

Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

The True Story of the Roman Catholic Church

Joseph McCabe

In Six Double Volumes

Volume 7

The Height of the Papal
Regime of Vice and Crime

Volume 8

How Rome Fought
Attempts to Reform Morals

THE TRUE STORY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Volume VII

The Height of the Papal Regime of Vice and Crime

**How the Monstrous Popes of the
Renaissance Period Really Lived**

Joseph McCabe

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THE HEIGHT OF THE PAPAL REGIME OF VICE AND CRIME

CHAPTER I

THE RESULTS OF A THOUSAND YEARS OF PAPAL RULE

HE tenth centenary of the fall of Rome, the year 1410, had, we saw in the last book, been commemorated in the medieval city by the elevation to the Papacy of an ex-brigand, an expert in every variety of crime and vice, a Pope who would within five years be indicted by a Council of the universal Church in such terms as would today describe only the very lowest type of criminal. The character of the man had been quite well known to those who elected him and to the chief prelates, princes and statesmen of Europe. The electoral machinery of the Roman Church, the central body which had to discharge the most momentous of its functions, the choice of the supreme moral ruler of the world, had become so corrupt that any type of man could by bribery secure the tiara and cynically exploit the Christendom which, kneeling at his feet, hailed him as the Vicar of Christ. It was four hundred years since the last invasion, even locally, of Europe by barbarians. For several centuries the nations had been solidly Christian and had acknowledged the formidable powers which, by forgery and the exploitation of ignorance and superstition, the Papacy had usurped. A dozen strong Popes had wielded those powers mercilessly and had scorched the souls of men with censures which seemed to them to throw wide open the gates of the flaming pit. And the issue had been a corruption of the Papacy itself which was made plain to all the world in the trial of Boniface VIII and of John XXIII, in the vices of Papal Avignon, and in the sordid scenes of the great Schism.

How those historians of our time who are complaisant to the Catholic Church explain this deep and prolonged degradation of the Papacy at the very time when Europe was returning to the level of civilization I do not know, for they never mention this degradation, undisputed as it is. We have studied the problem, in so far as it bears upon the supposed services to the world of the Papacy, more seriously. When we carefully analyze the progress that was made in Europe in the later Middle Ages we see that it was in no sense due to the Papacy and in a very slight degree to the hierarchy of the Church of Rome; though, seeing that this hierarchy owned at least a third of the wealth of Europe, we might expect it to co-operate extensively. The artistic movement, which is the most conspicuous brighter feature of the later Middle Ages, was not even

noticed in Rome until it had run for nearly three centuries and was at its height; and any modern authority on art will tell you that it expresses a removal of the cultivation of art from the monks and clergy to the laity. The intellectual movement owed much at first to liberal bishops and abbots but it had been recognized by the Papacy as a danger and had been guided into channels of safety, sterility, and insipidity, and had become one of the chief obstacles to further progress. The fundamental progress was that of civic, industrial and commercial life, and this was due to purely secular causes.

But it is unnecessary to apply this analysis to the last part of the Middle Ages which we now approach. If the Papacy or the Roman Church did not contribute to the progress of this period at least by maintaining the sense of moral principle in Europe few of us will be inclined to consider the claims that are made for it. The fact that some Pope patronized learning when all the princes of Italy were patronizing it, that some other Pope patronized art when every prince or prelate in Europe had been patronizing it for a century or two, merely proves that the Papacy was not *always* the most reactionary power in Europe. And if we find that precisely these Popes who patronized art and learning protected the utterly corrupt practices of their own Church and permitted the utmost laxity in their own court, we shall not be much impressed by the fact that with their tainted funds they employed painters and subsidized scholars.

This is what we are going to find. We saw that all the reforms of the Papacy and renaissances of Europe of which we hear so much had ended in a general demoralization of the monks, the clergy and the Papal court—of what ought, in the best sense of the word, to be called the Church. At the close of the last book we saw a new and very remarkable reform. The prelates, princes and lawyers of Europe got together at Constance and decided very solemnly that the Church was to be reformed “in head and members,” and that such Councils should henceforward be convoked periodically, at intervals of a few years, to guard the reform, since Popes could not be trusted. It is notorious that the most active men in this Conciliar Movement, as it is called, and in the Council of Constance, were laymen, like the great French lawyer Gerson; and that the most deadly enemies of the movement were the Popes, especially the more religious Popes. So the next phase of Papal history, which we study in this book, is this: Europe has become civilized in spite of its Popes and prelates and it decides to civilize its Church, but the Papacy defeats it and sinks into a luxurious corruption, based upon a sordid traffic in sacred things, which leads inevitably to the Reformation.

For nearly all the facts which I shall give in this stretch of Papal history I can quote the authority of the most learned Roman Catholic historian of recent times: if we disregard men like Loisy, who quitted the Church so as to be quite free to say what they thought of it, or like Lord Acton, who wrote as little as possible

about the medieval Church. Dr. Ludwig Pastor has published a very large "History of the Popes" (of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) in fifteen volumes for which his Church has not shown much gratitude. It is a generally excellent piece of scholarship, and, since the authorities are abundantly quoted in it, it will not be necessary in this book to give references except for a few facts which are not given by Pastor, though they are beyond serious dispute. Pastor candidly admits nearly all the sordid facts about the Church in the Renaissance period which Catholic writers have generally denied for a century or two. It is true that he prevents his reader from appreciating the full significance of them by burying them in a tedious narrative of unimportant matters, devoting ten pages to rare instances of virtue and ten lines to widespread vice, and adding excuses which we shall often have to disallow. His work is, however, very useful and is based upon a learning and personal research which are rare in Catholic publications; and it may be understood that every ugly fact which I give here and do not trouble to quote the evidence is admitted in this most authoritative of Catholic histories. Another large and useful work on the period is the "History of the Papacy" of Bishop Creighton; but I must add that Creighton, though a bishop of the Church of England, is too conscious of the kinship of the Roman Church to his own to tell the whole truth. However, details that may be called into question will make no material difference to our story. The history of the Roman Church in the century before the Reformation is admittedly one of general and remarkable corruption.

§1. MORALS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The events I have described and will further describe almost dispense us from making a special inquiry into the state of morality in the fifteenth century. The vicious and violent conduct of a Pope Urban or a Pope John XXIII obviously means that the society to which they belonged was generally corrupt from top to bottom. In every age, as I have repeatedly said, we can find a few priests or laymen of genuine piety and strict character, and it is the favorite trick of the apologist to devote as many pages to these as he devotes lines to darker events. But we very rarely hear of opposition to the conduct of the unscrupulous Popes or princes, and they seem rather to be surrounded entirely by men, clerics or laymen, who at once carry out their most dishonorable designs. Torture is inflicted, forgeries are perpetrated, oaths are broken, murder or rape is committed, on every page. Armies move incessantly over the face of Europe, and murder, loot and rape are the invariable consequences of the march of troops; and the very worst troops of all, the "free companies" or mercenary troops under no king, are especially employed by the Popes to secure their temporal possessions. But, since the Church put chastity at the head of the list of virtues, we may test its moral influence in Europe by again summoning a few witnesses in this respect.

We shall see presently that the influential lawyers of different

countries who, with the aid of a minority of the higher clergy, really wished to see the Church purified of vice, secured the holding of another Council, at Basle, in 1431. Its chief business was the reform of the Church. The Popes had prevented earlier attempts to hold a Council, and they denounced this Council of Basle and fought it for years, but for a time it had the support of the emperor and it boldly defied and censured the Pope. Our most reliable account of it is from the accomplished pen of Aeneas Sylvius, a fine scholar and very tortuous adventurer who, although in 1431 he was a layman and the most active opponent of the Papacy, afterwards became Pope Pius II. He tells us in his Latin "Commentary on the Acts of the Council of Basle" (Fea edition, p. 57) of a curious fact which even Dr. Pastor prudently overlooks. The Emperor Sigismund, who was no paragon of virtue, was so disgusted at the hypocrisy which the law of celibacy had brought upon clerical life that he demanded that this law should be withdrawn and priests declared free to marry. He directed an elderly bishop, John of Lubeck, to bring the matter before the Council, and John very willingly and earnestly pressed it. The historian thus sums up his address:

It had been useless to take their wives from the priests. Scarcely **one priest in every thousand** would be found to be chaste: **all lived in concubinage or adultery or something worse [incest and unnatural vice],** and administered the sacraments in a state of pollution. It would be better to perform the mass after the legitimate exercise of marriage rights than after rising from an impious concubinage. The bond of friendship between the clergy and laity could not be maintained on account of this difference of their condition: **for all priests** were suspected by the people to be the enemies of conjugal fidelity, and it cast suspicion on the freedom of the confessional. . . . His idea was endorsed by very many, though they thought the time was not opportune. Some of the older men condemned it because it would be no advantage to them; and the monks, who were bound by a vow of chastity, did not like to see the priests permitted to have wives.

Another old and respected prelate, Cardinal John, rose and said:

Though I am an old man and have no mind to marry, yet I think it proper that the priests should have wives once more.

There seems to have been no indignation at this description of nearly the whole of the clergy as corrupt or the proposal to undo all the "magnificent work," according to some writers, of Hildebrand and Innocent III. The historian merely says that "the opinion prevailed of those who felt that this was not the time to approach such a task." In other words, the bitterly hostile Pope would have

had a new weapon against them if they had dared to attempt it, and they had no influence on half of Christendom.

These general indications of vice are much more important than the life of some isolated bishop or nun, and many such could be quoted. The most respectable historian of the early fifteenth century, Dietrich of Neim, tells us some curious facts about the state of the clergy in Ireland ("the land of saints") and Norway, where concubinage was decently organized. All the priests he says had women. Sometimes he calls them wives, sometimes concubines, sometimes lovers; but, whether they went through any form of marriage or no, the Church at that time did not recognize it. When bishops went on official visits to their clergy the priests insisted that they should bring their own "lovers" with them, so that there should be no borrowing. In Ireland the women of the clergy shared the dignity of the clerical estate and, on ceremonious occasions, took precedence of the wives of the military. Dean Milman in a lengthy note gives the Latin passages from Dietrich's rare work.

Here is a little picture from Germany. The Papal secretary, Poggio Bracciolini, who had been employed at the Council of Constance, went in the summer of 1416 to Baden for his health. From there he wrote to a friend what Dr. Pastor calls "a shameless and immoral letter," the second worst of his "offensively obscene and coarse writings." A French translation of the letter was published by A. Meray in 1868, and it is so little "obscene" that you could publish an English translation in America at any time. But it describes a condition of complete sexual license at this German watering-place of the fifteenth century, though only in general terms. In the poorer public baths no costume is worn, and there is no separation of the sexes. In the better baths men and women are "nearly naked"—they have very short linen drawers or tunics—and spend hours in the water, eating and drinking from floating tables and listening to the bands. Crowds of professional young women minister to them in every way. The liberty of conduct is so unrestricted that husbands raise no objection when bathers caress their wives. It is, Poggio tells his friend, with obvious delight, "the place chosen by Venus herself to concentrate her pleasures and all the charms of her gracious court." As many as two hundred thousand people (in the course of a summer, I presume) visit this abode of love; and it is only one of many in medieval Germany, France and England. What is more to my purpose, Poggio adds: "There are also nuns, abbots, friars, and priests, and they often behave less decently than the others"; and one gathers that the only "decency" is that the bathers retire for actual sexual intercourse. These priests and monks, he says, bathe amongst the women like other men, and have silk ribands in their hair as they dance and sing and disport themselves.

There is a note of joyous discovery in the Papal secretary's letter but the only difference from Italy is, not the freedom of conduct, but the bathing. The ancient Romans had been the cleanest people in the world: the Romans of the Middle Ages were notorious

in an unclean age for filth and vermin. Poggio himself illustrates Italian morals as you will have gathered from Pastor's description of his writings. The worst of his books—which the Middle Ages enjoyed so much that it was translated into French, German and English, and printed twenty-six times before the year 1500—is entitled "Jokes" (or Funny Stories), and it is a collection of the thoroughly indecent stories (especially about the vices of bishops, abbots, monks, nuns and confessors) which Poggio and the other Papal secretaries used to tell each other in the Vatican. Poggio's looseness was notorious, yet he was the chief secretary of the Pope, Martin V, who was expressly appointed by the Council of Constance to purify the Church. He does not say that the Pope enjoyed his stories, but in one of his letters (quoted by Voigt) he tells us an instructive fact. In a time of trouble a certain Italian abbot visited the Pope and brought with him a grown-up son, and, says the secretary, "to the great amusement of the Pope and the whole court," the abbot enthusiastically assured the Pope that he had four more sons who were all willing and able to bear arms in his service. Lorenzo Valla, "the father of modern history," or the first critical historian to arise in the Middle Ages, tells us that it was usual in every country for the clergy and abbots to have children. Valla himself tries to prove in his little work "On Pleasure" that chastity is a crime against nature; but I hasten to say that he was not a Papal secretary or cleric, for he discovered the fraud of the Donation of Constantine and plainly accused the Popes of being the curse of Italy.

Lastly, since Italy ought to be the special sphere of moral influence of the Papacy—if you think that they had any—let me say a few words about a work of another Italian writer of the time, Antonio Beccadelli. It is entitled "Hermaphroditus," and any student of sex-questions will know what that means. It is a defense of unnatural vice, and the great Florentine Cosmo de Medici accepted the dedication of it. Voigt, one of the chief German authorities on the period, says that pederasty "raged like a moral pestilence in his time [about 1430 to 1450] in the larger towns of Italy." He quotes a decree of the Council of Ten of Florence of the year 1455 which begins: "Since it is most clearly understood how greatly the abominable and detestable vice of sodomy multiplies in this city." Poggio also says of Florence in one of his letters (No. 87): "Nowhere else is such license to sin with youths permitted as with us." But it was just as bad at Venice, Lucca, Siena, Naples, and other cities. The great preacher of the time, St. Bernardine of Siena, repeatedly attacks it in his sermons. The writers or Humanists of the time constantly accuse each other of it in their quarrels.

§2. THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

Pastor and other Catholic writers represent this very considerable spread of unnatural vice as an effect of the revival of Greek and Roman literature, since writers like Beccadelli base their defense of it very largely on the Greek and Latin poets. To show that they are wrong in this I need only recall that in the days of Hilde-

brand himself his cardinal friend, Peter Damian, wrote a book ("The Book of Gomorrah") in which he described it as appallingly prevalent, especially amongst the clergy and monks, of the eleventh century. The mistake of most of the writers is to suppose, as is commonly done, that it is a vice peculiar to civilized periods or cities. It is, and always was, just as prevalent amongst semi-civilized peoples and in rural districts. The attempt to keep the priests from women and to make monks observe their vows was bound to lead to an increase of it, and we may recognize that some impulse was given to it in the cities of Italy by Arabian influence. But it was there throughout the Middle Ages, and what happened in the fifteenth century was rather that more men wrote about it. If, however, we prefer to believe that there was a great spread of the practice, we merely have one more example of the moral futility of the Popes, for they, of course, condemned it.

Pastor opens his great work with an ingenious theory, in defense of his Church, that there was a "true" or Catholic and a "false" or more or less skeptical Renaissance. In the first, which is supposed to have done a good deal for Europe, we have the sage and sane blend of Christian piety and the revival of learning: in the other the customary perverse rebellion of human nature against the benign influence of the Church. It is surprising how this kind of sophistry can mislead any historian. Of the scholars of the "true Renaissance" whom Pastor, with great industry, gathers together, not a single one is ever mentioned today. They were for the most part clerics who condescended to enjoy the fruits of the labors of the real scholars of the Renaissance: men like Petrarch, Boccaccio, Poggio and Valla, who took immense trouble to collect manuscripts of the old classical writers from the rubbish of the monastic libraries. All of these men describe remarkable adventures in search of the classics. Even at the great abbeys the collections of manuscripts were in gross disorder and neglect. Hundreds of precious parchments had had the old writings washed away to be replaced by medieval twaddle or had been cut up to make prayer-books. It took a hundred years to get together, from the dust-laden libraries of Europe, a modest collection of the Latin classics. The idea that they had been carefully preserved by the Church or the monks is absurd; and Rome was one of the last places to which these scholars of the Renaissance looked for copies of the old Roman writers.

It is quite true that one or two of the Popes of the fourteenth century had, in luxurious Avignon, taken a mild interest in the classics. When we bear in mind that every Pope was just as familiar with Latin as with Italian or French we wonder rather that so few of them were interested. No Pope seriously helped the revival of learning until Nicholas V, about the middle of the fifteenth century. The classical movement was then a hundred and fifty years old and the most difficult part of the work was long over. It was the Greek classics which were now engaging the attention of Europe, and we shall see presently how the study of Greek was forced on the Papacy, long after it had been taken up in other parts

of Europe. The Popes now, they thought, had a prospect of bringing the Greek Church at last under their dominion. From 1450 onward, in any case, we shall not find a Catholic and pure zeal for the revival of learning and cultivation of art separate from the "false" or pagan Renaissance. We shall find the Papal court itself as pagan and immoral as Poggio Bracciolini or cultivating a most complete blend of what Pastor calls the two Renaissances.

§3. THE REVOLT AGAINST THE PAPACY

It is more important to notice how the better elements of Europe regarded the continued corruption of the Church and the defiant attitude of the Popes toward the reformers. One expression of this was the Conciliar Movement to which I have referred. The core of it was a body of conscientious laymen and clerics of all countries who held that a Council of the universal Church had a higher authority than the Pope, and that, in view of the long futility of the Popes and their stubborn refusal to reform their own court, such Councils must meet every few years, depose the Pope if he will not cooperate and appoint another. The great Council of Constance had done this with the consent of all.

But there were two chief weaknesses of the Conciliar Movement. It was not, as some say, wrecked by the attachment of Europe to its Popes. We have repeatedly seen that the people of the later Middle Ages were very far from docile to the Papacy. As a point of doctrine they generally recognized its powers but they spoke contemptuously of the conduct of a large number of the Popes and of the financial corruption of the Papal court under all of them. When, however, laymen, with the assistance of some of the higher clergy, wanted to reform the Church, they found no canonical basis in Church law for their action—so; at least, it seemed to very many—and they had behind them no force to compel submission to their schemes. The second chief weakness was that such a Council must, to be effective, represent the whole of Christendom, but political considerations and hostilities, of which the Popes made an unscrupulous use, kept some of the nations from cooperating. If we add that large numbers of the prelates did not want reform, we easily understand the failure of this first method chosen by Europe to rid itself of the more sordid features of its religion.

Hence large numbers of people began again to question the very basis of the Papal power and deny that the Papacy was a legitimate Christian institution. We saw that there had been hundreds of thousands of such heretics from the second half of the twelfth century, but the largest body of them, the Albigensians, had not ever been Christians, and the rest of Europe had approved of the brutal suppression of them. These sects continued to exist, but the terrible activity of the Inquisition drove them into obscurity. The next large movement was in England, when the Lollards, or followers of John Wycliffe, a sort of fourteenth-century Luther, who spoke of the Pope as anti-Christ and "the most-cursed of clip-pers and purse-kervers" (pickpockets), at one time numbered hun-

dreds of thousands in every stratum of society. The revolt spread to Bohemia, and, as we saw in the last book, its leader John Hus was, though he had received a safeguard from the emperor, burned by the Council of Constance. But the execution of Hus and of his companion Jerome of Prague inflamed the Cheks and led to one of the mightiest revolts against Rome before Luther.

It is necessary to remind many readers that at the beginning of the fourteenth century the Bohemian civilization was one of the highest in Europe. Two appalling religious wars, besides ordinary wars, have ravaged the ancient kingdom and destroyed nearly all its beautiful monuments, but in 1400 art and learning were scarcely more honored in any country than in Bohemia, and the land enjoyed the greatest prosperity. We must suppose, in fact, that even the moral tone was higher than elsewhere, for the stern preaching of Hus had won the support of the nobles. In 1415 they sent a fiery remonstrance to the treacherous Council of Constance. They denied that Hus was a heretic—he had generally avoided the doctrinal heresies of Wycliffe—or that there was any heresy in Bohemia; and they swore they would defend with their blood the freedom of their teachers and the pure law of Christ. I am here not concerned with doctrines and need say only that the Hussites broke into moderate and extreme parties. The moderates wanted a reform of the Church and the right of laity as well as the clergy to drink from the chalice: the Taborists, the extreme or people's party, rejected the sacerdotal scheme generally and appealed to Scripture. In 1419 the Bohemian king died, and the Emperor Sigismund took over the country and began to persecute. Pope Martin V, in the familiar way of Popes, called for knights of all countries to join the crusade against the heretics, who now repudiated the rule of Sigismund, and there followed, as Bishop Creighton says, "the most savage and bloody religious war Europe had yet seen."

It will at once give an idea of the extent of the revolt against Rome and the bravery of the Cheks if I say that after seven years of warfare, against a combination of the imperial armies with troops from England, France, Spain, and Poland, the Hussites defeated an army of two hundred thousand men, had still seventy thousand soldiers themselves, and four years later defeated an army of a hundred thousand. The war, in fact, lasted sixteen years and only came to an end because the moderates joined the Catholics against the extremists, and because the demands of the moderates were conceded. During all this time the ferocity of the fighting was appalling. The more savage practices had clearly begun on the Catholic side, but the Hussites retorted. Priests and monks were burned alive and the devastation was terrible. A Catholic city, a rival of Prague, which was Hussite, bought prisoners of war at about a dollar a head and executed them. The Bohemians retorted on priests, monks and nuns. The emperor himself sickened of the slaughter and repeatedly tried to make terms but Pope Martin V demanded the extermination of all who would not submit, and, when he died, Pope Eugenius repeated his frantic orders and declared null and void

every peaceful arrangement with the Hussites. In spite of their civil war, however, they won their liberty, and in 1459 Europe saw its first heretical king.

I have spoken highly of the work of Dr. L. Pastor, but his treatment of this appalling chapter of medieval history shows how impossible it is for any Romanist, no matter how scholarly, to convey a just impression. In a work in which he covers less than two centuries in fifteen large volumes he devotes only a few lines to this terrible war and says nothing about its barbarity, the policy of the Popes, and the grave injury to the civilization of Europe. What is worse, perhaps, he, like the apologists for the massacre of the Albigensians, tells his readers that these Hussites were "a danger to the very foundations of civil society," and for this mean libel he merely quotes another writer who is, though he does not inform his readers, a Roman Catholic. He dare not tell his readers how Europe, or the greater part of Europe, was held in submission to the Papacy only to murder and massacre and brutal destruction.

At this time also the strange movement which is known as witchcraft spread over Europe. This was, we now know, a fully organized sect comprising members of both sexes, all ages from infancy upward, and every condition of life, even lawyers, nobles, students, and occasionally priests. It was more drastic even than the heresy of the Albigensians, for its chief point was a drastic rejection of the Christian rule of sexual morals. I must, however, refer the reader to my Little Blue Book (No. 1132) for details. The activity of the Inquisition in the thirteenth century was naturally met by this secret organization of worshippers of Lucifer, and it seems to have been the general hypocrisy of the Church in sexual matters which largely inspired this cult of the orgy. Tens of thousands were put to death in the fourteenth century, possibly hundreds of thousands in the fifteenth. Yet the sect continued to grow, and we shall find it later so numerous that some historians count its "martyrs" by the million.

CHAPTER II

THE POPES PREVENT REFORM

THE phrase which the Conciliar Movement now made familiar in Europe was that it was going to reform the Church "in head and members": it was going to begin with the Pope and the Papal court, pass on to the morals of the hierarchy and religious orders, finally improve the general moral tone of Christendom. To put it more definitely, the Church was to be purified of simony, which was most flagrant in the Papal court, and of vice, especially amongst the clergy and monks. The modern attempt of a few writers to pretend that the wickedness of the later Middle Ages has been just as much exaggerated as the darkness of the Dark Ages is in a sense amusing. The most important movement of the fifteenth century was the Conciliar Movement, and the very essence of it was that the Church was so foul with simony and corruption, and the Popes had so little influence on its condition, that this new and desperate remedy must be tried. An appalling literature denouncing the corruption of the age can be gathered from the fifteenth century. Dr. Pastor's history, for instance, gives large numbers of quotations from it, often from unpublished documents, and we shall see a few of these later. It is enough to say that, while such historians as Pastor relieve the character of the time by enlarging on the high virtue of an individual here and there, they quite agree to the general corruption and the loud demand for a reform. The devout lawyers, bishops, and even cardinals who formed the core of the Conciliar Movement would have been amazed if some person had said to them, in the language of some of our modern writers, that the charge of corruption was exaggerated and the critics of the Papacy were really inspired by political motives.

The Popes certainly never questioned the claim that the Church urgently needed a thorough purification. No writer, preacher, or prelate in Christendom questioned it. But, not only did the Pope not contribute to the advance of Europe by enforcing this reform, but they notoriously refused to cooperate in it. This will not seem strange to any person who reflects that any cooperation with these Councils which claimed to be greater than Popes was inconsistent with the claims which the Popes had maintained for several centuries. The best of the Popes of this period wanted a reform of morals but they insisted that it must be entirely the work of the Papacy. The whole world, including the Conciliars on the one hand and the heretics on the other, must again be completely subject to the Papacy, and then the Popes would by means of Legates to all countries enforce a reform of morals. Europe retorted, of

course, that the Popes had, when their power was unquestioned, not concerned themselves about this reform. Moreover, while Christendom was very far from agreed that a reform of morals was needed, for clergy and laity alike bore their sins very gaily, there was a very decided agreement that the Papal court, with its sordid traffic in sacred objects and offices and its unmeasured greed, must be reformed; and, whether or no some of the Popes really wanted this reform, the immense clerical regiment that now profited by it, from the highest cardinals to the humblest clerks, was determined that the system should not be changed. In this light we may now read how the Popes resisted and presently wrecked the movement for reform and by their conduct led to a deeper demoralization than ever.

§1. THE REFORM POPE CREATED BY THE CHURCH

We smile when we read the efforts of Catholic historians to prove that Martin V was a great and virtuous Pope. As we saw at the close of the last book, the Council of Constance had deposed three rival Popes, elected Martin V, and directed him to proceed with the reform of the Church and convoke a general council every few years to see that this reform was being conducted. Never before had a Pope been so explicitly instructed or made such solemn promises. And no one disputes that Martin V made no serious effort to reform the Papal court, refused to summon another Council, and did all in his power to prevent a Council from being held. Even Bishop Creighton tries to exonerate Martin. He was "a cautious and prudent man," and there was much difference of opinion in the Church as to the method of reform, but in the end Creighton admits an "entire failure to accomplish any permanent results" either by the great Council or the Pope. Pastor admits that Martin confirmed at once nearly the whole of the financial practices of the Papal court which the Council had denounced as simony. But what, Pastor feebly asks, was the poor Pope to do? The Church had not provided him with an alternative income, and it would be most incongruous for the Church to have an impoverished Pope presiding over a hierarchy of splendid and very wealthy prelates. And so on. In the end we get admissions that the Pope scandalously enriched his relatives and refused to reform the Church, even "the most crying abuses," when he had the opportunity.

Martin V might have been a quite admirable bishop but if we measure his character by the task he had solemnly undertaken he was entirely unworthy. He never had the least idea of altering the simoniacal system of Rome which he had sworn to alter. He was a courtly and diplomatic man who sought to please everybody at Constance and secure the tiara. Historians of the Papacy in the Middle Ages seem to have the quaint idea that they are giving high praise to a Pope when they can say that he was not accused of being immoral, but the story I have reproduced from Poggio Bracciolini, of the Pope laughing when an abbot brings a bastard son to see him, does not suggest a very ascetic character. Pastor himself

is troubled by the fact that Martin chose Poggio and others of that type as secretaries, for their character was quite notorious, and the most indecent book of the age was composed in the offices of the Vatican. Poggio—Pastor does not add—had a mistress and three bastard children not far from the Vatican. Martin took office, at a solemn moment in the history of his Church, with perjury on his lips, at once confirmed the worst financial practices of the Roman court, and made no effort to alter the morals even of his immediate surroundings. Pious letters about the beauty of virtue and the restoration of Roman churches do not in these circumstances greatly impress us.

The fourteen years of Martin's pontificate were spent in restoring Rome, recovering the Papal States, enriching the Colonna family to which he belonged, and resisting the attempt to hold a second Council. He found Rome, when he at length returned to it, in a state of ruin. The slight recovery that had followed the return of the Popes from Avignon had been completely lost during the Great Schism, and Rome was terribly impoverished and squalid. Visitors from the splendid cities of north Italy at this time spoke of the Romans as "swineherds." The revenue of the Papal States was lost, and Martin at once made peace with Naples and got its aid in recovering Papal territory. He contrived also to restore the prestige of the Papacy in France and England—until his opposition to reform became clear—and gold began to flow once more from those countries. In 1423 he reaped the golden harvest of a Jubilee. With the money he did a great deal to restore Rome, and he even began the work of its artistic adornment. For literature and learning as such he had rather a contempt. We cannot excuse his employment of men like Poggio on the ground of zeal for the new learning. Pastor quotes him saying: "While we possess Augustine, what care we for the sagacity of Aristotle, the eloquence of Plato, the prudence of Varro, the dignified gravity of Socrates, the authority of Pythagoras, or the skill of Empedocles?"

On the other hand he "went beyond the bounds of justice" in enriching his family out of Church property—a practice which we shall presently find the gravest source of the demoralization of the Papacy—and he stubbornly resisted the reform of the Church by periodical Councils, which was the most promising method. Constance had decided that the Pope must call a Council every five or ten years. Martin dare not at once disavow his oath, and he announced that there would be a Council at Pavia in 1423. As France, England and Spain were occupied with war, few prelates came, as he expected, and Martin dissolved it and announced that there would be a Council at Basle in seven years. Pastor says: "A thorough reform of ecclesiastical affairs might in this interval have been undertaken, but Martin allowed the precious time to pass almost in vain as far as that important work was concerned" (I, 240). The excuse is that he was busy recovering the Papal States: or getting money to build pretty churches and make millionaires of his relatives. Europe began to growl once more. A foreign envoy,

quoted by Pastor, writes in 1420: "Here at the court all friendship ends with the last penny." In 1425 an English prelate said bluntly to the Pope: "If the abuses of the Church are not removed by your Holiness, the necessary reforms will be taken in hand by the secular powers." Placards appeared on the walls of Rome demanding reform and threatening to depose the Pope. In 1430 an envoy wrote: "Greed reigns supreme in the Roman Court." It was the cry of Europe. But Martin saw that no storm was likely to break in his time and he steered the luxurious bark of Peter over the sunny waters until he died in 1431.

§2. THE STRUGGLE OF POPE AND COUNCIL

To Martin succeeded Eugenius IV, an Augustinian monk of great piety and very sober habits. He never drank wine, and he was really virtuous, and he enriched no relatives. There is a very edifying account of his daily life in Pastor. Then we have a very short allusion to some "hasty and over-violent measures" which he took to secure the wealth which Martin had given to the Colonna family. The facts which the Catholic historian conceals are peculiar, for a saint. When the Colonna refused to yield the money, Eugenius declared war on them, and for six months there was brutal fighting. All the Colonna in Rome were imprisoned. One old man was tortured until he died. Two hundred were "executed." The palace of Martin V was looted and destroyed, and from all the monuments that Martin had raised or restored in Rome his name was savagely erased. The strongholds of the Colonna in the country were reduced: the family was almost extinguished: and with the aid of Venetian and Florentine troops the Papal States were bloodily reconquered. One cannot say that the odor of monastic virtue is very sweet.

Meantime there was the Council of Basle which his predecessor had summoned. Eugenius had sworn at his election to reform the Church and summon Councils, but, alleging that a Council beyond the Alps would be beyond his control, he issued a Bull dissolving the Council of Basle and saying that he would summon one at Bologna in two years. At this second defiance or perjury of the Popes the reformers were thoroughly angered, and the Pope's Legate at Basle, Cardinal Cesarini, wrote a long and passionate letter, which we still have, reproaching Eugenius. The Pope would, he said, be charged with "the grossest hypocrisy" if he persisted in dissolving the Council. There was a special importance of this meeting at Basle, for the leaders of the Hussites had promised to attend, and there was much hope of a compromise with them. Eugenius, like his predecessor, repudiated the idea of any concession to them. Complete subjection or bloody extermination, he urged. He was a man of stubborn temper and little ability, and the Council ignored him and proceeded to discuss its work. It even cited the Pope to appear, declaring that Councils were above Popes, and when he angrily refused the Council declared him "contumacious."

Eugenius splutteringly described it as "a synagogue of Satan" and gathered a swarm of monks about him at Rome.

Two years later (1433) the saintly Pope swung back and sent his blessing to the Council. The emperor had come to Rome to be crowned, but, instead of yielding to the Pope's entreaty that he should abandon the Council, he had said that it must continue. But there was a more formidable pressure. The democratic spirit to which I have often referred again found active representatives in Rome. There was a revolt, and the Pope was driven to the north. A fighting prelate led a Papal army and subdued the Romans, but Eugenius felt it safer to remain at Bologna—he remained out of Rome during nine of the sixteen years of his pontificate—and watch the proceedings of the Council with a very jealous eye. Presently he found a new excuse to dissolve the German Council. The Greeks were being very hard pressed by the advance of the Turks, and they sent to implore the aid of the Latin Church and were ready to submit to almost any terms. Eugenius ordered the transfer of the Council to Italy, and, when it refused, his Legate stole the seal of the Council and put it to a forged document which declared its submission to the Papacy. The prelate was driven out of Basle; and Eugenius made him a cardinal and protested against the treatment of his representative.

Even the grand prospect of the submission of the Greek Church came to nothing. The Greek emperor, who was ready to sell his church and doctrines to secure his crown, and the Greek Patriarch (or Pope) came to Ferrara, and the first breeze was when Eugenius sent word that his Greek brother must kiss his, the Pope's foot, in public as a sign of subjection. The Patriarch hotly refused, and the Pope had to consent to a meeting on equal ground. By this time, near the middle of the fifteenth century, Greek was being cultivated in many parts of Europe, yet neither Pope nor Patriarch, the two heads of Christendom, could speak a word of each other's language. However, the Turks were threatening Constantinople and, after a long and stormy resistance, the Greek clergy, at the pressure of their emperor, consented to believe that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Son as well as the Father, that there was a purgatory as well as a hell, and that the Pope was the head of the Christian Church. So the bells rang over Europe, and the Pope's Legates everywhere, but especially in Basle, proclaimed the triumph of Eugenius. And in a month or two Basle was convulsed with ironic laughter. The Greek people, monks, and clergy had fierily refused to acknowledge the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son and had repudiated the treaty. They preferred to face the Turks, and the destruction of the Greek empire went forward toward the final stage.

