

History of the Papacy Chapter IV. Rise and Progress of the Temporal Supremacy.



This is the next chapter after [Chapter III. Rise and Progress of the Temporal Sovereignty.](#)

We left the Papacy, at the opening of the ninth century, reposing beneath the shadow of the Carlovingian monarchy. One grand stage in its progress had been accomplished. The battle for the temporal sovereignty had been fought and won. A crowned priest now sat upon the Seven Hills. From this time another and far mightier object began to occupy the ambition and exercise the genius of Rome. To occupy a seat overshadowed by the loftier throne of the emperors would not satisfy the vast ambition of the pontiffs, and accordingly there was now commenced the struggle for the temporal supremacy.

There was an obvious incompatibility between the lofty spiritual powers claimed by the pontiffs, and their subordination to secular authority; nevertheless, at this time, and for some ages afterwards, the popes were subject to the emperors. Charlemagne was lord paramount of Rome, and the territories of the Church were a fief of the Emperor. The son of Pepin wore the imperial diadem, and, in the words of Ranke, "performed unequivocal acts of sovereign authority in the dominions conferred on St. Peter." [1] Nevertheless, he had received the empire in a way which left it undecided whether he owed it more to his own merit or to the pontiff's favour, and whether he held it solely in virtue of his own right, and not also, in good degree, as the gift of Leo. The Pope was nominally subject to the Emperor, but in many vital points the *first* was *last*; and he who now wrote himself "a servant of servants," was fulfilling in a bad sense what our Lord intended in a good,—“Whosoever will be the greatest among you, let him be the servant of all.” The popes had not yet advanced a direct and formal claim to dispose of crowns and kingdoms, but the germ of such a claim was contained, first, in

the acts which they now performed. They had already taken it upon them to sanction the transference of the crown of France from the Merovingian to the Carolingian family. And on what principle had they done so? Why did the Pope, rather than any other prince, profess to give validity to Pepin's right to the throne of France? Why, seeing, as a temporal ruler, he was the least powerful and independent sovereign in Europe, did he, of all men, interpose his prerogative in the matter? The principle on which he proceeded was plainly this,—that in virtue of his spiritual character he was superior to earthly dignities, and had been vested in the power of controlling and disposing of such dignities.[\[2\]](#) The same principle is yet more clearly involved in the bestowal of the imperial dignity on Charlemagne. That the popes themselves held this principle to be implied in these proceedings, though as yet they kept the claim in the background, is plain from the fact that, at an after period, and in more favourable circumstances, they founded on these acts in proof of the dependence of the emperors, and their own right to confer the empire. It was the usual manner of the Papacy to perform acts which, as they appeared to contain no principles hostile to the rights of society or the prerogatives of princes, were permitted to pass unchallenged at the time; but the Popes took care afterwards to improve them, by founding upon them the most extravagant and ambitious claims. In nothing have the plausibility and artifice of the system and its patrons been more plainly shown.

But, *second*, the principle on which the whole system of the popes was founded, virtually implied their supremacy over kings as well as over priests. They claimed to be the successors of Peter and the vicars of Christ. But Christ is Lord of the world as well as Head of the Church. He is a King of kings; and the popes aimed at exhibiting on earth an exact model or representation of Christ's government in heaven; and accordingly they strove to reduce monarchs to the rank of their vassals, and assume into their own hands the management of all the affairs of earth. If their claim was a just one,—if they were indeed the vicars of Christ and the vicegerents of God, as they affirmed,—there were plainly no bounds to their authority, either in temporal or spiritual matters. The symbol which to pontifical rhetoric has alone seemed worthy to shadow forth the more than mortal magnificence of the popes is the sun, which, they tell us, the Creator has set in the heavens as the representative of the pontifical authority; while the moon, shining with borrowed splendour, has formed the humble symbolization of the secular power. According to their theory, there was strictly but one ruler on earth,—the Pope. In him all authority was centred. From him all rule and jurisdiction emanated. From him kings received their crowns, and priests their mitres. To him all were accountable, while he was accountable to no one save God alone. The pontiffs, we say, judged it premature to startle the world as yet by an undisguised and open avowal of this claim: they accounted it sufficient, meanwhile, to embody its fundamental principles in the decrees of councils and in the pontifical acts, and allow them to lie dormant there, in the hope that a better age would arrive, when it would be possible to avow in plain terms, and enforce by direct acts, a claim which they had put forth only inferentially as yet. But to make good this claim was the grand object of Rome from the beginning; and this object she steadily pursued through a variety of fortune and a succession of centuries. The vastness of the object

was equalled by the ability and perseverance with which it was prosecuted. The policy of Rome was profound, subtle, patient, unscrupulous, and audacious. And as she has had no rival as respects the greatness of the prize and the qualities with which she has contended for it, so neither has she had a rival in the dazzling success with which at last her contest was crowned.

