the history-writers who tell all about the beautiful life of the begging friars or the Friars Minor (Little Brethren) and refuse to glance at this totally mislead their readers. Do not imagine that I am going to reproduce gossip or disputed evidence. I will take the story from an authoritative history of the friars written by one of the ablest German friars of recent times: Father H. Holzappel's "Handbuch der Geschichte des Franziskanenordens" (1909).

Brother Elias, the intimate friend of Francis, from whom he skilfully concealed his aims, was disappointed that he was not made general of the order at the death of Francis (1226). However, he acted very independently, and, to the scandal of many, he gathered funds for a magnificent church in honor of Francis; to whom, by the way, such a plan would have seemed a sordid violation of their vows. In 1230 the body of Francis was to be transferred to this church, and on that occasion there was to be a General Chapter (Council) of the friars. Elias meant to use this to displace General Parenti, but that friar learned his design and directed that only brethren with a vote should be present. Elias, nevertheless, brought his troop of supporters, and they broke down the doors of the Chapter House—remember that Francis of Assisi was only four years dead and this fight was almost over his body—and installed Elias in the general's chair. "In view of this painful spectacle," says Father Holzappel, "Parenti wished to resign," but the majority, led by my old patron Anthony of Padua, scattered the insurgents and sent Elias to a sort of hermitage to repent.

Anthony and the majority saw, however, that the situation could not be maintained, and, in express violation of the command in the Testament, they appealed to the Pope. They saw, says Father Holzappel in this fully approved work, that Francis had "overestimated the strength of the average man." How many modern writers on the friars tell that? There were, as a fact, already three

schools of friars: the zealots, the lax (following Elias), and the moderates (following Anthony). The latter saw that the order—I am still quoting the Franciscan writer—would shortly disappear if the strict ideal of Francis, especially in regard to poverty, were maintained, and the Pope obligingly modified it. They could now have large houses and estates and receive funds: the real ownership remaining with the donors (whom the Popes would promptly call to order if they tried to recover them) or the Church.

More remarkable still, Parenti resigned two years later, and Brother Elias was elected general. He kept a stud of horses for his journeys: he had a private cook and ate his "excellent food" apart from the other friars: he collected money for himself as well as his order and "was not inaccessible to corruption." He was even accused of alchemy. It was, however, not so much these things as his harsh and autocratic policy that ruined him. The French, English and German friars hated him, and within six years of the death of Francis the order was seething with sentiments that were far from humility. There was a conspiracy against the "diabolical" rule of Elias and he was deposed. It is, however, curious that the fourth and fifth generals of the order were of the Elias type. The Popes favored them, while, as we shall see, they converted the genuine followers of Francis (the Spirituals or Fratricelli)—here, by the way, I am **not** quoting the Franciscan writer—into heretics and burned hundreds of them. During the next three centuries the order was passionately agitated over this question of poverty. Within one hundred years the friars were the butt of the popular songsters for their sensual laziness and immorality. As usual, no man can tell you how many friaries were lax, and how many strict, by the end of the fourteenth century, but of their wealth there is clear evidence. At the end of the thirteenth century the English Franciscan friars deposited \$100,000 with bankers on the understanding that it be paid to Pope Boniface if he decided that they could hold property. He decided that they could not own anything; and, since it followed that they could not own this money, he compelled the bankers to pay it to himself.

So much is said about "the good friars" in recent manuals of history that this admitted story should be known. It is typical of these monastic reforms. By the end of the fourteenth century we find popular poets like the author of "Piers the Plowman," representing the friars as on the same moral level as the older monks: we find Councils, like that of Magdeburg in 1403, denouncing them for their "Marthas" (concubines). As to the nuns, let me turn back for a moment to Archbishop Rigaud's "Record of Visitations." There are not many impeachments of nunneries, as compared with priests, but when we read of one, at Almeneschiis, in which several nuns have children, drink flows freely, laymen walk in and out, and no rules are observed, and we find that the pious archbishop inflicts no censure or punishment—because of their wealth and social position, Morison suggests—we see that convents could still be brothels. The popular songs of the fourteenth century represent priests,

monks and nuns as quite commonly immoral. But it will be enough to go more closely into this on the eve of the Reformation.

## CHAPTER VI THE POPES OF THE NEW BABYLON

**U**NTIL the accession of Pope Boniface VIII, with whom we closed the third chapter, the Popes had for two centuries been, as a rule, genuinely religious men. It is, perhaps, not an overpowering compliment to the Church to say that it succeeded in finding a man of strong religious feeling and strict character to be its supreme head, but you will remember that the procedure of the election of a Pope had become absurd and mischievous. The bishops of Rome had at first, like other bishops, been chosen by the people and clergy of Rome. As the line between clergy and laity became stricter, the laity had been excluded from the election; they were at Rome confined to the privilege, during many centuries, of looting the Pope's palace at every election. Gradually the election had been restricted to the "cardinal" or principal clergy of the Roman Church, and it was inevitable that they should, as a rule, choose one of themselves. This led to intrigue and bribery and the insidious or open use of the influence of the more powerful noble families. Even quite religious Popes enriched their relatives by assigning salaried offices to them. Next the Papal diplomacy, the eternal concern about the temporal possessions of the Papacy, brought in the influence of monarchs, and cardinals were created of various nationalities. Christendom at large looked on helplessly while this score of individuals, not chosen for their virtue and many of quite unscrupulous ambition, wrangled and intrigued for the tiara. It was a popular joke in Rome that they opened the proceedings by imploring the light of the Holy Ghost.

This arrangement may or may not testify to the wonderful statesmanship and mellow wisdom of organization which some seem to find in the Roman Church, but we may admire that in spite of what most of us would call its crudeness it had for two centuries generally given the Church Popes who believed in its doctrines and observed its laws. That they were of any particular value to civilization no man who studies their action in detail can seriously hold. The chief act by which they might be presumed to be of benefit to civilization, the censure of high-placed offenders, was weakened, even in the case of the best Popes, by consideration of the material interest of the Papacy, gross partiality to men who promised to help them, violent excesses and powerlessness or disinclination to reform the Papal court itself, which was derided throughout Europe. Now, however, we turn to a new line of Popes, and it is merely amusing to read a claim that these promoted the interests of civilization or chastened the morals of Europe. We are going to find the Papal court and the college of cardinals generally and habitually corrupt for more than two centuries. We are going to see this electoral machinery produce quite a large number of immoral Popes, and not one in two and a half centuries who combined strength of character

with an unstained moral reputation. And remember that this is one of the most important formative periods in the development of European civilization. Quite clearly Europe recivilized itself in spite of its Church.

#### §1. THE NEW PATRONS OF THE PAPACY

You will remember that the reforming Popes of the eleventh century brought in the German Emperors to help them to chasten Rome and Italy, that this led to two centuries of exhausting and absorbing conflict with the Empire itself, and that in the thirteenth century the Popes turned in despair to France for help in exterminating the Hohenstaufen dynasty of Emperors. It is an exaggeration to say, as some do, that this was merely to replace the coarse and violent barbarism of Germany by the soft and sensuous barbarism of France, for Frederic II and Manfred had been the most enlightened monarchs in Europe and were not German in character. But certainly the new master of the Papacy was more demoralizing than the old. We shall find France at once compelling the Popes, the supposed moral governors of Europe, to stoop to acts which can only be described as infamous. Nor is it of the slightest use for the Catholic apologist to plead the violence or corruption of the world: a world which the Popes had now ruled despotically for more than eight hundred years. By one bold stroke the Papacy could have made itself independent of the influences which corrupted it and could have become a real spiritual power. A sacrifice of all claim to territory and temporal sovereignty would have made the Papacy a moral power and might have enabled it to contribute to civilization. But neither the reputed worldly wisdom nor the other-worldly guidance of the Popes induced them to make this sacrifice. The most religious of them fought as bloodily and intrigued as unscrupulously for their land as any sordid princelet in Europe.