In 1439 the Council of Basle declared Eugenius deposed, and it proceeded to commit a blunder which did much to ruin the whole Conciliar Movement. The international basis of the Council was far from complete, and it was clear that Eugenius would continue to receive the money from the greater part of Christendom. Hence the Council looked for a wealthy man whom it could make Pope,

and Europe generally was astonished and amused to hear that it drew from his pious but luxurious retirement the Duke of Savoy, Amadens, who had resigned his principality. Felix V was a sober man, but he did not include apostolic poverty amongst his new virtues. The tiara which he donned at his coronation cost about \$75,000, and his court at Lausanne and Geneva was very gorgeous. There was no need for Eugenius to spit anathemas at the new anti-Pope. Europe could not take him seriously, and an astute adventurer who had so far been one of the stoutest of the Basle rebels now deserted the Council and skilfully steered his way toward Rome.

This was Aenaeas Sylvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, but I will say a word later about his remarkable career. After being for years a secretary of the Council and violent critic of the Popes, he got himself appointed secretary of the amiable Felix and induced that mock-Pope to send him on a mission to the German emperor. About this time he abandoned his gay ways, after a severe struggle, and entered the clergy. He captivated all men by his wit and learning, and presently he began to win the support of Germany for Eugenius: which would smooth for himself the way to higher clerical office. The chief obstacle, he found, was that the tactless and stubborn Pope had deposed two important German archbishops and refused to restore them. There was, therefore, a tendency in Germany to support Basle and its gaudy Pope, but Aenaeas Sylvius used his persuasive gifts on the emperor (who had promptly appointed him secretary), and he forged or falsified a letter of Pope Eugenius, representing him to the German Diet as now willing to restore the archbishops. He induced the emperor to send him to Rome with the submission of Germany, and, with his customary blend of audacity and suavity, he approached Eugenius and his monks and airily explained away his ten years hostility and his forgery. Eugenius, perhaps fortunately for him, was just entering upon his final illness. He lived long enough to ratify the treaty with Germany and raise Aenaeas Sylvius one step nearer the Papacy. And, with sullen curses on the head of the traitor, the reformers of Basle, now deserted by the emperor, dissolved their Council and postponed indefinitely the reform of the Church. Felix of Savoy—"M. de Savoie," as the French king humorously called him—placidly put away his pretty tiara and accepted a cardinal's red hat instead.

Eugenius had thus completely succeeded in frustrating the only attempt that was made to reform the Church and had completely failed to save Christendom in the east. It is to his credit that he never drank wine, he said many prayers, and he had no sons and daughters to enrich. Catholic historians claim further for him that he patronized art and letters and was one of the Popes who thus laid the foundations of the greatness of Rome. Seeing that he was a strict monk and that he was for nearly ten years absent from Rome this is peculiar. In point of fact, he did subsidize scholars and artists, but one suspects that he, a man of little intelligence, was rather induced to do so by the better educated of his cardinals. Let me give one curious illustration of the artistic work he did when

he returned from Florence to Rome; and we will suppose that in this superb city of the north he had not entirely failed to appreciate art. One of the beautiful bronze doors was at this time made for the baptistery at Florence, and Eugenius decided to have an elegant bronze gate for St. Peter's. A Florentine artist was summoned to Rome, and the work of piety proceeded. When it was finished, it was found that there were in its decoration not only little figures of Christ and the saints, but also of Jupiter and a not heavily draped ganymede, a centaur lasciviously courting a nymph, and even a sketch of the very edifying episode of Leda and the divine swan! Probably the bleary-eyed Pope did not examine it very closely.

Eugenius had neither the time nor the personal inclination to do much for art and letters in Rome. When he returned to Rome he found sheep and cows nibbling the grass in the neglected streets. In the winter wolves came down from the mountains as far as the Tiber and could be seen from the Vatican digging up the corpses in the cemetery. It was still true at the middle of the fifteenth century that Rome was, in adornment and culture, if not in morals, one of the most backward cities of Europe. But 1450 was the turning year in its fortunes, and we must see how in the next half century it became a great sanctuary of art and the most glorified brothel in Europe.

CHAPTER III

ROME BECOMES CIVILIZED

WE have now seen how for thirty years, at a time when the best elements of Europe were clamoring for reform, two Popes of what is called virtuous character actually prevented the work of reform from being carried out. It is easy for any historian to point out that the opportunity for reform that was offered to them by cooperation with a Council which claimed to be greater than they, was inconsistent with the claims that they had fabricated for themselves, or that they were busy recovering their temporal dominions. But it is not for the same historians to assure us that the Papacy was the most beneficent and progressive influence in the life of Europe, or that Europe loved its medieval institutions and was so attached to them that it sought the blood of heretics. Europe was, to say the truth, in a state of great confusion of mind. The school-movement, which had begun as an effort to rekindle intellectual life, had become, or been made, mechanical, narrow, and uninspiring. Very little new knowledge had come to enlighten the ignorance of Europe, since the wisdom of the Arabs had been rejected, and even the ablest lawyers were puzzled. The foundations of the Papal structure of doctrine and discipline were in a past which was concealed even from scholars by Papal forgeries. It was not until the fifteenth century that the clumsiest fabrication, the Donation of Constantine, was detected by a skeptical historian, Lorenzo Valla. The mass of people resigned themselves indolently to the contrast between their life and their religious law, their belief about the divine foundation of the Church and their disdain of its corruption.

Several things were necessary before the chronic and natural revolt of the minority against this state of things could successfully break the authority of the Papacy, as it was bound sooner or later to do: a leader like Luther, a wider circulation of the Bible through the new art of printing, the broad dissemination of critical literature like the writings of Erasmus by the same means, a deeper and more intolerable corruption of the Papacy both in regard to finance and morals, and the occurrence of political conditions which would give the reformers a military force that could equal that of the orthodox. Printing, which was to introduce a profoundly important new element into the life of Europe and render more service than any of the Popes, was adopted in the west—it was ages old in China—in the first half of the fifteenth century. The first Bible was printed by Gutenberg about 1450, soon a score of presses were pouring out Bibles and classical and critical literature. This and the favorable political conditions are the special reasons why the

permanent revolt against Rome did not succeed until the sixteenth century. But we will consider the conditions in the next book. Here we will follow the history of the Papacy until the time of Luther and see how its quite unbearable hypocrisy occurring in an age of mental awakening, inevitably led to a schism.

§1. A PAPAL HUMANIST

One sometimes reads about "the Popes of the Renaissance" as if the whole series of pontiffs of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were immoral men who entered fully into what was called the pagan revival of the time. This is far from true. Of the two Popes we have already seen one detested the literary revival and the other was incapable of understanding it. They merely patronized a few scholars since that was the fashion of Italian princes in their time. Of the next five, with whom I deal shortly in this chapter, only one had shared the sexual license of the time (as far as we know), and he had adopted more sober ways long before he became Pope. But even these Popes of decent life prepared the way for their degenerate successors. The gravest and really criminal defect of most of them was a shameless nepotism. They enriched and gave high clerical promotion to their relatives without the least regard to their character, and this led to the complete corruption of the college of cardinals which enabled men like Alexander VI, Julius II, and Leo X to occupy the Vatican. The other way in which they contributed to the demoralization of the Papacy was by adopting the new art and culture in what they thought to be the service of the Church until at last Rome seemed to the nations of the north to be thoroughly paganized.

Nicholas V, who followed the futile Augustinian monk in 1447, inaugurated this development; for we may ignore the little that his two predecessors had done for art and culture. Nicholas was, on the contrary, a very genuine patron of art, a real lover of books and scholars, and at the same time a religious and in many ways admirable prelate. He was the son of a poor doctor, but he had been educated in Florence and had become a tutor there before he entered the clergy. There he had learned to regard the artistic and literary poverty of Rome with disdain, and when the cardinals chose him, though he had only been a bishop three years and was only forty-eight years old, he began at once to dream of the glorification of Rome. But the democrats were in revolt again, the Papal States were in confusion, the treasury was empty. Nicholas sincerely detested war and he succeeded rather by diplomacy in restoring order. A Jubilee year in 1450 brought profitable streams of about forty thousand pilgrims a day to Rome, and the coffers began to fill. Unfortunately the plague came along once more, and there were horrible mounds of corpses in Rome and on all the roads that led to it. However, the pilgrimage was resumed when the heat of summer was over, and the new emperor Frederic came to Rome to be crowned, and, in short, Rome soon found itself prosperous once more. Aenaeas Sylvius had helped him to the Papacy and been helped by

him, and every court in Europe now heard from the former enemy of the Popes, who was still secretary of the emperor, a very glowing account of Nicholas V and the magnificent work that he was doing in Rome. The Council of Basle was dissolved, the Anti-Pope retired, and the Pope was monarch once more of the whole of Europe except the heretical half of Bohemia.

Of the artistic use that Nicholas made of his great resources little need be said here. He did much to redeem Rome of the contempt with which visitors from Florence and Venice regarded it. He founded the Vatican Library—for the first time in a thousand years the Papacy has a modest collection of books—but when historians call it “the most important library in the west in the fifteenth century” (as a writer in the *Cambridge Modern History* unhappily says), they seem to be strangely ignorant that thousands of men in the still prosperous Moorish kingdom of Granada could boast far more valuable collections, and the public libraries there were a hundred times as large. However, we will not seek to belittle the efforts of Pope Nicholas. After a thousand years of nearly continuous semi-barbarism he reintroduced civilization to Rome.

We may, however, resent the practice of dilating on these services, which were merely a tardy imitation of the conduct of the princes and republics of the north, and ignoring the fact that Nicholas refused, like his predecessors, to take up the work of moral reform. Once the inconvenient zealots of Basle had been scattered, he settled down to exploit Europe in the old way. “It is to be regretted,” says Pastor (II, 48), whose chapters on him are full of praise, “that the reforming zeal of the early days of his pontificate gradually cooled down.” He had at his election taken the usual oath to reform the Church, and it might occur to a pious Catholic historian that this work was even more important than building sumptuous churches. Beyond sending Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa to bring about a partial and temporary reform of the monks and clergy of Germany, where the criticism of clerical corruption was becoming serious, he did nothing. A Carthusian monk, quoted in Pastor, addressed to him a passionate and quite futile appeal to take up the work of reform. “No nation in Christendom,” wrote the monk, “offers such opposition to reform as Italy, and this from love of gain and worldly profit and fear of losing its privileges. Nor is it true that, as Pastor claims, the fault lay entirely with the crowd of parasitic clerics at Rome. Nicholas himself wanted the money for his adornment of Rome and the Papal palaces.

In 1453 two events occurred that darkened the Pope’s vision of a splendid future. Constantinople, refused all assistance by Europe, fell to the Turks, and they began to threaten the west; and in Rome there was another democratic conspiracy, which had to be bloodily suppressed. So Nicholas spent his last two years in melancholy and suffering. He was racked with gout and, some say, with remorse. He died in 1455, and a new and very mischievous phase of Papal rule began with the election of Calixtus III.

§2. THE CORRUPTION OF THE COURT OF CARDINALS

"Cardinals" had meant originally the "chief" clergy of the Roman Church, just as we speak of the four cardinal points, but these electors of the Popes had become "princes of the Church," and were now accustomed to lay down conditions during an election for their own profit and protection and require the sworn assent to these of every candidate for the Papacy. Since the Council of Constance they had been on the whole men of what we might call average clerical character. A few were distinguished for virtue and learning (generally Church law and theology), a few of a notoriously worldly character, and most of them not noted in the literature of the time for either good or bad qualities. But we now reach a period when nepotism is so flagrantly practiced by the Popes that the college of cardinals steadily fills with immoral and luxurious men.

It illustrates once more how easy it is to misrepresent Papal history when we learn that the Pope who set the worst example of this demoralizing practice, Calixtus III, was an extremely pious old man, seventy-seven years old. In a deadlock of ambitions it was usual to elect some aged cardinal who would, presumably, do little and soon disappear. But Calixtus, a learned (which probably means very industrious) Spanish jurist, succeeded during his three years of office in bringing upon Rome the curse of the Borgias, for that was the family to which he belonged, and inaugurating the worst period of Papal corruption. This pious old man and an equally pious friar who mounted the Papal throne later, Sixtus IV, did more to demoralize Rome than even John XXIII, so I do not propose to discuss their virtues at any length.

The short reign of Calixtus was, says Gregorovius, "devoid of importance": unless one may regard the introduction of the Borgias to Rome as a not unimportant event. The Pope was gouty, as well as old and stupid. The Vatican was turned into an infirmary, and bare-footed friars were in great honor in it. The Pope, it is said, had only two great aims, beyond securing the future of his soul. He despised the artistic and cultural work of his predecessor and fired the artists and scholars. His two passions were a great crusade against the Turks and the enrichment of his family. He sold Papal treasures to buy ships and issued a bull calling upon the whole of Christendom to enlist against the Turks. Some countries refused even to publish his bull, and no crusade was organized.

But the Pope was certainly successful in his second aim. Within less than a year of his coronation he summoned his three young nephews from Spain, gave them his own family name of Borgia (they were sons of married sisters), promoted two of them to the cardinalate, and entertained gorgeous dreams for the secular advancement of the third. The latter, Pedro Luis, a common type of profligate young Spaniard, was made commander of the Papal army, Prefect of Rome, and Duke of Spoleto. A swarm of Spanish friends and adventurers came over, secured all the appointments, and ran Rome on much the same lines as an American city was at times run by a corrupt gang in the last century. There were daily murders,

and justice was a matter of money. As the Romans sent this man flying for his life as soon as the Pope fell seriously ill we need not trace him farther.

His younger brother Rodrigo, later the famous Alexander VI, who, with his cousin, at once became a cardinal, was then twenty-four years old. No matter how ill and secluded the Pope was, it is incredible that he should have heard nothing, or made no inquiry, about the conduct of these young cardinals. Rodrigo was, as we shall see later, a completely unscrupulous and very sensual man, yet the Pope gave him, besides a number of profitable benefices, the highest office of the Papal court, the Vice-Chancellorship. And, having thus used his golden opportunity to assist in the recivilization of Europe and reform of the Church, Calixtus III soon died in the arms of his friars, and the infuriated Romans chased every Spaniard out of the city.

But the cleverest and most unscrupulous of them, Rodrigo Borgia, found his way back and became a ferment of corruption in the college of cardinals. The next Pope gave him important offices, and did not take them away or do more than express a mild astonishment when he heard (his letter is extant) that Cardinal Rodrigo and other cardinals had entertained (after excluding their parents) a number of frivolous young ladies for five hours in a private garden at Siena, and the entertainment included "dances of the most licentious character" and other things which, unfortunately, "modesty forbids us to relate." A translation of the Pope's letter may be read in "The Life and Times of Rodrigo Borgia" (p. 35) by Bishop Mathew. Catholic writers used to explain that the letter was a wicked forgery, but the original was found in the last century in the Vatican archives.

83. A REPENTANT POPE

This Pope who very gently rebuked his Cardinal Legate for conduct which would today get him a year or so in jail was the Humanist adventurer Aenaeas Sylvius to whom I have several times referred. He had crowned his very remarkable career—Voigt has given us an account of it that fills three large volumes—by securing five years of pontifical beatitude. Catholics hasten to tell us that, whatever may have been the sins of his youth, he was quite moral in his Papal days. We should not exactly call it high praise if some writer assured us that, for instance, the Archbishop of Baltimore has not a mistress, and in point of fact Aenaeas Sylvius, or Pius II as he now was, can hardly be regarded as heroic. He was fifty-three years old, racked by gout, and prematurely aged. It is more interesting to consider how such a man was found at all in the higher ranks of the clergy. He was a man of great ability, learning, and legal skill, and in early years he had been much employed on diplomatic missions. Voigt quotes many amorous passages from his letters at this time, but I need notice only one in which he naively replies to his father, who has scolded him for having a son by an English woman. He asks his father rather to rejoice that he has "a little one to play at his grandfather's knees." As to what his father

calls the "sin" of it, is there really anything in it? "Remember what a c—— you were yourself," he says to his father, and "I don't know anybody who does not do it." In fact, says the future Pope, "I don't see why we should so severely condemn fornication seeing that nature, which does nothing false, has put this instinct in all animals." If you want to understand the real spirit of the Middle Ages, and if you can read German, try to see this letter in Voigt's biography of the Pope.

Aenaeas then, as we saw, became one of the most important opponents of the Popes at the Council of Basle, and at about the age of forty he decided to adopt the clerical career and lead a chaste life, in which the poorness of his health assisted him. It is useless in the case of such a man to attempt to disentangle the elements of sincerity and ambition. In a few years he passed from the secretaryship of an Anti-Papal Council to that of a rich Anti-Pope, then to that of a young Emperor, and next to that of a Pope. Nicholas V used his diplomatic gifts very extensively and he was on a mission in Germany when that Pope died. He claimed that he defeated the plot of a party at court to take advantage of the Pope's death and reassert Germany's claims, and the Emperor sent him to convey his congratulations to Pope Calixtus. He was personally disliked by Calixtus, but he was an indispensable man, and he settled in Rome and became a cardinal. A year and a half later he was Pope Pius II.

Humanists who imagined that he was going to resume the work of Nicholas V were bitterly disappointed. He had one aim only, a crusade against the Turks. When the Christian monarchs proved too busy with their own wars to listen to his appeal, he wrote the Sultan a long and curious letter, to convert him to Christianity, which seems to indicate a remarkable decay of the intellectual power he had shown in his earlier years. He then left Rome to rouse the world in person against the Turks, and the city fell back at once into poverty and demoralization. Once more we have visitors speaking of it in terms of the greatest disdain. All wealth had been diverted to the Borgias or to the crusade-plan. For a time a band of three hundred youths terrorized the city, sacking houses, holding citizens for ransom, and throwing into the river any maid or matron who refused to yield to them. In 1450 we find Rome, under Nicholas, described by Catholic writers as if it were a second Florence: in 1460 we find it almost as barbarous as it had been in the tenth century. When Pius, in the provinces, heard that there was a plan to restore the Republic once more, he sent an army and suppressed the attempt in the usual manner. For four further years he misruled the sullen city and assailed the deaf ears of Europe with appeals for a crusade. The one consolation of his pontificate was that some Greek refugees brought to Rome one of the faked relics—the "head of St. Andrew"—that had been so numerous in the Greek Church. Pius and all Rome lay prostrate before it. And that is all that can be said for the six years pontificate of one of whom Milman says that "few men of more consummate ability" ever sat on the Papal throne.

CHAPTER IV

THE GAY CARDINALS AND THEIR MISTRESSES



THROUGHOUT this history we have found the undisputed facts so emphatically opposed to the claim that the Papacy was the chief influence at work in the recivilization of Europe that we are almost astonished to find even Catholics advance that claim today. We have found it just as ludicrous to say that the recovery was so slow because barbarians checked the beneficent action of the Popes, for we saw the Roman Church very corrupt in the days of Pope Damasus, thirty years before the Goths invaded Italy, and reaching its lowest point of degradation six hundred years after the barbaric invasion. But the decisive answer to the claim is that when Europe did at last return to some sort of civilization, the Papacy tended constantly to sink to its old level and had repeatedly to be corrected by the world which it was supposed to civilize. The Papal power was at its height when Innocent III died in 1216, and Europe was making considerable progress. Yet in the three centuries of advance that followed the Papacy is, during the greater part of the time, the butt of all the wits in Christendom. We have Boniface VIII and the corrupt period of the Avignon Popes, then the sordid spectacle of the forty years of the Great Schism, ending in the condemnation of John XXIII, and now a series of Popes who, even when they are personally virtuous, repudiate the oath which each of them takes to reform the Church and use every stratagem to prevent others from reforming it. There is not much exaggeration in saying that the Papacy was corrupt from 1300 to 1550, the period when Europe made most progress and when it is least possible to find excuses for Papal corruption.

It is even more ironical to notice that, just when the Church solemnly declared to the Popes that simony was the radical evil that they must attack, the Popes not only made it more extensive in the Church, especially by developing the sale of indulgences, but applied it to what they called their own Holy See. The conclave, or meeting of the cardinals for the election of a Pope, takes on in the fifteenth century the aspect of Tammany at its worst. Rival candidates bargain shamelessly against each other for votes while their followers make murderous attacks on each other in the streets of Rome. The Papal tiara is, in a sense, put up at auction, and the bids and the prices eventually paid are reported by foreign envoys in Rome to the rest of Christendom. Corrupt cardinals elect corrupt Popes and these create an increasing number of corrupt and corruptible cardinals. The Papacy sinks to such a condition that we shall find it still resisting the demand for reform at a time when half of Europe has contemptuously repudiated it.

§1. THE MORAL CONDITION OF ITALY

In the introduction to the fifth volume of his detailed history of the Papacy Dr. Pastor has some reflections on the moral condition of an age that could witness this extraordinary corruption of its highest religious institution. With great diligence he searches for and describes at length every instance of virtue that he can discover, but he candidly admits that the general condition in the fifteenth century was appalling. The chapters I have devoted in each book to the general moral condition may have seemed too severe, and I will therefore here be content to quote this distinguished Catholic authority. He tells us that "of all the evils which darken Italian life at this period the deadliest was the prevailing immorality" and that "revolting excesses were common." It is in every age the characters of princes that are most apt to be described for us, and there is here no ambiguity. "Almost all the Italian princes of the age of the Renaissance were steeped in vice," says Pastor. Pope Pius II (Aeneas Sylvius), who has left us many frank and valuable descriptions of Europe in the fifteenth century—his account of the morals of Scotland, which he visited, is amazing—wrote about the year 1450: "Most of the rulers of Italy at the present day were born out of wedlock." When, in 1459, he reached the city of Ferrara in his crusading tour, he was received by seven princes, and they were all bastards. The literature which was most popular was a glorification of sexual freedom, and much of it would not be permitted to circulate today; while unnatural vice was, as I have previously said, extremely common and openly imputed to men of great distinction.

It is Pastor's theory that the Renaissance, or what he calls the false Renaissance, was responsible for this immorality. I have shown that this is absurd. The Renaissance brought into Europe the severe moral writings of Plato, Epictetus, Cicero, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius as well as the frivolous work of Catullus and Martial: it esteemed the sober Vergil as much as the amorous Ovid. We have only to look back on the previous century to see how little we can blame the Renaissance. We found the Papal court at Avignon "the sink of all vices" at a time when it had not felt the slightest influence of the revival of classical literature, and it is precisely the leader of the revival, Petrarch, who most bitterly reproaches it. But there is another aspect of the moral character of Italy in the fifteenth century which even more clearly removes the blame from Greek and Roman literature. However free in matters of sex some of the Roman writers were, there was not one of them who countenanced treachery, cruelty, and brutality, yet this brilliant Italy of the fifteenth century, the apparently refined and artistic Italy which we admire in the great medieval paintings, was almost barbaric in its cruelty and treachery.

"Little heed was paid to moral character in general," says Pastor, and "cruelty and vindictiveness went hand in hand with immorality." He might have added that there was such treachery, perjury, and duplicity that in this sense Europe had grown worse

instead of better. It was a literary age, and we have a very considerable number of chronicles, histories, and memoirs depicting contemporary life, and Pastor scarcely exaggerates when he says that they are "an appalling tissue of malignity, profligacy, and savage brutality." He quotes this illustration from Burckhardt's famous work on the Renaissance, relating to the Ferrara court:

In 1491 the sons of the house, both legitimate and illegitimate, fled from the court and were dogged by assassins sent after them: the exiles kept up a series of conspiracies against the government: the bastard of a bastard sought to dispossess the lawful heir Ercole I, who a little later, in 1493, was supposed to have poisoned his consort on discovering that she was plotting to get rid of him by the same means at the instigation of her brother Ferrante, king of Naples. The whole episode ends with a plot contrived by two bastards against their brothers Alfonso I, the reigning Duke, and Cardinal Ippolito.

This Cardinal Ippolito, an ornament of the Papal court whom we shall meet later, hired assassins to put out the eyes of his natural brother Giulio because one of his mistresses had said that they were beautiful. The King Ferrante of Naples who is mentioned was as bad as the others. Pastor says that his court was "even worse": which seems difficult. To arrest men he used to invite them to banquets in his own palace, and he chuckled whenever he thought of the prisoners in his horrible dungeons. His son and successor is described by the French chronicler Philippe de Comines as "the cruelest and most vicious man that has ever lived." Lorenzo the Magnificent (Lorenzo de' Medici of Florence) is said by Pastor to have equaled his contemporaries, but I should say not in brutality; and we shall presently find a Pope's nephew, in the presence of a cardinal, attempting to murder Lorenzo and actually murdering his brother during high mass in the cathedral of Florence. But we need not skip from court to court. We shall find enough of this presently at Rome. Pastor concludes:

It is indisputable that a considerable proportion of the Italian clergy, from the mendicant friars to the highest dignitaries, were participators to a large extent in most of the evils that we have described.

We shall see this in the case of Rome, but "it is a mistake to suppose that the corruption of the clergy was worse in Rome than elsewhere"—if that is a consolation to anybody—and some cities, such as Venice (then one of the greatest and richest cities of Europe), were worse than Rome.

Most of us will probably not agree with the historian that immorality was "the deadliest of the evils that darkened Italy," though in clerics and monks, and especially Popes, exploiting the world on the strength of their "sacred" characters, it deserves all the indignation he pours on it. But the brutality, cruelty, treachery, vindictive-

ness, and utter lack of principle of any kind are more revolting and more significant. To connect this sort of sadist epidemic that seized Europe with the reading of Greek and Roman literature is too absurd for discussion. It is just one more proof of Papal impotence, if not Papal connivance in vice: one more proof that the progress that Europe made toward civilization was purely secular, and that the one element of its life that did **not** make progress is precisely that which, according to some historians, the Popes had given it—its moral and spiritual character. The chronicles of the fifteenth century are a ghastly monument to a thousand years of Papal despotism.

§2. THE POPES CORRUPT THE PAPAL COURT

We have now to see how, largely through the action of Popes whom the Catholic historian calls very devout and virtuous and other historians treat far too leniently, the Papacy itself becomes steeped in all the vices I have described. The first step was, as I said, taken when bribery became considerable at the Papal election. Often before there had been at least virtual bribery in the elections. The cardinals had established a practice of binding each other before the election to certain conditions, for their own profit and protection, which the successful candidate would be bound, by his solemn oath, to carry out. Occasionally these included financial promises; and since the Council of Constance every cardinal swore a solemn oath that he would, if he were elected, convoke a Council and set about the reform of the Church. Every few years they thus gave the princes of Italy a high lesson in perjury and treachery, for not one of them carried out his oath until the Reformation had succeeded. But in the second half of the fifteenth century bartering and bribery became flagrant. One of the most important of the cardinals, D'Estouteville, a wealthy and sensual French prelate, had offered bribes in the conclave of 1458, and it is known that he thus won the support of five electors. He made another effort at the death of Pius II, but the stricter cardinals were still in the majority, and a Venetian cardinal, of wealthy noble family, was elected and took the name of Paul II. He was a very handsome man, very proud of his appearance, and he actually proposed to take the name *Formosus* (which is the Latin for "handsome"), but the cardinals violently objected. Pastor is quite sure that the Pope was not moved by his admitted vanity in this, but when we reflect on the fate of the only preceding Pope of that name we wonder.

All Rome rejoiced in the superb appearance and splendid promise of the new Pope, but it was not many days before there were violent quarrels in the Vatican. Paul had, with all the other cardinals, signed an agreement that he would press the campaign against the Turks, summon a Council within three years, never have more than twenty-four cardinals, not promote more than one nephew to that dignity, and not promote any man under the age of thirty. But as soon as he was comfortably installed in the Vatican he repudiated his oath: at least he went through the form of con-

sulting his Papal lawyers, and they dutifully replied that such restricting conditions were inconsistent with the supreme autocracy of the Pope. He wrote out a new document and compelled the cardinals to sign it; one writer says that he did not even deign to sign it himself and just threw it aside. The cardinals were furious at the sudden change from a most amiable and sociable cardinal into one of the most arrogant and self-centered of the Popes. One of them told him to his face that the tenor of his life for twenty-four years had been a deliberate plot to deceive them. Only one elderly cardinal defied him and refused to sign his perjured paper.

Paul was very virtuous and "a born ruler," says Pastor. He was also a strong man and wealthy. But, says Gregorovius, "nothing great was accomplished under him," and it is a very poor crop of achievements that Catholic historians get together. He refused, although the French king pressed him, to convoke a general Council, and of his own reforming efforts Pastor can only say that he "cannot be charged with absolute inaction." He discharged a number of the superfluous secretaries, for economy, and put some of them in prison when they complained. In his love of pomp he was at first generous to the people, yet he was so detested that another of the periodical republican conspiracies was formed and truculently suppressed. Pastor boasts that he never signed a death sentence, but might have added that he freely sanctioned the use of torture. He declared that the classical literature of the Humanists was responsible for the conspiracy and for all wickedness and made this an excuse for attempting to check the Renaissance. "I will," he said, "forbid the study of these senseless histories and poems which are full of heresies and blasphemies," and to some extent he carried out his threat. Against the Turks, who were now seriously threatening western Europe, he made totally inadequate efforts to secure a campaign.

On the other hand he, while Christendom was, as he said, threatened with destruction by the Turks, toyed with jewels and rich robes as if he were a child. In the year after his coronation his rival Cardinal Scarampo died. Scarampo was known in Rome as "Cardinal Lucullus" on account of the splendor of his banquets. He was very wealthy, sensual, and ambitious, and some said that he died of mortification at losing the Papal election. He left jewels and money to the extent of half a million dollars—some say twice or three times that sum—to his nephews, but the Pope declared his will void and seized the treasure. This he hoarded and augmented, but none were permitted to see his secret collection. At his death it was found to be worth between two and three million dollars. It included fifty-four silver shells full of pearls that were valued at three quarters of a million, and the jewels of his two tiaras were worth the same sum. The cardinals sealed the treasure and swore that whoever became Pope would use it for a crusade; and we shall see what happened. We shall find the nephew of the next Pope a very saintly monk, decorating his mistress with pearls from head to slippers. Paul was, in the words of Gregorovius, "wholly given over to sensual pleas-

ures," and when in 1471 it was announced that he had died of a stroke, hastened by his customary gluttony, there were few who mourned. Certainly a **very** virtuous Pope.

§3. A FRIAR-POPE HASTENS THE DEGRADATION

The bidding in the conclave was high, but the majority of the cardinals were still decent men and, to the astonishment of Rome, the general of the Franciscan Order was elected. He was chosen for his learning (in purely ecclesiastical matters) and his piety, Pastor assures us; but he presently admits that Sixtus IV, as he became, did not merely sit saying his prayers in the election-chamber, and as to his "piety," you will have a new conception of that quality when I have described his work. He did more than any Pope for the debauching of the Papacy. The facts are so notorious that it is foolish to use any but plain speech. These Popes of the transition-period like Calixtus III, Sixtus IV, and Innocent VIII, were either doddering old fools who did not see what was happening in the Vatican itself—and they are represented as sweeping the whole of Europe with eagle-eye—or corrupt men in the sense that they wilfully promoted corruption in the Church; and if you grant them the folly and the connivance at vice in about equal proportions you will not be far from the truth. You will judge for yourself, for in this and the next section I will admit no statement of any questionable chronicle or letter, but confine myself to facts that are given by Pastor as indisputable.

Francesco Rovere was a child of the people—some say, of fisher-folk—and his family remained **very poor** and unlettered until he was in a position to give education to one or two of his nephews. He became General of the Franciscan Order, to which he belonged, and a cardinal, and when the rival ambitions reached their usual deadlock, Cardinal Borgia astutely worked for the election of this elderly, and presumably, unworldly monk; and he very promptly rewarded Borgia and the Cardinals who helped him. He did, it is true, at once equip a small fleet for service against the Turks, and throughout life he called for action against them. But he soon involved himself in such policy in Italy, very largely for the enrichment of his family, that nothing was accomplished. He broke his conclave-promises more flagrantly than any other Pope had done and scandalized the world by the extent and the recklessness of his nepotism.

Less than four months after his coronation he summoned his two raw young nephews from their provincial friaries and made cardinals of them. The elder, Giuliano, we shall see later as Pope Julius II. Here I need say only that for the next twenty years he was notorious for his conduct. He had three known daughters, drank heavily, swore and hunted and fought like any soldier, and intrigued all his life for power. The younger nephew, Pietro Riario, twenty-five years old when he was raised to the cardinalate—one would almost say from a pig-stye—was the phenomenon of his age. In two years of frantic dissipation and debauch, under the eyes of

the Pope, the robust young peasant wore out his life, a palpable sacrifice to Venus and Bacchus. The Pope at once made him Patriarch of Constantinople and Archbishop of Seville, Florence and Mende. The more dissipated he became, the more benefices were showered on him, until his income rose to \$150,000 a year; and, of course, money was then worth much more. In his hectic two years, in fact, he spent half a million dollars and left immense debts for his uncle to pay. He had a hundred race-horses in his stables, and his favorite mistress, Teresia, had even her slippers decorated with pearls. Every vice, natural and unnatural, was paraded by him. He spent his days, says a Roman writer, "amongst whores and handsome boys."

Pietro ruled the Pope, who doted on him, and controlled the Papal treasury. The accounts of the banquets he gave—and the Cardinals now commonly gave—recall the Arabian Nights. In 1473, for instance (a year after he had been brought out of a friary), he entertained the daughter of the king of Naples. The great rooms gleamed with gold and silver and purple and were hung with the most precious tapestries. A seneschal on horseback commanded the hundreds of servants in gay silks. The banquet lasted six hours, and when the princess and her ladies at last retired to rest in the temporary palace he had built for the occasion, they found, as a crowning diversion, that the vessels under their beds were of silver gilt. Many such banquets are recorded; while the Turks hammered at the gates of Christendom. Two years of vice on this scale killed the youth, to the poignant grief of the Pope, but his brother took his place in the shower of gold. Sisters, brothers, nephews, nieces and cousins flocked to Rome, and the weirdest types of Italian peasants were housed in palaces, on the tainted funds of the Papacy. One nephew was married to the bastard daughter of the King of Naples, whose consent was bought by the sacrifice of Papal rights in Naples; and the king then laughed at the boorish "prince," and his Papal uncle.