With Charlemagne expired the military genius and political sagacity which had founded the empire. His power now passed into hands too feeble to save the state from convulsions or the empire from dissolution. Quarrels and disputes arose among the inheritors of his dominions. The popes were called in, and asked to employ their paternal authority and ghostly wisdom in the settlement of these differences. With a well-feigned coyness, but real delight at having found so plausible a pretext for advancing their own pretensions, they undertook the task, and executed it to such good purpose, that while they took care of the interests of their clients, they very considerably promoted their own. Hitherto the pontiff had been raised to his dignity by the suffrages of the bishops, accompanied by the acclamation of the Roman people and the ratification of the emperor. For till the imperial consent had been signified, the newly-elected pontiff could not be legally consecrated. But this badge of subordination, if not of servitude, the popes resolved no longer to wear. Was it to be endured that the vicegerent of God should reign only by the sufferance of the French emperor? Must that authority which came direct from the great apostle be countersigned by a mere dignitary of earth? These ambitious projects the popes had found it prudent to repress hitherto; but now the sword of Charlemagne was in the dust, and they could deal as they listed with the puppets who had stood up in his room. A course of policy was adopted, consisting of alternate cajolery and browbeating, in which the emperors had decidedly the worst of it. Their privilege of giving a valid and legal right to the tiara was wrested from them; and the popes manoeuvred so successfully as to keep the imperial prerogative in abeyance till the times of Otho the Great. Inimitable adroitness did the Papacy display in turning to account the troubles of the times. Like a knowing trader at a commercial crisis with plenty of ready cash in hand, the popes did such an amount of business in Peter's name, that they vastly increased the credit and revenues of his see. So wisely did they lay out their available stock of influence, that their house now became, and for some time afterwards continued to be, the first establishment in Europe. Of the many bidders for a share in the trade of the great Fisherman, none were admitted into the concern but such as brought with them, in some shape or other, good solid capital; and thus the business went on every day improving. Monarchs were aided, but on all such occasions the popes took care that the chair of Peter should receive in return sevenfold what it gave.

The posterity of Charlemagne at this time contested with one another, in a sanguinary war, their rights to the throne of their illustrious father. By large presents, and yet larger promises, Charles the Bald was fortunate enough to engage the reigning pontiff, John VIII., in his interests. From that moment the contest was no longer doubtful. Charles was proclaimed Emperor by the Pope in A.D. 876. A service so important deserved to be suitably acknowledged. The monarch's gratitude for his throne was embodied in an act, by which he surrendered for himself and his successors all right of

interfering in the election to the pontifical chair. Henceforward, till the middle of the tenth century, the imperial sanction was dispensed with, and the pontiffs mounted the chair of Peter without acknowledging in the matter either king or kaisir. In this the pontificate had achieved a great victory over the empire. Nor was this the only advantage which the pontiffs gained in that struggle with the imperial power into which they had been temptingly drawn by the unsettled character of the times. In the case of Charles the Bald the Pope had nominated the Emperor. The same act was repeated in the case of his successors, Carloman and Charles the Gross. It was continued in the contests for the empire which followed the reigns of these princes. The candidate who was rich enough to offer the largest bribe, or powerful enough to appear with an army at the gates of Rome, was invariably crowned emperor in the Vatican. Thus, as the State dissolved, the Church waxed in strength. What the one lost the other drew to herself. The popes did not trouble the world with any formal statement of their principles on the head of the supremacy; they were content to embody them in acts. They were wise enough to know, that the speediest way of getting the world to acknowledge theoretic truth is to familiarize it with its practical applications,—to ask its approval of it, not as a theory, but as a fact. Thus the popes, by a bold course of dexterous management, and of audacious but successful aggression, laboured to weave the doctrine of the supremacy into the general policy of Europe. But for the rise, in the tenth century, of a new power superior to the Franks, Rome would now have reached the summit of her wishes.[\[3\]](#)

No weapon was too base for the use of Rome. Her hand grasped with equal avidity the forged document and the hired dagger. Both were sanctified in her service. In the beginning of the ninth century came the decretals of Isidore. These professed to be a collection of the decrees and rescripts of the early councils and popes, the object of their infamous author, who is unknown, being to show that the see of Rome possessed from the very beginning all the prerogatives with which the intrigues of eight centuries had invested it. Their style was so barbarous, and their anachronisms and solecisms were so flagrant, that in no age but the most ignorant could they have escaped detection for a single hour. Rome, nevertheless, infallibly decreed the truth of what is now universally acknowledged to be false. These decretals supported her pretensions, and that with her decided the question of their authenticity or spuriousness. There are few who have earned so well the honours of canonization as this unknown forger. For ages the decretals possessed the authority of precedents, and furnished Rome with appropriate weapons in her contests with bishops and kings.[\[4\]](#)