To Boniface VIII had succeeded, as I said, a wiser and gentler man, but the problems he had inherited killed him in a few months: unless we care to entertain the rumor that he was poisoned. The cardinals met at Perugia, and the representatives of the great rival Roman families, the Colonna and the Orsini, entered into a bitter conflict. The Colonna were pro-French and made a lavish use of French gold. The Orsini were anti-French and supporters of the dead Boniface. At last the people of Perugia, disgusted with the selfish quarrel, threatened to supply food no longer to the cardinals, and it was proposed that a non-Italian bishop should be chosen. The Archbishop of Bordeaux was selected: a Frenchman, but promoted by Pope Boniface and thought to be favorable to his memory. We must reject the story that he asked forty days' grace and made a secret journey to France to come to terms with the French king, but that he duped the Orsini and made a secret compact with the French is quite clear. He was elected, and he at once alarmed the Italians by going to Lyons and summoning the cardinals to assist at his coronation there.

Clement V, the new Pope, had accepted the Papal throne from a violent and quite unscrupulous monarch, and he had to pay the

price. He withdrew the Bull by which Boniface had declared all Church property immune from secular levies or taxation and agreed that the king should take a tenth of the enormous wealth of the French Church. But King Philip had two far more serious demands. He insisted that the body of Pope Boniface should be dug up and burned on the charge of heresy, and that the order of the Templars should be destroyed so that he could confiscate its vast wealth. The only suggestion that can be made in mitigation of the conduct of Clement V is that, to save Christendom from another war of Church and State and to prevent the fearful scandal of condemning a Pope, he concluded that he had to sacrifice the Templars. Even this is not entirely true. The French clergy themselves restrained the king in his passion against the memory of Boniface and persuaded him to have the Pope tried by a Church Council.

The destruction of the Order of the Temple of Jerusalem was secured by such grossness of procedure and inspired by so transparent a greed that it astonished and scandalized Europe; and the Pope acquiesced in it. The order had begun as a body of crusading knights of great fervor who had taken monastic vows so as to keep their company clean for its purpose. Like all such bodies it had become extremely wealthy, and the whole experience of the Middle Ages persuades us to believe that a good deal of corruption had entered the order, though it still enjoyed the highest esteem in Christendom. But the actual charges against it are ridiculous, and the evidence consisted of loose gossip and confessions made under savage torture. An indictment was drawn up by the king's lawyers, and the whole of the knights of the order in France were arrested and imprisoned. The Inquisition was to investigate the charges: and the friar preachers were meantime furnished with them and were told to enlarge on them in their sermons and inflame the country.

Any man who still has any feeling that the age of the beautiful cathedrals and gilds and the friars must have had deep virtue and piety will, perhaps, understand it better if I give the chief charges against this great body of semi-monastic knights and add that hundreds of knights were racked with barbaric tortures until they confessed them, half of Europe came to believe them, and the Pope endorsed them. These charges were that at their secret initiation to the order the members renounced the Christian faith and spat on the crucifix, kissed the navel and buttocks (or spine) of the officiating knight, received a license to indulge in unnatural vice, worshipped a certain grotesque idol, and were in secret league with the Saracens. The tortures to which the knights were subjected were those customary in Europe, in spite of the improvement of law and justice, which some historians find in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: they were jerked off their feet and suspended by ropes fastened to their wrists, their soles were oiled and set alight, splinters were forced between their nails and fingers, heavy weights were tied by string to their testicles, and so on. Some were tortured six or seven times, until even the Grand Master of the order confessed that the charges were true; and with his last breath, on the

scaffold, he swore that they were false. By this means the great order, with its thousands of religious knights, was represented to Europe as one vast secret sect for the cultivation of unnatural vice all over the world. And the whole of the clergy of France, and all the pious friars, and the university of Paris supported the king; and all the world knew that the king wanted the gold of the Templars.

It seems too loathsome a story for any age but it is, as far as I have told it, not in the least disputed. Pope Clement made a feeble protest but subsided at the king's orders. He issued a Bull endorsing the wildest charges and dissolving the order: the leading members being burned alive. Clement's own words confess that he was conscious of the injustice. "If," he said, "the order cannot be destroyed by way of justice, let it be destroyed as a matter of expediency lest our dear son the king of France be scandalized." Such was the civilizing force of the Papacy in the Middle Ages. Europe was scandalized at the outrage, and countries which held an inquiry, as was done in Spain and Germany, found the Templars innocent. The English king also bluntly refused to believe the charges or suppress the order. But lest his dear son Philip be scandalized the Pope pressed his campaign in every country, and the order was suppressed and its property confiscated.

Seriously ill from mortification and remorse, the Pope retired to live at Avignon, which was not at that time in the territory of the French king: a fact which emboldens Catholic writers to say that the Popes were not at all subject to the dictation of the monarchy! But Philip was as vindictive as he was greedy, and he now demanded the trial and condemnation of Pope Boniface, which Clement seems to have promised as part of the price of the Papal tiara. But Clement was genuinely horrified when he heard the charges against his predecessor. He had been, witnesses who had been at school with Boniface said, blasphemous and dissolute from his youth. He had sneered and jeered at the Christian religion during all his pontificate: there was no future life, all religion was "folly," the Eucharist was "mere flour and water," Mary (Little Mary, he used to say) was no more a virgin than his own mother, and so on. He laughed at moral rules and said that "there was no more harm in adultery than in rubbing hands together." When pious monks came to him—these monks now came to Avignon and testified—to complain that their abbots were immoral he laughed at them. It is useless to attempt to find how much of this was true, but the evidence is of a very different character from that used against the Templars. There was no torture or compulsion, and, when we have weeded out mere gossip and partisan hatred, we have a serious group of devout Roman priests, monks, lawyers, etc., testifying of their own knowledge that Pope Boniface, at whose feet Europe had groveled in the year 1300, was skeptical about both religion and morals. So much is proved on reasonable evidence.

The Pope drew back in terror and implored the king to press him no further, and the king—who gave the Pope a hundred thousand florins which probably came from the treasury of the Templars

—genially agreed to leave it to the Church. The exposure of Boniface satisfied him. Shortly afterwards, in 1312, the Council of Vienne met, and Catholics generally say that it acquitted Boniface. But even Catholic historians are not agreed that the question came before the Council, and in any case there was no examination of witnesses; and the dishonored Pope sank into his grave two years later. What does our Catholic Encyclopaedia say on these matters? It barely mentions the charges against Boniface and represents them quite falsely, as based entirely on the gossip of the Colonna family. And as to Clement it is content to plead that the poor Pope feared a schism if he refused both the demands of Philip, so he sacrificed the Templars (to protect the prestige of the Papacy)!

## §2. THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY OF THE POPES

Pope Clement, says a Catholic writer, had been a most distinguished prelate and patron of letters. He ordered the establishment of chairs of Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic at the older universities, and he directed the foundation of new universities. As he suffered for years from some malady which is believed to have been cancer we will not press the gossip of the time which gave him the Countess de Talleyrand-Perigord as a mistress. But this Catholic writer admits that by exacting payments for clerical offices—by simony, in a word—he left at his death, though he had lived opulently, a sum of about \$2,500,000, one-half of which went to his own relatives, though he had heaped lucrative Church offices on them during life, and only about \$160,000 to his successor. He created nine Gascon cardinals, three of whom were his own nephews, and they were determined to keep this lucrative business of the Papacy in Gascony, if not in the family. The struggle in the conclave was therefore one of the most violent on record, while the Gascon and Italian followers of the cardinals reddened the streets with blood and fired and looted each others' houses. At last the Gascon soldiers appeared before the episcopal palace, and the Italian cardinals fled over the back wall. For nearly two years these "princes of the Church" refused to come together, and at last the Count of Poitiers enticed them all to Lyons, imprisoned them in a monastery, and told them they would not leave until they gave the Church a Pope. They succeeded, after two further months of sordid squabbling, in agreeing upon a more or less neutral Pope, John XXII, who had done legal work for Clement in the suppression of the Templars. As he was seventy-two years old and seemed feeble we perceive, why he was chosen.