Another nephew, Girolamo, took to politics and dragged the Pope from one sanguinary struggle and muddle to another. The Medici brothers of Florence were hostile and contemptuous, and a conspiracy to murder them was hatched at Rome, chiefly by the Pope's nephew. The Pope was fully cognizant of this conspiracy and fully approved of some treacherous plot, though Pastor will not, of course, admit that he approved of the design to murder the Florentine princes. Many writers think the charge that he was implicated probable enough, and it must seem to any person strange that the Pope should sanction a plot against the Medici and not ask how they were to be overthrown. As I read the conflicting evidence, the Pope had more than a suspicion what they proposed to do and hypocritically said: "You have my blessing—but no violence." Christendom was outraged to hear that men in the employment of the Pope's nephew and chief representative, in the presence of another cardinal-nephew and on the solemn occasion of a high mass in the cathedral, stabbed Giuliano de' Medici to death

and severely wounded Lorenzo. They had not been popular, but this piece of brutal treachery set the city aflame, and they imprisoned the cardinal and flouted the interdict which the Pope laid on them. But how it all ended, and Girolamo turned to other intrigues for wealth and power we need not consider. The Pope's character is clear enough. I should agree with Pastor that the charge against Sixtus of unnatural vice is a piece of reckless gossip, but we have a document which shows that even in sex-matters he was not very scrupulous. In 1481 he legitimized Pedro Luis, son of Cardinal Borgia, and he cynically—for Pedro Luis and his father were both openly immoral—added: "Those who are born illegitimate but are adorned with good morals are not in the least degraded by the defect of nature, for the glory of virtue wipes out in children the stain of birth." The document coolly describes Pedro Luis as "son of a cardinal-priest and a married woman"; and this cardinal-priest Pope Sixtus kept at the head of the Papal Court because he owed his election to him. Let us bury the "virtuous" Sixtus and pass on. He infected the Papacy and Europe for thirteen years and died hated and despised.

§4. THE CROWNING OF THE WORK

Every serious Papal illness now provoked a murderous agitation in Rome, and as soon as it was known that Sixtus was dead the people rose and the Rovere family fled with what treasures they could collect. The stronger cardinals who were rivals for the Papacy barred the massive doors of their palace-fortresses and had their pieces of artillery and their companies of soldiers ready. They were afraid to attend the Pope's funeral. The whole city was in arms, and the factions fought in the streets. At length the electors were safely brought together and the bargaining began. The chief rivals were Cardinal Borgia and Cardinal Rovere, both notoriously immoral, but the college of cardinals was already so far corrupted that money alone counted with the majority. From this year onward we have an invaluable account of life in the Vatican. The German master of ceremonies to three Popes in succession, John Burchard, kept an extensive diary, and almost every day he wrote down the most trifling as well as the important events of the day. His revelations, especially in regard to Alexander VI, are so extraordinary that Catholics have sometimes tried to discredit his work, though they can plead only that he is occasionally inaccurate when he speaks from hearsay and that he liked a naughty story and must therefore have been unscrupulous. It is now admitted that he is the most reliable chronicler that we have of life at the Vatican in those days. He lived in the palace and knew everything.

He begins with the Papal election of 1484. Cardinal Borgia and Cardinal Rovere bid heavily against each other, but neither could get the required number of votes. The strict minority put forward Cardinal Barbo, and there was a fear that a really religious and virtuous Pope might be elected. Cardinal Rovere therefore advocated the election of a creature of his own, Cardinal Cibo, who,

as Gregorovius says, "owed his career to his genial character and his skill in flattery." He had, before he entered the clergy, lived loosely, and his two children were well known. Pastor, who remarks that "it is characteristic of Cardinal Giuliano that he did not scruple to help in promoting a man of such antecedents to the supreme dignity," fails for once to find any distinction in his Pope, and can claim only that after he became a priest he had no more children. Burckard describes a remarkable scene on the night of August 28-29; and there were servants enclosed with the cardinals who would report it afterwards. One by one, in the dim light, the electors stole to the "cell" of Cardinal Cibo for a talk; and at nine in the morning the election of Innocent VIII was announced. After this beginning we know what to expect. "Unfortunately," says Pastor, "nothing of any importance was done under Innocent VIII for the reform of the ecclesiastical abuses." On the contrary he multiplied the abuses, promoted the vicious and corrupt, and completed the degradation of the Papacy.

Innocent did not at once begin to imitate the nepotism of his predecessor, and his son and daughter were kept away from Rome. But Cardinal Rovere, who ruled him, drew him into a war with Naples—his first public discourse had been on his love of peace—which led to a siege of Rome. Rovere himself conducted the defense, for he was a born soldier, while Cardinal Orsini was with the besiegers, threatening that he would never rest until he saw Rovere's head on top of a pike. The Pope began to look for allies against Naples and he chose Florence, and to seal the alliance he arranged the marriage of his bastard son, Franceschetto, to the daughter of Lorenzo de' Medici. The ceremony was conducted in the Vatican palace with great splendor. This was audacious, but in the following year he celebrated in the Vatican the marriage of his granddaughter (daughter of his own bastard daughter) Peretta, and he himself sat at table in the "sacred palace" with his daughter and her two daughters; and almost the only criticism was that it was against the canons for a Pope to sit at table with women! Later the King of Naples found it politic to make peace with the Pope and offered his grandson for marriage with the Pope's second granddaughter, so there was a third very splendid ceremony at Rome. It is almost naive enough to be amusing.

Cardinal Borgia had, though the deadly rival of Cardinal Rovere, contrived to remain Vice-Chancellor of the Papal court, and he and Franceschetto now ruled the city in very remarkable fashion. The Pope's son was as completely corrupt and unscrupulous a scoundrel as Italy produced at that time. He roamed the streets at night with other rakes and broke into houses after women; just as Nero had once done. The Pope was quite familiar with his ways. One morning he burst angrily into the Pope's presence to complain that Cardinal Riario, with whom he had been gambling the previous night, had cheated him to the extent of \$35,000 (in one evening), and the Pope merely ordered the cardinal to return the money. Franceschetto and Borgia had a system of graft which brought them im-

mense sums. "God does not wish the death of a sinner," said Borgia, "but that he should pay and live," so even the murderer had merely to pay. Every fine or payment over \$400 went to Franceschetto: the smaller sums to the Chancery. A man who murdered his two daughters got off for \$2,000. Murderers bought Papal safe-conducts and went about the streets with their gangs. The police picked up corpses every morning. During the siege of Rome by the Neopolitans Cardinal Rovere had allowed or invited even expelled criminals to return to Rome, and the anarchy for the next ten years was appalling. One night, we read, a noble is stabbed in the house of a prostitute, and his friends rally and burn the house.

The leading cardinals were now indistinguishable from the secular nobles. They wore swords, gambled heavily, hunted with hawks and hounds, and joined gaily in the carnivals. Pastor names eight of the chief cardinals as "deeply infected with corruption" and says that these were merely the more conspicuous men. Strict cardinals were, in fact, now few in number and of no influence, and Innocent recklessly multiplied the worse element. He made a cardinal of the fourteen-year-old son of Lorenzo de' Medici; and it is amusing to read the grave letter which Lorenzo composed for his son on the terrible evils and temptations of the new world to which he was summoned at Rome. Sixtus IV (who had nominated the Medici boy to an abbey at the age of eight) had relieved Cesare Borgia, the cardinal's famous son, of the canonical bar against advancement in the Church on the ground of illegitimacy, and, though the youth was already deeply corrupt, Innocent made him a bishop. He made a cardinal of the bastard son of his brother. He created a large number of new offices and sold them, the Papal secretaryships alone bringing him about \$200,000. Each secretary would then recoup himself by graft. The state of things seems incredible but is beyond question. Some young Romans one day had a quarrel with followers of Cardinal Sforza, and he sent out his men to cut up the crowd. Another day the officers were erecting a gibbet to execute a man near the palace of Cardinal de la Balue. The cardinal objected, and when the officers declined to move, he sent his men to sack the court of justice, burn the records, and release the prisoners. Gregorovius, eager to say something for Rome, points out that we find the same "fiendish cruelty" in the contemporary Wars of the Roses in England, the Moorish War in Spain, and in France under Louis XI, but he admits that the evils were "more appalling in the history of the Papacy and the Papal nephews."

In 1490 Innocent was reported to be dying, and his precious son attempted to seize the Papal treasury and the "Grand Turk" who was then a prisoner in the Vatican. The story of this Grand Turk, or Prince Djem (or Zizim) of Turkey, well illustrates the times. Djem was a younger brother of the Sultan Bajazet and had conspired against him and then fled to the protection of the Knights of Rhodes (a semi-religious order of Crusaders). Bajazet wanted him killed or at least kept in prison, and the Grand Master of the

Knights made a bargain with the infidel. He would keep Djem a prisoner on an estate of the order in Auvergne for the sum of about \$120,000 a year, and meantime he would not attack the Turks. The Pope and nearly every monarch in Europe now sought this profitable captive, and the Pope made the best offer. He made the Grand Master a cardinal and gave special privileges to his order and to the king of France. So Djem was brought with royal pomp, and with adequate protection lest the king of Naples steal him on the voyage, to Rome and lodged in magnificent quarters in the Vatican.

He was a drunken, dissolute and viciously cruel youth, but the Pope spent \$180,000 a year in entertaining him. This was, says Pastor, a severe strain on the Pope's resources, but Innocent did it for the good of Christendom, since they could use Djem to cause trouble in Turkey; and a few pages later Pastor acknowledges the well known fact that Innocent presently got \$300,000 (three years arrears of blood-money) from the Sultan and a promise of regular payment and some most choice relics that had been taken from the Greek Church. One was the actual spear with which a Roman soldier had pierced the side of Christ on the cross, and Innocent and all Rome lay prostrate when this outrageous fraud arrived. The Sultan had tried the more economic method of sending a man to poison the well in the Vatican garden, but he had been caught and savagely executed. Even when a Turkish minister brought a letter to Djem, the prince made him lick it all over to prove that it was not poisoned. He remained five years at the Vatican, and we shall see his tragic end under the Borgia Pope, who is said to have had him poisoned on the Sultan's offer of three quarters of a million dollars. Part of the bargain of the Sultan with the Popes—they exchanged magnificent presents—was that this talk about a Crusade must cease. Innocent did not formally agree to that, says Pastor; but, somehow, we do not find so much Papal zeal for a Crusade after the annual payment begins.

It was in 1492 when Pope Innocent crowned his glorious career by receiving the sacred spear of Longinus at St. Peter's, and shortly afterwards he entered upon his last illness. He was fed with human milk in his last days; we will assume that it was conveyed to him in a cup or spoon. His numerous enemies spread a report that, at the prescription of his Jewish doctor, three children were killed, and he was fed on their blood. But Italy was then full of wild rumors—and equally wild prescriptions: Lorenzo de' Medici, who died in the same year, was given a potion of dissolved diamonds. Even mothers' milk, however, could not save the Pope, and he died a most worthy and edifying death: leaving Rome more corrupt than it had ever been except during the few years reign of the insane Emperor Nero. The Popes had now ruled the city for more than a thousand years.

CHAPTER V

ALEXANDER VI, OR DON JUAN IN A COPE

THE state of the Roman Church which I have now described and which I have traced to the wilful conduct of the Popes of the fifteenth century, culminated in the election of a man whose name has become famous in history, and is still known throughout the world, as a symbol of vice and crime. Let me say at once that a great deal that has been written about Pope Alexander, his son Cesare, and his daughter, Lucrezia, is taken from writers of the time who eagerly reproduce the worst and most reckless gossip. From the point of view of serious history we cannot accept many of the stories of incest and poisoning which have added to the horror of the name of Borgia. It was an entirely unscrupulous age, and the pen was often as poisonous and as unrestrained as the stiletto. On the other hand, even Catholics now smile at the efforts which a few French and Italian Catholic writers once made to rebut all the charges against the Pope. Even the Catholic Encyclopaedia abandons him to the wolves. He was, from the sexual point of view, thoroughly and frankly immoral even after he became "the Vicar of Christ": he bought the tiara by most scandalous bribery and throughout life practiced simony on the most extensive scale: he was in every way devoid of principle, and there is serious reason to consider the charges that in his later years he was so thoroughly corrupted by his son, a monster of criminality, that he had cardinals poisoned for their wealth.

But we have already seen how far astray the Catholic writer is who represents Alexander as almost the one stain on the escutcheon of the Papacy. In almost every century from the ninth onward we have encountered Pope murderers, mutilators, and adulterers, men of brutal passion and entirely unscrupulous mind or men entirely indifferent to morals and content to enjoy the luxury of their state. There was no accident in the election of Rodrigo Borgia to the Papacy. It was the logical outcome of the development that we have followed for the last hundred and fifty years. The picturesqueness of his career must not blind us to its real historical significance. All Christendom knew his character and knew that he had been for twenty years one of the strongest candidates for the Papacy; and there was little protest and no attempt, except by equally corrupt rivals, to prevent his election. He remained on the Papal throne for eleven years, and the ambassadors of the Christian powers constantly reported—we still have their dispatches—to their sovereigns the sordid and extraordinary scenes of Vatican life, even to the dances of nude prostitutes, contests in fornication, and the open and daily entertainment of a mistress, a young mar-

ried woman, in the Papal chambers. And we are going to see four immoral (until age sets a limit) and unscrupulous Popes almost in succession, and a maintenance of the deep corruption of the Papal court for nearly one hundred years, from the days when Borgia and D'Estouteville and the Riarios and Roveres began to enliven it. The real historical significance is not so much that the words "sacred" and "holy," which the Catholic applies to everything connected with the Pope, are a grotesque defiance of facts, but that, as I have repeatedly shown, the Popes obviously did not contribute to the civilization of Europe because in the chief respect in which we might expect them to influence it, in regard to what is called its moral and spiritual condition, it made no progress at all during the centuries of their greatest power.

§1. BORGIA'S MISTRESSES AND CHILDREN

I told in an earlier chapter how Pope Calixtus brought his nephew Rodrigo from Spain, changed his surname to Borgia, and made a cardinal of him. This was in 1456, when Rodrigo was twenty-six years old. The "learned and virtuous" Pope, to the scandal of Rome, made him Vice-Chancellor in the following year, and he astutely put benefices in the hands of Cardinal Piccolomini, who was to succeed his uncle and keep him in high office. Whether or no Calixtus learned of his nephew's morals—we have not found any of the Popes of the time very concerned about such things—Pius II certainly did, for he had to write and rebuke Rodrigo for scandalous behavior. Yet Pius must have known quite well that when Cardinal Rodrigo returned to Rome, in the same year (1460), he adopted a married Roman woman, Vannozza dei Catanei, as his permanent mistress and had his first child by her, Pedro Luis Borgia.

In the next twenty years Borgia lived quite openly with Vannozza and had five further children by her. The legal documents proving his paternity in each case were preserved in the private archives of the Duke of Ossuna, were published in the French edition (by Thuasne) of John Burckard's Latin Diary, and are summarized by Pastor in his History (II, 453). Even the epitaph of Vannozza has been discovered, and we learn that she was not merely a lady of "signal probity and great piety," but the recognized mother of Cesare, Joan, Jofre and Lucrezia Borgia. The Pope's elder children, Pedro Luis and Girolama, would, according to this epitaph, belong to an earlier mistress, but they may be omitted for other reasons. They are, in any case, all now fully admitted to be children of Cardinal Borgia. There was not the least secrecy about his establishment. Vannozza had a small palace near his and was very well known in Roman society. The ambassadors under Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII often speak of her and her relations to the cardinal.

In all this Borgia lived like most of the other cardinals except in the duration of his attachment to one mistress and the number of his children. Both Sixtus and Innocent were, as I have showed,

quite familiar with his domestic arrangements and helped him to promote the careers of his children. Borgia was, in fact, by no means unique in maintaining his immoral life after his election. We have seen quite a number of such Popes. But he lived in an age of publicity and there is a shameless audacity about the way in which, during at least the first four years of his pontificate, he loved Giulia Orsini. Rome thought it a good joke to call her "the Spouse of Christ," and during these years the letters of the foreign envoys constantly speak of her at the Vatican. She was a golden-haired girl—the Lombard type of beauty—of fifteen when Alexander, shortly before his election apparently, married her to a man of the Orsini family, in order to cover the liaison, and at once began to be intimate with her. With interruptions, when intriguers seem to have stolen his affection for their daughters, Giulia remained his lover throughout his pontificate, or from his fifty-eighth to his seventy-second year. She made no pretense of living with her husband, but lived in the palace of Lucrezia, near the Vatican, with the Pope's daughter and her own complaisant mother-in-law. Her disreputable brother, Alexander, was made a cardinal—"the Petticoat Cardinal," Rome joyously called him—and later we shall find him the last of the long line of gay Popes.

There are only two points in dispute about Alexander VI and Giulia Orsini. It is, in fact, disputed by few that her daughter, Laura, was the Pope's daughter. The Venetian ambassador wrote home in 1493, the year after Alexander's accession, that he had called, as all who wanted the Pope's favor must call, to see Giulia, and she insisted that he must see the baby. He found the child "so very like the Pope that one can readily believe he was the father." Of this there is, of course, no documentary evidence, as a legal certificate of the Papal paternity of a child would have been too sensational, but it was generally understood in Rome and it is not likely that Giulia, while under the Pope's protection, had relations with any other man.

Another child is more frequently disputed, though it is now the general opinion that it was the Pope's eighth and last child, born when he was sixty-five years old and had occupied the "Holy See" for four years. The only ground for dispute is that in the case of this Juan Borgia the legal certificate exists in two different versions. In one he is described as the child of Cesare Borgia, while the other says that he was the child, "not of the said Duke, but of us [the Pope] and the said married woman." It is generally thought, and seems to me clear, that the second or genuine certificate was kept secret, only to be produced after the Pope's death in case of dispute, and that Cesare for public purposes took over the paternity. We have to take Roman rumors with discretion, but a passage in the diary of the distinguished Venetian Senator Sanuto about this birth (apparently) is entitled to very serious attention. The Venetian ambassador reported to the Republic about this time, he says, that the Pope had a child by a married Roman lady with the connivance of her father (which seems to exclude Giulia), and that the

woman's husband cut off the head of the man and stuck it on a pole with this inscription: "Head of my father-in-law, who prostituted his daughter to the Pope." Whether or no this refers to the same tragedy, we have an account of Cesare Borgia stabbing the Pope's chamberlain Caldes so that the blood spurted over the Pope's garments. I have introduced the episode in my historical romance "The Pope's Favorite" (out of print) and suggested that Cesare did not want to see Giulia supplanted by an ambitious rival. It is clear from the writings of the time that the Pope, during his pontificate, had relations with many different ladies, but Giulia held his affection to the end. He had her painted as a demure Madonna on the walls of the Borgia rooms in the Vatican, while he himself was superbly painted on the same walls by Pinturicchio (as immoral as himself) kneeling in rapt and most impressive contemplation before the risen Savior! After all this we find it comic that Pastor should take pains to prove to us that Alexander had a genuine devotion to the Virgin Mary and was regular in discharging his religious duties.

§2. ROME UNDER ITS MERRY POPE

In a forthcoming series of books I trust to give a full account of general morals in these various ages through which I am tracing the story of the Popes and will give here only a few details which directly concern my subject. From the first Alexander had acted quite unscrupulously. After the death of Innocent twenty-two cardinals were locked in the Sistine Chapel for the election. It was the last trial of strength between the nephew of Calixtus and the nephew of Sixtus IV, and their followers in the city fought with such spirit that there were two hundred and twenty murders in Rome between the death of Innocent and the coronation of Alexander. Cardinal Sforza was the most important man to win, and the less reliable writers tell us—and it is by no means incredible—that Borgia had won his support before the election by sending four mule-loads of silver to his palace. We know that, in fact, Sforza got more than that from Alexander: his superb cardinalitial palace, the Vice-Chancellorship, the bishopric of Erlan (worth \$25,000 a year) and other benefices. Eleven cardinals were bought in the election-chamber, and four had been secured in advance. Borgia paid about three million dollars for the Vicarship of Christ; and all Rome rejoiced. At his coronation in St. Peter's the selected orator dilated solemnly on "the glory of virtue, the merit of discipline, the holiness of thy life"; and Alexander then rode to the Lateran palace under triumphal arches which bore such maxims as "Chastity and Charity." Religion had at Rome become a stupendous joke.

Whether he really had a momentary fit of seriousness or whether he wished to create a better impression abroad we cannot tell, but during the first few weeks he posed as a reformer of abuses and morals. It was probably a hollow show for on the very day of his coronation he made his dissipated son Cesare, who had at once thrown up his studies and come to Rome, Archbishop of Valencia. Three months after the coronation he canceled the betrothal of his

daughter, Lucrezia, to an obscure Spanish youth, summoned her to Rome, and, with great pomp, married her in the Vatican to the bastard brother of Cardinal Sforza. Twelve cardinals and a hundred and fifty of the noblest ladies of Rome attended the festival, which ended with the performance of loose comedies. Lucrezia was only fifteen years old, and she and Giulia remained with the Pope for the comedies; and many a time afterwards we read in the letters of ambassadors of their presence when these indecent comedies were presented before the Pope in the "Sacred Palace." They would be familiar spectacles there for the next twenty or thirty years.

My own estimate of Lucrezia Borgia, whom I studied with interest for the composition of my "Pope's Favorite," is that she was never so vicious as many represent her. In her early years, certainly, she made no pretense to be chaste. We must remember that she was educated by the Pope in the Vatican in her adolescence. A change in the Pope's policy a few years later, when Ferranti of Naples (a totally unscrupulous man) and Cardinal Rovere (quite immoral) threatened to expose the naughtiness of the Pope in a General Council, made a new alliance expedient. Lucrezia and her husband were made to swear hypocritically that the marriage had never been consummated—it is doubtful if she was a virgin even when she married—and the Pope annulled it. For a time Lucrezia found consolation in the very handsome boy cardinal, Ippolito d'Este, but her father married her for political reasons, to Alfonso of Naples. It is possibly her divorced husband who spread the report that the Pope dissolved the marriage because he wanted an incestuous intimacy with his daughter. Any Borgia really seems capable of anything, but we must understand that there is no respectable historical evidence of these extreme acts. What is certain is that Cesare Borgia had her second husband murdered in 1500, as he wanted a new matrimonial alliance. The prince was stabbed on the steps of St. Peter's. He staggered to the palace, and it is said that the Pope and Lucrezia did their utmost to protect him, but the utterly remorseless Cesare brought his private thug to the Vatican and bade him strangle Alfonso. This at least sobered Lucrezia. She married the Duke of Ferrara—she still only twenty-four years old—and lived strictly from that time.

Of the notorious Cesare it is hardly necessary to speak here. He was created cardinal a year after his father's coronation. His youngest brother, Jofre, was married to a bastard princess, and Juan, who seems to have been the Pope's favorite son, was already Duke of Gandia. Pedro Luis had died. Cesare either concluded that he would never reach the Papacy or he preferred the adventures and triumphs of secular rule. He was bitterly jealous of his brother, Juan, and, although no proof has ever been found, it is believed by many that Cesare was responsible for the murder of the young duke in the summer of 1497. In my "Crises in the History of the Papacy" I did not subscribe to the guilt of Cesare, but further study in connection with my historical romance convinced me that it was most probably the cardinal who had his brother stabbed and thrown

into the river. This was in June, and the frantic Pope had a fit of genuine repentance. He refused to speak to Cesare, whom he plainly suspected, and he directed six strict cardinals to draw up a scheme of reform. The draft still exists, but within six months Cesare was back in the Vatican, Lucrezia was scandalously divorced, and the gaieties of the Borgia rooms were renewed. Cesare resigned the cardinalate, and the Pope tried to get for him the hand of the legitimate daughter of the King of Naples, which was refused. It was well known at the time that Cesare (and at least four other cardinals) suffered from syphilis, which the Spanish sailors had recently introduced from America. Cesare soon afterwards married a niece of the French king and set out on the career of ambition which astonished even medieval Europe. The way in which he created a principality for himself in Italy is an almost unparalleled story of treachery and brutality, and the Pope blessed every step and conferred the highest distinctions at his command on his monstrous son.

§3. THE LAST DAYS

I do not propose here to follow Cesare's wars or the tortuous and unscrupulous diplomacy of the Pope, but we may glance at the further fortunes or misfortunes of the Grand Turk. King Charles of France, who was as immoral as Alexander, professed to be shocked at the Pope's conduct and set out for Italy to secure a reform: really, to take the kingdom of Naples and perhaps capture the profitable Turkish prisoner. The Sultan Bajazet had refused to pay the annuity since Alexander's accession, and the Pope wrote him to ask for the money, so as to protect Djem against the French. Bajazet sent the money and with it a letter in which he offered the Pope \$750,000 if, once for all, he would make an end of the troublesome prisoner. Unhappily for the Pope, both money and letter were captured on the way by Cardinal Rovere's brother, and the letter was published. The Pope protested that it was a forgery, and Catholic historians naturally take his word, but it is the general opinion of experts that it is at least substantially genuine. King Charles came to Italy and the Pope disarmed him. He abandoned Naples and handed over Djem, and Charles genially agreed to overlook the Pope's amours; and, as Djem died shortly afterwards, the gossips opined that the Pope had earned the \$750,000. It is the general and more probable opinion that the prince died a natural death.

Relieved of his fears, the Pope resumed his gaiety, except during the few months after the murder of his son, and the Jubilee of the year 1500 brought a golden stream to his treasury. He collected further large sums from men whom he made cardinals. At one promotion twelve cardinals paid a total sum of \$300,000. He was now seventy years old, but probably under the influence of his son, who was expert at every variety of vice, he was more callous about morals than ever. The ambassadors tell repeatedly of Cesare introducing troops of prostitutes into the Vatican at night. Burchard

tells in his *Diary* at the date October 11, 1501, that, though it was Sunday and the Vigil of All Saints Day, the Pope did not attend vespers but held in the palace an orgy which can hardly be excelled by anything in Latin or Arabian literature. The Pope dined with Cesare and Lucrezia in Cesare's rooms in the Vatican. Cesare had introduced fifty selected prostitutes, and after the banquet they danced, nude, before the guests. In one dance they had to stoop to pick chestnuts from the floor while lighted candles lit their posturing forms. Burckard is not explicit on the next scene, but he says vaguely that the entertainment ended with the distribution by the Pope of silk garments and other prizes to those servants of the Vatican who had displayed the most amorous prowess in dallying with the courtesans. He obviously means that this contest took place before the Pope and his daughter. Burckard, remember, was the chief official living in the Vatican at the time and, if he were not present, would surely learn the details; and we have nowhere found him mendacious. The incident is indisputable from the serious historical point of view. The only objection to it is that it may be thought too monstrous to believe, but nothing is too monstrous to attribute to Pope Alexander VI and his son. They had no moral code. And the city itself had sunk so low that almost anything could be done by the Pope. In the previous year, 1500, the Jubilee Year, the physician to the Lateran Hospital was hanged because he used to poison wealthy pilgrims under his charge, and even kill pilgrims on the streets, to get their money.

It is quite true that there were murmurs in the Christian world, one monarch after another threatening to have the Pope's conduct brought before a general council, but the charges were generally complicated by selfish political interests and the Pope could nearly always smile at the morals of the monarchs who made them. He even claimed that the fanatical Queen Isabella of Spain was unchaste. However, he finally settled on an alliance with Spain and France, buying with territorial concessions their scruples about his morals, as so many other Popes had done, and his son, Cesare, set out to complete his protection by creating a monarchy of his own in Italy. The famous work of Machiavelli, "*The Prince*," which has seemed to the world ever since the most revolting manual of unscrupulous egoism, is merely a codification of Cesare's procedure; and it does not include his more terrible acts. After five hundred years of Papal rule all Europe had become convinced that the end justified the means; and the candid and serious historian must acknowledge that the conduct of even the greater Popes had encouraged the growth of this spirit. Secular monarchs held that their rule was as important to men and countries, in the human sense, as the rule of the Church was spiritually, and if the Popes could sanction bloodshed, deceit, and forgery in the interests of the Church, they could in the interest of the monarchy. One curious outcome of the time was the discovery that there was actually a prosperous business of forging bulls in the name of Alexander at Rome.

It was this spirit which led in the Pope's later years, which are the most repulsive of his career, to acts which, in some cases at least, seem to justify the legend of the Borgia poison. Baron Corvo in his "Chronicles of the House of Borgia" (1901), and R. Sabatini, in his "Life of Cesare Borgia" (1911), have shown that there has in connection with this legend been a great deal of exaggeration. The death-rate of Cardinals during Alexander's pontificate was normal. Yet in two cases at least the evidence or the presumption against the Pope is serious. Dr. Pastor and Bishop Creighton admit this. The Pope had Cardinal Orsini, head of one of the greatest noble houses at Rome, arrested. The arrest was dishonest and treacherous, and when the cardinal's mother applied for permission to send decent food to her son in prison, the Pope exacted from her a very valuable pearl which he coveted. But the cardinal died soon afterwards, and there is strong reason to suspect that the Pope, who confiscated his immense estate, had him poisoned. Next Cardinal Mihiel died, with suspicion of poison, and his estate was confiscated by the Pope. Even the cardinals believed that the Pope used poisoners, and the more wealthy of them were apprehensive. The Pope filled up the college with nine new cardinals, and, as they had to buy the dignity—they paid the Pope in all about \$350,000—they were by no means men of virtuous life.

The Pope was now, in 1503, seventy-two years old, but in perfect health, with a prodigious income, and with the prospect of seeing a large part of Italy united under the monarchy of his son. These facts and the peculiar circumstances of his death and the rapid decomposition of his body have led many historians to accept the Roman story that in the end the weapon of poison was turned against himself. Most of our modern authorities are inclined rather to the view that he contracted fever and died a natural death. It was late summer, a season of very unhealthful nights, and the Pope supped with one of the cardinals. The legend is that he had his host's wine poisoned but drank it himself in mistake. The fact is that he was ill for thirteen days, and the duration and course of the illness seem to point to fever. So successfully had these Renaissance Popes destroyed the Conciliar Movement that a Pope more openly immoral than any that had preceded him and quite unscrupulous in all his actions had tranquilly occupied the Papal throne for eleven years. His bastards were allied with several royal houses, and more than one monarch had humbly walked by his side or knelt for his blessing. And he dutifully received the last rites of his Church and was buried with all the pomp and splendor and eulogy that the hypocritical Roman Church could devise.

CHAPTER VI

JULIUS II, THE FIGHTING AND SWEARING POPE

IN the year 1498, when Alexander had resumed his voluptuous habits after the spasm of remorse that had followed the murder of his son, the monk Savonarola had been hanged at Florence, and this step had been taken by the Florentine authorities mainly because the Pope pressed. One may not admire the extreme asceticism of the famous preacher, but all the casuistry in the world will not reduce the horror of that contrast: Roman Catholicism murdering an austere and virtuous monk on a faked charge of heresy in Florence and in Rome kissing the hand, or even the slipper, of the most open libertine who ever masqueraded in the garb of the moral ruler of the universe. Yet even this reminder of the depth to which it had fallen made little impression on Europe. The new wealth, the new art, the new liberty brought about a kind of intoxication. There was no hypocrisy, for there was no pretense of virtue. Just about this time the disease of syphilis was introduced into Europe, very probably by Spanish troops returning from America. The rapidity with which it spread from country to country, the number of distinguished persons both in Church and State whom we know to have contracted it, reveal a state of things that compels us to smile when Catholics speak of their "Holy" Roman Church and conceive it as the special guardian of morals.

One would have thought that the Christian monarchs would at least make some effort at the death of Alexander to preserve the Church from the possibility of another scandal of the same magnitude. In fact, French, Spanish, and Venetian troops overshadowed Rome, while Cesare Borgia made a dash with his men, as soon as he heard of his father's death, and carried off his treasury. But the cardinals were not minded to have their chances of election disturbed by the interests of these powers, which were no more spiritual than their own, and they refused to meet until all troops were withdrawn. There was only a momentary astonishment when it was announced that one of the few strict cardinals had been elected, for Pius III, the new Pope, was already stricken with a mortal disease, and he died ten days after his coronation. Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, nephew of Sixtus IV, and the French Cardinal D'Amboise, the strongest candidates, now resumed their conflict, and the former worked so swiftly and effectively that in three days he was elected and took the title of Julius II.

§1. THE PERSONALITY OF JULIUS II

Historians often speak of Julius II as one of the great Popes, and too often they give the impression that the Borgia atmosphere

was now expelled from Rome and the Papacy purified. His fame rests chiefly on two achievements. He restored the Papal States and he did more than any other Pope to make Rome, as it ought to be, the most splendid city of the Middle Ages. With certain reserves about the brutality of his methods in recovering the Papal States we may admit that these feats award Julius considerable distinction as a secular monarch, but when we find that they left him little time for the spiritual duties of a Pope, in which he took little interest, we wonder whether it is not perhaps incongruous to speak of him as a great Pope rather than a great king. We shall probably conclude that to call him "great" in any sense is to use the word very liberally, and he almost as grossly as his predecessors and successors neglected his proper function in the life of Europe and permitted the Roman Church to remain as corrupt as ever; indeed, in respect of its fundamental vice, simony, he made it worse than ever.

We saw that he was in his youth just an ordinary Franciscan friar like thousands of others, possibly with a few privileges because his uncle was General of the Order. The uncle contrived to get himself elected Pope, and Giuliano was called to Rome and made a cardinal. He had none of the effeminacy of his cousin, Pietro Riario, and he did not imitate what we might call the sober voluptuousness of his Borgia rival. He was a virile type, fond of hunting and leading troops, and he cursed and drank like any other captain. To the end of his days his love of strong wine and strong language was notorious. But he had no more regard for moral restraints than most of the other cardinals, and three of his daughters are well known. Not less openly than Pope Alexander he married one of them in the Vatican. The Catholic tells you with pride that he had quitted his irregularities before he became Pope. He was then sixty years old and suffered from gout, so this naive pride in his virtue is amusing. We must examine his character in the light of his potentialities, and, however much we may admire his patronage of art, we shall not find him virtuous; and, in fact, we shall have presently to consider a grave charge against him.