The French power was declining; that of the Germans had not yet risen. The pontifical influence was, on the whole, the predominating element in Europe; and the popes, having now no superior, and freed from all restraint, began to use the ample license which the times afforded them, for purposes so infamous, that they transcend description, and well-nigh belief. With the tenth century commence the dark annals of the Papacy. The popes, although wholly devoted to selfish and ambitious pursuits, had found it prudent hitherto to maintain the semblance of piety; but now even that pretence was laid aside. Thanks to Rome, the world was now prepared to see the mask thrown off. Europe had reached a pitch of ignorance and superstition, and the Papacy

a height of insolence and truculence, which enabled the popes to defy with impunity the fear of man and the power of God. Not only were the forms of religion contemned; the ordinary decencies of manhood were flagrantly outraged. We dare not pollute our page with such things as the pontiffs of this age practised in the face of Rome and the world. The palaces of the worst emperors, the groves of pagan worship, saw nothing so foul as the orgies of the Vatican. Men sat in the chair of Peter, whose consciences were loaded with perjuries and adulteries, and whose hands were stained with murders; and claimed, as the vicars of Christ, a right to govern the Church and the world. The intrigues, the fraud, the violence, that now raged at Rome, may be conceived of from the fact, that from the death of Benedict IV., A.D. 903, to the elevation of John XII., A.D. 956,—an interval of only fifty-three years,—not fewer than thirteen popes held successively the pontificate. The attempt were vain to pursue these fleeting pontifical phantoms. Their brief but flagitious career was ended most commonly by the lingering horrors of the dungeon, or the quick despatch of the poignard. It is enough to mention the names of a John the Twelfth, a Boniface the Seventh, a John the Twenty-third, a Sixtus the Fourth, an Alexander the Sixth (Borgia), a Julius the Second. These names stand associated with crimes of enormous magnitude. This list by no means exhausts the goodly band of pontifical villains. Simony, the good-will of a prostitute, or the dagger of an assassin, opened their way to the pontifical throne; and the use they made of their power formed a worthy sequel to the infamous means by which they had obtained it. In the chair of Peter, the pontiffs of this and succeeding eras revelled in impiety, perjury, lewdness, sacrilege, sorcery, robbery, and blood; thus converting the palace of the apostle into an unfathomable sink of abomination and filth. "A mass of moral impurity," says Edgar, "might be collected from the Roman hierarchy, sufficient to crowd the pages of folios, and glut all the demons of pollution and malevolence." The age, too, was scandalized by frequent and flagrant schisms. These divided the nations of Christendom, engendered sanguinary wars, and unhinged society itself. For half a century rival pontifical thrones stood at Rome and Avignon; and Europe was doomed daily to listen to the dreadful volleys of spiritual thunder which the rival infallibilities, Urban and Clement, ever and anon launched at one another, and which, in almost one continuous and stunning roar, reverberated between the Tiber and the Rhone.^[5] There is no need to darken the horrors of the time by the fable (if fable it be) of a female pope, who is said about this time to have filled St. Peter's chair. The traditionary Pope Joan is found, perhaps, in the sister-prostitutes, the well-known Marozia and Theodora, who now governed Rome. Their influence, founded on their wealth, their beauty, and their intrigues, enabled them to place on the pontifical throne whom they would; and not unfrequently they promoted, without a blush, their paramours to the holy chair. Such were the dark transactions of the period, and such the scones that signalized the advent of the Papacy to temporal power. The revels of Ahasuerus and Haman were concluded with the bloody decree which delivered over a whole nation to the sword. The yet guiltier revels of the Papacy were, in like manner, followed in due time by ages of proscription and slaughter.^[6]