But the bilious old man, son of a middle-class Frenchman, upset all their calculations by remaining on the Papal throne for eighteen years. He had been bishop of Avignon, and to Avignon he at once decided to remove the Papal court. As the chief work which he did in this time was the organization of the income of the Papacy by the sale of offices I postpone it for consideration to the next chapter. Beyond that most important and equally disreputable work he did singularly little, comparatively to the length of his rule, for the Church. He dabbled in theology and incurred a charge of heresy.

He strengthened the Inquisition and was particularly severe on the minority of the Franciscan friars who, under the name of the Fratricelli, tried to observe the poverty of their vows and even dared to say that the Popes and the bishops ought not to accumulate wealth. John had many of them burned alive as heretics. In fact, John was so keen on questions of property that he declared the theory of the Franciscan monks generally, that they used but did not own their property, impossible nonsense, and the learned head of the order nailed to the door of the cathedral at Pisa, as Luther would later do at Wittenberg, a thesis charging the Pope with heresy. Over a very large part of Europe his financial greed so inflamed the clergy that lawyers and theologians as well as princes assailed him in the most violent terms, and a very serious rebellion against the Papacy seemed to be preparing. In these circumstances it is useless to look for much beneficent influence on the world.

In personal conduct also John gave offense. Petrarch tells us that it was believed by many that one of the cardinals was his bastard son, but it was an age of gossip and we leave these things open. When, however, Catholics wish us to take seriously the statement of other writers of the time that John disliked the sensuality of his predecessor and lived soberly and frugally, we must remind them that his ledgers have been found and published, and that a Pope who in those days of cheap money spent \$15,000 a year on his table and wine cellar and \$20,000 a year on his wardrobe was not conspicuously frugal. At his death he left a collection of three hundred and twenty-nine valuable rings. His ledgers show, and we have grounds to think that they do not show all, that his average income for eighteen years was about \$600,000 a year. He spent most of this on war—for the Papal States, of course—but his gifts to his relatives were outrageous and notorious. The palace—it was John who began the building of the famous palace at Avignon—and the Papal service swarmed with his relatives.

Quite early in his pontificate a man to whom he had sold a bishopric and whom he had to call to account for his misconduct attempted his life. It turned out on inquiry that there was a conspiracy against the Pope, not only poison but the magical practice of stabbing wax images being used. The whole story gives us another appalling picture of the times. An archbishop had blessed the wax images, and they and the poison had been smuggled into Avignon inside loaves. The Pope fully believed in magic and set the Inquisition on a search for magicians. The chief bishop inculpated was dragged through the streets by horses and then burned alive. John's admirers plead that this extensive plot, in which several cardinals were involved, made him anxious to surround himself with relatives and personal friends, but this nepotism was now a common practice of the Popes and one of the chief causes of the degradation of their court.

At his death John left about \$4,000,000 in the treasury and a See worth at least \$1,000,000 a year; upon which one of his genial and sensual successors, Clement VI, remarked, "My predecessors did

not know how to live." Eight years, however, were first to be occupied by the reign of Benedict XII, a Cistercian monk, the terror of heretics, who still abounded in France. He made at first a serious effort to reform the Papal service, which had become very corrupt under the influence of John XXII and his insatiable demands for money, and the religious orders, but he did little more than provoke a shower of abusive epithets and stern resistance from the monastic leaders. "Few Popes have been so much abused," says the Catholic historian of the Avignon Popes, G. Mollat. He admits that Benedict's efforts "had little effect," and his personal harshness was largely responsible. One of the epitaphs composed for him when he died described him as "a Nero, death to the laity, a viper to the clergy, a liar, and a drunkard." And this was the one really religious Pope in half a century. I should add that he was certainly addicted to drink, and the saying, "Drunk as a Pope," is said by some writers to have taken its rise from this monk-Pope.

Then came Clement VI (1342-52) and the completion of the demoralization of the Papal court. The vast sum collected by his predecessors was spent in completing and adorning the Avignon palace and filling it with gaily. Avignon belonged to the kingdom of Naples, but it happened that at this time Queen Joanna of Naples murdered her husband and married her lover. She penitently submitted her fault to the Pope, especially as her husband's relatives threatened her, and she received absolution and protection; and Pope Clement got the entire town of Avignon, which was now large (with at least a hundred thousand inhabitants) and luxurious, from her for the modest sum of about \$200,000. This town now became one of the richest and gayest in Europe. The cardinals and prelates who lived at Avignon had palaces only second in luxury to that of the Pope, and hundreds of elegant ladies assisted at their hunts, with hounds and falcon, and at the rich banquets and heavy gambling which closed the day. Gossip said that the Countess de Turenne was the mistress of the Pope himself. This we cannot check, but one of the first great writers of the Middle Ages, Petrarch, lived near Avignon, and a little volume of his letters ("The Letters Without a Title," of which there is no English translation) gives us an extraordinary picture of the demoralization.

Petrarch did not pretend to live a moral life, but he was fiercely angry with the Popes because they would not return to Rome. On the other hand, he was personally familiar with life in the Papal town, and we cannot suppose that his prejudice accounts for more than the violence of some of his epithets. Babylon is used from end to end of the letters as the name of Avignon. All the crimes and vices of Greek tragedy are found there, and "what you have to search for industriously in other places is found there at every cross-roads" (Letter vi). "All that has been said about Babylon and Nineveh, about the entrance to Avernus [hell] and the forests of Tartarus, is a fable compared with this Inferno" (viii). The city is "swept along in a flood of the most obscene pleasures, by an incredible storm of debauch, by the most horrible and unprecedented

shipwreck of chastity" (xi). The Pope is "an ecclesiastical Dionysos with his obscene and infamous artifices" (xiii). No city of the pagan world—and Petrarch was the best classical scholar of his age—equaled Avignon in vice (xvii), and unnatural vice was extremely prevalent. In the eighteenth letter Petrarch gives more detail about "the Scarlet Woman," as he calls the Papacy. White-haired prelates think of nothing but banquets and harlotry. They take aphrodisiacs and seize young women on the open streets. They send husbands out of the country to get their wives, and then send the pregnant wives after them. There is a certain cardinal more than seventy years old and with only seven teeth in his jaws. He is "as lascivious as a goat and capable of fertilizing any animal . . . in fact more lascivious and stinking than any goat." He "celebrates a fresh marriage every night" and has procurers seducing girls in every part of the city. When one, perceiving his senile ugliness, refused his offers, he put on his cardinal's hat to impress her and had an orgy of vice—Petrarch seems to mean unnatural vice—with her.

We shall not waste time in trying to appreciate exactly the moral influence on the world of Clement VI, but this depraved atmosphere of the court obviously did not begin suddenly with Clement, and we shall now find it clinging to the Papacy for more than two centuries, never wholly destroyed and in the end becoming more monstrous than at Avignon. Some improvement was made by the next Pope, Innocent VI. Clement had been so liberal with the funds which now poured in, thanks to Pope John's organization of simony, that thousands of clerics from all parts came to Avignon, shared his bounty, and entered into the gaiety and license of the town. Innocent VI was an old and feeble man, a peasant by birth, and the cardinals expected to rule him. Successive decrees had by this time arranged the details of a conclave much as they are today. The cardinal electors were to be imprisoned in a common large room with their beds and servants and not permitted to leave it until a Pope was elected. Still, so fierce were the rival ambitions, they took three months to elect a Pope and had to agree upon one they considered negligible. But he was religious, and the crowd of lower clerical parasites was scattered, and an attempt to reform the friars—even the new Dominican order was, says Mollat, "in a state of complete decay"—brought upon him the usual epithets. He was, said a pious monk, "more abominable than the Jewish usurers, more treacherous than Judas, more cruel than Pilate." He died, like so many reformers, in despair, and his policy had brought such sufferings on gay Avignon that, after a siege, seventeen thousand of its citizens died of famine and plague. It was not many years since the Black Death had killed seventy thousand of them.