He lived at Avignon during the pontificate of Alexander, whom he hated. Had he ventured to live in Rome he would probably have contracted a fatal illness like Cardinal Orsini. But he made an alliance with Cesare Borgia, who still had influence in the Papal election, and promised to respect his principality and make him commander of the Papal army: a compact which he violated, as soon as possible, with all the treachery and unscrupulousness of his age. He corrupted the cardinal electors and made promises to them which he had no intention of fulfilling. He indulged also in the vice which he knew to be the most important cause of the corruption of the Papal Church, nepotism. Soon after his coronation he raised a nephew and an uncle to the cardinalate, and he married another nephew to Giulia Orsini's (and the late Pope's) daughter Laura. He issued an edifying Bull against simony, and he so increased the sale of offices and indulgences that he raised the Papal

income to nearly a million dollars a year. His table bill alone ran to \$6,000 a month, for though he suffered from gout, he ate and drank intemperately.

I have said that, seeing that he was rather old for his age and gouty, we might grant him the virtue of chastity, but some writers will not allow this. There is certainly grave reason to believe that as a cardinal he was addicted to unnatural vice, as other cardinals were. The Duke of Bracciano, one of the leaders of the Roman nobility, openly accused him of it. Later gossip we may choose to ignore, but Catholic writers are untruthful when they say that no charge is made against him as Pope, and the historians who say that we can definitely call the charge false are not justified. It seems to me improbable as regards his pontifical years, and so I need not discuss the sources. But what we shall see about his conduct shows that Julius was quite an unscrupulous man. Bishop Creighton, who is rather too lenient to the Renaissance Popes, finds "the cynical consciousness of political wrong-doing" of Julius II "as revolting as the frank unscrupulousness of Alexander VI." I should say that both men were frankly unscrupulous, the chief difference being that the sexual life of the gouty Julius had probably decayed or his energy diverted into exacting military adventures at an earlier age. He never attempted to curb his violent temper, and his flow of abusive peasant language—"the Rovere are a peasant family, and nothing but the stick on his back will keep the Pope in order," said the French King when he quarreled with him—or his indulgence in strong wine. He was, in short, no more fitted than his predecessor to be a "Vicar of Christ," and he did no more than Alexander for the moral and spiritual life of Europe.

§2. HOW THE PAPAL STATES WERE RECOVERED

Loathing the Borgias and all their brood, he at once purified Rome of the parasites whom they had encouraged to fasten on the city and the Vatican, and in so doing he reformed a number of fiscal and juridical abuses. We may assume that a man would no longer say, as a sailor had said when it transpired that he had seen the murderers of Alexander's son throw a body into the Tiber, that he had not reported it because, as Burckard gives his words, "he had seen in his time a hundred dead bodies thrown into the river at the same place without any inquiry being made respecting them, and that he had not therefore considered it a matter of importance." Then, not from any concern about the interests of Italy, as some imagine—"Perish the whole of Italy provided I get my way," he once said—but because the treasury was empty, he set out to recover the Papal States.

The first obstacle was Cesare Borgia, whose lordship of the territory nearest to Rome he had sworn to respect. He grasped the first pretext of a quarrel, and Cesare, who seems to have been taken by surprise, was soon dispossessed and allowed to retire to Naples. It is not disputed—Pastor himself gives the Pope's letter—that Julius then secretly and treacherously urged the Spanish com-

mander at Naples to arrest Cesare and convey him to Spain. I may add that he escaped from confinement two years later, became a soldier, and came to an obscure end in a small war. Julius next set out from Rome himself at the head of his cavalry and, with reinforcements from the north, took further Italian cities. There is no need here to follow his movements. Venice held other cities that he claimed, and he entered into an alliance with France and Germany against Venice, with which he had a treaty of peace, and dismembered the great Republic. Then he, to get further Italian cities, formed a league with Venice against France. From the palace to which he had retired after his first campaign—it is here that, writers of the time like Priuli tell us, he was accused of indulging in unnatural vice—he set out once more at the head of his army. He never led the troops in action, but he did everything short of that, placing the artillery, living in camp, and at one place giving orders that every foreign soldier found in a certain city which surrendered to him should be killed. He, of course, had thousands of foreign (Swiss) troops in his own army. He almost succeeded to the reputation of Cesare Borgia.

His conduct was so violent and treacherous that many of his cardinals seceded, and the French King and German Emperor announced that a General Council would be held at Pisa and summoned the Pope to attend it. He was ill with anger and disappointment, and if, as seemed likely, he had died at that time, no one would ever have dreamed of calling him a great Pope. He was heard even to threaten suicide, and most of Europe expected him to be deposed at Pisa. The democrats moved in Rome once more and decided to restore the Republic when Julius died. But he surprised everybody by recovering his passionate energy, and in a few months he succeeded in leaguings Spain, Venice, Germany and England against France. He made promises recklessly for, if they were at his own expense, he trusted always to enter a new combination and evade the fulfillment of his promises. To counteract the Council of Pisa, which proved a fiasco, he called a Council at Rome. This was merely a diplomatic move and his Council did nothing of consequence. Then, when the combined armies had driven the French from Italy—they seem to have succeeded best when the Pope remained in Rome—he callously turned against Spain and Venice in the hope that he would get Naples.

In short, he was not a great soldier—his influence in this respect was rather in the way in which he goaded his captains to action by his odoriferous language—and he had, from the religious point of view, no excuse whatever for his violent military adventures. He was not a great statesman, and his success in diplomacy was mainly due to treachery and lack of scruples. When the Duke of Ferrara, whose territory he coveted, came to Rome under a safe-conduct given by the Papal general, with the Pope's approval, Julius affected to discover that he had done something not covered by the safe-conduct and arrested him. When the Pope's officers, more jealous of their honor, cut their way through the Papal troops

and rescued the Duke, and he later sent the great poet Ariosto to treat with the Pope, Julius, in one of his flaming fits of temper, which grew worse with his age, threatened to kill him, and the poet fled for his life. The leading Italian historian of the time, in fact the first Italian historian, Guicciardini, rightly says that if we call Julius "great" we are taking the word in a new sense. One of his last acts was to arrest a noble who had assisted the ruler of Florence to escape his vengeance and his avarice, and he had this man so terribly tortured that he died in a few days. He was, said the chief Venetian historian Bembi, "not a pontiff, but a hangman, a master of every type of cruelty." For nearly ten years he afflicted Italy with war, and the campaigns, as described in the historians of the time, are just such orgies of ferocity, rape, and loot as we have found in the worst periods of the Middle Ages.

83. THE ADORNMENT OF ROME

There is no English biography of Pope Julius II and, naturally, the volume of Dr. Pastor on that Pope does not frankly describe the horrors of his campaigns and the unscrupulousness of his character. Perhaps one of the best accounts will be found in some of the early chapters (VII, VIII, and IX) of Roscoe's "Life of Leo X." I have therefore felt it necessary, since it is customary to say that one of the Pope's titles to greatness is his partial "unification of Italy," to point out that it was won by a series of revolting campaigns and acts of treachery, and that the sole object of it was to recover power and wealth for the Papacy. It is further necessary because it was these things which enabled Pope Julius to achieve the one piece of distinguished work which we may unreservedly admire, however little religious the motive was. It was Julius more than any other who summoned the architects, sculptors and painters of Italy to Rome and set them to create the superb buildings which made it at last the artistic center of Christendom.

I have already pointed out the significance of the date in connection with the claim that the Roman Church was the great patron and inspirer of art. Until the Papacy had been corrupted in Avignon—Rome remained one of the least artistic of all the great cities of Europe. Little was done even after the return to Rome, and it was not until the Papal court had been thoroughly corrupt for thirty years that the immense resources of the Papacy were used on a large scale in the employment of artists. The artistic history of Rome, in short, is the most convincing proof of the statement I have repeatedly made, that the Church was the employer not the inspirer of artists.

Here and there in some church or museum of Europe you may see a work of art which was obviously inspired by religious sentiment. Here and there is a cathedral or an abbey which is a genuine memorial to the religious fervor of some province at a particular time; though the architects and sculptors even of the finest cathedrals are little known to us, and we often find them carving a lascivious gargoyle with the same high skill as a Madonna or a

St. John. But the visitor to Rome itself should understand that St. Peter's and nearly the whole of its finest medieval monuments arose at a time when the city was as loose as it had been under Nero, when Popes were so flagrantly immoral or sordidly treacherous that we cannot credit them with any religious sentiment, and when the Papal court had been so corrupt for half a century that to call it "pagan" is an insult to the ancient Greeks and Romans; for such of these as are known to have been voluptuous did not derive the price of their pleasures from a profession of an ascetic religion.

Though the completion of the artistic adornment of Rome had to be left to his successor, Leo X, and that Pope, being a patron of letters, has received almost all the praise for it from Roman writers, the credit must be given mainly to Julius II. Michael Angelo did his finest work, including the painting of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, under Julius, and he at least gave far more praise for artistic feeling to Julius than to his refined and effeminate successor. The great architect Bramante was employed by Julius, and the Pope instructed him to realize the magnificent designs of a new St. Peter's and Vatican Palace and colonnade which he produced. Raphael and half a dozen great painters were summoned to Rome, and for the first time in two centuries of artistic creativeness Rome began to vie with the cities of northern Italy. Even the city itself received the Pope's attention, and there was much restoration and improvement.

There is no need here to consider the new monuments and works of art separately. It is sounder history to impress upon the reader that the Pope who laid the foundations of the artistic greatness of Rome was coarse, materialistic, and totally unscrupulous, and that the vast sums of money expended on the work were obtained by simony and the sale of indulgences on such a scale that Europe was at last driven into successful rebellion against its "spiritual" rulers. The art of Rome is a magnificent refutation of all that Catholics have written about art and religion: an undying memorial of the colossal apostasy of their Church from the beliefs and sentiments of Christ.

Several other reforms are ascribed to Julius II, but historians really obscure or falsify the character of the Pope when they enlarge on these. He summoned a Council at Rome, and the first aim of such a council in the mind of Europe was to reform the Papacy and the Church; but we have seen that Julius summoned his council for tactical reasons only and took care that it should attempt no reform that threatened the supply of funds for his wars and his buildings. He issued a bull against simony; and he raised millions of dollars by the practice of simony. He forbade duelling; and he was one of the most callous and passionate soldiers of his time. He placed appalling anathemas on the practice of corruption at Papal elections; and he had been one of the most guilty cardinals in the introduction of it, had bought his Papal crown, and had broken his own promises more cynically than any other Pope had

ever done. He opposed the Spanish Inquisition and refused to let the Spaniards establish it in Naples; but this was merely because the Spanish Inquisition was independent of the Roman and paid nothing to the Papacy of the immense sums it acquired from its victims. At the most we may admit that toward the close of his life Julius II felt some remorse and turned to sincere ideas of reform; and it was then too late and the price of reform was too costly. As cardinal he had been one of the worst debauchers of the Papal court: as Pope he had fully maintained the corruption of the Church and in all his conduct he had betrayed a low moral ideal or a Machiavellian defiance of ideals.

The reader of some of our modern manuals of medieval history may suspect that I am expressing an eccentric or biased opinion of the "Great Pope." On the contrary, the best writers of his time, like the historians Guicciardini and Bembo, expressed the same opinion, and it has been fully endorsed by the best modern writers on the Popes. Ranke's famous "Popes of Rome During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" (of which there is an English translation in three volumes) has little to say about the pontificate of Julius, but the learned and impartial historian notes in his introductory chapter how surprising his energy was in view of the fact that he was "enfeebled by intemperance and debauchery." The historian of the city of Rome, Gregorovius, describes Julius as "one of the most profane and unecclesiastical figures that ever occupied the chair of St. Peter," and says that "there was not a trace of Christian piety to be found in him"; and against this verdict Pastor can do no more than feebly protest that the Pope heard mass daily when it was convenient, persecuted heretics, condemned (and practiced in an unprecedented degree) simony, and so on. The eulogies of Julius by the Catholic Encyclopaedia and some of our modern historians grossly mislead their readers.

CHAPTER VII

LEO X, AND THE HEIGHT OF PAPAL GAIETY

POPE JULIUS II died in 1513, and it was four years after that date when Martin Luther began his historic campaign against the corruption of the Church. We shall see in the next volume how the spirit of Europe was being prepared for the Reformation, but it must increase our astonishment at the sustained corruption of Rome if we bear in mind that the rebellion against it had already begun. Writers like Erasmus and Ulrich von Hutten were publishing most pungent satires on the state of the Church and translations of them circulated in most countries of Europe. Tens of thousands of middle-class men in every land were learning to laugh at the hypocrisy of Popes, bishops and monks: tens of thousands were for the first time reading, in a score of printed translations of the Bible, the real sentiments and beliefs of the founders of Christianity. Rome's representatives in France, Germany and England reported to it, often with the gravest warning, a condition of revolt and contempt that grew worse under each succeeding Pope.

The general condition of the clergy, monks, and nuns I reserve for the next book, since this book hardly suffices to contain all the important facts about the Popes themselves during the half-century before the Reformation. It is enough to remark that in view of this prolonged degradation of the Papacy no one with a sense of proportion will expect to find the clergy and monks better than we have found them in previous books. Europe had, just at the time when most historians close the period of the Middle Ages and open the modern period, sunk to a condition which has no parallel in history. Whether or no there had been in earlier ages so general a sexual looseness, violence, and glorification of deceit—I doubt if there was ever so comprehensive an immorality in any previous advanced civilization—it is quite certain that in no age had this viciousness of character been combined with a profession of an ascetic religion and so deeply infected the religious institutions themselves. Perhaps the freedom of life in the Arab-Persian civilization is the nearest parallel we can quote as regards sexual conduct, but it had not invaded the Mohammedan religious institutions and it was not accompanied by violent, treacherous, and dishonorable maxims of conduct. The Church of Rome had done one unique thing, and it is the only unique thing it ever did: it had, centuries after the last disturbance of Europe by barbaric invaders had occurred, centuries after the power of its Popes had become despotic from the fringe of the Arctic to the Mediterranean, presided over the development of a civilization which professed to believe that the punishment of

"sin" was immensely more terrible than any other civilization had ever imagined, yet was at least as free and gross in its conduct as any group of peoples had ever been in history.

§1. THE CHARACTER OF LEO X

The central feature of this unique situation, and quite the most singular fact that is recorded in the history of civilized religion, was the state of the Papacy itself. It is sufficiently remarkable that during the three hundred years when Europe was really improving its civilization—say, from 1220 to 1520—not a single great man was found to place in the position of spiritual ruler of Christendom. The population of Europe had doubled, its wealth increased many fold, yet men of the commanding personality and intense zeal of Innocent III no longer appeared. One man of mediocre character had succeeded another, and quite a large number of them had been unworthy of the office, some of them scandalously unfit for it. The Papacy had proved incapable of maintaining its own moral dignity, to say nothing of giving a moral elevation to Europe, for fifty years at a stretch since its degradation during the tenth century. The myth that the Popes spiritualized or civilized Europe is refuted once for all by the fact, which stands out prominently from medieval history, that the Papacy was worse in the second half of the Middle Ages than in the first. From 400 to 900, the period of barbaric invasions, we encounter few vicious Popes: from 900 to 1550 we meet quite a large number who presented to Europe a very low ideal of conduct.

This was due in part, as I explained, to the fact that one of the most important sections of the ecclesiastical structure, the machinery for electing Popes, instead of exhibiting the mellow wisdom which some find in the Roman Church was crude, antiquated and particularly exposed to corruption. That is why in face of the growing indignation of Europe, the college of cardinals continued to put on the Papal throne men who were themselves too immoral to wish to reform the Church. Julius II, the man who had practiced bribery at three successive Papal elections, had, as I said, issued a very drastic bull condemning such bribery at future elections. We are told that his bull was effective, and that his successor paid no graft. But the bribery merely took a new form. The cardinals drew up a secret agreement that whoever was elected Pope should promote their financial interests and all were compelled to sign it or resign any hope they might have of obtaining the prize. Whether the new Pope went further and made specific promises to some of the cardinals, we simply do not know. Some of the cardinals had tried, when Julius died, to seize the fund of about \$750,000 that he had left, but they had been prevented. They then turned to a man whose amiability of character, love of luxury, and general unscrupulousness were well known, anticipating that the Vatican and the Papal court would be more richly watered with gold than ever before.

Leo X, the new Pope, was a member of the famous Florentine

house of the Medici, the greatest patrons of the new art and culture, if not the new liberty of conduct. He was the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who had cynically put him into the ranks of the clergy at the age of seven as a provision for his career. Innocent VIII—one of Pastor's virtuous Popes—had made him a cardinal at the age of fourteen, and he had begun to sit in the college of cardinals at the age of sixteen. Historians generally observe that we have against Leo none of the charges of vice which we find against most of the cardinals of the time. His chief English biographer, William Roscoe (*"Life and Pontificate of Leo X,"* 2 vols., 1846), who is too aristocratic to find blemishes in so princely a Pope, represents him as guarding himself from the corruption of the college of cardinals and soberly pursuing the studies which would fit him for high office in the Church, and most writers follow his lead.

In point of fact, although a great deal was written by Italian writers about Leo in his Papal days—I give the list in my *"Crises in the History of the Papacy"*—we are far less informed about his conduct as a cardinal. Under Alexander VI he retired from Rome and lived with his family at Florence, and, when the power of the Medici was broken, he spent many years in traveling over Europe. He was still only thirty-seven years old, though an abnormally stout and unhealthy man, at the death of Julius II. One is almost tempted to think that his unpleasant illness helped to make the Papal election shorter than usual. Thirty-one cardinals were, according to custom, sealed up in the small Sistine Chapel of the Vatican, not to leave it for any purpose until they had given Rome a Pope, and Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici suffered from fistula, and it was in the warm days of a Roman spring. At all events, he was elected Pope without the long and passionate struggle that had drawn out the last half-dozen Papal elections, and, as the majority of the cardinals were still of what is politely called the worldly type, it is clear that they were quite confident that there would be no reform of the Vatican or the Church. We may, in fact, accept the assurance of one of the writers of the time, that Leo's most intimate friend, and—significantly enough—the most immoral of all, Bernard Davizo (almost always referred to by his nickname Bibbiena) canvassed the electors for him and promised that he would not be ungrateful.

The rejoicings of Rome at his coronation confirm our suspicion that he had by no means the reputation for virtue and sobriety which is so often claimed for him. Pastor gives some of the details of the decoration of the city, and the dominant note of the scheme seems to have been pagan mythology. The banker Chigi erected opposite his house a triumphal arch adorned with pagan figures and this motto:

First Venus ruled: then came the god of war:
Now, great Minerva, it is thy day that dawns.

The reference to the recent pontificate of Alexander VI as the rule of Venus shocked nobody, but in another street was a still bolder inscription on a triumphal arch:

Mars has reigned: Pallas has followed—but the reign of Venus goes on forever.

The spectacle of a Pope riding under and smiling at such inscriptions on the day of his solemn consecration is surely a quite unique event in the history of religion. Even prelates decorated their arches with pagan figures. The whole of Rome knew well what to expect under the pontificate of Leo X.

There is, in point of fact, a very grave charge against his moral character and it must be taken seriously. It is discussed at some length in the Latin Life of Leo X, which was written shortly after his death, by P. Giovio, Bishop of Nocera, himself a prelate of easy morals but deeply indebted to the generosity of Leo X and very far removed from any disposition to libel him. Yet this courtly bishop, who was intimate with the Pope and with life in the Vatican palace, discusses the charge in such a way that it seems fairly clear that he knew it to be true. Dr. Pastor (VIII, 81) is here guilty of a deliberate ambiguity which must mislead his readers. He says that "Giovio passes over the whole truth of the accusations brought against the moral conduct of Leo X."

On the contrary, the learned and cautious bishop, one of the most esteemed writers of the time, carefully abstains from denying the charge. He returns to it several times (pp. 96, 98 and 99 of the 1551 edition of his work), as if it were so notorious that he cannot venture to ignore it, and he deals with it so evasively that, remembering how little regard for truth there was at the time and the position of the bishop himself, we feel that he admits the charge but is too courteous to say so. Leo's good qualities were, he says, "obscured by an excessive luxury of life and by the lusts which were ascribed to him." He so acted, the bishop adds, not from depravity, but with "a sort of regal license," as if he were above all laws. A few pages later Giovio says, more clearly: "Nor was he free from the infamy that he seemed to have an improper love of some of his chamberlains; who were members of the noblest families in Italy, and to speak tenderly to them and make broad jokes. But what prince, even the best and most virtuous, could escape the shafts of the invidious in that most evil-speaking court? And who, on the other hand, will be so wicked, so devoured by the disease of envy, as to claim to have penetrated the secrets of the night and know the truth?" Later again he remarks that "it is proper to believe" that the charge is false. I have translated the Latin text, which seems to me deliberately ambiguous, quite literally, so that the reader may be able to judge for himself. One thing is certain: that it was generally believed in the Papal court that Leo X, in his Papal days, was a sexual invert, keeping a number of noble youths in the "sacred palace" for that purpose. But I submit further that this friendly and flattering courtier plainly believes the charge to be true but will not, or dare not, venture to admit so scandalous an accusation.

It is said by H. M. Vaughan in his work, "The Medici Popes"

(1908), that Giovio is the only writer to mention the charge and that we need pay little attention to a man who was, in the fashion of his time, almost more pagan than Christian. Even if it were true that the Bishop of Nocera alone spoke of the matter, we should have to give it serious attention, for he is not only one of the leading writers of the time but the chief authority on the life of the Pope. In point of fact, however, the charge is noticed also by the chief contemporary historian, Guicciardini, and he also seems to accept it. He says in his "*Storia d' Italia* (p. 254 in the 1832 edition) that it was generally believed that Leo had lived chastely as a cardinal but after his election to the Papacy he was "found to be excessively devoted to pleasures which cannot be called decent." It would certainly be the climax of Papal infamy if a man waited until he became the "Vicar of Christ" to begin the practice of unnatural vice, but it seems improbable, and I prefer to think that Leo's long absence from Rome before he became Pope is possibly a certain discretion in view of his ambition for the Papacy merely left the Romans in ignorance of his practices until he became Pope. However that may be the belief that Leo X practiced unnatural vice in the Vatican with noble youths was so common that the two leading writers of the time are compelled to mention it and both seem to admit it.

§2. LIFE IN THE VATICAN

This is quite consistent with all that we know of the personal life of Leo X. Writers who find a certain virtue in his frequent fasts are amusing. These fasts were necessary to keep within certain limits his colossal growth of fat. He had not a particle of religious or ascetic sentiment. The story that is often reproduced, that he one day cynically remarked that he owed all his luxuries to "the fable of Jesus Christ," cannot be regarded as having any historical value, as it appears only long after his death and in the writings of an English anti-Papal author. But we can easily believe the Venetian ambassador when he tells us that after his consecration Leo said, "Let us enjoy the Papacy now that God has given it to us," for that was the ruling maxim of his whole pontificate. The reconquest of the Papal States by Julius and the reconciliation of various monarchs had raised the Papal revenue to its highest point. Leo spent about \$1,500,000 a year, or, on the lowest estimate, \$12,000,000 in the eight years of his pontificate, and he left behind him debts amounting to several million dollars. Several of his bankers were ruined. The table bill alone of this fasting Pope was more than \$20,000 a month.

It need hardly be said that a very large proportion of this income was raised by the grossest simony. Few Popes had ever been so cynical in the exploitation of sacred offices as Leo X. In Rome itself he created and sold more than two thousand new offices, and he pressed the sale of benefices and indulgences throughout Europe even more than Julius had done. I leave the question of indulgences to the next book, when we will consider Luther's campaign, but may say here that they were sold throughout Europe

as flagrantly and noisily as a curb-broker in New York sells his stocks. One instance will suffice to illustrate his cynicism in the sale of sacred offices. In the very year in which Luther started his rebellion, 1517, and in spite of all the alarming reports of his representatives in Germany, Leo permitted the Archbishop of Mayence to press the sale of indulgences in his province for their mutual profit. Three years earlier he had conferred this archbishopric on a young and loose-living noble, Albert of Brandenburg, and he, for a payment of \$60,000, permitted the man to retain two other bishoprics and recover his money by a share in the sale of indulgences.

By every sordid means he raked ducats into the Papal treasury. In the same year, 1517, he discovered, he announced, that there was a conspiracy of the cardinals to murder him. There are critics who maintain that the whole story was fabricated by the Pope as an excuse to extort money from the cardinals, but it seems more probable that at least one young cardinal attempted to have the Pope poisoned. Several cardinals were seized and enormous fines imposed on them or their entire property confiscated. Cardinal Riario, head of the College of Cardinals, who probably had no share in the plot, but was wealthy, had to pay the Pope nearly \$400,000. Cardinal Petrucci, the real culprit, was strangled in prison, and the servants he had brought into the plot had their flesh wrenched from their bones with red-hot pincers. Five cardinals were punished, the whole property of three of them being confiscated, and the Pope then announced that he proposed to create thirty new cardinals. Most of them paid large sums for the dignity or had previously lent large sums of money to the Pope. Several of them were totally unfit to hold any clerical office.

The conspiracy reminds us that many cardinals, not necessarily of the stricter type, were disgusted with the new life of the Vatican. There was a certain puerility about the Pope's pleasures which annoyed and estranged even cardinals of irregular life. His chief friend was Bibbiena, whom he promptly raised to the cardinalate, although he was one of the most openly immoral clerics in Rome. He wrote indecent comedies that could not be publicly presented in any part of the world today, but they were presented in the Vatican. Even noble ladies at the various Italian courts enjoyed the loose comedies which it was the fashion to write, but they were nowhere more appreciated than in the Vatican. The comedies of Terence and Plautus, the ancient Roman comedians, were revived, but in regard to sexual looseness these were far surpassed by the imitations of them by Cardinal Bibbiena, Machiavelli, Ariosto, etc. Shakespeare's early comedies, which are generally modified before they are staged in our time, were inspired by these Italian comedies and give some idea of their character, but they are less "indecent" than the comedies at which Leo X applauded.

Apart from this there was, as I said, a certain puerility about the Pope's pleasures. He liked boisterous fun and gross jokes. His immense frame shook with laughter at the antics of the buffoons and wits that were brought to entertain him. He heard that there was somewhere a particularly gluttonous Dominican friar, and he

had the man brought to his own table and gloated over his prodigious consumption of food. His abnormal tendency to fat compelled him to eat sparingly and fast several times a week, but he spent five or six times as much as Alexander VI had spent on the Papal table. He encouraged the cardinals and the bankers (from whom he borrowed large sums at excessive interest, whereas all interest on loans was still condemned by the Church as a sin) to give banquets of the most eccentric prodigality. Cardinal Cornaro entertained him at a banquet in which sixty-five courses were served up on silver dishes. Banker Chigi (at whose marriage to his mistress the Pope assisted) wound up a sumptuous banquet by having all his silver thrown into the river. There was such an orgy of banqueting and buffoonery as Rome had never known since the days of Nero, and cardinals mingled with courtesans at the tables and the comedies which followed. Some of the cardinals even took parts in the most licentious comedies. Bibbiena, the Pope's chief favorite, had indecent frescoes on the walls of his bathroom.

Another childish aspect of the Pope's character was seen in his love of jewels. There is still in the Vatican archives an inventory of the jewels he left at his death, putting the value at more than half a million dollars. Money could not be found, the Pope said, to carry forward the great architectural plans of his predecessor and to support the Roman university, but millions of dollars were wasted on musicians, jewelers, buffoons, wits, and every variety of entertainer. Even Roscoe, who unduly glorifies his hero and discreetly veils his grosser features, says that "whoever could render himself either the cause or the object of mirth was certain of receiving at Rome, and even in the pontifical palace, a hearty welcome and often a splendid reward." It might almost be said that the chief aim of the Pope's life was to crowd as much laughter as possible into the few years of his pontificate; and remember that these are just the years when the Reformation begins in Germany. Nothing pleased the Pope more, apart from the jewels he loved to finger, than to have his ministers discover some man, lay or cleric, who was unconsciously ludicrous in his behavior.

Apart from his circle of intimate friends, all of whom were openly immoral, Leo promoted the interests of his family more flagrantly than any other Pope had done. The historian Guicciardini estimates that he spent two million dollars in trying to get the Duchy of Urbino for his nephew Lorenzo, and his procedure moves even Pastor to reflect that there is "something repulsive about it." The Duke of Urbino, nephew of the late Pope, had been one of the most generous friends of the Medici after the fall of their house at Florence, yet the Pope seized the first pretext to attack him in order to make a duke for his own nephew. He made his brother, Giuliano, whose morals were quite in the manner of the age and whose military talent was purely imaginary, commander of the Papal army, and he promoted to the cardinalate his bastard cousin Giulio and his particularly dissolute nephew, Innocenzo (son of the bastard son of Pope Innocent VIII and Leo's sister).

§3. THE POPE'S PERFDY

Except in regard to the charge of unnatural vice, for which I have accordingly given the quotations and references to the original authorities, not one of these facts is disputed and I have not troubled to quote Italian writers on every page. All the details and the authorities for them may be read in Pastor or Gregorovius, and it seems hardly necessary to notice the way in which these writers and Roscoe try to recover some shred of decency for the "Great Pope." He was a selfish sensualist, seeking his own gratification even in the prodigal gifts to others which he made in the early years of his pontificate, before the trouble in Germany and other parts of Europe began to curtail his revenue. In spite of the immense sums which he spent he did comparatively little for the glorification of Rome or the promotion of learning. Historians find that there was an actual decay of serious letters at Rome while the Pope showered his gold on literary flatterers and scurrilous wits, and little progress was made with the building of St. Peter's. But we must glance at one other aspect of his life, his public action, to complete the picture.

It is often said to his credit that, unlike his predecessor, he sincerely loathed war and wished to keep Italy in peace. Apart, however, from the wars for the aggrandizement of his family, to which I have referred, one would rather regard his love of peace as the natural inclination of a fat and lazy man and a disinclination to waste on soldiers the millions of ducats which would purchase jewels and entertainment for him. Permanent peace was, in any case, impossible in so vicious an age, and the Pope adopted a policy of "unparalleled double-dealing," as Pastor puts it, or of the grossest perfidy and dishonesty. The famous work of Machiavelli which has become notorious as a manual of princely treachery, was written for the guidance of the Medici family, and its worst counsels were repeatedly adopted by Leo X.

Quite early in his pontificate he made a secret treaty with Spain against France and with France against Spain. He urged Louis of France to carry out his designs in north Italy, and he secretly promised the Milanese that he would assist them if Louis made his attack. His idea seems to have been that he would get a principality for his brother from whichever side won in the struggle, but he expressly claimed that there was no such thing as a political morality in such matters. "When you have made a league with one man," he said, "there is no reason why you should cease to negotiate with his opponent." King Louis suspected him and pressed him for a definite alliance, and the Pope then discovered that it was not proper for Christian princes to fight each other while the Turks still threatened Europe. Louis died at this juncture (1515), and his successor, Francis I, still pressed the Pope. Leo secretly offered an alliance with him on condition that the kingdom of Naples should, if it were taken from Spain, be given to his brother, Giuliano, and he at the same time secretly joined the league of

Germany, Spain, and other powers against France. For several months he kept up this secret correspondence with both sides.

When the war opened and the French made progress in Italy, the Pope came to terms openly with them and had a cordial meeting with the French King. When, however, a few months later, the German Emperor led a body of Swiss troops against the French, and the French King demanded the dispatch of Papal troops, as had been promised, Leo deliberately kept his troops back in order to give the Swiss a chance, and then, when the Swiss failed, betrayed to the French the secret information that the English had paid for the campaign. To keep the favor of the German Emperor he sent cavalry to aid him, and he then protested to the French that they had gone without orders. He further assured Francis that he had sent a legate to induce the Emperor to make peace with him, and the secret instructions given to the legate were that the war must go on, in the interest of the Papacy. So he continued to the end. In 1519 he entered into an alliance with Francis against Spain and got from the French King a quarter of a million ducats for his nephew and the same sum for himself; and within a fortnight he signed a secret treaty with Spain against France.

If Leo had been a secular ruler only, instead of being the moral and spiritual head of Europe, historians would sharply dismiss him as morally rotten, and we need not hesitate to say it. He had no sense of principle either in personal or public conduct. It is a mere mockery that such a Pope presided over the Council for the reform of the Church which his predecessor had summoned. The seventy or eighty bishops who attended were permitted in the end to draw up a very modest scheme of reform; and in the following year the Pope bestowed a bishopric, and later the cardinal's hat, on a boy of tender age, son of the King of Portugal—probably for money. In 1517 Leo closed the futile gathering, and in 1521 he closed his own quite futile and frivolous pontificate at the age of forty-two. Some of the leading writers of the time affirm that he was poisoned, but modern authorities find that the symptoms of his illness point to malaria. In the very gravest hour of the Church, when Luther was giving a lead to the widespread anger and disgust of Europe, Leo X had carried the frivolity and immorality of the Papacy to its culminating peak.

THE TRUE STORY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Volume VIII

How Rome Fought Attempts to Reform Morals

The Real Cause of Rome's Antagonism
to the Reformation

Joseph McCabe

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HOW ROME FOUGHT ATTEMPTS TO REFORM MORALS

CHAPTER I

THE GENERAL CONDITION OF THE CHURCH

HE lay historian who now feels that the broad human interest which we cultivate compels him to glance sympathetically at the religious life of the people he describes is peculiarly liable to err. He no longer has the time or the requisite knowledge of European languages, ancient and modern, to read the original authorities: he is intimidated by the new Catholicism and its pretentious but utterly mendacious historical literature; and he shares the general impulse of modern scholars to say novel things and find errors in his nineteenth-century predecessors. The result is, as I have repeatedly shown, that a comprehensively false conception of the history of the Church of Rome finds expression in our literature. We read idyllic accounts of its austere and pure primitive life and its heroic resistance to persecution; of its almost miraculous capture of the heart and mind of Europe in the fourth century; of its survival, while every other ancient religion perishes, after the devastating floods of barbarism; of its provision of placid and virtuous and studious monasteries for the refuge of culture and refinement in that long age of barbaric violence and its eventual triumph over the unruly passions of the new Europe; of its inspiration and firm moral guidance of the civilization that at last appears, and had indeed been developing continuously during what the older historians had improperly called the Dark Ages; of its deep roots in the thoughts and emotions of Europe during the centuries when the foundations of our modern prosperity and idealism were laid.