In tracing the rise of the temporal supremacy, we are now brought to the middle of the tenth century. Otho the Great appears upon the stage. With a

vigorous hand did these German conquerors grasp the imperial diadem which the degenerate descendants of Charlemagne were no longer either worthy to wear or able to defend. Otho found the Papacy running a career of crime, and in some danger of perishing in its own corruption. He interposed his sword, and averted its otherwise inevitable fate. It did not suit the designs of the German emperors that the Papacy should suffer a premature extinction. It might be turned, they were not slow to perceive, to great account in the way of consolidating and extending their own imperial dignity, and therefore they strove to reform, not destroy, Rome. They rescued the chair of Peter from its worst foes, its occupants. They deposed several popes notorious for their vices, and exalted others of purer morals to the pontifical dignity.^[7] Thus the Papacy had found a new master; for Otho and his descendants were as much the liege lords of the popedom as the monarchs of the Carolingian line had been.^[8] The popes were now obliged to surrender the powers they had usurped during the time that the imperial sceptre was in the feeble hands of the last of the posterity of Charlemagne. In particular, the rights of which Charles the Bald had been stripped were now given back.^[9] The emperors again nominated the pope.^[10] When a vacancy occurred in the chair of St. Peter, envoys from Rome announced the fact at the court of the emperor, and waited the signification of his will respecting a successor. This substantial right of interfering when a new pope was to be elected, which the emperors possessed, was very inadequately balanced by the empty and nominal power enjoyed by the popes, of placing the imperial crown on the emperor's head. "The prince elected in the German Diet," says Gibbon, "acquired from that instant the subject kingdoms of Italy and Rome; but he might not legally assume the titles of Emperor and Augustus, till he had received the crown from the hands of the Roman pontiff,"^[11]—a sanction that could be withheld with difficulty so long as the emperor was master of Rome and her popes. But the intimate union now existing between the empire and the pontificate was productive of reciprocal advantages, and tended greatly to consolidate and extend the power of both. The rise of the French monarchy had been owing in no small degree to the favourable dispositions which the kings of France discovered towards the Church. The western Goths and Burgundians were sunk in Arianism; the Franks, from the beginning, had been truly Catholic; and the popes did all they could to foster the growth of a power which, from similarity of creed, as well as from motives of policy, was so likely to become their surest ally. The miraculous succours vouchsafed to the arms of the French resolve themselves, without doubt, into the material aids given by the popes and their agents to a people in whose success they felt a deep interest. Hence the legend, according to which St. Martin, in the form of a hind, discovered to Clovis the ford over the Vienne; and hence also that other fable which asserts that St. Hillary preceded the Frank armies in a column of fire.^[12] The St. Martin and the St. Hillary of these legends were doubtless some bishop, or other ecclesiastic, who rendered important services to the Frank monarch and his army, on the ground that, with the triumph of their arms was identified the progress of the Church.

The same influence was vigorously exerted, from the same motive, in behalf of the German power. Monks and priests preceded the imperial arms, especially in the east and north of Germany; and the annexation of these countries to the empire is to be attributed fully as much to the zeal of the ecclesiastics as

to the valour of the soldiers. Nor did the German chiefs show that they were either unable to appreciate or unwilling to reward these important services. They lavished unbounded wealth upon the clergy, their policy being to bind thereby this important class to their interests. No one was more distinguished for his munificence in this respect than Henry II. This monarch created numerous rich benefices; but the rigour with which he insisted upon his right to nominate to the livings he had endowed betrayed the motives that prompted this great liberality. Abbots and bishops were exalted to the rank of barons and dukes, and invested with jurisdiction over extensive territories. "The bishoprics of Germany," says Gibbon, "were made equal in extent and privilege, superior in wealth and population, to the most ample states of the military order."[\[13\]](#) "Baronial, and even ducal rights," says Ranke, "were held in Germany by the bishops and abbots of the empire, not within their own possessions only, but even beyond them. Ecclesiastical estates were no longer described as situated in certain counties, but these counties were described as situated in the bishoprics. In upper Italy, nearly all the cities were governed by the viscounts of their bishops."[\[14\]](#) Military service was exacted of these ecclesiastical barons, in return for the possessions which they held; and not unfrequently did bishops appear at the head of their armed vassals, with lance in hand and harness on their backs. They were, moreover, addicted to the chase, of which the Germans in all ages have been passionately fond, and for which their vast forests have afforded ample scope. "Rude as the Germans of the middle ages were," observes Dunham, "to see a successor of St. Peter hallooing after his dogs certainly struck them as incongruous. Yet the bishops, in virtue of their fiefs, were compelled to send their vassals to the field; and no doubt they considered as somewhat inconsistent, a system which commanded them to kill men, but not beasts."[\[15\]](#)