### §3. THE RETURN TO ROME

The prelate who was chosen to succeed Innocent happened at the time to be in Naples, and a secret mission was sent to bring him to Avignon before the Romans could learn and detain him. Urban V was, however, a conscientious Pope, an abbot of some scholarship

and a patron of letters. He made the usual almost futile efforts to reform the Church from Avignon, and after a few years he announced that he was going to return to Rome. The French king and the French cardinals stormed him with entreaties to remain, but he courageously resisted, and in 1367 he set sail with his court from Marseilles. He had counted on the protection in Italy of a powerful noble, but this man died during the journey, and in almost the first Italian town in which the Pope stopped, Viterbo, his ears were assailed with the strange cry of "Death to the Church: Long Live the People," and for three days the citizens fought his guards on the streets. Seven leaders of the people were hanged, and two thousand soldiers had to protect the Holy Father as he rode across Italy.

Rome was in ruins. It had lived for centuries on the gold that flowed into the Papal treasury and had not the healthy economic life of a northern town. Grass now grew on the streets; and even the Papal palaces were in decay. It received the Pope with boisterous rejoicing, and for nearly a year the returning stream of gold restored its gaiety. This was disturbed for a time when Urban audaciously created eight new cardinals only one of whom was a Roman, but as he still remained in Rome the agitation passed. But it was too squalid an age to remain long in peace. Urban had hardly been three years in Italy when the storm broke. The Romans leagued themselves with the Perugians, who had rebelled against the Papacy, and Urban found himself penned up in Viterbo with Italian mercenaries assaulting the town. France and England were too busy fighting each other to come to his aid, Germany sullenly refused to hear his appeal, and Urban returned to Avignon, where he died three months later. Clearly a very futile Pope; but in 1870 the Roman Church discovered that Urban had lived so beautiful a life that it raised him to the company of the blessed.

Gregory XI (1370-1378), nephew of Clement VI of gay memory, succeeded, and we are told that his moral qualities were equal to his mental powers. He used them mainly to whip the Inquisition—or, rather, the secular powers who, as usual, obstinately refused to let it function—to greater activity, and we are assured that the jails of France were overcrowded while immense numbers were burned alive. In Spain, too, the Pope egged on the Inquisitors, and the "converted" Jews suffered mercilessly, while in Germany, Sicily, and other countries the surviving heretics were dragged from their refuges in the forests and executed. "Nevertheless," says the Catholic historian Mollat, "the efforts of Gregory XI remain in the end sterile. The Inquisition is regarded with suspicion and jealousy by the public authorities and they refuse to assist it. Anger against the Church continues to grow." So it was not the "princes and peoples" who wanted to fly at the throats of heretics and had to be held in leash by the merciful Popes. There were, in fact, more formidable masses of heretics than ever appearing: the Wycliffites of England and their fellows in Bohemia. Europe rang with denunciation of the greed and corruption of the Papal Court.

The Pope was in the prime of life and might be expected to have

a long and influential pontificate. He decided that his work must be done from Rome, but when the whole court stormed him with entreaties he yielded and remained six years in Avignon. Then, says Catholic history, the tender maid St. Catherine of Siena boldly admonished the Pope and he set sail. As a matter of fact, the Papal dominions in Italy were in danger of being irrevocably lost, and the Papal treasury was so low that the Pope had to pawn his jewels to get money for his journey to Rome. Fearful seas tossed the Papal fleet, and a cardinal and some of the court went down in one vessel. After a three months journey the Pope's vessel sailed up the Tiber and Rome, repentant and inebriated, hailed the return of its master. His spirit was broken, his health shattered, although he was one of the youngest Popes to be elected in that age; and a year later the last French pope expired with the customary feelings of melancholy and failure. The "Babylonian Captivity" of the Church, as the older historians called it, was over. The only force that had held it captive in Avignon, the new Babylon, was the luxurious corruption of the Papal court, and this would now never again be reformed until the terror of losing one half of Europe in the Reformation should prove stronger than the love of wine and women in the "sacred college."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SALE OF SACRED THINGS ORGANIZED

**I**T IS necessary for me to repeat at times that I am telling the plain and undisputed historical facts. I have not pressed the gossip of the time about the mistresses and sons of the Avignon Popes—these remain charges which no man can prove or disprove—and I leave it to the reader to make what allowance he pleases for the hostility of the great accuser Petrarch, the finest scholar of his age. These are relatively unimportant matters. The serious points which we have in mind are: whether the Papacy had a considerable, or any, share in the restoration of European civilization which was now proceeding more rapidly, and whether it even realized the two great aims which it had set itself: the suppression of simony and the improvement of morals. On the first point we can have little hesitation. Most of these Popes of the thirteenth and fourteenth century did nothing whatever that can be seriously regarded as an important influence in the progress of Europe. A few of them took some interest in art or intellectual life, but they had no more influence than a similarly minded noble or bishop. At the most we may be reminded how some of them granted diplomas to universities, but the universities of the fourteenth century were almost the worst opponents of the real intellectual life that had been brought into Europe in the thirteenth century and was now almost extinct. The claim that the Popes helped in the recovery of Europe is a piece of vague rhetoric or insincere and calculated flattery. In the fourteenth century their merciless campaign against heretics helped to retard the recovery.

And we can have no hesitation whatever on the second point.

There is not a particle of positive evidence of any reform of morals, while the extraordinary corruption of the Papal court itself makes it almost superfluous for us to seek any influence of the Popes in this direction. But when we turn to the second aim which the greater Popes had set up as their supreme task, the suppression of simony or of the sale of sacred things, we find an ironic situation: we find it deliberately adopted, developed, and elaborated in the highest degree by the Popes themselves. The Reformation, we now perceive, covers several centuries. It began in the twelfth century as soon as Europe began to think. It was prevented from attaining success earlier only by the murder, on a colossal scale, of those who dared to think, or to say what they thought. But this destruction of thought could not make people blind to the corruption of the clergy and the shameless exploitation of its sacred offices by Rome. The one evil appears on every page of this history: to the second we must now devote a few pages.

### §1. THE SALE OF SACRED OFFICES

The Catholic historian has some difficulty in defining simony. It is founded, as everybody will know, on the story that a certain Simon offered money to the apostles for the transfer to himself of their sacred powers, and it should therefore mean the offer for a money-payment of any sacred office or function or object. But the wealth of the medieval Papacy was so notoriously derived from fees charged for appointments to clerical offices or for the granting of indulgences—all the magnificent artistic monuments of ecclesiastical Rome were built on funds derived from these sources—that we get some remarkable verbal gymnastics in defining simony. We need not waste time on these: A legal writer defines simony as “the corrupt presentation of anyone to an ecclesiastical benefice [a clerical office with income attached] for money-payment or reward.” The word “corrupt” is superfluous, for no such presentation for the sake of money can be other than corrupt. So we take the word in precisely the same sense as Gregory VII and Innocent III. They found princes and nobles and prelates appointing men to bishoprics and other lucrative jobs and receiving money for doing so. They breathed fire and slaughter at the outrage; and their successors, the men who had no barbaric Europe on which we can blame their sins organized this presentation to offices for money until it brought a million of dollars a year to the Papacy. We won't waste time discussing whether it was a “sale” or not. The money to be paid was fixed in advance and the scale was published. If you paid less you got nothing: if you paid more you got your change. As to the plea that the money was merely to pay office-expenses, it gives us an impressive idea of the credulity of Catholics. We shall see that, when the system was complete, it yielded the Papacy at least a million dollars a year after paying all expenses.

There is no need to study the development in detail. Pope Innocent's thunder against the horrors of simony was only half a century past when, in 1267, Clement IV reserved to the Papacy the income of clerics who died in Rome. Boniface VIII improved the

revenue by including all clerics who died within two days journey of Rome. Then came John XXII, the business-man of Papal Avignon. His predecessor Clement V had discovered that, when the Papacy was entitled to the revenue of a benefice that became vacant by the death of the holder, there seemed to be no hurry about the appointment of a successor. This was very improper, so the Pope regularized the procedure by decreeing that (where he could get it) every cleric who obtained a new benefice should pay "first fruits," or one year's income, to the Papacy. Pope John altered the figure to three years revenue and extended the law to the whole of the Church. Then, under pretense of reforming a scandal, he decreed that all clerics who held more than one benefice, which was extremely common, should select one and surrender the remainder to the Papacy; and, of course, the new appointee paid three years revenue to the Pope. He next discovered that many of the bishoprics were far too large and could not be properly administered, and he subdivided a large number of them: each new bishop paying his first fruits besides other fees. It is said that the archbishop who was involved in the plot to murder him had seen his income threatened in this way. By a further astute measure, which had the air of a reform and was very profitable, whenever an important office fell vacant John moved on, or promoted, a whole series of clerics, so that half a dozen paid first fruits instead of one.