We now realize that the undisputed historical facts compel us to regard this as a quite untruthful and, in view of our modern controversies, very mischievous misrepresentation. Let us pause for a moment on the eve of the Reformation and at the close of the Middle Ages (as usually estimated) and recall what we have found. And let us here entirely ignore the very few disputed facts which, with original authorities that ought to convince any man, I have given, and see how the established and well known facts of European history discredit, line by line, the version of Papal history which I have just quoted and ought to move any serious historian to dismiss the Roman claims with disdain and derision.

We cannot even accept the edifying version of the life of the Roman Church during the first three centuries. Until about the year 200 A. D. we know very little about the small community,

using the Greek tongue, that gathered round its bishop in one of the most squalid suburbs of Rome. Let us assume that these few hundred early Roman Christians were generally sincere for that first hundred years. But when they grow to thousands at the beginning of the third century and a cultivated writer, Bishop Hippolytus, at length arises to describe them, we find that the progress in numbers has been won by a remarkable relaxation of morals; and that this continued to be the general condition of the Roman Church is confirmed by the fact that when a genuine and severe persecution began at the end of the century all but a mere handful renounced their faith. The record of saints and martyrs with which the Church has adorned this section of its history is so gross a fabrication that I was able to quote Catholic scholars who laughingly tear up nearly the whole of it. All the more popular lives of Roman martyrs are acknowledged to be either wholly or in their more picturesque details deliberate fabrications by Roman clerics. Very few genuine Roman martyrs are known.

The next sentence in Rome's fanciful version of its history, the supposed spiritual capture of the mind and heart of the Roman Empire, is just as untruthful. We cannot accurately measure the progress made by the Church under the favor of the Christian emperors during the first three-fourths of the fourth century, though we have the assurance of St. Augustine that as late as 380 A. D. "nearly the whole of the nobles," the best educated class, were still pagan; and the letters of St. Jerome and the authentic documents describing the murderous fights in the churches show that the general body and the clergy were remarkably corrupt. For the rest of the century the facts are notorious. We have the text of a dozen imperial decrees which forcibly suppress every other religion and compel every citizen of the Roman Empire to belong to one or other branch of the Christian Church. The Roman Church was still one of a dozen such branches, and every single attempt of its bishops to claim supremacy was rejected and ridiculed by the other Churches.

Covering the next section of Roman history, from 400 A. D. to 1050 A. D., we found such a mass of historical untruth that a very short summary must suffice. There was, in the first place, no moral improvement of the life of southern Europe, but an immediate and conspicuous deterioration. For this collapse of civilization, we saw, it is quite unsound to cast all the blame on the barbarian invaders, for the few efforts that were made to restore civilization were made by Teutonic kings, and all history shows that such barbaric invaders of a civilization can be civilized in one or two generations. As to the monasteries, we saw that they were quite generally corrupt throughout this period, and the modern practice of suppressing the facts and describing the life of some rare strict monastery as "typical" is not honest. It was, moreover, the sensual monks, or a few of them—for the majority were too lazy to learn to write—who preserved (generally in the dust of their libraries) copies of such of the ancient Latin works as have survived; while the idea that these monks or the bishops, except in

short periods when a king compelled them, educated any large part of Europe is a gross misrepresentation. Rome had educated Europe: the Roman Church frowned on education and made ninety-nine percent of Europe illiterate. This illiteracy it exploited by making and using the grossest forgeries, especially to increase its power and wealth, and by fabricating myriads of sordid relics and making the religious life of the majority purely mechanical. Manners and morals were so debased, vice and violence so general, ignorance so profound and universal, life so coarse and rudimentary and uncertain, that there is not the least exaggeration in the phrase Dark Ages. And the dishonesty of claiming that the Church remained a moral and spiritual power and was merely checked by barbaric invasions is at once exposed by the notorious fact that the Popes were much better in the first half of this period than in the second. The corruption of the Papacy and the clergy became worse as the invasions decreased, and it was worst of all when Europe was again settled and prosperous.

For the next stretch, again, or from 1050 to 1500 A. D., I must summarize very briefly; but every statement here made is a plain generalization of the masses of undisputed details in the preceding seven books and in this book. There were two short periods of purification of the Papacy—the clergy and monks were never more than locally and temporarily reformed—but the central and commanding figures of these periods, Gregory VII and Innocent III, brought a deeper corruption upon the Church by their prohibition of the marriage of priests and of divorce for the laity, and they were so unscrupulous and violent in their efforts to consolidate the Papal power that they made no permanent contribution to civilization. The solid proof of their moral futility is the astonishing corruption of the Papal court itself during this period. We have a long period of general degradation from the accession of Boniface VIII, who was solemnly charged with every vice, in 1294 to the deposition of the infamous John XXIII in 1415. There is little moral distinction in the Popes who follow until 1455, and then Calixtus III inaugurates, by his scandalous nepotism, the long period of complete demoralization of the Papal court which lasts nearly a century. It is ludicrous to conceive such an institution as an inspiration in European life, and the historian who so represents it may be asked to explain why the moral tone of Europe was worse in 1500 than it had been for five centuries. The real progress which Europe made in this period was not moral or, as is said, spiritual. It was an economic, artistic, and intellectual advance that was due to secular development to the transfer of art, culture, and teaching from the monks to the laity, and to the powerful inspiration of the Arab civilization. In its best elements, the cultivation of science and freedom of speculation, it was checked by the Papacy and the dawn of our modern civilization was postponed.

Finally, it is just as mythical or mendacious to represent the Roman Church as based upon the affections or commanding the loyal allegiance of the people of Europe. In this last period, when liberty of mind was the primary requirement of progress, the Popes,

who compelled the princes and peoples to carry out their policy, slew several million men, women, and children for rebellion against them. The number of Manichaeans, Albigensians, Cathari, Bohemians, Jews and Witches thus executed or massacred certainly runs to seven figures; and we have still to add hundreds of thousands. The murder of Savonarola at Florence to protect from criticism the sordid Papal court at Rome is symbolical of the later Middle Ages. Had any freedom of thought and teaching then existed in Europe this widespread rebellion would have wrecked the Roman Church long before the sixteenth century. From the thirteenth century onward men sang ribald songs about the greed, simony, and hypocrisy of the clergy, monks, and Popes in every city of Europe. What we have to explain in the sixteenth century is not why there was a rebellion, but why it succeeded, why it did not capture the whole of Europe.

Before we attempt to answer this we will take a last survey of the condition of the Church. Part of the new history, or the new fashion of accommodating history to Catholic requirements, is that the corruption of the Church was exaggerated by the Reformers of the sixteenth century, and that the Reformation was due to political motives much more than the older historians imagined. These are the two untruths I refute in the present book. I showed in the last book that from 1400 onward Europe loudly demanded the reform of the Papal court and the clergy: that from the latter part of that century Rome was repeatedly warned by legates or prelates that the prevalence of simony and of clerical and monastic vice actually threatened the ecclesiastical system, and the few strict cardinals at Rome emphatically confirmed this. I shall presently quote the head of the English branch of the Roman Church, the Archbishop of Canterbury, saying openly in a synod in 1486 that the immorality of the priests and monks threatens his Church with "destruction." Many prelates were similarly alarmed, and there were, naturally, some attempts at reform. But I will show that they had comparatively little result and in the first quarter of the sixteenth century the Church was still preponderantly corrupt. Then we shall see that the inspiring principle of the Reformation was an honest disgust with this chronic corruption. It opened men's eyes to the doctrinal perversions of the teaching of Christ and St. Paul which the printing of the Bible made more generally available. Political conditions were important only in the sense that they permitted a balance of military force and, after one of the most ghastly wars known in history, the Papacy had at last to relinquish the attempt to drown its rebels in blood.

§1. CONTEMPT OF THE CLERGY THROUGHOUT EUROPE

Those who claim that the Church had reformed or was reforming itself before the Reformation occurred seem to have a curious idea of the position of the Popes in the Church. During the first quarter of the sixteenth century Europe heard in succession of the bold vices of Alexander VI, the equally revolting violence and un-

scrupulousness of Julius II, and the more sordid vice and more flagrant dishonesty of Leo X. It was well acquainted, through visitors to Rome and foreign ambassadors, with the degradation of the Papal court which I described. It knew well that it was contributing millions of dollars to maintain this sensual hypocrisy. We must, in fact, bear in mind that it believed even worse things of the Papal court than I have described, for I have ignored rumors, which circulated throughout Europe but cannot be accepted as historical evidence, that painted these Popes more darkly than I have painted them. It is absurd to suppose that any very extensive reform would be carried out in the Church while Rome remained so corrupt, and we shall find the Papal court resolutely maintaining its corruption until near the middle of the century, when it loses half its revenue and contemplates a prospect of losing the remainder.

We saw that Julius II was compelled by the action of some of the secular monarchs to summon a reform-council at Rome, and Leo X was forced to toy with it for a time until new political conditions enabled him to sterilize and dismiss it. A religious noble of Italy—a rare thing in those days—Pico della Mirandola, then (1519) addressed a Latin letter to the Pope on the appalling condition of the Church. It has often been reprinted under the title “On the True Causes of Our Calamities,” but most of it is a tiresome refutation of the astrologers and is uninteresting. The conclusion is, however, that the unprecedented spread of vice and crime in the Church is the true cause of the wars and plagues and other troubles of the time. Pico was one of the most cultivated men of the time and he knew well the life of ancient Rome and Greece, yet he insists that they were morally superior to Europe under Leo X. “I have,” he says, “never read in the history of earlier peoples such contempt of God, such profanity and blasphemy, as I have heard in our time.” He is unfortunately vague in detail, but he does specify “the unprecedented lust of both Venuses [natural and unnatural vice] and incest.” What he sees in the Church “would not even be found amongst the devils in hell.” Pope Leo courteously acknowledged the letter—and pursued his pleasures.

The early chapters of the second volume of H. C. Lea’s “History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church” (3rd edition 1907) show that this is a broadly correct description of the state of the Church; and let me say that, when you are assured that a Catholic writer, Father Baumgartner (“H. C. Lea’s Historical Writings,” 1909), has shown how unreliable Lea is, you will find, if you care to look up the Jesuit’s miserable tract, that it very discreetly avoids any reference to the “History of Celibacy.” I have found only trifling and unimportant errors in that learned work, as one generally finds in a work with thousands of quotations (hundreds of which I have verified in the Latin, German, French, Italian, and Spanish originals) and will presently reproduce some of the clerical statements it gives about the state of the Church and the contemptuous songs of the people. Here let me give a modern Catholic (and not a liberal Catholic) authority who is almost as severe as Lea.

The "Cambridge Modern History" opens with a volume on this period, and Chapter XVIII, on "Catholic Europe," is entrusted to a British Catholic writer, Canon W. Barry. This man has shown his vicious and resolute orthodoxy in his scandalous biography of Ernest Renan, but in such an academic and important work as this he has to tell the truth, or something near it. He admits in the Church on the eve of the Reformation "a worldliness which has never been surpassed," and he finds this "especially amongst the higher clergy and in religious associations" or monastic and semi-monastic bodies. He speaks of a "corruption so wide as in the opinion of many to justify revolt from Pope and bishops." He quotes the English Bishop of Winchester—I will return later to this—declaring in 1520 that "everything belonging to the primitive integrity of the clergy, and especially to the monastic state, was perverted either by dispensations or corruption, or else had become obsolete from age or depraved by the iniquity of the times"; and I have already quoted the Archbishop of Canterbury using the same language. It is only in Germany that Barry finds or claims a better state of things, as the Papal legates had tried (much earlier) to meet the popular disgust by drastic reforms, but Lea shows in the same volume (Chapter XIX), and I will presently prove, that by the age of Luther the effect of the reform was generally lost and there was much the same corruption as elsewhere. However, one naturally feels reluctant to make or accept general statements about the whole of Europe, and it will be more convincing to glance at the state of some of the chief countries.

§2. THE STATE OF THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND

I take England first because Catholics particularly claim that the charge of corruption in that country brought by the Reformers and their followers is grossly exaggerated. I reserve the monks to the next chapter. Let me note first the occasion on which the Archbishop of Canterbury used the language I have already quoted. King Henry VII was not a saint, but either from personal disgust or fear of the growing agitation he, in his first Parliament (1485), ordered the archbishops and bishops to commit to prison all priests and monks who were convicted of "adultery, fornication, incest, or other fleshly incontinence." The full text of the decree is given by Froude in his *History of England*. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Morton, had to do something, and in the following year he said in synod that the English branch of the Church, once so virtuous and honored (mainly in fictitious lives of saints), was now so corrupt and despised that it might be destroyed. The text of his discourse (in Latin) is given in Wilkins's "Councils of Great Britain and Ireland," vol. iii, p. 619. The English laity, he says, "always hate the clergy," and in London certain street preachers of the gospel revile the priests and monks to crowds of them: fifty years before the Reformation, remember. "Large numbers" of these priests, he adds, spend the whole day in taverns, wear swords and daggers, and in dress and fashion of hair can hardly be distinguished from laymen.

How little the archbishop did we shall realize better in the next

chapter, when we shall find him, several years later, describing such gaieties in monasteries and nunneries in his diocese as the stories of Boccaccio and Rabelais suggest to us. But there is another document which proves conclusively that there was no reform of the English clergy. This is "A Series of Precedents and Proceedings in Criminal Causes" by Archdeacon Hale (1847), or a series of cases taken from the Act-Books or Registers of the Ecclesiastical Courts of London. The secular courts could not at that time try a cleric until he was degraded, and the procedure of degradation was so cumbrous that it was rarely used, and until 1529 a priest or deacon, Froude says, could "commit murder with impunity," while the ecclesiastical courts (which also tried certain offenses of the laity) were so lax that "the grossest moral profligacy in a priest was passed over with indifference." That is nearly, but not quite, true, as you will see. Occasionally the priests were fined—from half a dollar to two dollars for very grave offenses—but generally they were allowed to "purge" themselves by simply swearing that the charge was false or bringing four friends to swear for them. The laity generally had to bring these "witnesses," the priests very rarely.

The book is now rare, and in any case the reports are in mediæval Latin with fragments of old English, so I will quote a number of the cases. If we bear in mind that the courts only tried an offender when he was denounced, the picture of life in England is appallingly gross. The archdeacon apologizes to his readers because so many of the cases are sexual, and he admits that the cases of vice which he gives bear "no proportion whatever to the real number." The full records show, he says, that "lust was always the great prevailing crime." I will not run through the entire book, which covers nearly seventy years, but take a few cases in each of several years to show that there is no indication of any reform and that the general life of London must have been extraordinarily gross and free.

In 1476, when the record begins, we have four cases of priests who have been denounced to the court. The first had said to his people in church, in a loud voice: "Lick my —"; for which he received a light penance. The second gambled and swore habitually "by the members of Christ"; he was dismissed with a caution. The third, who got off by swearing that he was not guilty, had a woman in his bed every night and had walked the streets quite nude exhibiting himself to all he met. The fourth exhibited himself to a number of women in his parish, and the case was apparently dismissed. In the same year a layman was brought before the court, and dismissed, for saying that there was "not a good priest in England" but they were "all whoremongers." As a few years later a man and wife appear before the court on the charge of keeping a brothel specially for "priests and friars," and reviling them in the street as pederasts if they would not come in, we begin to realize the Rabelaisian atmosphere.

The record skips to the year 1490. There is a case of a cleric who finds whores for priests. The next case is that of a whore who specializes on priests; and the court benevolently dismisses her. The

next case is that of a priest charged with, and clearly guilty of, incest, but he simply swears that it is not true; and after this come in succession four priests who have had relations with the same prostitute, and one ex-cleric who "for love of her mutilated and almost killed his own wife." As "priests'-whore" is a fairly common term of revilement in these records we see clearly that a section of the profession confined itself to these, or, as some of the brothel-cases show, to "priests and friars."

In 1491 we find a woman who visits a priest—he pretends he is ill and goes to bed—three times a day. Then we have a man who is charged with shouting in church on a feastday: "What be you but hores, harlots, and bawdes." Next is a man who has lived seven years with a woman and, because she has been to see a priest he meets her in the street and says: "Fi on the, harlott . . . If I see the speke any more with him I shall kutt of thi nose." (The clerk of the clerical court is a little better in Latin than English but poor at both.) Then we have two men who call priests "horseson [whoresome] prestis and horemongeris," but these are dismissed on the ground that they are "respectable men." There is also a whore who is charged with specializing on "priests, friars, monks, and canons." Remember that London was then a small town, where everybody could see these friars in their brown robes and canons in their distinctive garments visiting brothels.

I will add a few cases taken at random out of the next few years. A priest has attempted to rape his servant and to strangle her when she resists: he purges himself (that is to say, the court benevolently takes his word that he did not). Men are charged with sanguinary fights, in some cases with priests, in church. A priest is charged with habitually having intercourse with young women who confess to him. A priest, carrying the sacrament to a sick person, chases the pigs and breaks pots on windowsills with his stick. A priest and his curate have had a fight at the high altar in their church. A priest has been summoned to court in the matter of five women, and he has thrown the clerk who delivered the summons out of his house. A man offers a wooden cross contaminated with urine (apparently in ridicule of the priests) to people to kiss and assures them that they will have eleven days indulgence. A priest drinks day and night with women in his house, and, although his parishioners have broken in and caught him, the court accepts his purgation. A priest has given a child to a nun in a convent at Kilburn (now a suburb of London) and, as this is a serious scandal, he is fined two dollars. In the next case two laymen have been found in bed, with a nun sharing the bed with them, in the same Kilburn nunnery, and it is proved that they habitually use the convent as a brothel; and all that the ecclesiastical court does is to accept their assurance that the charge is false. This is in 1502, after all the "reforms," and seven years later a priest is in court for fornication with the prioress of Gilborn (and is fined 80 cents for it), which I take to be the same nunnery of Kilburn: then a pleasant little village two or three miles from London, which like so many similarly situated nunneries, was

used as a brothel by Londoners. But we will take the monks and nuns separately.

If we recollect that this court never noticed offenses until they were denounced to it, that it rarely punished priests, and never severely, and that the archdeacon has merely given us a small selection of cases (with the assurance that they are mostly cases of "lust") out of a total number which he does not state, we have a remarkable record for a small city. But the number of cases is less important than the general freedom and coarseness of life which we perceive in the details of nearly every case. And, as no one pretends that medieval London about the year 1500 was any worse than any other town of Europe, we have here a genuine and most valuable picture of the state of Europe on the eve of the Reformation. If some American historian or sociologist could get permission to compile for us a large and quite candid work from the ancient church-records that still exist in England, we should probably hear no more about the spiritual influence of the medieval Church or about the beautiful character of the Middle Ages. Lest it be thought that city-life accounts for the laxity in London, let me add that, as Froude shows, King Henry VII received a memorial from the gentry and farmers of Carnarvonshire (one of the most rustic of counties) complaining that the priests systematically and continuously try to seduce their wives and daughters, and that Lea reproduces some instructions, in verse, by an English provincial canon of the time which naively say that a man need not confess to his own parish priest if he has had intercourse with that priest's

Moder or sister or hys lemman
Or by his doghter gef he had on.

§3. THE CONDITION IN GERMANY AND ELSEWHERE

Since England was certainly no worse than any other country, and this agrees entirely with what we saw about Rome in the last book, it is not necessary to add much about the rest of Europe. It is sometimes claimed that the moral level was higher in Germany, partly because there was a genuine religious movement amongst the people in the second half of the fifteenth century and partly because Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa had effected a very drastic reform in the German Church. But Dr. Lindsay, who describes the popular religious movement in the Cambridge Modern History (vol. ii), expressly says that the clergy were "the least affected by it." As to the reforms of Cardinal Cusa, they refer chiefly to the monasteries, and I shall presently quote one of the most distinguished of German abbots saying that scarcely a single monastery of his own Benedictine order had failed to return to its evil ways.

Lindsay says that "the chronicles, whether of towns or families, bear witness to the degradation of morals among the parish priests and the superior clergy"; and he remarks how little asceticism we should expect amongst the common priests when we read of bishops riding to the Diet (Congress) with their concubines dressed as men in their troops. As late as 1522, when Germany is ringing

with scorn, we find the Imperial Diet at Nuremberg complaining to the Pope that the priests seduce women, abuse the confessional, and pay their ecclesiastical superiors a regular fine for concubinage which was in effect a license to sin. In some dioceses this tax was levied on all the priests, and they could then please themselves if they got value for it. In Hungary we find synods at Gran in 1450 and 1480 complaining that this payment on account of concubines causes some ecclesiastical authorities to promote immorality.

Lea gives several pages of quotations from contemporary documents which show that the German clergy were as bad as any others. At Brunswick in 1476 we find a chapter of the cathedral clergy laying down that for the future canons, vicars, and other clerics serving the cathedral must not keep their mistresses openly in their houses. An Inquisitor who tried to suppress concubinage in Hungary (where it was, as I said, regularized by payment), was forced by the priests to fly for his life. In Pomerania the priests had "wives," and these took precedence of other married women at public festivals. Lea quotes synods and bishops of the years 1454, 1492, 1499, and 1500 to show how futile were attempts to suppress the custom. In Schleswig the situation was the same, and a new bishop who attacked the custom in 1494 was driven out of Germany. In 1476 a swineherd in the district of Wurzburg set up as an inspired preacher, and to audiences that ran to twenty or thirty thousand he violently denounced the vices of the clergy: until, of course, he was burned at the stake. Some years earlier a similar enthusiast had done the same in the Low Countries and France, and had come to the same uncomfortable end. In Wurzburg the popular scorn counted for so little that in 1521 we find the bishop complaining that "large numbers" of his priests are as bad as the laity for drink, gluttony, gambling, and impurity. In 1512 the Bishop of Ratisbon is equally unflattering about his clergy.

These instances will suffice to show that the criticisms of Erasmus, Ulrich von Hutten, Cornelius Agrippa, and other censors of clerical morals in Germany, were well founded. The situation was, in fact, the same in every country. The Catholic Canon Barry, who was incautiously entrusted with a chapter in the first volume of the *Cambridge Modern History*, notices the reforms of Cardinal Ximenes and others in Spain and concludes: "The worst abuses were purged out of the Iberian Church, and, while other European clergy were accused of gross licentiousness, the Spanish priests became for the most part virtuous and devout." This, of course, enables the Catholic to quote so authoritative a work as the *Cambridge Modern History* for the purity of the Spanish clergy, yet they were almost the most immoral in Europe!

Listen. Lea quotes the Spanish Council of Aranda in 1473 bitterly complaining that the priests have lost the respect of the laity by their vices. Then came the reforms of Cardinal Ximenes, with the vigorous support of the fanatical monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella; yet in 1512 the Council of Seville is just as severe on the morals of the clergy. It seems that, with more audacity even than their colleagues in other countries, they officiate at the marriages of

their own children and use their sons as altar-boys (assisting them in the mass). It seems further that in no country was the hearing of the confessions of women more industriously used for the purpose of "solicitation," as the corruption of the women was now called, than in Spain, and it was the Archbishop of Toledo who introduced, in 1547, the practice of enclosing the confessor in a "box" or little wooden hut that separated him from the penitent. Hitherto a woman had just knelt by the side of a priest to confess her sins.

But the Spanish clergy particularly resisted this interference with their liberty—we find the authorities still urging it on them to the end of the eighteenth century—and in 1561 the Inquisition was instructed to stamp out the practice of solicitation. It broadcast a decree that women were to lodge their complaints within thirty days, and one Spanish writer, whom we will not take too literally, says that, when this decree was published at Seville, twenty secretaries of the Inquisition did not suffice to take down the charges of the vast crowd of women in thirty days and the period had to be extended to four months! It is at all events certain that a memorial was presented to the Inquisition praying it to abandon this job and that in 1571 it did in fact abandon it. From the Middle Ages to the twentieth century the Spanish clergy have been notoriously the most immoral in Europe, and their license in Latin America, of which most of my readers will have some idea, is merely an extension of their practices.

Does anybody wonder if, perhaps, the French clergy were any better? It was particularly in France that distinguished laymen urged Rome to permit the clergy to marry on account of the general license. The bishops and abbots were luxurious and often corrupt, and, as Barry says, "Dissolute prelates can't reform immoral priests." One cardinal held five bishoprics and thirteen abbeys. Popular friar preachers denounced the morals of the clergy, high and low, to immense crowds. "It was," says the Cambridge History, "idle to talk of reform at the bottom when at the top every personal interest was bound up with the existing corruption."

Of Italy it is, after what we have seen and shall further see, about Rome, hardly necessary to speak. Catholic writers tell us about the beautiful new religious bodies (Oratorians, Theatines, etc.) which appeared in Italy, to show that the Church was reforming itself. Apart from the fact that no serious writer was ever so foolish as to say that there were no virtuous men left in Christendom, and the fact that these reforms began only when the thunder of revolt was rumbling over Europe, those partial reforms afford the most explicit evidence of the general corruption. The new bodies were authorized by Rome on the express ground that the priests were generally immoral. Another defect of cooperative historical work, in which no single writer knows the whole subject, is seen when we find a writer in the Cambridge History saying that "Florence was a sober God-fearing state." Perrens, in his classical biography of Savonarola, the famous prior of St. Mark's convent and eloquent preacher, quotes one contemporary writer after another to prove that Savonarola did not exaggerate the facts: that

few cities contained more vice, especially unnatural vice, and skepticism than Florence. Savonarola preached repeatedly on the vices of the clergy: not some of the clergy, but the clergy generally. I translate a few terrible sentences from his sermons:

"They [the priests] spend the whole day with women. They visit prostitutes every day. . . . When you see them leading wicked lives, keep your children away from them. See to it. More than once women dressed as choir boys have been seen taking part in the services of the Church. . . . All the cities of Italy are full of these horrors [priests and boys]. . . . This man who has spent the night with a concubine . . . rises in the morning to say mass."

In face of this mass of evidence—and no one has yet completely gathered the evidence from contemporary literature—we see that beyond question the tens of thousands of priests of medieval Europe were as a body, or in the great majority, corrupt. We have scores of declarations of councils, synods, or prelates of every country; and, as Barry himself says, "It is not the way of religious councils to legislate for evils, which do not exist or have attained only slender proportions." This is confirmed by the sermons of scores of celebrated preachers, dozens of contemporary writers, and popular songsters or rhymers in every tongue. The general immorality of the clergy is one of the most conspicuous and consistent facts in European literature on the eve of the Reformation.

What makes these modern attempts to extenuate the corruption look particularly foolish is that Popes and prelates repeatedly admitted that the rebellion against Rome was mainly inspired by the immoral life of the clergy and monks. The Lateran Council, which Leo X permitted to draw up a scheme of disorders and remedies, which he then filed, was quite explicit on the corruption of the clergy. It used the language which we found on the lips of Innocent III three hundred years earlier: that the vices of its priests threatened to destroy the Church. In 1523 Pope Hadrian V says in the instructions (translated in Pastor) which he gave to the Legate he sent to the German Diet: "We frankly acknowledge that God permits this persecution of his Church on account of the sins of men, especially of the prelates and the clergy." In the year 1567 we find (text in Lea) the Bishop of Constance saying in synod: "Bear in mind that the damnable and detestable life of the clergy was the chief cause of the evil that afflicts us"; and, as I will tell in the next book, he finds their lives in Catholic Germany as scandalous as ever. In the same year, 1567, we find Pope Pius V saying in a letter (Latin text in Lea) to the abbots and friars of Germany:

"When we ask ourselves what it was that gave cause for so many and such pestilential heresies . . . we conclude that the chief cause of the evil was the corrupt morals of the prelates, who, giving the same license to the clergy under them and cor-

rupting them by their own example, not undeservedly brought upon themselves the greatest hatred, contempt and anger of the laity."

There is one little omission here: the prelates would add that they got their license from the example of the Popes. "Rome has spoken: the case is finished," to use a phrase which Catholics like. Any historian who gives a different version of the causes of the Reformation is miseducating the young.

CHAPTER II

THE MONASTERIES ON THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION

I AM trying as far as possible to enable the reader to form a conscientious and scientific estimate of an historical situation which is generally obscured by sectarian writers or by writers who are too polite to tell, in full, facts which are distasteful to "our Catholic fellow-citizens." The first requirement is, obviously, to ascertain in *what proportion* the priests and monks were corrupt. Unfortunately the loose literature of the Middle Ages never takes the form of statistics, and on this point one cannot attempt to be precise. What one can confidently say is that all the records of clerical virtue given us by Catholic writers, especially Pastor, clearly relate only to a small minority of the whole. On the other hand, the quotations I gave in the last chapter vaguely but unmistakably relate in most cases to the general body, or the large majority, of the clergy. We may leave it at that. Naturally there were in every age sincere men who entered the ranks of the clergy. I have already spoken of a wave of piety amongst the common people of Germany which gave more than one child of devout parents, like Martin Luther, to the church or the monastery. Eloquent preachers like Savonarola converted thousands or tens of thousands to sober ways, and some of these became clerics or (like Pico della Mirandola, a pupil of Savonarola) reform-writers. But any historian who collects and enlarges on these particular instances and ignores or crushes into a line the hundreds of indications of general corruption is a false teacher.

The fact that the majority of the clergy were corrupt is enough to discredit every attempt to represent the Roman Church as a civilizing agency. And our censure of the Church must be all the more severe when we keep in mind a second point: that for a hundred and fifty years, at least from the time when the Council of Constance deposed a Pope and ordered the new Pope to reform the Church, the laity brought heavy pressure to bear upon Rome to purify itself. In earlier centuries we had to listen to Catholic pleas that the world held back the Papacy: now we have the spectacle of the Popes and clergy defying the censures of the laity, burning critics of their morals, realizing fully that wealth and simony are the root-causes of the corruption and refusing to sacrifice them. From 1450 to 1520, when the Reformation may be said to have begun, the fire of angry or caustic criticism at the Popes and clergy was incessant. In such circumstances it is not strange that we find a few reforms: it is monstrous, and it shows the comprehensive depravity of the Church, that we find so few reforms. It is little use asking us to admire the reforms of Cardinal Cusa in Germany, Cardinal Contarini in Italy, or Cardinal Ximenes in

Spain. We expect **something** to be done: the graver thing is that the Popes, as we shall see, resisted reform in their own court, and this caused the effects of all reforms to be merely local and temporary.

We have now to see the condition of monasteries and nunneries on the eve of the Reformation. This is really less important than the condition of the clergy, since virtuous monasteries and nunneries had little to do with the life of the people, but it is a picturesque and popular subject because of the particularly solemn vows of chastity and poverty which these religious bodies made. Let us approach it with the two points I have just made in our minds. First, since much corruption is admitted by everybody and much virtue is similarly admitted, it is really a question of proportion. The literature is too loose to enable us to determine this accurately, but we may certainly say that if any large proportion, even short of the majority, of the monks and nuns were corrupt, it is a fouler scandal than the corruption of the clergy, because the monks and nuns lived entirely by their profession of superior virtue. Secondly, the anger and ridicule of the laity were particularly directed at the monks and nuns, because the hypocrisy was more sordid in their case, so that we ought to find a good deal of improvement in the sixteenth century.

§1. THE MONKS AND NUNS OF MERRY ENGLAND

We begin with England because Catholics boast that it is precisely in the case of England that their historians have proved that the charge against the monks and nuns has been grossly exaggerated. There recently died an English Benedictine monk who had been promoted to the cardinalate, Gasquet, and of all his works it was his "*Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*" that chiefly won his rewards for him. Even in America this "scholarly" work is made the excuse for adopting a new tone in regard to medieval monasteries. The cardinal has proved, it is said, that very little corruption was found in the monasteries suppressed by Henry VIII, on the ground that his Visitors had found them largely immoral, and therefore we may ignore these exceptional cases and dwell rather on the pious lives and social and literary services of the majority. And I reply that Gasquet's book is as miserable a piece of sophistry and miseducation as you will find in all the recent Catholic literature which claims to be "scholarly" because the author, not having to work for a living, has had leisure to forage in our libraries of unpublished manuscripts and quotes a few quite unimportant facts from these.

Gasquet examines the English monasteries about the year 1535, when the royal Visitors descended on them. The first duty of any impartial historian is, therefore, to point out that the Church was then already in face of a formidable rebellion in Germany, very largely on account of the state of the monasteries, and that even in England the monks and nuns had been threatened for many years with dire punishment, and not obscurely threatened with the loss

of their houses, if they did not mend their ways. I have already explained that just fifty years earlier, in 1485, King Henry VII had taken the very unusual step of ordering the bishops and archbishops to commit to prison all priests and monks who were convicted of any kind of sexual transgression, and archbishops and cardinals had been worrying them ever since. Cardinal Wolsey had threatened very drastic action against them. All this, which the scholarly Gasquet does not tell, is very singular if there was only a little corruption here and there in the monastic world. It is still more singular that the most powerful prelates had not been able in the course of fifty years to crush a mere handful of rebels against their rules. Clearly the corruption was too widespread for them either to ignore or to defeat.

Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury and head of the English Church in 1485, could not entirely ignore the royal command. Some Catholic writers tell, as a proof of the hawk-eyed vigilance of the Popes, how in 1489 Innocent VIII sent a bull to Archbishop Morton admonishing him to correct the evil lives of the monks of England. We saw in the last book the character of this half-converted libertine, the Pope who married his children in the Vatican and allowed his son to debauch the whole of Rome. He cared nothing what happened in England, but the archbishop had not the power to deal with monks—most monasteries and nunneries were by Papal order not normally subject to the bishops—and the Pope had to grant him that power when the King demanded it. The text of the bull is given in Wilkins (*"Councils of Great Britain and Ireland,"* III, 630), but I need quote only that the Pope says he hears that "some" of the English monks "live a lascivious life."

They certainly did, for the next document in Wilkins, is a long Latin letter of the Archbishop to the abbot of St. Alban's (a Benedictine monastery, so the Benedictine Gasquet conceals this important document). We learn that the abbot is guilty of usury (trade), simony, and "other enormous crimes." His monks "lead a lascivious life and hesitate not to profane the sacred places, even the temple of God, by fornication with nuns and the shedding of blood and seed." The chapel of the famous old abbey must have witnessed curious spectacles. It seems that the abbot has turned into a nun a loose married woman who has left her husband, has put her at the head of a neighboring nunnery, and he and his monks "notoriously go to fornicate there." He has made another brothel of a second nunnery under his jurisdiction. In several smaller houses under the control of his abbey the monks neglect all church services and "prostitute themselves to whores inside and out of the monasteries, almost publicly and continuously." They steal and sell the ornaments of the church, even the jewels from the precious bier of St. Alban, to pay for these dissipations. All this is going on openly four years after the King has ordered jail for adulterous monks; and the archbishop merely tells the wicked abbot that he really will have to punish him unless he improves. It was only an hour's ride from London, and the archbishop or his representative could easily have gone there. In point of fact, we do not know

that there was any punishment. Froude says that neither the King nor the archbishop dare do more than talk.