The acquisition of wealth formed an important element in the growth of the Papacy. The Roman law did not permit lands to be held on mortmain; nevertheless the emperors winked at the possession by the Church of immoveable possessions, whose revenues furnished stipends to her pastors and alms to her poor. No sooner did Constantine embrace Christianity, than an imperial edict invested the Church with a legal right to what she had possessed hitherto by tolerance only.[\[16\]](#) Neither under the empire, nor under any of the ten kingdoms into which the empire was ultimately divided, did the Church ever obtain a territorial establishment; but the ample liberality, first of the Christian emperors, and next of the barbarian kings, did more than supply the want of a general provision. For ages, wealth had been flowing in upon the Church in a torrent; and now, from being the poorest she had become the wealthiest corporation in Europe. A race of princes had succeeded to the fishermen of Galilee; and the opulent nobles and citizens of the empire represented that society whose first bonds had been cemented in the catacombs under the city. Under the Carolingian family, and the Saxon line of emperors, "many churches possessed seven or eight thousand mansi," says Hallam. "One with but two thousand passed for only indifferently rich."[\[17\]](#) This vast opulence represented the accumulations and hoardings of many ages, and had been acquired by innumerable, and sometimes not very honourable, means. When a wealthy man entered a monastery, his estate was thrown into the common treasury of the brotherhood. When the son of a rich

man took the cowl, he recommended himself to the Church by a donation of land. To die without leaving a portion of one's worldly goods to the priesthood came to be rare, and was regarded as a fraud upon the Church. The monks sometimes supplemented the incomes of their houses by intramitting with the funds of charities placed under their control. The wealthy sinner, when about to depart, expressed his penitence in a well-filled bag of gold, or in a certain number of broad acres; and the ravening baron was compelled to disgorge, with abundant interest, on the bed of death, the spoliations of church-property of which he had been guilty during his lifetime. The fiefs of the nobility, who had beggared themselves by profligacy, or in the epidemic folly of the crusades, were not unfrequently brought into the market; and, being offered at a cheap rate, the Church, which had abundance of ready money at her command, became the purchaser, and so augmented her possessions. It is but fair to state also, that the clergy helped, in that age, to add to the wealth and beauty of the country, by the cultivation of tracts of waste lands which were frequently gifted to them. The Church found additional sources of revenue in the exemption from taxes; though not from military service, which her lands enjoyed, and in the institution of tithes, which, in imitation of the Jewish law, was originated about the sixth century, formed the main topic of the sermons of the eighth, and finally obtained a civil sanction in the ninth, under Charlemagne. But, not content with these varied facilities of getting rapidly and enormously rich, the monks betook themselves to forging charters,—an exploit which their knowledge of writing enabled them to achieve, and which the ignorance of the age rendered of very difficult detection. “They did nearly enjoy,” says Hallam, “one half of England, and, I believe, a greater proportion in some countries of Europe.”[\[18\]](#) This wealth was far beyond the measure of their own enjoyment, and they had no families to whom they might bequeath it. Such rapacity, then, does seem as unnatural as it was enormous. But, in truth, the Church had fallen as entirely under the dominion of an unreasonable and uncontrollable passion as the miser; she was, in fact, a corporate miser. This vast wealth, it may easily be apprehended, inflamed her insolence and advanced her power. The power of the Church became greater every day,—not its power as a Church, but as a confederation,—and might well excite alarm as to the future. Here was a body of men placed under one head, bound together by a community of interest and feeling, superior in intelligence, and therefore in influence, to the rest of the empire, enormously rich, and exercising civil jurisdiction over extensive tracts and vast populations. It was impossible to contemplate without misgivings, so numerous and compact a phalanx. It must have struck every one, that upon the moderation and fidelity of its members must depend the repose of the empire and the world in time to come. The emperors, secure, as they imagined themselves, in the possession of the supremacy, saw without alarm the rise of this formidable body. They looked upon it as one of the main props of their power, and felicitated themselves not a little in having been so fortunate as to entrench their prerogative behind so firm a bulwark. The appointment to all ecclesiastical benefices was in the emperor's hands; and in augmenting the wealth and grandeur of the clergy, they doubted not that they were consolidating their own authority. It required no prophet to divine, that so long as the imperial sceptre continued to be grasped by a strong hand and guided by a firm mind, which it had been since it came into the possession of the German race, no danger would arise; but that the moment

this ceased to be the case, the pontificate, already almost on a level with the empire, would obtain the mastery. Rome had been often baulked in her grand enterprise; but now her accommodating, patient, and persevering policy was about to receive its reward. The hour was near when her grandest hopes and her loftiest pretensions were to be realized,—when the throne of God's vicegerent was to display itself in its fullest proportions, and be seen towering in proud supremacy above all the other thrones of earth.