It may be interesting to insert here a schedule of the income of the Papacy under John XXII as it is summarily described, from the Pope's ledgers, by Mollat. First were the "common services" or fees paid direct by bishops and abbots at their nomination for the office, the confirmation of their election, their consecration, or their removal to another bishopric or abbey. Some years after the death of Innocent III the Pope had encouraged them to make voluntary gifts to the Papacy on these occasions; and the larger and more prompt the gift, the more smoothly ran the election to office. Boniface VIII converted this into a fixed sum, a third of the income for one year. In addition they paid, on the same occasions, the "minute services," or gifts to individuals of the Papal court or the Pope's family. The sum was fixed. If the bishops or abbots were consecrated or blessed at the Papal court there were two further fixed charges. They paid also for letters or bulls that they received, and they paid a fixed sum every time they visited the Papal court; and the Popes made it obligatory to pay such visits. These sums were paid direct to the court, as also were the "tributes" of countries which were not in a position to deny that they were fiefs of the Holy See: Naples 8,000 ounces of gold a year, Sicily 3,000 ounces, Corsica and Sardinia 2,000 silver marks, England 700 silver marks for itself and 300 for Ireland. In addition there were considerable sums from legacies and fines and dispensations.

Then there were seven kinds of "taxes" levied in the provinces. Whenever they willed, generally to sustain their incessant wars in Italy for their dominions, the Popes exacted a tithe or tenth of the net ecclesiastical income of any country. Next were the "first

fruits" which I have described, and the "procurations." The procuration was an edifying thing. In older times a bishop or abbot was entitled to hospitality when he visited benefices subject to him, and in time they accepted money instead. The Popes, in the fulness of their benevolence, and with disastrous results to the Church, granted them dispensations from making these visits yet the right to take the money—if the Papal court got one half, later two-thirds, of the money. Another old custom had been that the people had the right to loot the house of a dead bishop, and the bishop or abbot the right to loot the house of a dead cleric under him: which was surely more edifying than letting the property go to bastard children. "The Holy See," says Mollat politely, "substituted itself" for the holders of these rights, or made itself the heir of dead prelates. Finally there were "voluntary gifts," suggested by the Popes themselves, the incomes of vacant Sees, the revenues of whatever provinces happened to be Papal and willing to pay, Peter's Pence (levied in ten countries), and some minor exactions.

John XXII was the organizer of this income, and it was plainly open to great abuses even in his time. Under his successors there was open scandal. The fair ladies of the court of Clement VI are said to have done quite a profitable business in clerical benefices. But the second chief organizer and the man who completed the degradation of the Papacy in this respect was an utterly unscrupulous ex-pirate who became a cardinal and Pope, as we shall see in the next chapter. Baldassare Cossa was as good at business as John XXII and did not know what moral scruples were. In 1396 he became Private Chamberlain to Pope Boniface IX, and the traffic in clerical offices became scandalous at Rome. Men paid the stipulated three-years income to be put on the list for a benefice that might soon be vacant, and they then, perhaps, learned that some other cleric had paid more and got a "preference." Spies in the provinces watched the health of aged or ailing beneficiaries and reported to Rome. Crowds of aspiring clerics gathered at the Papal offices and bid against each other for the prospective vacancies. From that time until the Reformation, if not from the time of John XXII, we not only may but must say that Rome sold the sacred offices flagrantly and habitually.

## §2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SALE OF INDULGENCES

Cardinal Cossa was also the Pope who chiefly organized the sale of indulgences. I need not say that what the Catholic calls an indulgence is not a license to commit sin, though it often acts as such (since it relieves of the penalties of sin), but a remission of the temporary punishment that a man is supposed to undergo in purgatory. How this belief in a third section of the world beyond the grave, where souls not condemned to hell should be "purified" before admission to heaven, arose, it is impossible to say. Any man who cares to study the matter—do not consult the Dictionary of Religion and Ethics, for the article is by a Catholic and untruthful—will probably conclude that in the early Church there was by no means a fixed belief that the moment a man died his soul went for

eternity to hell or heaven. The idea seems to have been revolting to the Greeks, and Origen met their disgust by supposing that there was hope for a man even after death. He imagines a "spiritual fire" which may "cleanse" souls; and after a time they may be admitted to heaven. It seems that it was those great promoters of the intellectual development of Europe, the medieval schoolmen, who turned this into a material fire and fully worked out the idea of two crematoria beyond the grave, one eternal (hell) and one temporary (purgatory).

But, although the doctrine of the indulgence is based upon this doctrine of purgatorial punishment, it developed separately. An indulgence was at first a remission of the severe penances which living men and women had to perform. The first idea of the Church had been that there was no forgiveness for grave sins committed after baptism. The next idea was that men might obtain forgiveness by confessing (or admitting) the sin and doing public penance. This in turn proved too onerous for the Roman world, but for notorious sins or sins which people were moved by their own consciences to confess—there was obligation of confessing at least once a year until 1215—the priests or bishops imposed severe penances. It was within the power of the bishop to curtail or "remit" these penances, and by the eleventh century we find bishops—the first traces are said to be in France—of bishops granting an indulgence from the penance because the culprit gives an "alms" to the church or to a monastery. One almost wonders how they overlooked this source of revenue so long. The Popes themselves remitted the penances of all who offered for the Crusades, and, as I said, Innocent III, who was so severe on the bishops for granting indulgences too freely and for their simony, began to cancel the penance due for the gravest sins (murder) when a man promised to pay for the outfit of a few soldiers. Very soon a Crusade was any sort of campaign the Popes cared to start against their enemies, and the indulgences became extraordinarily common—for money payments.

The idea is closely connected with the growing belief in purgatory because in the Middle Ages the penances were supposed to have the effect of shortening or abolishing the time in purgatory. When, in the thirteenth century, the practice of going to confession was made obligatory, the idea grew that the sin was forgiven and the sentence of hell canceled the moment the priest pronounced the magical formula of absolution. But there remained the temporary cleansing process of purgatory, and, as its fires were vaguely understood to be as drastic as those of hell—it troubled very few to ask how fire could affect a spiritual soul—there was great eagerness to have this punishment reduced or abolished in advance. The Church professed to be able to do this. Its theologians discovered that the merits of Christ had placed at its disposal a great fund of vicarious satisfaction, and it was supposed to draw upon this in granting indulgences. It was a sordid piece of trickery. The theory was invented to excuse the practice.

The Jubilee idea of the year 1300 suggested a new development.

Were the benevolent services of the Holy Fathers to be confined to those who had the money to make a journey to Rome and visit the tomb of the Apostles? So aristocratic an idea could not be tolerated, and the glad news spread over Europe that giving a large alms to the Church secured the same indulgences as going to Rome. The alms was at first fixed at the cost from that particular place of a pilgrimage to Rome, so as not to reduce the profitable streams of pilgrims; but the roads of Europe were so beset with bandits, and the perils of Rome itself were so great, that many preferred to pay the money to the Pope's representatives. We shall see presently that the Popes could not wait a hundred years for the golden harvest of a Jubilee year, and, as the Jubilees multiplied, the price of the indulgence fell.