St. Alban's is about ten miles from my home in London. In the old days it was on the main road into London, and must have been visited by abbot and prelates almost every week as they passed; and there cannot have been a person in the city who did not know that the whole group of religious houses in the district were as corrupt as any medieval story-teller ever depicted a monastery. We know that there were others like it but do not know how many. We find Morton's successor, Warham, making further feeble protests against the corruption of the monks in 1511. We found the nunnery at Kilburn, a few miles out on the second main road from London to the north, equally corrupt (as I told in the last chapter) throughout at least the first decade of the sixteenth century. We found brothels for friars, and prostitutes specializing on them, in London itself. We found Canon Barry quoting the Bishop of Winchester (in the south of England) saying in 1520 that "everything belonging to the primitive integrity of the clergy, and especially to the monastic estate, was perverted." Gasquet assures his readers that the bishops testify to the *vigue* of the monks. He omits to quote the testimony of the Archbishop of Westminster and the Bishop of Winchester.

After 1520, when the latter denounced the monks, there was the formidable development of the Reformation. By 1530 Lutheranism had conquered a large part of Germany, as well as Denmark and Scandinavia; Zwingli had captured the great cities of Switzerland; Calvin had obtained a hearing even in the royal palace at Paris; and one of the chief grievances of the millions of rebels against Rome was the immorality of the clergy and the monks. Moreover in 1529 Henry VIII joined in the rebellion, and in 1532 the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer, was a man who had imbibed Lutheran ideas in Germany. We should therefore be rather astonished if in 1535, when the English monasteries were partially inspected, the monks and nuns were still as gay as they had been in 1500 or even 1520.

In other words, serious examination of the findings of Henry VIII's Visitors, or of the second commission which rejected some of the charges of the first, is rather a waste of time. One hundred and fifty-five religious houses, or less than half the number in the areas selected—only part of England—were visited. The commissioners were not men of high character, and Gasquet eagerly points out that they were known to be guilty of graft; and his lack of a sense of humor prevents him from seeing that they may have accepted bribes to overlook misdeeds. They made no serious legal inquiry; Gasquet says; and he forgets that that would prevent them from finding corruption where it existed, for no abbot would present it under the noses of the Visitors for whose coming he was quite prepared. As to the second visitation, only a fool would expect it to find looseness. The gay days were over, and the only suprising thing is that so many houses were still open to criticism fifteen years

after the Reformation began. Gasquet's rejoicing is rather like the pride of a man in his purity after he has been castrated.

§2. THE GERMAN MONASTERIES

Canon Barry, on the other hand, surrenders the English monks to the Protestant critics but finds corruption "rare in the larger houses" of Germany and is very positive about virtue in Spain. We should again find it singular if the Reformers won their case largely by criticizing the morals of the monks, whom the people knew well, and the Popes acknowledged the prevalence of corruption, yet these modern writers, four centuries later, find that it was all a mistake. But neither Barry nor Gasquet mentions a deadly little book by a pious and learned Benedictine abbot, Trithemius (or Tritheim), who ruled the great abbey of Spanheim in the last decade of the fifteenth century. It has not been reprinted for more than four centuries and is very rare, but I have read this crabbed little "Lugubrious Book on the State and Ruin of the Monastic Order," to translate its Latin title. It was printed in 1493, and its authority is absolute.

Abbot Tritheim opens with a glance at the former glory of his Benedictine order and grieves and is "ready to shed tears" over "its present depravity." It is "in ruins," and "the rule of righteousness has yielded place to the delights of pleasure." We must, of course, be on our guard against exaggeration in the words of such men, for strict truthfulness is the one virtue disregarded by strict moralists. But when the author deliberately says, "I see few walk according to the traditions of the order," and "almost all are mad with pleasure," we realize that there is no question here of a few black sheep in the flock. Nor is he speaking merely of what some are fond of calling a "worldly spirit"; though they seem to forget that even that is a mortal deviation from the rule. The abbot speaks of "lives filled with every sort of turpitude." He surveys his Benedictine world, to which most of the great abbeys of Germany belonged, and says: "I might almost say that all have fallen." He candidly admits that "there never was a general reform" of monasteries. Of the one hundred and twenty-seven abbeys reformed by Nicholas of Cusa about 1450, about half had, in monastic language, "returned to their vomit." At all events, he is clear about his own order. There are almost no strict monasteries left; yet Canon Barry writes in the Cambridge History that corruption was rare in them.

Lea adds a few details that confirm this. He quotes a Carthusian monk writing in 1489 in much the same strain. He quotes the statutes of the Cistercians (the strictest monks) for 1518 complaining that some of the abbots are so lax that they keep women in the abbeys: which is the deadly sin against monastic rules. He gives the text of a bull of Pope Alexander VI about the Benedictine nuns—how they must have smiled at admonitions from such a man—saying: "In certain monasteries of the said order the nuns have no closure; they admit all sorts of men, even of suspicious char-

acter, and they wander out of their convents to courts and castles and on the streets and commit many scandals." The monks who are not in orders "are said to throw off the habit and marry." Abbot Trithem also makes this complaint that numbers leave the order.

Another witness is one of the most zealous anti-Lutheran preachers of Reformation days, the Franciscan friar Thomas Murner. He was quite a learned man but the chief ground of his popularity in Germany was that he composed his sermons in verse, and he used coarse and free language which must have made the congregations, in the most famous churches, rock with laughter. Collections of his sermons were printed, and some have been reprinted in the nineteenth century, though the old German is sometimes difficult to follow. Anybody who can read his "Narrenbeschweerung" (Conspiracy of Fools) ought to try to see it. Catholic writers talk much about the indelicacy of Luther's language. The worst of it is mild compared with some of the language used in sermons to vast congregations by Thomas Murner; and I may add that even Sir Thomas More, Catholic Lord Chancellor of England, attacked Luther in language as vile as any Luther ever used. Modern religious people get the police to prevent us from reproducing the language actually used by these saints and martyrs of the ages of faith and then try to tell us how morally delicate people then were. The times were unspeakably gross. Here I must be content to say that Friar Thomas attacks the morals of priests, monks, and nuns as caustically as Savonarola or Erasmus. In the convents, he says, the nun who has most children becomes abbess. More himself was, I may add, a fierce critic of the monks until the Reformation.

§3. GENERAL CORRUPTION

It was the same in every country. Erasmus was one of the most widely informed as well as most scholarly men of the time, and both he and Ulrich von Hutten, another caustic critic, were originally monks. But Erasmus declares them the same everywhere. "They are called Fathers, and they often are," he says of the friars. His most deliberate statement is, perhaps, in his "Encomium Mariae" (Praise of Folly), where he says of monks in general: "A large proportion of them are as far removed as possible from religion." His works, full of criticisms of monks and priests, were translated into nearly every language in Europe and circulated by the hundred thousand. Ulrich von Hutten was crowned Poet Laureate of Germany in 1517 and extraordinarily popular, yet he was the fiercest critic of priestly and monastic morals. In the humorous "Letters of Obscure Men"—at least he was the chief author—he distinguishes three classes of monks. The first are the holy and useful, but "these are in heaven." Those of the second class are neither useful nor useless, and these are "painted in the churches." The third class consists of the living monks, and these "do much harm." They "seek money and handsome women." In fact, "when the devil can't succeed anywhere he sends a wicked old

woman and a monk." Nearly all Europe that could read was laughing over these things before Luther ever dreamed of rebelling or was known outside his monastery.

Of the monks of Spain, where we should hardly expect them to be much superior to the priests, we have one curious record. Friar Wadding, the English historian of the Franciscan order, tells it about his brethren. I described in the last book how even before Francis of Assisi died his followers were fighting for the ownership of property. The majority remained lax and were known as the Conventuals, as distinct from the minority of the Strict Observance. The Spanish reformer Cardinal Ximenes was at first a friar, and when he became head of the Spanish friars in 1495 and wanted to reform them, there was an ungodly commotion. The friars sent to Rome for their General—to protect them from reform, notice—and he tried to persuade Queen Isabella that this Ximenes was a meddlesome good-for-nothing. But the king and queen were fanatics, and the friars were ordered to mend their ways or be exiled. In a body they marched out of Toledo, a crucifix at the head of the procession, chanting the 114th Psalm: "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language." They did not leave Spain, nor were they more than temporarily reformed, for in 1545 Philip II, another fanatic, again bade them choose between reform and exile.

These indications do not tell us what was the proportion of strict and lax monks. Everybody knows that there were strict monasteries. Luther never complained of vice in the monastery to which he had belonged, and many distinguished Catholic leaders and reformers of the time were monks. But when we find a Benedictine abbot impeaching nearly the whole body of his colleagues in Germany, and Ximenes struggling against the whole body of the Conventual friars in Spain, the general public enjoying the contempt that is poured on the word monk, brothels openly frequented by monks in the towns, and so on, it is moderate to say that there was a widespread corruption. The monks had their defenders, and round the great abbeys folk did not want to impeach them and see them suppressed. Evil as it was from the economic point of view, they supported very large numbers in idleness by giving them food, and they employed further large numbers. But as a whole the institution was repulsively hypocritical, even when it was not as lascivious as St. Albans, and it was deservedly suppressed over half of Europe.

CHAPTER III

THE REVOLT OF EUROPE

BEFORE we apply this moral scrutiny to the Popes and cardinals it will be useful to glance at the rebellious movement in Europe which culminated in the appearance of the Protestant Churches. I have, in fact, in the preceding book examined the conduct of the Popes and of their court during most of the period we have now covered. We found three corrupt Popes occupying the Vatican from 1492 to 1521, and during the preceding half century we found the Popes, several of whom had been loose in earlier years, morally indifferent to the deepening degradation of Rome. This prepared us for what we have now found in regard to the condition of the prelates, priests, and monks. The structure was rotten from top to bottom. Ecclesiastical offices were generally sold and the buyers chiefly looked to the profit of them. The more important prelates held several bishoprics or abbeys, and could therefore pay no personal attention to them. Certainly the majority of the prelates and abbots of Europe, the men who would compose a General Council if one were summoned to reform the Church, were corrupt at least in the sense that their luxurious lives were based upon the illegal simultaneous possession of several benefices and the sale of offices to those beneath them. Cardinal Wolsey, who dreamed of reforming the Church of England, is a type. He was Archbishop of York, Bishop of Winchester and Durham, and Abbot of gay St. Alban's; and he was incurably sensual, luxurious, and desirous of pomp.

What Catholics call "reform from within" could therefore only come from the Popes, and these in turn were fettered by the corrupt court which elected them. Indeed for the last thirty or forty years we have found no Pope who wanted reform. What we have next to examine, then, is the claim that the Church did eventually reform itself and so deprive Protestantism of its chief pretext for disrupting the Christian body. Since it is a notorious historical fact that Rome took no step in the direction of reform until long after the actual disruption of the Christian body, Catholic writers cannot hope to do more than fool their own followers in this matter, but the general reader of history does not, perhaps, realize how very thoroughly and spontaneously the peoples of Europe accepted the new ideas before political considerations and military operations began to have an influence.

Europe was bound sooner or later to discover the fraud that had been imposed on it in the name of the gospel of Christ. For several centuries, as we saw, large sections of Europe had been making this discovery, and the Papacy had, as long as the rebellion was sectional and depended on preaching, been able to suppress it

by the brute force of Inquisitors and crusaders. The great increase of the middle class, the increase of education initiated by the scholars of the Renaissance, and especially the invention of printing made the sixteenth century much more favorable for the spread of rebellion more rapidly and over a larger area. What the historian has really to explain is, not why half of Europe discovered and rejected the imposture of the Papal system, but how the other half was persuaded that it was not an imposture. In any case I want to make particularly clear that the Popes and the Papal court refused to assist in any reform of the foul condition of the Church until half their revenue and authority was gone and the other half gravely threatened.

§1. LUTHER AND THE GERMAN REFORMERS

In order to understand the slowness of the revolt against what we, with our historical knowledge, see to be a transparently fraudulent system of priestcraft we must try to realize the colossal historical ignorance of the people of the Middle Ages. Even the finest scholars of the Middle Ages had not an elementary notion of the true course of human history. The story of the first four centuries of the Christian Era, which was essential to an understanding of the real development of the Papal system, was falsified by hundreds—if you include the lives of the martyrs, thousands—of forgeries which we have seen, and not a scholar in Europe had a suspicion that they were forgeries. The grossest of all was the claim that the Emperor Constantine had, in leaving Rome to found Constantinople, handed over Italy to the Popes, yet no scholar in Europe ever suspected this story until the second half of the fifteenth century. The discovery of this by Lorenzo Valla, and the translation of his essay into German and other languages, had a great influence in opening the eyes of middle-class men to the Papal imposture.

There were, therefore, only two ways in which a revolt against Rome could be inspired. The obvious corruption of the Church did not suffice because the obvious reply was to cleanse the moral and fiscal corruption and leave the system of doctrine and discipline intact. But the corruption made many feel that there was something wrong with the claim of a divine foundation of such a Church, since it seemed by its very nature to lend itself to the spread of corrupt practices, and lead to a scrutiny of its foundations. This was difficult, as I said, because the real foundations were historical forgeries. Some therefore rejected the entire Christian system as incredible and demoralizing; some rejected the Papal system on the strength of the plain teaching of Christ and St. Paul. The very large revolts of the Bogomils in eastern Europe, the Albigensians in the south of France, and the witch-sect (which we now know to have been an organized anti-Christian cult, for both sexes and all ages and conditions) followed the first line; and from the time of Frederic II onward there was a very considerable growth of educated skepticism. But the ideas of the Albigensians and witches were fantastic,

and educated skepticism inspired by the Arabs or the classical literature was necessarily confined to a small class. The general revolt of Europe was bound to take the second way: an appeal to the authentic teaching of Christ in the Bible.

The weakness of this was that if you pressed it rigorously the whole Church had apostatized right from the second century. All the venerated Fathers of the early Church had accepted a system of priests and bishops, elaborate ritual and the mass, and so on. Some accepted this grim conclusion, as the very extensive Lollard movement in England and the stricter followers of Hus in Bohemia had done. Their success shows that the Bible was by no means inaccessible before the Reformation, yet it made a most important difference when, in the second half of the fifteenth century, the printing presses began to multiply copies of translations of the Bible by the hundred thousand. In an earlier chapter I mentioned, incidentally, open-air preachers of the evangelistic type who addressed crowds in the streets of London, especially near the old St. Paul's cathedral, before the end of the fifteenth century. Earlier in the century, as I said, such preachers had been burned alive when they attacked the clerical system. Now they had to be tolerated, and they multiplied in every country. There was a Jacques Lefebvre in France openly preaching return to the Bible and its teaching, and a little later Jean Calvin had such success, both with the people and the learned, that he won the support of the French king's sister and was received by the king himself. He is so much better known by the Latin name Calvin that most people are unaware that he was French and had at first a very great success in spreading his gospel in Paris. A more liberal biblical preacher, Zwingli, had in the meantime won the majority in the larger cities of Switzerland to the new ideas, and it was on his work that Calvin built his success in that country.

In Germany up to the time of Luther's revolt the ground had been prepared chiefly by the frivolous and caustic attacks on the Papal system by the witty scholar Erasmus, whose real beliefs we cannot tell, and the brilliant young poet Ulrich von Hutten, and other writers. There were three conspicuous currents in German life: a sort of religious revival amongst the mass of the people, from which Luther originally came, a cultivated liberalism to which the reformer Melancthon (a good Greek scholar) belonged, and the frivolous, contemptuous body of readers, without constructive ideas, of the witty critics. There was, in fact, much the same division everywhere, and it did not help the revolt. Luther and Calvin hated the new paganism of the Humanists, and Calvin especially detested the more coarse and frivolous attacks on Rome, which had really done more than anything else to prepare Europe. The Roman Church, on the other hand, was united and powerfully organized, and a really zealous and religious Pope like Innocent III might have set the rebels against each other and destroyed them separately.

Fortunately, in a sense, a man of strong personality, Martin Luther, entered the movement and it crystallized round him. I have shown in Little Blue Book No. 1141 that the Catholic calumnies

of his character are just specimens of Catholic Truth: that he was a sincerely religious Augustinian monk who very conscientiously and gradually worked out his position until he found himself doctrinally opposed to the Roman system. The coarseness of some of his language is, as I said, not in the least in that age inconsistent with deep religion. The language of Pope Julius II was worse, and the "refined" Medici Pope Leo X was just as coarse in his tastes; while even the English Sir Thomas More uses language about Luther that cannot be printed today.

Luther began his work on an orthodox basis. I told in the last book how in 1514 Leo X perpetrated a gross scandal in Germany, just at the time when the country seethed with anger against Papal corruption. He sold the Archbishopric of Mayence and two bishoprics to a dissolute young noble for \$100,000 and allowed him to recover his money by a share in the sale of indulgences in his district. The Pope sent Father Tetzel, a Dominican monk, to press the sale, and in 1517 he was conducting his traffic a few miles from Wittenberg University, where Luther taught. We need not notice Catholic objections to the word "sale." The indulgences were given for definite money-payments, and the Pope's agents cried out their wares in the churches just as men cried out their linens and drugs on the streets. Disgust at the proceedings led Luther to examine, as a serious theologian, the bases of the doctrine of purgatory and indulgences (or reliefs from the sufferings in purgatory). As a result he wrote out ninety-five propositions impeaching the doctrine and nailed his paper, as a challenge, to the door of the Castle Church. The monks informed the Vatican that Luther was interfering with business, and Luther was ordered to present himself before a Papal Legate at the Diet at Augsburg in 1518. He saw, however, that the Diet was sullenly anti-Papal, and he appealed to a General Council and returned to his study of the bases of the Papal system. He embodied the results in two little books in 1520, which rejected more doctrines of the Church, and he publicly burned the bull in which the Pope condemned the books.

This is generally taken as the beginning of the Reformation, though no definite beginning can really be assigned and Luther had not the least idea of forming a new Church. I need follow it only a few steps further at this point. The Emperor was orthodox, and Rome easily persuaded him to summon Luther to the Diet of Worms in 1521 and condemn him as "a stiff-necked heretic." This would mean the usual end of the revolt, Rome thought. But Luther's local ruler, the Elector of Saxony, agreed with him, protected him, and lodged him in the castle at Wartburg, where he continued his critical studies. It was in the next ten years that the success of the Reformation was secured, and we may almost trace it to an historical accident. The Emperor left Germany to pursue his ambition in Spain and Italy and the Council he appointed to rule in his absence was feeble and divided. Luther's ideas spread rapidly and several princes (which means armies) were won to them. When, in 1529, the Emperor sent orders to enforce the sentence against Luther, an important minority in the Diet, at Spire,

lodged a "protest," and from that date they were known as "Protestants." When, next year, the Emperor returned, he found the Lutherans championed by the Elector of Saxony, the Duke of Hesse, the Margrave of Brandenburg, the Duke of Luneberg, and a formidable body of nobles and representatives of free cities. Revolt against Rome had at last the one thing that could save it from Papal vengeance: a league of princes with armies at their disposal. Luther had in part won this by condemning the Revolt of the Peasants (1524-25).

§2. THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

England had always maintained a considerable degree of independence—it had not, for instance, admitted the Inquisition, though it passed a civil law condemning heretics to death—and at the time of the Lollard movement at least a quarter of the country had become definitely anti-Papal. This had been too democratic a movement to be tolerated by the monarchs, but, as we have seen, there remained a very widespread attitude of contempt of Rome and the hierarchy. Nowhere were the popular songs and poems more bitter against priests, bishops, and monks, and lay preachers in the cities had to be tolerated by the bishops. In fact, important ecclesiastics like Colet, the learned and pious Dean of St. Paul's, were almost Lutherans before Luther, and Sir Thomas More, in the first part of his famous "Utopia," reflects a very strongly critical mood in learned lay circles.

By 1527, when Henry VIII began to think of a divorce from his queen in order to marry Anne Boleyn, many ecclesiastics were ready to break with Rome and the people generally were daily familiar with contempt of the Church and the clergy. In the collection of cases of Archdeacon Hale from which I have previously quoted a very high proportion of the trials refer to vituperation of the clergy, sacrilege, mockery of church usages, and heresy. London was saturated with such things in the year 1500. Froude, on the other hand, shows that by 1532 there was a strong party amongst the prelates and gentry in favor of rejecting the Pope's authority. In an address which the Church Convocation offered to the king in 1532 he was requested to forbid the clergy to send "first-fruits" to Rome, and the petition ended: "May it please your Highness to ordain in the present Parliament that the obedience of your Highness and of the people be withdrawn from the See of Rome."

Some of our recent historians are therefore again obscuring the truth when they lay undue stress on political considerations and the personal passions of Henry VIII. Henry, whose ability none now questions, was not more immoral than most of the Catholic princes or prelates of the time. He was unfortunate in choosing as mistress—Anne was already such, as her sister had been before her—an ambitious woman who was determined to be queen; and, indeed, he felt even more the prospect of having no male heir. But his desire of divorce was merely the occasion for letting loose the

general resentment of Rome. The whole question of his successive doubts about the validity of his marriages is hardly worth discussing. It was largely miserable sophistry, but those who censure Henry and his prelates seem to be ignorant that in regard to royal marriages the Papacy had acted on just such sophistry for two or three centuries, and Henry and his bishops knew quite well that the scruples now professed by Pope Clement VII were fraudulent; he acted solely from policy, as will be realized when we deal with the circumstances in which the Pope then was.

Some of our historical writers seem to be ignorant that scores of royal or noble marriages had been dissolved by the Popes on even more frivolous grounds—I have given a large number of cases in my "Influence of the Church on Marriage and Divorce"—and they do not appreciate the frame of mind of Henry. The same Pope, Clement VII, had annulled the marriage of Henry's own sister, Margaret of Scotland, in 1525, on a ludicrous pretense (to let her marry her lover) and was entertaining a further divorce from this lover when she tired of him. Henry was as much disgusted with the Pope and his hypocrisy as eager to wed Anne Boleyn. As compared with this, the English Catholic historian, Lord Acton, holds that Henry's first marriage really did afford "an issue charged with genuine doubt," and Clement, in moments when Spain did not press him, was ready to nullify the marriage.

The second general fact to keep in mind is that there was so little resistance to the change. Let us keep apart local uprisings due to the suppression of the monasteries: the "sturdy beggars" who had depended on these for food do not deserve our sympathy. There were remarkably few "martyrs" under Henry, and under his successor the chief difficulty was to check the people from attacking what remained of the Roman system. In the enormous majority the people of England lightheartedly followed the king. Under "Bloody Mary," as we shall see, there was more bitter opposition to the attempt to restore Catholicism. Henry quarreled only with Papal authority and suppressed most of the monasteries, as spurious outgrowths of the Catholic faith. Cranmer tells us that in his last year he was thinking of more radical alterations, but he did not in fact found Protestantism in England. He did merely what Cardinal Richelieu, as we shall see, thought of doing in Catholic France long afterwards.

I will not therefore describe the events in detail, since this is a history of the Roman, not the Protestant, Church. Sick of the Pope's vacillations, which were transparently political, Henry in 1530 persuaded his clergy to declare him Supreme Head of the English Church. The majority of the clergy were still loyal to Rome in sentiment, yet in 1532, as I said, the rebels got Convocation to pray the king to break with Rome (text in Froude). People smiled when the Pope excommunicated Henry. Parliament passed a law that Henry was Head of the Church, and a few zealous Catholics who refused to submit were executed or imprisoned. The monasteries were dissolved (1536 and 1538). Cranmer was now Archbishop of Canterbury and, whatever his weakness, his

noble declaration in face of death shows that he had genuinely accepted the Lutheran ideas he had learned in Germany. To get the support of the Lutherans a statement of faith was drafted which slighted the doctrine of Purgatory and ignored four out of the seven Roman sacraments. But Henry clung to the mass, confession and the celibacy of the clergy until late in life. The English were, he maintained, not heretics, as the Pope said. The authorization of an English translation of the Bible and the partial introduction of English into the church services are all that we need further notice. What happened after Henry's death (1539) we shall see later.

§3. SPREAD OF THE REBELLION

The Swiss cantons had long before broken away from the Empire. They were united in a Federal Council, like the American states, but each canton enjoyed a great measure of democratic freedom. Here, therefore, the new ideas had a very favorable environment, and, about the same time as Luther, the learned preacher Zwingli roused the people of Zurich against the sale of indulgences. His quarrel with the Papacy led him, like Luther, to make further discoveries of its imposture and to appeal to the Bible. The canton of Zurich was won to his views. This led to a war with the more Catholic and more rural cantons, and it ended, though Zwingli was killed, in the recognition of religious toleration. Zwingli departed further from Catholicism than Luther, and the two reformers quarreled. But Protestantism spread rapidly in the more populated parts of Switzerland.


Calvin was, as I said, a Frenchman whose real name was Cauvin. He was a learned but harsh and intolerant man, and, when his work in France was ruined by the alliance of Pope and king, he went to Geneva, and, although he was after a time exiled on the ground that he was as bad as "a new Pope," he was recalled, and, with the aid of refugees from France, organized what came to be called the Calvinistic Church. It spread not only to other parts of Switzerland but in time to the Netherlands and Scotland, and, through the English Puritans, to New England. It was the first sect to make a drastic attack, in the name of Christian teaching, on the loose morals of Europe, and, as the burning of Servetus testified, it was equally despotic against freedom of speculation.

The king of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, which were still under one crown in 1520, was a nephew of Luther's protector, the Elector of Saxony, and he sent to him for Lutheran preachers. He was, however, a harsh and unpopular monarch, and the clergy and nobles excited a revolt which ended in his exile. But the crown now passed to his uncle, the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, who had already embraced Protestantism; and he encouraged the growth of the new ideas in Denmark and Scandinavia. In 1527 formal toleration was accorded to them, and they spread rapidly. Under Frederick's successor Protestantism completely triumphed, and the old Church was dispossessed. During the same period Gustavus Vasa won the independence of Sweden and he promoted the spread of

Protestantism. The Church had, as we shall see, consolidated southern Germany and Austria in its support and had insured the opposition of the French monarchy. But by 1550 the rebellion had spread over the greater part of northern Europe and the stream of gold to the Papal court had shrunk to about one half. It is in the light of these facts that we must understand the Papacy, after a prolonged struggle, deciding to reform itself.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESISTANCE OF THE POPES

HE history of the Popes during this spread of Protestantism is one of the most curious and disreputable chapters in the whole chronicle. Nothing more convincingly disproves the claim that the Papacy was, as Catholics and too lenient historians imagine it, a beneficent and unselfish institution that played a great part in the development of European civilization. We have actually seen it degenerate in proportion as Europe rose in the scale of civilization. The chief respect in which Europe still fell short of a civilized standard was the general coarseness, violence, and, in view of the Christian stress on purity, hypocrisy of its life. This conduct of the laity we can regard very leniently when we study the condition of the clergy and monks, and we feel little astonishment at the corruption of these when we reflect on the corruption of Rome itself. The laity of Europe were correct. Reform of the Church must begin with the head and extend to the members; and the head obstinately refused to reform itself even in face of the terrible revolt which it saw spreading over Europe.

Catholics conceal the significance of this fact from their readers by saying that the demand for reform was urged in a shape which the Popes could not accept without sacrificing the principles of the faith: some other authority than that of the Pope was demanded to carry out the work of reform, and attacks on moral abuses were mixed with attacks on doctrine. But until 1520, the year before the death of Leo X, there was not in Europe any such demand for doctrinal alterations as needed to be taken into account. The great causes of discontent in Europe were simony and clerical and monastic corruption. Even the heresies of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin might never have been formulated if the Church had, before 1517, shown a serious disposition to reform the Papal court, the fiscal system and the morals of the clergy. It is one of the plainest facts of the history of the Reformation that the Papacy made the spread of heresy a sheer pretext for further delay in setting about a reform.

The facts which I shall now give show plainly that, not only had the Popes of the last fifty years, when heresy was rare, not had the least inclination to reform their court (as we saw in the last book), but even the Popes of these fateful three decades, apart from one futile and very short-lived pontiff, did not want reform. We shall find it perfectly clear that the Popes hoped in the sixteenth century to drown the Protestants in blood, as they had drowned the Albigensians, Cathari, Lollards and Hussites, and that they then trusted to maintain the corrupt fiscal system which was the certain root of all the moral corruption. And this grave fact will be fully confirmed when, in the next book, we find the supposed Catholic

Reformation or "reform from within" ceasing to interest the Popes as soon as they have securely retained half of Europe, and all the old hypocrisy of clerical and monastic life thriving in Italy, Spain, Portugal, France and Austria.

§1. A VIRTUOUS POPE LASTS A FEW MONTHS

To this view the Catholic historian may reply that at the death of Leo X the cardinals evinced their desire for reform by putting on the Papal throne a genuinely pious non-Italian bishop who sincerely meant to attack abuses. We shall see that he spent only thirteen months in Rome, and that Rome, which prevented him from doing anything, almost killed him with ridicule. But even of the conclave itself we must emphatically deny that it showed any desire for reform. It lasted ten days, and it "showed a spectacle of the most disgraceful party struggles, but mustered enough unanimity to propose to the possible candidates a capitulation by the terms of which the towns of the Papal States were divided among the members of the conclave and hardly anything of the temporal power was left to the Pope." That description of a Papal election, held just at the time when Luther had fired Europe with his two books, comes from the pen of a Catholic scholar, Professor F. X. Kraus, in the Cambridge Modern History. The simple fact is that the ambitious and loose cardinals reached their customary deadlock, and they agreed to nominate a simple-minded foreigner whom they could compel to share the wealth of the Church between them.

Hadrian VI was a Dutch bishop who had been a professor at Louvain University. He was on an imperial mission in Spain, and he shuddered when he heard of his election. He was elected in January, 1521, and he did not reach Rome until August. He brought with him his old Dutch housekeeper and a few stolid Flemish servants. Neither he nor they could speak Italian, and the cost of running the Papal establishment was reduced from eight thousand to eight ducats a week. And Rome at first rocked with laughter and then poured ridicule on its Dutch Pope; and he died in despair in September, 1523, after thirteen months of misery. That is all I need say about the only Pope in a hundred years who really wished to reform the Church.

§2. THE BASTARD POPE

Thirty-three cardinals were sealed in the Sistine Chapel to elect a new Pope, and, as they would not wait for the French, the two French cardinals sped over Italy, at the royal command, and at length burst into the chamber still wearing their silver spurs and plumed hats. They need not have hurried. It took twenty days to decide which cardinal was indicated by the Holy Ghost as best fitted to rule the Church in its growing peril. For years Rome had been assured that nothing except a reform of the Papal court and the Church could check the growth of revolt, but it was the last thing that was considered in this conflict. It was a prolonged and fierce squabble of political intrigue and personal ambitions. Car-

dinal Alessandro Farnese (the next Pope) offered quarter of a million dollars to the Emperor's representatives if they would insure his election, and even Cardinal Wolsey intrigued for the tiara; though the Roman officials who guarded the doors shouted to the electors that the new Pope must be a Roman even if he was an idiot. In the end it was the influence of the Emperor, who sadly mistook his man, and sheer graft that won the prize for the Archbishop of Florence, Giulio de' Medici. Besides his archbishopric he held nine bishoprics and two abbeys, bearing a revenue of \$380,000 a year—at the time when Europe was raging against the plurality of benefices—and the cardinals had agreed that whoever was elected should distribute his benefices to the electors. He had also the Vice-Chancellorship to throw into the scale.

But, whatever the consternation in the Church, Rome and Italy, little suspecting the appalling ruin that he was going to bring upon them, burst into rejoicing. The Doge of Venice, Sanuto tells us, said that he would send the greatest nobles of the Republic to "worship Clement as a god on earth." The austerity of the late Pope, which had disgusted Italy, vanished in the promise of a golden era. Rich and magnificent, a patron of art and letters, the new Medici Pope promised a return of the reign of Leo X. It is true that he was only a bastard of the Medici family—Leo X, his uncle, has made him a cardinal after a hypocritical discovery that his parents had been "virtually married"—and his closest friend and counselor was a prelate-bastard. But no one minded in that age of bastards. He was a man of sober, if opulent life, a man of "good intentions," and all that I shall have to say about his pontificate, which covers eleven years of the most critical period of his Church, is that in his unscrupulous efforts to get back Papal territory and enrich his relatives he brought more terrible evils upon Rome and Italy than the Goths had brought and by totally refusing to reform he allowed Lutheranism to overspread Europe.

France and the Empire were still at war, and the Pope assured them of his neutrality. But the advance of the Emperor gave him concern about Papal rights in Italy, and he began secretly to negotiate with France, and then, when the French won a few victories, allied himself with France and Venice. The Emperor swore to take vengeance on him, and pushed the war, of which Italy was the theater, so vigorously that he captured and reduced the French king. Clement transferred his alliance to the Emperor, and began almost at once to negotiate secretly with his enemies. Historians speak of him as "weak and vacillating." He was really as unscrupulous as Leo X. He promised the French king that he would absolve him if he broke the oath by which he had obtained his liberty, and he joined a conspiracy to corrupt the Emperor's commander in Italy and rid the country of all foreigners. Then, convinced that the new European league against the Emperor could beat him, he openly joined it. When the imperialist troops under Cardinal Colonna swooped down on Rome and thoroughly sacked the Vatican, he signed a truce; and he violated it as soon as the troops had gone. To raise further funds he sold five cardinals' hats at the price of

\$100,000 each. But the imperial army moved inexorably across Italy and took Rome.