The emergency that might have been foreseen had arisen. We behold on the throne of the empire a child, Henry IV. and in the chair of St. Peter, the astute Hildebrand. We find the empire torn by insurrections and tumults, whilst the Papacy is guided by the clear and bold genius of Gregory VII. Savoy had the honour to give birth to this man. He was the son of a carpenter, and comprehended from the first the true destiny of the Papacy, and the height to which its essential principles, vigorously maintained and fearlessly carried out, would exalt the popedom. To emancipate the pontificate from the authority of the empire, and to establish a visible theocracy with the vicar of Christ at its head, became the one grand object of his life. He brought to the execution of his task a profound genius, a firm will, a fearless courage, and a pliant policy,—a quality in which the popes have seldom been deficient. From the moment that he chid Leo IX. for accepting the tiara from the hands of the secular power, his spirit had governed Rome.^[19] At length, in A.D. 1073, he ascended the pontifical throne in person. "No sooner was this man made Pope," says Du Pin, "but he formed a design of becoming lord, spiritual and temporal, over the whole earth; the supreme judge and determiner of all affairs, both ecclesiastical and civil; the distributor of all manner of graces, of what kind soever; the disposer not only of archbishopricks, bishopricks, and other ecclesiastical benefices, but also of kingdoms, states, and the revenues of particular persons. To bring about this resolution, he made use of the ecclesiastical authority and the spiritual sword."^[20] The times were favourable in no ordinary degree. The empire of Germany was enfeebled by the disaffection of the barons; France was ruled by an infant sovereign, without capacity or inclination for affairs of state; England had just been conquered by the Normans; Spain was distracted by the Moors; and Italy was parcelled out amongst a multitude of petty princes. Everywhere faction was rife throughout Europe, and a strong government existed nowhere. The time invited him, and straightway Gregory set about his high attempt. His first care was to assemble a Council, in which he pronounced the marriage of priests unlawful. He next sent his legates throughout the various countries of Europe, to compel bishops and all ecclesiastics to put away their wives. Having thus dissevered the ties which connected the clergy with the world, and given them but one object for which to live, namely, the exaltation of the hierarchy, Gregory rekindled, with all the ardour and vehemence characteristic of the man, the war between the throne and the mitre. The object at which Gregory VII. aimed was twofold:—1. To render the election to the pontifical chair independent of the emperors; and, 2. To resume the empire as a fief of the Church, and to establish his dominion over the kings and kingdoms of the earth. His first step towards the accomplishment of these vast designs was, as we have shown, to enact clerical celibacy. His second was to forbid all ecclesiastics to receive investiture at the hands of the secular power.^[21] In this decree he laid the foundation

of the complete emancipation of the Church from the State; but half a century of wars and bloodshed was required to conduct the first enterprise, that of the investitures, to a successful issue; while a hundred and fifty years more of similar convulsions had to be gone through before the second, that of universal domination, was attained.

Let us here pause to review the rise of the war of investitures which now broke out, and which "during two centuries distracted the Christian world, and deluged a great portion of Italy with blood." [22] In the primitive age the pastors of the Roman Church were elected by the people. When we come down to those times, still early, when the office of bishop began to take precedence of that of presbyter, we find the election to the episcopate effected by the joint suffrages of the clergy and people of the city or diocese. After the fourth century, when a regular gradation of offices or hierarchy was set up, the bishop chosen by the clergy and people had to be approved of by his metropolitan, as the metropolitan by his primate. It does not appear that the emperors interfered at all in these elections, farther than to signify their acceptance or rejection of the persons chosen to the very highest sees,—the patriarchates of Rome and Constantinople. In this their example was followed by the Gothic and Lombard kings of Italy. The people retained their influence in the election of their pastors and bishops down till a comparatively late period. We find popular election in existence in the end of the fourth century. A canon of the third Council of Carthage, in A.D. 397, [23] decrees that no clergyman shall be ordained who has not been examined by the bishop and approved of by the suffrages of the people. Even at the middle of the sixth century popular election had not disappeared from the Church. We find the third Council of Orleans, held in A.D. 538, regulating by canon the election and ordination of metropolitans and bishops. As regarded the metropolitan, the Council enacted that he should be chosen by the bishops of the province, with the consent of the clergy and people of the city, "it being fitting," say the fathers, "that he who is to preside over all should be chosen by all." And, as respected bishops, it was decreed that they should be ordained by the metropolitan, and chosen by the clergy and people. [24] "The people fully preserved their elective rights at Milan," observes Hallam, "in the eleventh century; and traces of their concurrence may be found in France and Germany in the next age." [25] >From the people the right passed to the sovereigns, who found a plausible pretext for granting investitures of bishops, in the vast temporalities attached to their sees. These possessions, which had originated mostly in royal gifts, were viewed somewhat in the light of fiefs, for which it was but reasonable that the tenant should do homage to the lord paramount. Hence the ceremony introduced by Charlemagne of putting the ring and crosier into the hands of the newly consecrated bishop. The bishops of Rome, like their brethren, were at first chosen by popular election. In process of time, the consent of the emperor was used to ratify the choice of the people. This prerogative came into the possession of Charlemagne along with the imperial crown, and was exercised by his posterity,—if we except the last of his descendants, during whose feeble reigns the prerogative which the imperial hands had let fall was caught up by the Roman populace. This right came next into the possession of the Saxon emperors, and was exercised by some of the race of Otho in a more absolute manner than it had ever been by either Greek or Carlovingian monarch. Henry