One of the Papal practices which chiefly stirred the ire of Martin Luther in the sixteenth century was the sending of agents over Europe who would not only grant these indulgences for money but would announce and advertise them like a cheap trader calling his wares on the street. We have the assurance of one of the most conscientious Papal lawyers of the fourteenth century, Dietrich of Neim, German historian and bishop, that these scenes were witnessed in the churches of Germany in his own day. Papal agents unfurled the Pope's banner in a church and proclaimed to the ignorant people that all the power of St. Peter was delegated to them. We shall see in the next chapter under what circumstances the Papacy stooped to this infamous extension of its corrupt practices. It is enough here that the sale of indulgences, apart from any Jubilee or Crusade, was fully organized by the year 1400. The world had been steadily improving since 1200: the Papacy had almost as steadily degenerated.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CHURCH AGAIN REFORMS ITS POPES.

**T**HE historians who are so eager to let us see that the Renaissance was not a sudden event of the fifteenth century but a process of recovery lasting about five hundred years do not seem equally concerned to convince us of the gradual nature of the Reformation. They are anxious, in other words, to relieve the repulsive features of the Middle Ages as early as possible, but to extend the Reformation over several centuries would be to admit that the fearful abuses which enkindled the Lutheran movement had already existed for several centuries. This would conflict with their estimate of the beneficent influence of the Papacy and with their theory that the people of the Middle Ages found their institutions quite congenial and cordially supported them. It is quite time that this tissue of Catholic falsehood was torn out of the fabric of history.

We have already seen, and in this chapter shall further see, abundant evidence on both points. The Papacy was corrupt and injurious during most of the Middle Ages, and the complaints of clergy and people against it would fill a large volume. While the

truculent and sanguinary methods by which the Popes silenced their critics would disgrace even a barbaric religion. I leave to the next book a proper consideration of the forms which the protest took in the fourteenth century. We shall take as one whole the revolt against Rome which culminates in what is specifically called the Reformation. The earlier revolt which we have seen was to a very great extent heretical in the sense of being in some respects anti-Christian, but in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries we shall find the rise of formidable bodies, especially in England and Bohemia, which rebel against Rome in the name of the teaching of Christ. First, however, we must complete the story of the Popes down to the beginning of the fifteenth century, and we shall continue to find it in many ways revolting and in no respect conducive to the restoration of civilization.

We may divide the history of the Popes from the Dark Ages to the Reformation into four periods. First there was the period of deep demoralization, the first part of which the older Catholic historians frankly called the Rule of the Whores, from about 900 to about 1050. Then there was a period of about two centuries of what are called reformed Popes, but we saw how the strongest and most religious of them, Gregory VII and Innocent III, died with a despairing confession of failure on their lips. We have now seen the period of the Babylonian Captivity, or of French influence instead of German, which witnesses a growth of the two greatest maladies of the church, simony and immorality. We here take the period of the Great Schism, when the splitting of the Papal power leads to a complete futility of the Popes, to scenes that often recall those of the Iron Age, and to a determination of the Christian body to compel the Popes to mend their morals and purify their court. Let me glance ahead and say this: in the next volume we shall find the Popes throw off the restraint of the Church and sink lower than ever. From first to last it is a story of Europe recivilizing itself in spite of its Popes.

#### §1. THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT SCHISM

We left the subject at the death of Pope Gregory XI after his return from Avignon in 1378. Gregory had foreseen the tumult that would follow his death and had decreed that the cardinals could choose the place of election, but he had brought troops to Rome to keep the French in check if the election took place there. Sixteen cardinals, of whom eleven were French, were locked in a room of the Vatican palace for the conclave, and it seemed an evil omen when a storm at once occurred and the lightning struck the building. From without came the roar of the Roman crowds demanding that they should elect a Roman, or at least Italian, Pope. Presently, in fact, a troop of armed men broke in upon the intrigues and quarrels of the cardinals, looked under their beds, and examined the possible exits in case the French tried to escape and fly to France. They would, they were assured, be cut to pieces if they attempted it, and their store of food was eaten. One day the crowd broke into the Pope's cellars, where there was a large stock of the finest wines

of Europe, and the threats became noisier than ever. Some cardinal had named the Archbishop of Bari, and he was persuaded to show himself to the mob in what appeared to be the Papal stole. When the Romans discovered that they had been deceived, the danger became very serious. Many of the cardinals escaped, but eleven remained in Rome, and the Archbishop of Bari became Pope Urban VI.

Urban was a gouty, aged, harsh-tempered, but very energetic man. The historians introduce him with the usual compliments about his profound piety and virtue, but we shall find him presently guilty, as no one disputes though few mention them, of acts which recall the Popes of the tenth century. Perhaps we may accept the assurance of Dietrich of Neim, who was in his service, that up to the time when he became Pope his life had been considered blameless. It confirms what I have several times said, that the Papal function itself lowered the character of otherwise religious men. But Urban's conduct is at times so gross that he cannot at any time have been a man of reputable character. He probably bribed other cardinals, as this was now a common practice at the elections; in fact, we are expressly told that they "accepted presents" from him. But the evil consequences appeared in a few weeks.

It is still a curiously medieval story that we read. Urban is said to have set about the reform of the Church with great zeal, yet presently, we read, he and his cardinals are abusing each other like troopers. One of the leading cardinals calls the Pope "a liar," and another has to intervene to prevent them from fighting. The French cardinals are at Anagni, whence they tell the world that Urban is a usurper, an apostate, in fact anti-Christ. The Breton troops who guard them cut up a small Roman army which the Pope sends against them and kill three hundred. Then the Breton troops consume the stores, and the French cardinals have to move to Fondi. Here other cardinals join them from Rome, for Urban's bad manners and temper have alienated all but the four Italian cardinals. Urban retorts by creating twenty-six Italian cardinals and at this break of faith the seceding cardinals elect a second Pope. He is a Frenchman, Cardinal Robert of Geneva, who takes the name of Clement VII. So the Great Schism begins and Christendom is rent in halves. France, naturally, supports the French Pope: England and Germany, naturally, oppose him: half Europe is Urbanist and half Clementist.

And do not imagine that the rivals are two well-meaning old prelates who look sadly upon the confusion of the time. What Urban can do in fighting for his rights we shall see presently: he was a vindictive and unscrupulous old blackguard. Clement VII differed only in that he was a vindictive and unscrupulous young blackguard. Under the preceding Pope (who had never disavowed his actions) he had led the Papal troops which, in conjunction with the fierce mercenaries of the English adventurer Hawkwood, were regaining the Pope's territory. Stung by the action of the people of Cesena, he had closed the gates and set his soldiers to massacre

men, women, and children for three days and nights. Some writers of the time put the number of victims as high as thirty thousand, and it is not impossible. Even the bold Captain Hawkwood had been disgusted and had saved the lives of a thousand of the women. For the next ten years the fierce passions of these two Vicars of Christ would pervade every rank of their followers and make Europe a cockpit of rival greeds.

## §2. THE FIGHTING POPES

Pope Urban found the treasury empty, and he wanted troops. Like nearly every other Pope, religious or irreligious, his first thought was to win back as much as possible of "the patrimony of Peter"; for the simple reason, in every case, that the Papal States meant money in the Papal treasury. Urban scandalized even the Romans by appropriating the sacred vessels of the churches and their property and selling them. Then he hired a mercenary army and drove his rival out of Italy. Clement, after a spirited exchange of anathemas with Urban, retired to Avignon, and we shall not have much more to say about him than that he managed to get enough money from France to live in comfort in the large palace.

Urban then turned his attention to the south. It is clear that he wanted a more effective recognition that the kingdom of Naples was feudally subject to him and that he also wanted to create small principalities for his nephews. The position of the Queen of Naples, Joanna (or Giovanna), was delicate. I told in an earlier chapter how she had her Hungarian husband murdered so that she might marry her lover, and how the gay Clement VI had given her absolution and protection from her Hungarian relatives in return for Avignon. She seems to have inherited the license of the old southern kingdom, but she knew how she depended on the Popes however much she despised them. But Urban wanted a creature of his own in Naples, and his conduct during the next few years was revolting. It happens that we have a particularly good historical authority for the time, the German Papal lawyer Dietrich (or Theodericus) of Neim, who has written a book called "The Schism." His character is unassailable, and as he was in the Pope's suite, he generally speaks from personal knowledge. The only objection to his narrative that I find in Catholic writers is that he was prejudiced against Urban: which is as much as to say that you must read the biography of a criminal with reserve because the writer does not seem to like the criminal. However, no one disputes the details which I am going to reproduce from Neim. You may remember how we found Bishop Gregory of Tours giving us the ghastly history of Frank life in the sixth century. It is almost as repulsive a picture that we have in this account of the Papacy, after all its reforms.