It is generally agreed that the outrages committed in Rome are the worst that are recorded in its entire history, and it is further agreed—Pastor as well as Gregorovius proves this—that the Spanish Catholic troops were far worse than the Lutheran troops in the Emperor's army. I will therefore give a brief account of this famous "sack of Rome," with which Gregorovius concludes his history, as a further illustration of the morals of the age. The sack lasted eight days, and it is estimated that by the massacres and the famine and plague that followed the population of Rome was reduced in that year from about 90,000 to 32,000. Palaces, often with their works of art, were blown up with gunpowder: churches, monasteries and houses were burned. Almost every building in Rome, except a few palaces which purchased immunity, sometimes at a price of \$1,250,000, was thoroughly looted. Wealthy folk flocked to the houses and palaces of friends of the imperialist faction, but they had to pay, and sometimes even then their women were dragged out. The total loot taken from Rome is variously estimated at twenty-five to fifty million dollars (equal to hundreds of millions in modern coinage), the poorest soldier making \$7000 or \$8000 by loot or ransom. Hundreds of individuals paid quarter of a million dollars for their lives, and cardinals who had not fled with the Pope into the castle of St. Angelo paid half a million. The jewels were torn from the reliquaries in the churches. Soldiers were seen dividing heaps of pearls with a shovel.

In all this Spanish and German troops were mingled, and the Lutheran troops committed outrages of their own. They cut the throats of monks, and no doubt they did their share in the wholesale raping of the Roman nuns. They flung the rich clerical vestments to prostitutes, drank wine with these out of the chalices and played dice on the altars, even in St. Peter's. Some proclaimed Luther Pope: others dressed as cardinals and rode about the streets on asses with a mock Pope. One group tried to force a priest to administer the sacrament to an ass. They made havoc of the precious relics of the Roman churches. One stole the rope with which Judas had hanged himself, another the spear with which the side of Christ had been pierced, another the veil of Veronica, and so on. These were inevitable effects of religious passion on the ignorant soldiers in such circumstances, but all the chroniclers tell us that the Spanish Catholic soldiers displayed a ferocious sensuality and blood-lust far beyond those of the Germans. The nuns were raped in their convents and then dragged, half naked, to the camp. Noble women were torn from their houses and taken to the camp or sold at auction. The prostitutes alone were happy. A writer of the time contemptuously remarks that in Christian Rome there was not a Lucretia to kill herself rather than be violated, but this seems to be untrue. Men, in some cases, killed their wives or daughters and then themselves. Thousands were slaughtered: thousands fled over Italy utterly impoverished from the blazing ruin and the mounds of rotting corpses. And upon the specter of a population that re-

mained when the army withdrew came all the horrors of plague and famine. Such were the Catholics of Spain in the days when Dr. Barry would have us believe that its priests were exceptionally virtuous and in the most splendid days of the new art and civilization of that country.

The Pope and some of the cardinals had taken refuge in the strong castle of St. Angelo. It had not been provisioned, and the cardinals, who looked out on the ghastly scenes round the Vatican and St. Peter's and in the city over the river, were glad to get a meal of ass-flesh. The Spaniard shot even old women and children who tried to pass a bunch of vegetables to the Pope. From the windows the terrified Pope contemplated the outcome of his four years of Papal activity. The patron of art and letters—they say at least this for him—had brought about the complete ruin of art and letters in Rome, for they never recovered. He was starved into surrender and fled to Orvieto, the most dismal figure in Christendom. The emperor, who sincerely mourned the outrages—he was not present—thought to depose the Pope and summon a Council, but France and England, who professed to be equally zealous for the reform of the Church, refused to cooperate and were drawn into alliance to check the victorious Emperor. The war rolled over Italy once more, until once wealthy men begged for bread in its streets and in some of its large villages only five or six ragged peasants were left. Both sides appealed to Clement for support, and, without a thought of the justice of any cause, without regard to his ruined country, this promoter of European civilization feverishly watched the progress of the war to see which side would prove the stronger and be able to restore Papal territory and enrich his family. It was in these political circumstances that the doubts and scruples of Pope Clement in regard to the divorce of Henry VIII were alternately inspired and laid aside.

Let us finish with the unscrupulous and callous opportunist. The Emperor made progress and promised to restore Papal territory and enrich the Pope's family; and Clement crowned him at Bologna, and lost England, in 1530. It was also these years of military adventure that, as I said, kept the Emperor out of Germany and enabled Lutheranism to take strong roots. And the Emperor destroyed for the Pope the republic of Florence, almost the last expression of the Italian democratic movement, and installed the Medici. In return the Emperor demanded, as the one hope of checking Luther, a reform-council, and Clement wrote that he was "straining every nerve" to get it summoned. It was the wicked king of France, Pastor says, who blocked the way; yet Pastor himself gives the conditions which the Pope stipulated, and a schoolboy could see that, being utterly impossible, they were designed to kill the plan of a council. It might have inquired how, against the severe canons, a bastard had become Pope and how he had enriched his family, ruined his country, and reformed nothing. So Clement crowned his glorious career by marrying Catherine de' Medici (who would later inspire the St. Bartholomew Massacre) to a son of the king of France, and came home to Rome to die. What do Catholic

historians like Pastor put to his credit against all this? First, his noble refusal to annul the marriage of Henry VIII: which the Catholic Lord Acton has shown to have been pure politics. Secondly, a number of partial reforms of clerical morals effected in Italy in those years; on which we can only comment that the Pope did not prevent them.

§3. THE PETTICOAT POPE

Eleven years had passed, and the revolt of Europe had spread alarmingly. How did the Papal court now behave? It elected the cardinal, Alessandro Farnese, who had been conspicuous for bribery at the last election: the cardinal who had been known in Rome for years as "the petticoat cardinal" because he notoriously owed his red hat to the fact that his sister Giulia was the mistress of Alexander VI, and had equally notoriously been for years one of the most immoral of the cardinals. Remember that in this chapter, which may seem incredible, I give nothing but accepted facts and so need give no references. You will find the documents relating to his four children in Pastor; and Pastor tells us, with that seriousness which is so comic in Catholic writers when they tell how their Popes sobered down after thirty years of gaiety, that since 1519 (his fifty-second year) he had led a regular life. He was now sixty-seven, and we will admit his virtue: that is to say in the sexual sense, for he violated every other law of his Church with his attempts to purchase the Papacy, his flagrant nepotism, his enrichment and promotion to the cardinalate of two young nephews, aged seventeen and fourteen, of most immoral life, his genial indifference to the sustained corruption of the college of cardinals, his loose comedies and astrologers and buffoons in the Vatican and his liking for the riot of the carnival and the society of pretty women. In the heart of the struggle against Protestantism, on the eve of the opening of the Council of Trent (1545, after he had been Pope eleven years), he conferred two Papal duchies on his worthless bastard Pier Luigi and struck a gold medal (of which you may see a copy in A. Armand's "*Médailleurs Italiens*," I, 172) representing a naked Ganymede watering a lily, which was the emblem of the Farnese house, whose greatness rested solely on the adulteries of his sister with a reigning Pope.

The only aspect in which Paul III interests us is his relation to reform: a very important relation, say the Catholic historians. Let us see. I will, unless I note otherwise, take the facts from Pastor; and the Catholic historian had already published ten volumes of his work before he reached Paul III and was being implored on all sides not to say so much. Europe wanted a General Council, and I will tell presently how Paul was forced at length to convoke the Council of Trent and how he sterilized it. But Popes, as was their business, we are told, loved to do things themselves, and before the end of the first year of his pontificate Paul gave joy to the hearts of the few reformers in the college of cardinals by appointing two commissions. One was to study the reform of morals and the other the practice of simony. Cardinal Accolti was called to task

for grave abuse of his position as Legate; but when the punishment took the form of a "fine" of \$150,000 men wondered. The commissions reported on the evils of the Church in 1540, and the report is described as very lengthy and very drastic. It still exists but it is not available. When Leo XIII, to the great admiration of the press of the world, threw open to scholars the Secret Archives of the Vatican, the scholars found, Pastor says, that this document and others (such as the records of the Roman Inquisition) had been abstracted and were kept in what we may call the Private Secret Archives of the Vatican.

In other words, the great report on reform was pigeon-holed by the Pope. The Church would be injured if it were published, was the curious plea. Paul, however, decided that there must be some reform, to close the mouths of these damnable Lutherans and the princes who declined to burn them, and he began with the most offensive department of the Papal business, the Dataria, or the office which brought the Papacy \$125,000 a year by charging fees for dispensations, privileges, etc. How it could be reformed without cutting down the income of too many people, including the Pope's, was discussed for three years—which brings us to six years after the election of this "reform-Pope"—and then, amidst tears, a few changes were made. One of the least difficult for a Pope, one would think, was to order prelates who held rich benefices over Europe but lived in Rome and paid no attention to their duties to return to their charges. Paul summoned eighty of these parasites to leave the gaieties of Rome, which he had fully restored, and see to their abbeys or bishoprics; and they pleaded that they could not live on their incomes in such circumstances and were allowed to remain. The reform-cardinals wrote strong letters to each other about Paul III, and Europe jeered at him. A few officials, out of the superfluous crowd (who had bought their offices) were dismissed, a few exhortations to the clergy to be virtuous were issued, and a few individual and unofficial reformers (including, as we shall see, Ignatius of Loyola) were encouraged. It is put to his credit also that he reconciled the French king and the emperor; but we really cannot lose sight of the fact that for his trouble the Pope married his wretched little grandson (thirteen years old) to a bastard daughter of the emperor (already a lively widow at the age of sixteen), got a duchy for the boy, and gave rights (sale of indulgences in Spain, etc.) to the emperor worth \$2,500,000 a year of Church money, and married his granddaughter to a French prince. The Pope's high object was, we are told, to unite the great monarchs against the Turks (who were drawing near to Italy) and the Protestants; and they declined to fight either.

The story of the reform-council of Trent, on the other hand, is even more deadly to any attempt to show that the Papacy wanted to reform morals and abuses. The Lutherans demanded a Council, and the Emperor, who knew little more about theology and German life than about morals, supported them. Yes, said the Pope, on Italian soil under my presidency: which was a flat refusal, for no sensible Protestant would attend such a Council. I may say, in a

word, that this remained the attitude of the Papacy. Doctrine was not to be discussed but defined, as a standard for the condemnation and execution of heretics; and the reform of morals and abuses was a secondary matter that must be left to the Pope. The idea of all Rome still was that the rebels could and ought to be drowned in blood. Henry of England was now indifferent what the Pope did. Francis I of France, the beloved son of the Pope, did not want Lutheranism checked in Germany because it enfeebled the emperor to have his empire distracted. Papal Europe was still sordid.

The Pope feared, or some feared, that the Emperor Charles might imitate Henry VIII, for he was reported to be in favor of concessions like the marriage of the clergy, and he announced that council would be opened at Mantua on May 23rd, 1537. When the Duke of Mantua said that the Pope had better send an army to protect his council, it was postponed for a year. It was to open on May 1st, 1538; and five prelates turned up for it on that date. The Papal Legates returned home, and the emperor tried a series of colloquies or conferences between his Protestant and Catholic divines, the Pope (pressed by the Emperor) sending several representatives. They came to nothing—the one formula accepted, at Ratisbon, being repudiated by the Pope—though, as Pastor shows from a document in the Papal archives, the Pope sent \$150,000 for bribing Protestants and promised much more if the Catholics would declare war on them.

In 1541 the emperor had a personal talk with the Pope and insisted that the council must be held in Germany, and thus Trent, just over the northern frontier of Italy, was chosen. The Pope meantime set the Inquisition to work in Italy, where Lutheran ideas were spreading; but the Vatican, as I said, keeps its records secret and encourages its writers to make the grotesque claim that it never put any to death. When the Papal Legates reached Trent, three weeks late, there was not a single bishop there. Four months later a dozen bishops, mostly Italians, had turned up. The French would not oblige the emperor: the Germans declined to be put on a common footing with the perfidious French. The Pope suspended the Council and went on with the aggrandizement of the numerous relatives which his four bastards had given him. Hardly any Pope had been so disgraceful a nepotist, in the darkest hour of the fortunes of his Church. But Turks and Protestants were making progress, and the reopening of the Council was announced for March 25, 1545. Two bishops were there to greet the Papal Legates. No one believed that the Pope was sincere: he wanted only an Italian council to define the standard of heresy. The emperor pressed again, and the Council opened in December, 1545, with twenty-five prelates. The furious wrangle of Pope and emperor as to whether it must merely lay down dogma or discuss reform ended in compromise: it was to do both, but the Pope would take care that it did not discuss Papal conduct. It really began work in the summer of 1546, and it was almost at once suspended because at last Catholics and Protestants were at war in Germany.

This was the only sincere aim of the Papacy. I have in my

"Crises in the History of the Papacy" quoted a large number of recent German and Italian studies which show from authentic documents that Paul was secretly all the time feverishly urging Francis and Charles to unite in a campaign against the Protestants. To make sure of the war the Pope let the Protestant princes know that there was a secret alliance against them of Charles V, the Duke of Bavaria, Ferdinand I, and the Pope—an alliance engineered by himself—and then, though Charles wanted the war kept on purely secular grounds, Paul represented it to France, Poland, and Venice as a religious crusade in which all Catholic powers ought to join. The emperor was furious and, when he crushed his Protestant subjects, made honorable terms with them, and two years later granted them provisional complete toleration. The Pope had meantime transferred his Council to Bologna, and there it proceeded to define Catholic dogmas. How far it reformed the Church we shall see in the next book. And Paul was gathered to his fathers, having greatly enriched and ennobled a score of members of his worthless family and left Protestantism an irrepressible power. He had been Pope fifteen years.

§4. THE LAST OF THE EPICURES

Well, now, you will say, with Protestantism established in Germany and Switzerland and spreading over Scandinavia and France, and England lost, we shall find the Papal court severely attentive to the situation. You will laugh. What happened was as far removed as one can conceive, not merely from the divine guidance in which the Catholic believes, but from that human wisdom and astuteness which some historians ascribe to the Papacy. Never in history was a great power wrecked by its own preposterous folly and viciousness as the Papal power was wrecked in the sixteenth century.

Paul III had created cardinals recklessly and unscrupulously, and forty-seven were enclosed in some of the larger rooms of the Vatican to choose a man to direct the distracted Church. It proved one of the most disgraceful elections in the whole picturesque history of Papal conclaves. It lasted fifty days, and Pastor has to devote thirty pages to the furious struggle. From that Catholic historian I will take every fact in this section. There was a furious struggle of personal ambitions and French and imperial interests. The closure was not strictly observed, cardinals easily getting permission to go out to the city (to tell the news and get fresh orders from their masters) and men making their way over roofs to deliver letters and instructions to the electors. The space was now ample, and the cardinals, in the little suites made for them in the large halls, invited each other to banquets "worthy of a Lucullus." And to end the deadlock they united at last on Cardinal del Monte, one of the most unworthy and most unsuitable men that could have been selected out of the whole fifty cardinals. Let me describe him from Pastor, whose volume on him is obviously written with disgust.

He was a man of large body and gross tastes who "spiced his feasts with free and unseemly jests." Although he suffered from

gout he would not control his appetite, devouring onions in large quantities and often indulging in pork: He was already in great disfavor with pious folk for his fits of violent temper—he excused them on the ground that in the Old Testament the Lord was often angry—and his “want of refinement of manners”: in other words, hilariously rejoicing at banquets and carnival time. Pastor has a disconcerting way of leaving the unfavorable remarks that he quotes about Popes in Italian or Latin, and from one of these we learn that Rome regarded Julius as “low-minded” and there were shocking rumors about his morals. He had a boy favorite, a particularly ugly and vicious-minded brute, originally picked off the streets and nicknamed “the monkey.” Julius III, the remarkable new Pope who was to reform the Church, made a cardinal of this youth. It was widely believed in Rome that he was a bastard-son of the Pope; though another theory, widely held, was that the Pope had adopted him for the purpose of unnatural vice. These things were “never proved,” says Pastor. It would be difficult. But that was the opinion of very many of the new Pope.

Rome did not mind these things. It wanted gaiety, and no Pope could have been chosen who promised it in greater abundance. He “had always had a great love of pleasure,” and he now seized any pretext for giving Rome a holiday. He particularly encouraged the license of the carnival, and to the end of his life he had bull-fights in the square before St. Peter’s and the Vatican, which he followed with delight. He gave banquets with all sorts of buffoonery, as Leo X (his model, apparently) had done, and, when he went to banquets at the houses of the cardinals, he often remained there for the night. He hunted, and he gambled frequently and heavily. In the first year of his pontificate he had what the Catholic writer calls the indecent comedies (preserved by the monks) of Plautus, and certainly indecent comedies of Ariosto, performed in the Vatican; and he continued to do so until the end of his life. He greatly enriched his relatives and favorites, and he paid no attention to the character of men he promoted. In short, says Pastor, “from the reports of the envoys and also from other sources it is clear that the Pope, regardless of the gravity of the times, continued to follow, in this respect [gaiety], the path on which his predecessors of the Renaissance had entered.”

Am I right in saying that the Popes actually resisted the world-demand of reform until the loss of half their income sobered them? But Pastor says that at least Julius set his cardinals to draft a great scheme of reform and embodied it in a bull which he was going to publish—but he died (1555). There are writers of the time who say he died of gluttony. I turn to the Catholic Encyclopaedia, which hardly mentions his scandalous acts, to see what it can say for him, and I read that Julius “occasionally made a weak effort at reform.” Alas, poor Yorick!

CHAPTER V.

THE JESUITS AND THE ATTEMPT TO MURDER PROTESTANTISM

WE have now seen in what sense the Reformation was a political movement, as so many recent historical writers are fond of saying. The German princes certainly liked to see the power of their emperor distracted, for it was just the age when monarchic power in Europe was becoming more absolute or autocratic than ever, by a religious division, and the Protestant leaders profited greatly by the absorption of the emperor in his foreign wars. The French equally wanted to see the emperor enfeebled by division and made friendly overtures to the Protestant princes against their Catholic emperor. Most of the English bishops and nobles obviously yielded to the political pressure of Henry, and Henry started his revolt upon a matter of policy. The Dutch fought for political as well as religious freedom. And so on. But nearly every religious movement for centuries had been colored by politics, and for fifty years the Papacy itself had been guided by the most unscrupulous political maxims.

On the other hand, when we reflect on the picture of the Church that I have given in the preceding chapters we see that these political motives were not the origin of the great human flood that poured out but the banks which guided its course. The soundest view—and it is a quite recent expression by a first-class authority—of the Reformation is that which Professor Pollard gives in the second volume of the *Cambridge Modern History*:

“The origin of the whole movement was a natural attempt on the part of man, with the progress of enlightenment, to free himself from the clerical tutelage under which he had labored for centuries and to remedy the abuses which were an inevitable outcome of the exclusive privileges and authority of the Church.”

It was the next stage of a process which we have for centuries perceived in European life. Life precedes art, and the first thing a re-awakened Europe did, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was to take over the mastery of its own civic and industrial life from the bishops and monks. But art precedes intellect, and the next thing was to take art from the monks and clergy. By both these developments the Church profited, but an intellectual development was menacing to it, and we saw how truculently it reacted when Europe went on to claim intellectual emancipation. The enlightenment of the Renaissance and the invention of printing, occurring simultaneously, made this more difficult, but just at that juncture the Papacy and the Church entered upon a prolonged period of degeneration and corrupt exploitation, which must in-

evitably rouse Europe to revolt. Men were still puzzled. We saw how Luther and Henry VIII hesitated long as to the form or measure of the revolt: because, as I said, the genuine history of the Papal imposture, which ought to be known to every educated person today, was concealed from them by an almost impenetrable mass of accepted fictions. One thing was clear. The Bible, which now circulated in hundreds of thousands of copies, showed how extraordinarily remote the Papal Church was from the teaching of Christ and St. Paul. On that the new Churches necessarily built. What we have to explain is why only half, instead of the whole, of Europe rejected an imposture which was so glaringly manifested and is to us today one of the most audacious constructions of priestcraft that religious history has recorded.

§1. THE NEW BLACK ARMY OF THE POPES

There came to Pope Paul III in the midst of his troubles a small group of men in black gowns, in 1539, who asked his blessing on some "Society of Jesus" that they had formed. Paul and his advisers hesitated. It seemed to be a request to found a new monastic order at the very time when the monks were being reviled from one end of Europe to the other. Several cardinals declared drastically against the new body and its constitutions. But there was none of the simplicity of St. Francis of Assisi about the olive-skinned leader of the little group, the Spanish enthusiast Ignatius. His religious fervor cannot seriously be questioned but it bore the Machiavellian imprint of his age, not the naive aspect of the thirteenth century. In my "Candid History of the Jesuits" I have, while fully acknowledging his sincerity in his ultimate aims, traced his pious trickery and deceit from the first year of his conversion. He was the first Jesuit in more senses than one. The first time he sent his followers to see the Pope he had told them to ask only the Pope's blessing on their design to go to Palestine to convert the Turks. Go by all means, said the Pope genially—if you can get there. Ignatius was not a man of much intellect but he had intelligence enough to know that no Christian could get beyond Greece, and neither he nor any of his followers learned a word of Turkish or Arabic. He was preparing the way, furtively: nursing the sick (which no Jesuit has ever done since), teaching the young, begging, and above all things attracting the attention of people of wealth and influence.

Within two years of the first request a shower of ardent testimonials fell upon Rome, the society was recognized, and it was accepted for special service in the Papal army, a body of shock-troops against the Protestants. Some of the little band went to India and beyond, by way of South Africa, and sent home marvelous and highly fictitious reports of their labors. Some were sent to France, to fight the Protestants; some on a semi-political mission to Scotland. They became in a very short time the secret service corps of the Papacy, for which their peculiar rules fitted them. Their vow of obedience was absolute—"like a corpse," a Jesuit

vowed to be: their vow of poverty was very accommodating and enabled them to amass indefinite wealth: their deliberate policy was to draw in "rich and noble" youths in preference to others; and they were not to chant services in "choir" as monks do. They were and are, in fact, not monks, but a very mobile body; and the monks and ordinary clergy hated them from the first, while General Ignatius remained in Rome and watched their destinies and won privilege after privilege for them.

But how looseness soon crept into their houses with wealth—this occurred in Spain within six years of the foundation of the society—and how they loved picturesque adventures, intrigues, and disguises in all lands must be read elsewhere. Anybody who still doubts the general corruption of the sixteenth-century Church ought to read their letters to headquarters in the official (Latin) "History of the Society of Jesus." Father Favre wrote to Ignatius from the important German city of Worms that there were not three priests there who had not concubines. Father Woulfe sent an appalling picture of the moral condition of Ireland. A few years later they were themselves driven out of Italian and Spanish towns for immorality. Pope Paul IV, the first real reform-Pope, who had always hated them, had the idea of suppressing them before the society was twenty years old. By that time there were a thousand Jesuits: ten years later there were three thousand. They were too useful to be sacrificed.

32. THE THIRTY YEARS WAR

Paul III had employed cardinals and bishops, as was customary, in the intrigues by means of which he trusted to excite a military crusade against the Protestants of Germany. Jesuits were at once sent, but they knew little German, and even the Catholics threatened to throw them into the river. At the Council of Trent several of them were theological representatives of the Pope, and they used whatever influence they had to prevent concessions and magnify the authority of the Pope. One of the Jesuits marched with the troops, and was wounded, in the first war against the Protestant princes, but this man used such violent language when the Emperor was reconciled with the Protestants that their activity in Germany came to an end for a time.

They were more successful in the German Catholic states, where they egged on the princes to stamp out Protestantism while there was time. Many people seem to have a superficial idea that the more genial temperament of the southern Germans kept them naturally loyal to the old Church, but it is as inaccurate as the equally common belief that the "Latin temperament" was opposed to the new creed. In both France (as we shall see) and Austria the new ideas made rapid and remarkable progress. In 1558 a Venetian ambassador estimated that nine-tenths of the entire German Empire (including Austria) were Protestant. The first aim of the Jesuits was to purify the southern states, by bribes to princes and bloody coercion of the people, while the Protestants were still in a minority.

One of them became Archbishop of Vienna seven years after Ignatius had solemnly sworn that no Jesuit would ever be allowed to accept an ecclesiastical dignity; and Ignatius agreed to his consecration. The Duke of Bavaria long refused to let them into the country, but a large grant to him out of ecclesiastical funds was followed by the introduction of the Jesuits, and this was followed at once by a drastic persecution of Bavarian Protestants. They spread as far as Poland, founding schools and colleges everywhere as centers of orthodoxy, and were a powerful influence in keeping southern Germany and Poland loyal. It is, however, amusing to read that several of them became Protestants and over and over again they were expelled in outbursts of popular anger.

Industrious as they were in opening schools, they perceived that the intellectual struggle in defense of the Papal imposture was not hopeful, and from the first they stood for persecution and war. They warmly espoused and played a great part in the Papal policy of exciting a war between the Catholics of the south and the Protestants of the north and east. From this during the sixteenth century both sides shrank, for the power was too equally distributed. They had come to terms in 1555, when toleration was given to Protestantism, and argument could make no further impression on the solidly Protestant provinces. The Jesuits and the Papacy watched their opportunity, and in 1617 a new Emperor, trained by the Jesuits, came on the throne. His grandfather, Ferdinand I, had refused to persecute, and had shown some liberality in being the first emperor to dispense with coronation by the Pope: his father, Maximilian II, had sustained the policy and had even shown a personal leaning to Lutheranism and allowed the new ideas to spread on every side. It seemed for a time as if the entire mass of the Germanic peoples, from the Alps to the Baltic, from England to Poland, would throw off the yoke of Rome. Unfortunately, the division or mutual hostility of Lutherans and Calvinists weakened the Protestants, while the Catholics were united and egged on everywhere by the Jesuits and other agents of the Papacy and supported by Spain. There was constant friction, and if the aid of France, which had slaughtered most of its Protestants, could have been assured, as well the resources of Spain, which was then at the height of its power, history might for a time have followed a very different course. Fortunately political circumstances again protected the Reformers. France was not disposed to do anything that would help to consolidate the formidable German-Spanish power. It was a situation of unstable equilibrium, and the Jesuits intrigued everywhere to get a sanguinary Catholic coalition against the Protestants of Europe.

The history of the cumbrous Empire and its princes is at this stage very complicated, and I must be content to say that Ferdinand II, who had been educated in a Jesuit college and had the most rigorous Papal ideas of persecution, came to the throne in 1617, and he at once began to apply his policy in Bohemia. Here, where the surviving body of Hussites had formed a large nucleus for a Protestant party, there was naturally, as far as south Germany is con-

cerned, the most dangerous province from the imperial point of view. The tyranny that was set up provoked a rebellion, as the Jesuits hoped, and the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) began. In 1619 the Bohemians, to enlist the aid of the Protestant League of Germany, offered their crown to a German prince, and it was accepted. In brief, all the Catholic forces in Europe except those of France (as we shall see) were soon at grips with nearly all the Protestant forces of Europe. The chief Catholic princes and Catholic generals had been trained by the Jesuits, and scores of Jesuits lived in the camps, firing on the troops and leaders, and even, as at the siege of Prague, took arms and joined fanatically in the fighting. The war entirely failed of its purpose and ended in the recognition of Protestantism in the Peace of Westphalia (1648), to the deep anger of the Jesuits.

But civilization was, over the wide area of the Empire, put back fully a century. Bohemia was ruined; its 30,000 villages reduced to 6,000, its 730 cities to 130, its three million people to 780,000, its magnificent old monuments, which showed that it had been second to few nations in the Middle Ages, almost entirely destroyed. Over the whole German region the most savage impulses were released and the desolation was appalling. And all that Rome got for its inhuman work was the consolidation of its rule in Austria and Bavaria. There is no psychological line between the Protestant north and Catholic south. War and persecution created the Catholic frontier. When the Jesuit Society was suppressed some of its secret documents were seized and published. From one of these we learned that the German province of the Society of Jesus had lent about three-quarters of a million dollars, and one Jesuit college in Belgium half a million dollars, for the prosecution of the war; and it is characteristic that the Jesuits (whose theologians condemned usury) charged a high rate of interest. Wherever the Catholics advanced they secured the former Catholic property for themselves.

Protestantism in Holland had been secured at an earlier date. The Netherlands, or Lowlands, as Holland and Belgium were jointly called, had fallen to the Spanish crown. Philip II of Spain was a fanatic of the type of Ferdinand II, and his tyrannical measures, both religious and political, provoked revolt in the Netherlands, where Protestantism had prospered as elsewhere. The progress had been very considerable in Belgium as well as Holland, and it was only after a campaign of appalling ferocity and barbarity that the Catholic troops, under General Alva, retained Belgium for Spain and the Papacy. The Protestant resistance crystallized round the Dutch prince, William of Orange, and he was able in time to declare Holland independent and hold it against Spain. Here again the religious frontier was created by war.

§3. THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS

In the entire history of the Papacy which we have traced for the last ten centuries we have so consistently found even pious Popes acting on the maxim that the end justifies the means that it

seems superfluous to ask whether the Jesuits in particular taught and acted on that maxim. We found Popes, from Leo the Great onward, sanctioning the use of forgeries, until the whole real history of the Church was buried under a tissue of fiction. We found Hildebrand writing that there was not much harm in a lie told "in a good cause" and acting as if there were no harm whatever in such lies; and Innocent III actually appealing to the authority of St. Paul in his studied use of treachery and deceit. By the year 1500, the age of Machiavelli, one may say that the maxim was in the blood of Europe. Popes like Julius II and Leo X surpassed any contemporary monarch in their endorsement of it.

The peculiar reputation of the Jesuits is therefore due in great measure to the fact that they were born in the sixteenth century and bore the mark of their age, and that, in offering their services directly to the Pope in the struggle against Protestantism they confronted a formidable task in which diplomacy was more important than argument. But quite clearly the peculiar kind of sanctity of their founder, Ignatius of Loyola, influenced the society in this direction from the start, or even before the society was actually founded. He was furtive and deceitful in his actions. He covered his real ambition with a pretense that he was gathering a group of men to go to convert the Turks—a design which he must have abandoned, if he ever seriously held it, as soon as his early semi-insane ecstasies were over—and he directed his early followers to win the support of pious wealthy Catholics and nobles by discharging duties which were simply taken up for that purpose. From its earliest years the society incurred a most remarkable amount of Catholic hostility and contempt for its deceitful and underhand ways.

I have never been able to find any Catholic theologian, Jesuit or otherwise, who ever expressly said, "The end justifies the means," in the sense that an act which is in itself described as sinful may be performed for a good end, but it is, as I said, a waste of time to seek for such an expression. The acceptance of that maxim in practice covers the whole history of the Church and of the Society of Jesus in particular. Lies and deceit were fluently encouraged, absolution from broken oaths was freely given, adulteries were amiably tolerated, murder (of kings, for instance) was openly defended, in the interest of the Society and the Church. The new institution created by the Papacy was so far from being helpful to civilization, in spite of the numerous schools which the Jesuits provided (solely for their sectarian purposes and to win rich and noble youths for their ranks), that we shall find the Church itself presently taking the unique step of suppressing it on the express ground that it was corrupt and mischievous. Within a hundred years of the end of the Thirty Years War Catholic countries were demanding the suppression.

It was just before the war, in 1612, that a work which was at one time famous, under the Latin title of "Secret Councils," as the private code of conduct of the Jesuits first made its appearance. The general opinion is that it was written by an ex-Jesuit Polish priest, and was rather a description of what the Jesuits did in prac-

tice than what they held in theory. It seems to me at times to have a satirical note which confirms this. No learned Jesuit, for instance, could have seriously written that they were to choose the wealthy quarters of towns to settle in "because the aim of our Society is to imitate Christ, our Savior, who dwelt mainly in Jerusalem." Yet they were from the start urged by Ignatius to win the wealthy, and it is still their practice to settle only amongst the wealthy. Such maxims again as that "everybody must be brought into a condition of dependence on us" and that wealthy widows must "be allowed to have secret recreation with those who please them" describe exactly what the Jesuits did everywhere but, when written down, have a note of satire. Those who believe that it was actually a manual of secret instructions issued by the Roman authorities point to the fact that it was repeatedly discovered in Jesuit colleges when they were suppressed. It seems to me that, though written as a satire, it was found quite useful by the Jesuits.

CHAPTER VI

HOW FRANCE AND SPAIN WERE KEPT CATHOLIC

WE are forcibly reminded at every stage of this history of the ludicrously unhistorical character of the claim that the Roman Church was a civilizing agency. The broad truth is that the efforts of Europe to return to its old level of civilization were checked by the Roman Church. If we grant that, as would, I think, now be generally admitted, the world did not reach the old Greco-Roman standard until the end of the eighteenth century (I should be more disposed to say a few decades later, but it is a complex comparison), we shall probably assign two main causes for the portentous and, historically, unprecedented slowness of the recovery: war and Romanism. If, on the other hand, we reflect that there was about the same amount of strife and warfare in the Mohammedan world, which rose from barbarism to the old level of civilization in two or three centuries instead of twelve, we must conclude that the Roman religion was far the more important restraining agency of the two. How it acted we have now seen, and we smile at the naive historical ignorance of the Catholic who asks the modern world to acknowledge a debt to his Church.

We shall find this social truth, not brought out by any subtle analysis of the facts, but sprawling over the entire face of history until recent times, when the triumph of democracy and of the social interest has compelled Catholic writers to strike a new note in their appeal. That the Papacy ruined Italy and checked the progress of Germany we have clearly seen. But the greatest advantages still

lay with Catholic countries. In closing the eastern Mediterranean the Turks had forced the genius of Europe to find other outlets, and it was Spain and Portugal, with which Austria was in the closest alliance and which had just inherited the practical science of the Moors, that naturally profited most. Into them, and from them to Rome and Austria, poured the mighty wealth of both Indies. France, England and Holland looked out upon the same ocean, but in a stormy parallel that was dangerous to the small ships of the time. Yet the story from that day to this is one of steady decay of the Catholic countries and progress of the Protestant countries; and the one exception, significantly enough, is France, which held its religion lightly, was very independent of Rome, and came entirely to reject the yoke of the Vatican. First, however, we must see how absurd it is to profess to find some greater disposition to Catholicism in what are called the Latin countries; though the long loyalty of Teutonic Austria and Bavaria and the apostasy of France ought to be enough to refute that superficial theory.

§1. RAPID SPREAD OF PROTESTANTISM

I have already said that there were reformers, or preachers with what came to be called Protestant ideas, in Paris and London long before the time of Luther and quite independently of German influence. The prelates were as worldly, the priests and monks as corrupt, the general level of life as coarse and violent, in France as in other countries. Apart from the clergy there was, says Professor Butler, in a special study of France in the sixteenth century, "no enthusiasm in the country at large for the See of Rome." But there was a jealous center of orthodoxy in the University of Paris, and the first French translation of the New Testament, by Lefèvre, was publicly burned (1523). In time the new ideas found patrons in the university itself and made much progress in Paris. It was the reign of Francis I who was, as we saw, busy with his wars and dynastic ambition in Italy. His absence, like that of the Emperor from Germany, gave an opportunity to the preachers, but he came home impoverished and had to appeal to the Church for funds; and the clergy naturally stipulated that he must check the growth of rebellion against themselves.