III., impatient to put down the scandal of three rival popes, assembled a council at Sutri, which deposed all three, placed Henry's friend, the Bishop of Bamberg (Clement II.), in Peter's chair, and added this substantial boon, that henceforward the imperial throne should possess the entire nomination of the popes, without the intervention of clergy or laity.[\[26\]](#) But what the magnanimity of Henry III. had gained came to be lost by the tender age and irresolute spirit of his son Henry IV. Nicolas II., in 1059, wrested the prerogative from the emperors, to place it, not in the people, but in a new body, which presents us with the origin of the conclave of cardinals. According to the pontifical decree, the seven cardinal bishops holding sees in the neighbourhood of Rome were henceforward to choose the pope.[\[27\]](#) A vague recognition of some undefinable right possessed by the emperors and the people in the election was made in the decree, but it amounted in reality to little more than a permission to both to be present on the occasion, and to signify their acquiescence in what they had no power to prevent. The real author of this, and of similar measures, was Hildebrand, who was content meanwhile to wield, in the humble rank of a Roman archdeacon, the destinies of the Papacy, and to hide in the monk's garb that dauntless and comprehensive genius which in a few years was to govern Europe. Hildebrand in no long time took the quarrel into his own hands.

He ascended the pontifical throne, as we have already stated, in 1073, under the style of Gregory VII. He comprehended the Emperor's position with regard to the princes of Germany better than the Emperor himself did, and shaped his measures accordingly. He began by promulgating the decree against lay investitures, to which we have already adverted. He saw the advantage of having the barons on his side. He knew that they were impatient and envious of the power of Henry, who was at once weak and tyrannical; and he found it no difficult matter to gain them over to the papal interests,—first, by the decree of the Pope, which declared Germany an electoral monarchy; and, second, by the influence which the barons were still permitted to retain in the election of bishops. For although Gregory had deprived the Emperor of the right of investiture, and in doing so had broken the bond that held together the civil and spiritual institutions, as Ranke remarks, and declared a revolution,[\[28\]](#) he did not claim the direct nomination of the bishops, but referred the choice to the chapters, over which the higher German nobility exercised very considerable influence. Thus the Pope had the aristocratic interests on his side in the conflict. Henry, reckless as impotent, proceeded to give mortal offence to his great antagonist. Hastily assembling a number of bishops and other vassals at Worms, he procured a sentence deposing Gregory from the popedom. He mistook the man and the times. Gregory, receiving the tidings with derision, assembled a council in the Lateran palace, and solemnly excommunicated Henry, annulled his right to the kingdoms of Germany and Italy, and absolved his subjects from their allegiance. Henry's recklessness was succeeded by panic. He felt that the spell of the pontifical curse was upon him; that his nobles, and bishops, and subjects, were fleeing from him or conspiring against him; and in prostration of spirit he resolved to beg in person the clemency of the Pope. He crossed the Alps in the depth of winter, and, arriving at the gates of the castle of Canossa, where the Pope was residing at the time, shut up with his firm adherent and reputed paramour the Countess Matilda, he stood, during three days, exposed

to the rigours of the season, with his feet bare, his head uncovered, and a piece of coarse woollen cloth thrown over his person, and forming his only covering. On the fourth day he obtained an audience of the pontiff; and though the lordly Gregory was pleased to absolve him from the excommunication, he straitly charged him not to resume his royal rank and functions till the meeting of the Congress which had been appointed to try him.[\[29\]](#) But the pontiff was humbled in his turn. Henry rebelling a second time, a furious war broke out between the monarch and the pontiff. The armies of the Emperor passed the Alps, besieged Rome, and Gregory, being obliged to flee, ended his days in exile at Salerno, bequeathing as a legacy to his successors the conflict in which he had been engaged, and to Europe the wars and tumults into which his ambition had plunged it.[\[30\]](#)