Joanna was childless in spite of all her matrimonial adventures, and her heir was the nephew of the King of Hungary. Urban invited the Hungarians to come and take over the kingdom at once, stipulating that Papal rights should be recognized and small principalities created for his relatives. The Hungarian prince came to Rome and

was crowned (1381). Joanna hastily adopted as her heir the nephew of the King of France, but the French failed to support her. She lost her kingdom and her life, the Pope making no protest (in spite of her absolution by Clement) when she was brutally murdered for her crime. King Charles had scarcely settled in Naples when the Pope, to the king's great annoyance, came south to claim his reward. He arranged for estates for his nephews and married two of his nieces—he was not of noble family—to Neapolitan nobles. During the festivities the Pope's favorite nephew, nicknamed Butillo, a rake of the most dissolute character, committed an outrage which the Neapolitans declared to be without precedent in their annals. Let me give it in the words of Dietrich (who was there) himself:

It chanced that while Urban had his quarters in the said church [the suspicious king kept him out of the palace], the said Francis or Butillo, his nephew, violently tore from the convent of San Salvatore, of the order of St. Clare, in the street in which Francis lived, a certain professed and enclosed nun of noble birth, and he forcibly kept her for several days in his house. It is not strange, for those who are clad in filth cannot shake off filth, for this man thought of nothing but gluttony, pleasure, luxury, and lust. Nor was he on that account corrected by the said Urban. When he was told that his nephew Butillo lived corruptly, he is said to have answered, "He is young," though he was over forty (I, 33).

But the king, as I said, detested the Pope and his family. He sent his guards for Butillo, and the rake fled to the protection of his uncle. He was tried and condemned to death, but he seems to have remained in the Pope's lodging, and Urban guarded the place with his troops and declared the sentence null and void. He was, he said, the overlord of the king of Naples, and he could quash any sentence. And to avoid a painful scandal, says Dietrich, the king yielded, and the Papal libertine was married to the daughter of the chief justice, a relative of the king, and got his principality!

This was bad enough, but there was worse to follow. On the plea that a large number of the Neapolitan clergy favored the anti-Pope, Urban began to depose and confiscate the goods of a large number of them and replace them by Romans or Hungarians, his own supporters and parasites. Dietrich tells us that he created as many as thirty-two archbishops, bishops, and abbots in one day; and you will not forget that he would get "first fruits" from the new men as well as the property of the condemned. He was, Dietrich adds, quite indifferent to the character of his nominees and men of the most unworthy character were appointed. King Charles at last revolted and swore that he would not have a priest interfering in his kingdom in this way. Urban had gone to stay at his charming nephew's new palace at Nocera, and he was presently besieged in it by the Neapolitan army, one troop led by the Abbot of Monte Cassino: Urban himself, on the walls, cursing the troops with bell, book, and candle. The cardinals who were with him begged him to moderate his fury, and it increased, and they then began to discuss

the situation secretly with each other. Some of them raised the question of insanity, and there was a general feeling that Urban ought to be deposed. Urban heard of the plot and he put six of the leading cardinals in the foul old dungeons of the castle and in chains. One tall cardinal was in so small a den that he could not stretch his limbs. Dietrich of Neim was an eye-witness of all that happened, and he was so pained by the sufferings of the cardinals—Urban laughing and sneering at them, he says—that he ventured to urge the Pope to be more humane. The Pope went into a worse fit of temper than ever—his face “like a burning lamp”—and ordered the torture.

Cardinals were now subjected to the same horrible tortures which only a few weeks before they had, as they now sadly observed, inflicted on the Neopolitan clergy to make them confess conspiracy. The executioner was an ex-pirate who was now a friar (thanks to Urban) of the order of Hospitallers. Butillo, the Pope’s nephew, stood by laughing during the torture. The Pope was in the garden just outside the window reading his breviary in a loud voice. All this we learn, remember, from an eye-witness, a lawyer of high character. At length the Pope made a sally and got away, taking the worn and wounded prisoners with him. One of them was so weak from torture that he could not keep the pace, as they fled on horse to the coast. The Pope bade the men dispatch him and leave his body on the road. No one knows how or where the other prisoners ended, but they were killed. Some said that they were tied in sacks and thrown overboard; others that they reached Genoa with the Pope and were killed in prison. Only one survived; for he was an Englishman, and the Pope healthily feared the wrath of the English king.

Before long the people of Genoa drove out the Pope because of the cruelties perpetrated by his officials, and he went to Lucca. Charles of Naples died at that time, and Urban, putting an anathema on his widow and children, fierily called upon all Christendom, priests as well as laymen, to join a Crusade (with the usual indulgences) against the Neopolitans. He moved on to Perugia, and there his nephew, who was with him, was caught breaking into the house of a noble lady, to rape her, and severely beaten by her brothers. Urban moved on, and he now announced a Jubilee. The first idea of the Popes had been to have one the first year of every century, beginning with 1300. It proved so profitable that Clement VI decided that the faithful must have these spiritual privileges every fifty years. Urban discovered that, as Christ had lived thirty-three years on earth, there must be a Jubilee every thirty-three years, so that the next would be in 1390. He died just before it was due to begin. “According to many accounts he was poisoned by the Romans,” says the Catholic Encyclopaedia; and the only comment it has to make on his character and the ghastly character of the times, as I have described it from this unimpeachable narrative, is that Urban “might have been a good Pope in more peaceful circumstances.” Heads I win: tails you lose. Whenever the Popes

are bad the circumstances made them bad: whenever the circumstances are good the Popes made them good. When will our historians begin to resent this paltry trickery?

### §3. THE PAPAL SCRAMBLE FOR GOLD

Clement VII, the anti-Pope, had meantime been chiefly occupied in securing enough money for himself and his court to live comfortably. France liked to have a Pope but did not like to bear the whole burden of supporting him. So the churches were fleeced everywhere. The hungry cardinals had their agents watching for vacancies and selling benefices. Fugitives came from Italy to pick up the crumbs of the Avignon table. The entire French Church was impoverished, and we are told that the work of education, particularly, suffered. All the proud school-life of the thirteenth century was being lost in this sordid squabble of the rival Popes; for the Italian cardinals had created Boniface IX, and he also was compelled to spend all his time in the quest of funds. The Jubilee of 1390 set him up for a time, and he repaired the dilapidated churches of Rome and restored the Papal army and made peace with Naples. But money was scarce, and it was now that, as I described in the last chapter, simony was most shameless and unbounded at Rome. The Papal offices were like a modern stockbroker's office, the price rising and falling according to the reports of the spies abroad on the health of aged benefice-holders. Dietrich, who was there, says that he saw the same benefice sold several times in a week. If a man offered more than the cleric who had actually bought a benefice, the Pope said that the first man had tried to cheat him. Dietrich says that even during mass the Pope talked business with his secretaries. As the older cardinals died off, Boniface put aside all pretense and made a market of the Church. It cannot even be said that the needs of the Church palliate his infamous conduct. He was one of the worst nepotists of the time, showering wealth upon all his relatives.

His rival Clement had died in 1394, and the University of Paris, which had now very few pupils left, petitioned the king to end the schism. Clement had such a fit of temper when his cardinals endorsed this request and suggested that he ought to resign or submit to arbitration that he retired to his bed and he died of apoplexy a few days later. The king wrote to direct the cardinals not to elect a successor; and they first elected a successor, the "crafty and unprincipled Spaniard" Benedict XIII, and then they opened the king's letter. And, of course, they all swore to end the schism as soon as possible. Boniface meantime had filled the Romans with disgust, and the city reeked with passion and bloodshed. To appease them and refill his purse he announced a Jubilee for 1400, and it is extraordinary to read how many came in spite of the appalling disorders. The pilgrims were robbed everywhere and sometimes murdered. Even noble ladies were raped. And the two Popes looked out, somber and melancholy, upon the ruins of Christendom: which some of our historians seem to find so admirable.