There is no country in which the political aspect of the Reformation is more apparent than in France, yet the experience of France ought to warn any historian against the fallacy of calling the Reformation a political movement. It is true that when the protestants became a powerful body, able to defend themselves, political malcontents joined them and swelled their ranks. This was the time, as in other countries, when kings were becoming more despotic than ever. But the broad story of Protestantism in France is one of a genuine religious revolt against Rome alternately checked and facilitated by political conditions, spreading all over the country in spite of every check, and in the end being almost totally destroyed by massacre and war.

The position of Francis I was difficult. Several times he

suspended the persecution of the Protestants, and he even, as I said, listened respectfully to the arguments of Calvin. His sister was openly in sympathy with the new ideas. But, apart from his financial dependence on the clergy, who could not be taxed (without Papal permission) and had to make voluntary offerings to his treasury, he found himself constantly threatened by England on the one side and Germany on the other. We saw how the Popes traded on these mutual fears and jealousies of the powers. Francis was less able than the Emperor to talk boldly to the Pope. When, however, the Protestant princes of Germany formed a strong league, he formed the policy of keeping his imperial opponent weak by negotiating with them, and they demanded toleration for their co-religionists in France. The name Huguenots, which came to be applied to French Protestants generally, it is said to be German in origin: Eid-Genossen, or Sworn Companions. At all events, in the intervals of persecution or in spite of it Protestant ideas made great progress. The Cambridge History quotes a Catholic preacher complaining, about the year 1535: "I see no one round me but old women: all the men go to the Louvre." In other words, the royal chapel itself was a remarkably successful theater of Protestant propaganda at that time.

One of those excesses of zeal which are customary at such times alarmed the clergy and brought about a reaction. Paris was plastered with Protestant posters roughly attacking the mass. Scores of heretics were burned, hundreds imprisoned. In the south there still remained a body of descendants of the Waldensians, the heretics of the thirteenth century who had settled there, and they had formally adopted Protestantism and were spreading it northward. A ruthless campaign was organized against them in 1545, and it is said that three thousand men, women and children were massacred and large numbers sent to the galleys. Yet the sect thrived in spite of these massacres and hundreds of executions. It is a point that is too rarely made clear in historical manuals, which are content to say that France remained loyal to the Church. By the middle of the century there were large numbers of Protestants in every city of France. Catholics often speak as if Normandy and Brittany at least were incorruptible in their loyalty, but Protestantism spread very extensively in Normandy, which was much more advanced than Brittany. Lyons had "swarms" of Protestants. Calvin estimated that there were now 300,000 Protestants in France. If we recollect that batches of them were still periodically burned or imprisoned we wonder whether, if there had been religious freedom, France would not have become mainly or wholly Protestant. If we can imagine the development in England apart from the royal pressure, we should be inclined to say that the French took to Protestant ideas more readily than the English.

The situation, from the viewpoint of Rome, became more serious when very distinguished Frenchmen, quite apart from political malcontents, joined the Huguenots. The heir to the throne after Henry II (who succeeded Francis in 1547) and his sons, Henry of Navarre and his famous brother the Prince of Condé, with Admiral Coligny

and other high officers and nobles, became Huguenots. A synod of the Protestant Church was held at Paris, though Protestants had been burned there in the previous year. In 1560 Admiral Coligny presented a petition to the throne. He said that he could have got fifty thousand signatures to it in Normandy alone. The fortunes of the royal family favored a further growth. Henry died; his successor, a sickly boy, died two years later; and Charles X, a boy of ten, became king. The government was divided and, as in Germany, colloquies or conferences were tried. At the first, before the court, twelve Protestant ministers defended their case against six cardinals and forty archbishops and bishops. There was another conference in the following year, but there was friction and quarreling all over the kingdom, and in 1562 the Huguenots, under Condé and Coligny, took the field openly against the royal troops, who had Papal, Swiss and Spanish auxiliaries. There were three short civil wars between 1562 and 1572, yet the Huguenots were strong enough to compel the court to grant toleration.

§2. THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW

Thus in spite of half a century of persecution Protestant ideas had made such progress in France that the Huguenots could not be defeated in carefully organized warfare. It was in these circumstances that the Catholics resorted to one of the most infamous of all the appalling crimes by which they sought to stifle Protestantism: the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. I told in an earlier chapter how Pope Clement VII had married a girl of his degenerate family, Catherine de' Medici, to a French prince. This prince became Henry II, under whom, in spite of his policy of persecution, the Huguenots had made such progress. He died early, as I said, and Catherine endeavored to carry out the wishes of the Jesuits, who had now great power in France, and the Papacy. She was a worthless and unscrupulous and quite pious woman, full of the Machiavelian spirit of Italian politics, encouraging her young sons in sensual and immoral ways so that she might keep power. Modern sex-students hold that she was an invert.

It was Catherine who had secured the entrance of the Jesuits into France. From the start the University of Paris, the clergy, and the civic authorities had united against them. When, as usual, they intrigued for the favor of the king and he wrote letters ordering that they should be admitted into Paris, the Parlement refused to publish his letters, and they remained of no effect. The Jesuits had to remain in a house in the meadows outside Paris until the death of Francis II, and they then sought to influence Catherine. When the colloquy of Catholic and Protestant divines showed a desire for compromise, the Jesuit general, who took care to be present, delivered a threatening speech which so much intimidated Catherine that she refused to attend any more sittings. The general remained in France, secured the admission of his Society to Paris, and impressed deep on the queen the duty of absolute intolerance. Again in 1565 we find a prominent Jesuit having audience of the queen

at a time when she met the Queen of Spain and General Alva in the South of France, and they held some sort of conference on the way to check Protestantism. Alva was a butcher, the Spanish queen the wife of the worst religious fanatic in Europe, Catherine a morbid pietist.

Up to this point we cannot ascribe to the Jesuits much influence in France, but their activity during the few years before the massacre is sinister. The Catholics of Paris remained bitterly hostile to them until, in 1567, their leader, Father Manares, revealed to the civic authorities that there was a Huguenot plot to sack and burn the city. Few historians mention this important prelude to the massacre, yet the Jesuits used it in their history to boast of their service. There is not the least evidence of such a plot and in view of the character of the Huguenot leaders it is an absurd suggestion. Manares relied solely on what he pretended was a private communication to himself; and it is enough to tell that a few years later this man was convicted by the Jesuits themselves of corrupt practices in the Society and disgraced. As a result of his "patriotic" service the Jesuits won the gratitude of Paris and full liberty in France, and the hostility of Catholics and Huguenots, which they did their utmost to fan, became worse. In the war that followed Jesuits accompanied the royal troops even in battle.

It hardly seems fanciful to suggest that the Jesuits' forged plot was the real inspiration of St. Bartholomew. After the last clash of armies between the two sects, which left the Huguenots strong enough to meet a new war, the circumstances changed in a way that Catherine, the Pope, and the Jesuits bitterly resented. The young king, listening to his most sober counselors, changed the policy of the country in a direction favorable to the Huguenots. Two special Jesuit envoys, in January, 1572, attended a conference at the royal palace at Blois, and in spite of all their efforts the king decided to marry his sister to Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot, and to look to England and Holland instead of Spain. Coligny became the adviser of the king, and there was a threat of war upon Spain. Catherine moved heaven and earth to check this policy, and she probably was not surprised when an attempt was made to murder Coligny. It failed, and the Huguenots flocked to Paris for the auspicious marriage of the king's sister to one of their own body. They slept tranquilly in their beds on the night of August 23-24, 1572, and at midnight the church bells rang, and troops, prepared in advance, spread over Paris to murder every Huguenot. The more fanatical or more ignorant Parisians joined, and one of the most horrible massacres on record was perpetrated. The best estimates of the number of victims vary from 20,000 to 50,000.

Although the young king was bullied into signing the order for this massacre, no one now doubts that its real author was Catherine de' Medici. It is an open question only whether she had long meditated the crime, and who had conspired with her, or whether the sight of so many Huguenots in Paris inspired the idea. The plot was so thoroughly organized and calculated that we cannot see in it a sudden impulse. Coldly, with the ferocity which was

then so closely allied with Romanism, she and her associates planned the orgy of murder. I cannot find that any Jesuits were then associated with her, but for ten years they had inflamed her fanaticism. The Pope, Gregory XIII, was so delighted when he heard the news that he ordered a medal and the singing of the *Te Deum*: the hymn which is sung in Catholic churches on occasions of special rejoicing. So much untruth has been said by Catholics about this ghastly act, and some historians are so little on their guard against it, that in the Cambridge Modern History we read on one page (20) that "Gregory XIII is said to have expressed dismay" (no contemporary says it) and on another (285) that he showed "triumphant acclamation." The Pope's jubilation is beyond any question in contemporary writers. The Catholic Encyclopaedia admits the *Te Deum* and the special gold medal, pleading only that he was rejoicing at the escape of the king and queen from a Huguenot plot: as if, even if that were true, it excused the brutal massacre of tens of thousands of unarmed men, of which the Pope was fully informed. Indeed the inscription on his medal was "Slaughter of the Huguenots." The mendacity of the article in the Catholic Encyclopaedia may be judged from the fact that it quotes the historians Ranke and Martin as saying that the crime was not premeditated and only two thousand were killed. Ranke actually puts the victims at fifty thousand (II, 47) and Martin at twenty thousand (IX, 310); and both quite plainly say the massacre was long prepared. Ranke believes Catherine drew the Huguenots to Paris for the express purpose. Catholic truth!

§3. THE EXTINCTION OF THE HUGUENOTS

We may pass beyond the limits of this book and consider the further fortunes of Protestantism in France, as nothing better illustrates the fallacy of the statement that the French and Latin nations generally were opposed to Protestantism. The Vatican kept five or six nations "loyal" only because in those it was able still to use its age-old policy of bloody coercion. Though there were corresponding massacres in other towns of France, and the massacre in Paris had in such circumstances (a royal wedding to a Protestant prince) naturally carried off most of the Huguenot leaders, the queen still found herself unable to crush out Protestantism. The survivors generally fled to towns in the west which they were prepared to defend, and four armies failed to reduce them. Catherine's sickly sons were dying off one by one, and, in view of the possible accession of the Protestant Henry, a fanatical Catholic league was formed to crush the Huguenots and keep him from the throne. Moderate Catholic sentiment and Huguenot courage prevailed, and a new measure of toleration was granted.

King Charles never recovered the horror which his share in the ghastly crime had brought upon him, and two years later he was succeeded by his brother, Henry III, who spent his time alternately in debauch and repentance, but was very zealous for the true faith. His confessor was a Jesuit, and it is from this time that we find the Jesuits smilingly presiding over the consciences in

France of as licentious a set of princes and nobles as one would find anywhere. All over Europe Jesuits spun a web of intrigue against the Huguenots. Some of them had as many disguises as an actor, and could swagger in taverns, over dice or cards, as well as any cavalier. A monk murdered the king for his laxness on behalf of the true faith, and the Jesuits not only applauded, one of them writing that the monk-murderer was "the glory of France," but called for a second assassin to remove Henry of Navarre. The assassination of kings in the interest of the Church was openly defended by Jesuit writers like Mariana. The Jesuit house at Paris was the headquarters of the fanatical league; and again Paris had a shock when, during the siege of Paris by Henry, when the citizens were reduced to eating cats and rats, the Jesuit house was found to be crammed with provisions. However, Henry of Navarre ended the quarrel by genially announcing that he would embrace Catholicism, and France now had a king who professed the old faith and was by no means hostile to the new. The century ended, after eighty years of persecution, massacre, and war in an edict of toleration (the Edict of Nantes, 1598) and complete liberty of worship for Protestants. The Jesuits were expelled, being involved in a plot against Henry, but restored in 1604, and one became the king's confessor. He was murdered by a Catholic fanatic six years later, but it remains an unsolved problem whether the Jesuits inspired the murder more explicitly than by their general doctrine of the right to assassinate kings.

Again in 1620, when the struggle in Germany had its echoes in France, there was another short religious war, but it ended in compromise and the maintenance of the Edict of Nantes. The Huguenots were now mainly confined to certain fortified cities, and there was little propaganda amongst the general population. Paris had ceased to be interested in religious quarrels, or left them to the partisans of the Jansenists (Puritans) and the scandalously lax Jesuits. The Huguenots had become a sect, and the age was too frivolous and immoral for serious controversy. In granting them fortified cities, however, the law had made them a sort of separate realm within the realm, and Richelieu would not tolerate this. He reduced the cities, though he did not persecute the creed. In fact, as I have shown in detail in my biography of him, "The Iron Cardinal," he was personally far from orthodox and had the idea of uniting Catholics and Protestants in a national church that would take no more orders from Rome. He it was who refused French aid to the Catholics in the Thirty Years War and materially helped in their failure. The Huguenots were still very numerous and prosperous, but their power of military protection was gone, and in 1685 the fanatics persuaded that remarkable champion of faith and morals, Louis XIV, about whom and the state of France we shall see more in the next book, to revoke the Edict of Nantes and embark on a savage persecution. For ten years he had grossly ill treated them. Now half a million of them, largely the most skilful and productive artisans of France, emigrated to England and Holland. "France had obtained its greatness by alliance with the Protestants," says

Sir Richard Lodge. It never recovered from this fanatical and inhuman blunder.

§4. THE INQUISITION IN SPAIN

Spain and Portugal are, geographically, an excrescence on the southwestern corner of Europe, and are separated from it by the great barrier of the Pyrenees. When the Reformation occurred, moreover, Spain had only recently expelled the last of the Moors and was consolidated as a Catholic power fresh from what it regarded as its pious work of completely destroying the high civilization of the Moors. In view of these circumstances we need hardly speculate on the reason why Protestantism did not extend to that country. It was, on the contrary, Philip of Spain, where medieval conditions lingered longest, who had chiefly sustained the long war against Protestantism in Europe. The frontiers were sealed against the new ideas, and there was little communication except with Catholic Italy and Austria.

The rebels that the Spanish Church had to confront were the nominally converted Jews and Moors who had been permitted to remain in the country. Of the Jews we need say little, for in 1492 two hundred thousand of them had submitted to complete spoliation and exile rather than pretend to join the Catholic Church, and later half a million descendants of the Moors were despoiled and expelled. But from the thirteenth century until the sixteenth hundreds of thousands were brought before the Spanish Inquisition and few escaped its terrible sentences. At the revolutionary period at the end of the eighteenth century the Spanish Inquisition was still intact, and a secretary of it, Llorente, turned against it and used its records to attack it. Largely on this account we know more about the Inquisition in Spain than in other countries, but it was the same tribunal as elsewhere, with the same gross procedure, cruel tortures, and division of the property of the victim between his accusers, the Inquisitors, and the Church.

The chief difference was that the Spanish monarchs would not allow their Inquisition to be controlled by the Papacy, and Catholic writers, incautiously followed by some others, have taken advantage of this to represent it as a Spanish political institution, not only not approved by the Popes, but condemned by them on account of its cruelty. The use of the word "political" is quite untruthful. The Inquisition having fallen into decay in Spain, largely because, as the Inquisitor Eymeric said in 1360, there were no more *rich* heretics to try, Ferdinand and Isabella were urged by the monks—there is explicit evidence of this and even of their hesitation—to restore it after the expulsion of the Moors. They applied to Pope Sixtus IV, and he supplied the rules of procedure. When we find him later complaining of the severity of the Spanish Inquisitors we understand quite well the reasons. Since Rome was not allowed to control the Spanish Inquisition, it got none of the spoils. There was a sordid quarrel about this between the Popes and the Spanish monarchy.

Llorente says that the victims of the Spanish Inquisition are

shown in its archives to have numbered 341,042: and remember that this does not include massacres of Jews (4,000 at Seville in 1391, for instance) and Moors. Father Gams has made a ludicrous attempt to reduce Llorente's figure to four thousand, but his strained and sophistical arguments are hardly worth discussing. The Catholic Canon Vacandard admits in the "Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics," in the course of an otherwise lamentable article on the Inquisition, that "according to the most conservative estimate Torquemada [one of many Inquisitors] sent to the stake about two thousand heretics in twelve years." We do not usually accept the most conservative (or Catholic) estimate of such matters. We cannot today check Llorente's statements and have no reason to suppose that he has made more than a few errors in compiling his total figure. I have written a special Little Blue Book (No. 1134) on the subject.

CHAPTER VII

THE ATTEMPT TO RECOVER ENGLAND

I HAVE in an earlier book referred to American Catholic writers who speak of "the violence of Reformation times," as if the horrors perpetrated by their Church were peculiar to an age in which both sides were stung into an intolerance which, in our more humane age, the Roman Church would not dream of reviving. What the law of the Roman Church is today we shall see in the last book, but the attempt to pass off Catholic savagery to critics as due to the temporary impulses of an age of conflict is particularly audacious. We have, on the contrary, seen that murder had been coldly adopted by the Church as the means of silencing critics four or five centuries before the time of Luther. When, in the second half of the sixteenth century, the first Catholic was tried and condemned to death for his beliefs, something more than a million men and women had been done to death by the Catholic Church on account of their religious beliefs; and those very laws in virtue of which the Protestants executed Catholics had been enacted centuries earlier at the command, and only because of the command, of the Papacy. Moreover, Catholic countries like Spain and her American colonies and France put in force the death sentence for heresy long after the Protestant nations had abandoned it. Our intelligence is sufficiently insulted by the Catholic plea that **their** religion is so august that we must condone its savage protection of itself, but at least historians ought to know better than to accept leniently the claim that such violence was born only in the stress of Reformation times.

The Catholic writers to whom I refer probably have in mind

only the alternation in power of Catholics and Protestants in England and the horrible executions of both sects. But here again there is a profound difference. England had never admitted the Inquisition. I am certainly not ascribing a greater humanity to the Englishmen of the Middle Ages. The motive was to check Papal encroachments, and England set up itself a law imposing the death-sentence for heresy: once more under threat of excommunication and interdict from Rome. I shall show presently that, while only about fifty persons were put to death under this law during the century and a half before the reign of the Catholic Mary, though, as we saw, heresy abounded, that atrocious queen and her clerical advisers executed, in the most barbarous fashion, about **three hundred** men and women, and even boys, **in three years**. The Protestant Elizabeth then restrained the very natural Protestant demand of reprisals for nearly twenty years and resorted to persecution only when conspiracies multiplied and Pope and Catholic powers threatened England; and the barbaric law was repealed a few decades later. So many people have a vague and entirely perverse idea about the conflict of Catholics and Protestants in England that these Catholic claims of a temporary rage which begot the spirit of intolerance are too readily accepted. I will summarize the facts in so far as they are undisputed.

§1. THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND UNDER EDWARD

As we saw in an earlier chapter, Henry VIII rejected the authority of the Pope but made little further difference, to the anger of the Protestants, in the doctrine and ritual of the new Church of England. His son, Edward VI, was too young to rule the kingdom, and Lord Somerset, the Protector, was anxious to leave the religious question as it was. To this the extremists of neither side would agree, and, when the strong arm of Henry was felt no longer, the situation became chaotic. Protestant preachers came to England from Switzerland and Holland, and to these Calvinists the English Church seemed as pagan as the Roman. The whole chronicle of the time shows that in the cities at least the majority were more than reconciled to the breach with Rome. The Protector and Council had indeed a difficult task in restraining the Protestant element. Priests were roughly handled by the people, and the statutes were dragged from the churches and destroyed.

Somerset's political rivals overthrew him, and the Catholics, who had helped Lord Warwick to do this, claimed their reward. But Warwick was neither willing nor able to tamper with the religion of the country, and in 1547 the Convocation of the Clergy itself demanded that the laity should communicate in both bread and wine—on this they were unanimous—and that priests should be permitted to marry. Parliament legalized these departures from Rome, and many other changes were made in the ritual. Cranmer remodeled the Prayer Book, statues were removed from the churches, and many of the old Catholic ceremonies were suppressed. A new Act of Uniformity was passed, and it was found that there were only five or six bishops who refused to accept these

divergences from the Catholic system and had to be deposed. It was a period of general toleration and fluidity of thought. There was little persecution under the Act of Uniformity, and the victims were generally Protestants who used violent language about the Romanist features that were still preserved. Catholics claim only ten "martyrs" under the rule of Edward VI, but not one of these was executed. They lost their offices, were put in prison, or were driven abroad. It was a short and generally bloodless period in an age of fierce passion.

§2. THE REIGN OF "BLOODY MARY"

Henry's three children, Edward, Mary and Elizabeth, were in the order of succession, and, as Mary was Catholic, her coreligionists resumed their hopes. But we see how hollow is the plea that England had been coerced into heresy by the tyranny of Henry VIII when we find her at once announcing a policy of toleration and accepting the title of Head of the Church. A priest said mass for her in her private chapel: a few Catholic bishops were reappointed: a number of the extreme Protestants fled to the continent. Mary is described by historians as acting at first with prudence, but one recognizes rather that her wish to restore Romanism as speedily as possible was checked by a consciousness that to do so might cost her the crown. She sent Cranmer and Latimer to the Tower of London for the boldness of their language, but the House of Commons resisted her efforts to get Church property restored or any alteration of the situation.

Mary was thirty-seven years old and an invalid, and her clerical advisers demanded that she should choose a Catholic husband and provide a Catholic heir to the throne. She chose Philip of Spain, and her agents (or those of the Church) industriously pleaded that it was in the national interest that an alliance with Spain should offset the the almost chronic hostility of France. The situation was, we must admit, very delicate and disturbing. There was the vigorous young Princess Elizabeth, a sound Protestant, waiting to replace Mary, the bitter rivalry of Catholics and Protestants which was, in view of the succession, bound to take a political complexion, and the strife of the advocates of a French or a Spanish alliance. Rumors of conspiracies spread, and as a result of one of these the brilliant Lady Jane Grey, a young woman of seventeen who already knew Latin, Greek and Italian, was sent to the scaffold, a victim of the ambition of her relatives. Mary inclined more to persecution, and with the use of funds sent by the emperor she corrupted the English Parliament and prepared it for a change.

Philip, a worthless and vicious but handsome Spaniard, came to England in the summer of 1554, and it was presently complained that there were four Spaniards to one Englishman on the streets of London, which led to many murders. The English Cardinal Pole, a fanatic, who had for years intrigued on the continent against the Church of England, now also came as a Papal Legate, and he brought the established Papal policy of execution. The corrupted

Parliament agreed to recognize the supremacy of the Pope, and an embassy was sent to give joy to the Vatican with that decision. The penal statutes were then at once put in force, and the imprisonment and execution of heretics began. All the acts of Henry and Edward were annulled, and England was declared once more a loyal branch of the Roman Church.

But the truculence of the new rule, the heroism of the Protestant martyrs, and the worthlessness of character of Philip, soon provoked an angry reaction. It was rumored, and is probably true, that Philip was not faithful to the queen even in these first years of his marriage; that a lady of the court had beaten him for his conduct to her and that he patronized ladies of a much lower character. His gluttony and coarse feasts of bacon-fat were discussed, and the people of London treated him with so little respect that the rumor spread that he was bringing a Spanish army to chastise their insolence. All the sympathy with which Mary had at first been greeted evaporated, and a strong Protestant reaction set in. The next two years, from 1555 to the death of Mary in 1557, were a nightmare.

Mary let it be known that she was expecting a child and the Catholic element broke out in the wildest rejoicing. The bells pealed, and religious processions marched through the streets of London praying for her safe delivery. The cradle was actually prepared, the documents relating to the royal heir drawn up; and Mary retired for her confinement and presently announced the oncoming of the pains. Mysteriously, nothing happened, and she passed into a morbid and at times hysterical condition. It is believed by modern physicians that she had a disease of the ovaries, one symptom of which was the cessation of the monthly disturbance that had deceived her. She knew nothing of this, and she used to sit on the floor, haggard and racked with pain, her head buried in her hands. God was punishing her for some sin, and what could it be but her toleration of heresy? Letters were found at times in her chamber telling her that she was loathed by the people of England, and she fell into bursts of hysterical temper. And, as she fell in the esteem of the people, the Princess Elizabeth, though carefully isolated and watched, rose. She became the "idol of London," and, when Mary's counsellors tried time after time to entrap and destroy her, she answered their questions with a mingling of shrewdness and boldness that infuriated them. Finally, when Philip was at last told of the real condition of his wife, he discovered that his valuable services were required on the continent and left her.

We have, of course, very scanty information of what occurred in Mary's council-chamber, but it is quite certain that the fanatical Cardinal Pole now encouraged her in her determination to win the favor of God by persecuting heresy. The Bishop of London, Bonner—"Bloody Bonner"—London soon called him, in accents of genuine horror—was one of the chief instruments of the policy. The leading Protestant prelates were burned at the stake, and even Cranmer, who had wavered pitifully, ended with a gesture of nobility. Cries of horror were raised all over England, and rumors of conspiracies

gave further excuses to the murderers. Boys in their teens, blind women, lame and helpless old men were taken to the scaffold, while Mary, with her increasing fits of temper and piety, urged on the work. The crowds in London now openly cheered the martyrs as they were carted through the streets. Mary and her Spaniard were loathed; and she had the further mortification of learning the real character of her husband. He paid her only one short visit after he learned of her incurable disease.

I do not wish to enlarge on the horrors perpetrated by the distracted woman, but we must remember that it was Pole, Bonner, and the other Catholic prelates who took advantage of her condition. The Jesuits were, of course, eager to join in such promising work, but Pole detested them and would not receive them. Ignatius had overreached himself. He had asked Pole to hand over to the Jesuits any monastic property that should be recovered! One Jesuit did enter the country in disguise, but the queen was dead. It is on Pole, and the English Catholics that we must lay the blame of a savagery that might have led to a terrible reaction under Elizabeth. I have said that up to this time only about fifty people had been executed for heresy in a century and a half. Now in less than three years nearly three hundred men and women suffered horrible tortures and death, and in the vast majority of cases there was not the least pretense or political activity.

Mary sustained her pious brutality to the end: indeed, it grew worse as her troubles increased. War broke out with France, and the English were ejected from the last bit of France that they still held and were now threatened with invasion. The harvest failed again, and famine lent new emphasis to the curses of the people. Heresy was still the cause of it all in the queen's morbid imagination, and the Catholic fanatics gladly carried out her will. Even the dead were dug up and their bodies burned. And in 1557 the miserable woman ended her life, and the nation turned with hope and rejoicing to the Princess Elizabeth. You will remember the kind of Pope, Julius III, in whose interest all this butchery had been inaugurated.

§3. PLOTS UNDER ELIZABETH

We shall see now how false is even the vague popular idea that both sides in the acrid religious controversy of the eighteenth century proceeded to burn and rip each other the moment they got power. Henry VIII and Edward VI left, as we saw, comparatively clean records for such an age; and it was chiefly advanced Protestants whom they had punished. Mary and her Catholic advisers had just spent two years in most loathsome and barbaric persecution. Until almost the day of the queen's death the executions had proceeded, and the country was full of anger and disgust. Yet for twenty years there were no more of these savage murders for religious beliefs. The Church of England was restored, but the numerous Catholics found that officials were encouraged to connive at their breaches of the law, and large numbers of priests and nuns were known to be sheltered in the homes of the wealthy Catholics.

It was only when conspiracies multiplied and the beneficent and peaceful reign of Elizabeth was threatened that the horrid fires blazed out once more. Keep these dates in mind. Elizabeth acceded to the throne in 1557, and until the Pope deposed her in 1570, thus inviting France and Spain to invade England and seize the crown, the penal laws were not enforced. Even then Elizabeth so checked the application of the laws that Froude quotes her boasting in 1580 that no Catholic had yet been persecuted for religion. The ferocity lay with "the Holy Roman Church."

What Elizabeth really felt about religion no one can confidently say. A Spanish envoy once, after a conversation with her, said that she was an atheist. She seems to have been a very liberal Lutheran, attaching little importance to doctrinal differences and disgusted with the Rome-inspired belief that it was proper to burn dissenters. She had, naturally, conformed under Mary, for they were round her like a group of cats round a mouse hole, only too eager to bring her to the scaffold. But she at once made her mind clear enough by refusing to announce her accession to the Pope and by walking out of her chapel during mass because the priest, against her orders, elevated the host in the Roman fashion. When the monks met her at Westminster Abbey with lighted candles she said: "Away with those torches: we can see well enough." London was delighted at the return of robust Tudor common sense after the neurotic fanaticism of Mary, but Elizabeth had more reason than Mary to proceed prudently. The overwhelming majority of the clergy had disowned the Pope, under Henry and Edward and bowed once more to him under Mary. Was it possible that they would profess a third change of religious convictions?

But it was soon found that the change to Catholicism under Mary had been generally forced and insincere. Parliament declared Elizabeth head of the Church, any man being a traitor to the realm who refused to admit it, and the laity were allowed to communicate from the chalice. To prepare the way for further changes there was, in the German fashion, a colloquy or debate of Catholic and Protestant divines in Westminster Abbey in the presence of the Lords and Commons. Next year Parliament passed a new act of uniformity, and only a few of the bishops refused to submit. They were deposed but were not imprisoned until, at a later date, the Papal policy made mischief. At this time the Pope still regarded Elizabeth as open to conversion, and he tried to bribe her by offering a solemn declaration of the legitimacy of her birth. Instead the making of the Church of England proceeded from year to year. The clergy drafted its Thirty-nine Articles in 1563. But the English Church had arisen under quite different conditions from the Lutheran and was not based upon such a study of the original Christian documents as Luther and Calvin had made. It retained hishops and so much of the ritual and doctrine of the old Church that, as is well known, a section of it today rejects the name Protestant and calls itself the English Catholic Church, of which the American Episcopal Church is an extension.

I am concerned here only with the question of persecution.

London clamored for reprisals on "Bloody Bonner" and his colleagues, but even that consecrated butcher was unharmed. In time the extremists on both sides, the Catholics and Puritans, gave serious trouble; and in the case of the Catholics the discontent always tended to assume a political shade, since their only hope was in a Catholic monarch while the Puritans saw no such change of any advantage to themselves. Most of the Catholics—they were officially estimated about this time to number only fifty thousand—considered themselves not hardly treated, and in 1569 some of them actually requested the Pope to allow them to attend the services of the Church of England. Instead the Pope encouraged, through the Catholic powers, a series of plots against Elizabeth. The chief idea was that Mary Stuart, of Scotland, should marry the Duke of Norfolk and succeed or displace Elizabeth. There were insurrections in the north (then almost entirely rural), where most of the Catholics were, and the Pope in 1570 deeply embittered the English by declaring Elizabeth deposed: a stupid measure which, in the language of the time, amounted to an invitation to France or Spain to invade England and seize the crown.

The penal laws were now, very naturally, revived, but Elizabeth checked their operation, and again the Catholic clergy abused her leniency. Catholic colleges for the training of English priests were now established on the continent, and scores were sent into England. The toleration had been intended only for survivors of the old Church, and there was much murmuring at the activity of these new zealots who came over with the new and harsher Papal policy. Just at this time too occurred, as I said, the horrible and wholesale butchery of Protestants in France; and France and Spain were notoriously conspiring against England. When, in 1580, the Jesuits, the most hated, arrogant, and unscrupulous of all Papal agents, boldly invaded England, it was impossible any longer to expect toleration. Parsons, their leader, a robust adventurer who swaggered into London disguised as a captain returning from the wars, with his companion disguised as a jewel merchant, had the effrontery to preach in the metropolis. They set up a printing press and spread Catholic literature of the usual amiable type; while in Scotland and France they engaged in the most treasonable conspiracies. The Catholics and their priests in vain implored the Jesuits to leave the country.

The "Roman mission" had now taken on a heavily political character, and the death-sentence was decreed for priests and Jesuits. The Jesuit Campion, one of the best of his gang, was captured, and under torture, to the great scandal of Catholics, he betrayed his associates. Persecution was soon in full swing, and a sordid quarrel between the Jesuit and the secular priests (whom the Jesuits accused of drunkenness and immorality, even in prison) helped the authorities. It is amusing to read of the horrified indignation of Catholics in Europe: it was only ten years since St. Bartholomew, and the Jesuit Parsons and the Papacy were even then urging Spain to that design on England which soon (1588) took shape in the famous Armada. It was in these circumstances that

the unfortunate Mary Stuart was executed—a pathetic spectacle in spite of the fact that she had been for years the center of the conspiracy against England—and the English Roman Church got the “martyrs” of whom it never ceases to speak.

How far in each case these priests were involved in political conspiracy it is impossible to discuss here. For most people it will be enough to reflect that Elizabeth refused for twenty years to persecute for religion, and that when the persecution began the atmosphere of Europe was sodden with conspiracies against her and her kingdom. I will be content in conclusion to glance at the famous Gunpowder Plot which was organized under Elizabeth's successor, James I. The policy of tolerating lay Catholics but not priests—a policy to which no parallel could be found in any Catholic country except France, where it was necessary—was maintained, and, in their bitter disappointment, though there were actually four hundred priests in England and few were executed, some Catholic laymen hatched the horrible and stupid plot of storing gunpowder beneath the House of Parliament and killing the entire body of members. On November 5, 1605, Guy Fawkes (the gentleman from whom America takes its familiar word “guy”) was discovered beside the powder in the vaults beneath the House.

The plot itself, even if confined to the laity, would have, in that age, provoked bloody reprisals in any country, but, as I have shown at length in my “Candid History of the Jesuits,” the Jesuits Father Garnet and Father Greenway were confidentially told of the plot three months in advance, and all Garnet's protestations that they disapproved are worthless. The plot was not told to them under the seal of confession, and they allowed it to take its course. They were, the documents prove, afraid to offend the Catholic laity, who were desperately bent on some large crime of this sort. Garnet's admissions during his trial, though he juggled pitifully with the truth, put this much beyond question. Not only was Roman doctrine now repugnant to all but a few thousand English people but the Church's policy of crime to protect its interests made the very name Popery a thing of contempt to the people. England broke forever with Rome; and it entered immediately upon the great age of Shakespeare and Bacon, of industry and science and commerce, which laid the foundations of its prosperity.

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