Now that the French had a Spanish Pope they were less anxious than ever to maintain him, and the French king, supported by his

clergy and lawyers and the University of Paris, decided in solemn council that both Popes must abdicate. An embassy was sent to Avignon, and nineteen out of the twenty cardinals—the twentieth was a Spaniard—agreed with it. Benedict, who had at his election sworn a solemn oath to end the schism, now evaded all their pressure and refused to move. After two years of wrangling France decided to renounce allegiance to Benedict and send an embassy to Rome calling upon Boniface to resign. He also refused, his greedy relatives gathering round him and imploring him not to yield. So the French king sent an army to Avignon, and the Pope called upon his faithful city to defend him. The citizens opened their gates, and the Pope provisioned and defended the Papal palace. He called upon the king of Aragon to come and deliver him, since he was the gonfaloniere (standard-bearer or protector) of the Papacy, and he was told that the king replied: "Does the priest think that I will go to war with France for him?" Benedict capitulated and was kept a prisoner in his palace for the next five years, so that he could not do much for the civilization of Europe. But in 1403 the king of Sicily relieved him, and his cardinals and all France submitted to him; but we need not believe the later story that he had his revenge on Avignon by inviting the leading citizens to a banquet and firing the hall.

They again pressed Boniface of Rome to submit, but death at this point removed him from the ignominious struggle. According to the gossip of the time we can put one virtuous act to his credit. He suffered from stone, and his doctor (probably a Jew) is said to have assured him that fornication was a good remedy for it; and he heroically refused, and died. The Italian cardinals got together and, after each had taken an oath to end the schism if he were elected, they created the "gentle and virtuous" Pope, Innocent VII. Rome flew to arms, and there was looting, raping, and killing everywhere. The king of Naples came north and secured peace, but the gentle and virtuous Pope had at once promoted a very ungentle nephew of his, and this man fell arrogantly on a deputation of Roman citizens and killed eleven of them. The bells of Rome rang once more, and the Pope and cardinals fled. There was the usual reconciliation, but Innocent died, and Gregory XII succeeded him. Gregory was determined to end the schism. He would go on foot, if he could not get a horse, to meet the other Pope. His only fear was that he "might not live to accomplish the great work." And so on. The two Popes were to meet at Savona. Gregory was in time pushed as far as Siena, and he there discovered twenty-two reasons why he could not go to Savona. Europe regarded the two greedy, and of course gentle and virtuous, old men with disgust, and at last, in 1409, a great Council of cardinals, prelates, abbots, and royal representatives met at Pisa, declared both Popes deposed, and elected a Franciscan friar, Alexander V.

#### §4. THE SINS OF JOHN XXIII

Now you will naturally expect to hear of the Popes behaving themselves for a century, possibly even exerting a beneficent in-

fluence on European civilization, yet I am going to introduce you to one of the most disreputable of them all. Alexander V never reached Rome. His two rivals ignored the Council, and, as one had the support of Spain and the other of Naples and part of Germany, there was a triangular duel of anathemas, and Alexander wearily sought a better world. The cardinals now elected Cardinal Cossa, and he became, to the astonishment of Italy, Pope John XXIII. It merely shows how incurably corrupt the Papal court had become, for bribery alone can explain the choice of so notorious a man. Whether or no it is true that, as Dietrich says—and I am quoting him as an authority only where he has personal knowledge—Cossa began his career as a Neopolitan pirate, it is certain and was notorious that, as Chancellor of Pope Boniface IX, he had been the worst agent of that Pope's simoniacal practices, that he made a large fortune for himself, that his conduct was of the loosest description, and that, as Cardinal, he led the Papal troops with all the truculence of the worst captains of the time. He captured Bologna and settled there as legate, and, while Dietrich may not be numerically correct in his statement that during his few years there he corrupted two hundred maids and matrons, it is known that he respected no moral laws. Even the gamblers and prostitutes paid graft to him. He had taken the lead in deposing the two Popes, hoping to get the tiara himself. When Gregory excommunicated him, he burned the Pope's bull in the market-place. When Benedict's representatives asked him for a safe-conduct through Italy, he said: "If you come to Bologna, with or without a safe-conduct, I'll burn you."

Such was the Vicar of Christ who emerged out of all the efforts of reform of the last ten years. I will not waste time in describing how by war and the sale of indulgences he kept his place for five years. Europe might have overlooked his personal conduct and his fighting, but the general condition of the Church gave very great concern. In England John Wycliffe had started a pure Christian movement, an early form of Protestantism, bitterly anti-Papal, which took such hold of religious-minded folk that some historians estimate that at one time in the fourteenth century half of the English nation belonged to the sect. The teaching spread to Bohemia, which was then one of the leading countries of Europe, and through the preaching of John Hus it made almost equal progress. All knew that the Lollard and Hussite denunciations of Papal greed and simony and priestly monastic corruption were justified, and there was a demand for reform all over Europe; and, since Popes were so futile and it had just been discovered that Councils were above Popes, there was a cry for another and larger Council. John announced that there would be a Council at Rome. Few prelates came, and Roman gossip said that, as John sat in St. Peter's, an owl perched opposite him, and, reddening and perspiring, he blinked for a time at this strange "Holy Ghost" and then fled.

Europe looked to the Emperor Sigismund, and he directed that there would be a General Council at Constance in 1414 at which John must appear. How John fought the proposal, how he had at

last to go and see what bribery would do, and how, disguised as a groom, he fled from Constance need not be told at length here. He reached Burgundy and sent to the Council a cool offer that he would resign if they would appoint him Perpetual Legate for the whole of Italy with a pension of about \$75,000 a year. He was betrayed, but he was now too ill to go to Constance, so in May, 1415, the Council decided to try the charges against him. It was the greatest gathering of representative Christians yet seen in Europe. There were twenty-nine cardinals, thirty-three archbishops, a hundred and fifty bishops, a hundred and thirty-four abbots, and about a hundred lawyers (some of them the greatest in Europe) and theologians. This grave Council drew up and endorsed fifty-four articles indicting the Pope. He had been "wicked, irreverent, unchaste, a liar, disobedient, and infected with many vices." He had made a fortune by simony, had bought the cardinalate, and as cardinal-legate had been "inhuman, unjust and cruel." He was "addicted to the flesh, the dregs of vice, a mirror of infamy," guilty of "poisoning, murder, and persistent addiction to vices of the flesh." He got the Papacy "by violence and fraud" and as Pope was "an oppressor of the poor, a persecutor of justice, a pillar of the wicked, a statue of the simoniacs, addicted to magic," etc. He sold "benefices, bulls, sacraments, indulgences, ordinations and consecrations," and was convicted of "sacrilege, adultery, murder, spoliation, rape and theft." A very Holy Father, John and the other Popes were declared deposed, and the Council very carefully chose a reformer, Pope Martin V.

As the story is usually told, it sounds as if at least the body of the Church was sound and eager for reform. There are a few facts about the Council of Constance, however, which ought to be stated if one is not to be misled about its work. One is that fairly reliable chroniclers of the time tell us that during the long sojourn of the prelates and their followers in the Swiss city a thousand prostitutes were attracted to it: which means, after due allowance for rhetorical exaggeration, that a gathering of the higher clergy had about it a marked tone of moral looseness and most people found it a joke. The next significant fact is that the monarch who convoked and virtually superintended the Council, the Emperor Sigismund, was one of the most notoriously immoral princes in Europe and in few senses a man of good repute. The third fact is that while this grave Council merely condemned Pope John, whom it described as a moral monstrosity, to a comfortable confinement in a castle—he was later restored to the rank of a cardinal and has a magnificent monument in Florence—the really noblest man in Europe at the time, John Hus, was, in spite of a safeguard from the Emperor himself, and after a grossly unjust trial, condemned to death and burned alive. You may therefore be prepared to learn in the next book that there was no reform of the Papal court and presently it would produce worse Popes than ever.