Gregory was gone, but his principle survived. He had left the mantle of his ambition, and, to a large extent, of his genius also, to his successors, Urban II. and Paschal II. Urban maintained the contest in the very spirit of Gregory; the opposition of Paschal may deserve to be accounted as partaking of a higher character. A conviction that it was utterly incongruous in a layman to give admission to a spiritual office, seems to have mainly animated him in prosecuting the contest. He actually signed an agreement with Henry V. in 1110, whereby all the lands and possessions held by the Church in fief were to be given back to the Emperor, on condition that the Emperor should surrender the right of investiture. The prelates and bishops of Paschal's court, who saw little attractive in the episcopate save the temporalities, believed that their infallible master had gone mad, and raised such a clamour, that the pontiff was obliged to desist from his design.[\[31\]](#) At length, in 1122, the contention was ended by a compromise between Henry and Calixtus II. According to this compact, the election of bishops was to be free, their investiture was to belong solely to ecclesiastical functionaries, while the Emperor was to induct them into their temporalities, not by the crozier and ring, as before, but by the sceptre.

It is not improbable that the sovereigns and barons of the age believed that this concordat left the substantial power in the election of bishops still in their own hands. With our clearer light it is not difficult to see that the advantage greatly preponderated in favour of the Church. It extricated the spiritual element from the control of the secular. It was a solemn ratification of the principle of spiritual independence, which, in the case of a church spurning co-ordinate jurisdiction, and claiming both swords, was sure speedily and inevitably to grow into spiritual supremacy. The temporalities might come in some cases to be lost; but in that age the risk was small; and granting that it was realized, the loss would be more than counterbalanced by the greatly enlarged spiritual action which was now secured to the Church. The election of bishops, in which the emperors had ceased to interfere, was now devolved, not upon the laity and clergy, whose suffrages had been deemed essential in former times, but upon the chapters of cathedral churches,[\[32\]](#) which tended to enlarge the power of the pontiff and the higher clergy. In this way was the conflict carried on. The extent of supremacy involved in the principle *that the Pope is Christ's Vicar*, had been fully and boldly propounded to the world by Gregory; and, what was more, had been all but realized. Rome had tasted of dominion over kings, and was never

to rest till she had securely seated herself in the lofty seat which she had been permitted for so brief a season to occupy, and which she only, as she believed, had a right to possess, or could worthily and usefully fill. The popes had to sustain many humiliations and defeats; nevertheless, their policy continued to be progressively triumphant. The power of the empire gradually sank, and that of the pontificate steadily advanced. All the great events of the age contributed to the power of the popedom. The ecclesiastical element was universally diffused, entered into all movements, and turned to its own purposes all enterprises. There never perhaps was an age which was so completely ecclesiastical and so little spiritual. Spain was reclaimed from Islamism, Prussia was rescued from Paganism, and both submitted to the authority of the Roman pontiff. The crusades broke out, and, being religious enterprises, they tended to the predominance of the ecclesiastical element, and silently moulded the minds and the habits of men to submission to the Church. Moreover, they tended to exhaust the resources and break the spirit of kingdoms, and rendered it easier for Rome to carry out her scheme of aggrandizement. The same effect attended the wars and convulsions which disturbed Europe, and which grew out of the struggles of Rome for dominion. These weakened the secular, but left the vigour of the spiritual element unimpaired. The deepening ignorance of the masses was exceedingly favourable to the pretensions of Rome. It formed a basis of power, not only over them, but, through them, over kings. Add to all this, that of the two principles between which this great contest was waged, the secular was divided, whereas the spiritual was one. The kings had various interests, and frequently pursued conflicting lines of policy. The most perfect organization and union reigned in the ranks of the Papacy. The clergy in all countries were thoroughly devoted to the papal see, and obeyed as one man the behests which came from the chair of St. Peter. It is also to be borne in mind, that in this conflict the emperors could contend with but secular weapons; whereas the popes, while they by no means disdained the aid of armies, fought with those yet more formidable weapons which the power of superstition furnished them with. Is it wonderful that with these advantages they triumphed in the contest,—that every successive age found Rome growing in influence and dominion,—and that at last her chief was seen seated, god-like, on the Seven Hills, with the nations, tribes, and languages of the Roman world prostrate at his feet? “After long centuries of confusion,” says Ranke,—“after other centuries of often doubtful strife,—the independence of the Roman see, and that of its essential principle, was finally attained. In effect, the position of the popes was at this moment most exalted; the clergy were wholly in their hands. It is worthy of remark, that the most firm-minded pontiffs of this period,—Gregory VII. for example,—were Benedictines. By the introduction of celibacy, they converted the whole body of the secular clergy into a kind of monastic order. The universal bishopric now claimed by the popes bears a certain resemblance to the power of an abbot of Cluny, who was the only abbot of his order; in like manner, these pontiffs aspired to be the only bishops of the assembled Church. They interfered, without scruple, in the administration of every diocese, and even compared their legates with the pro-consuls of ancient Rome! While this closely-knit body, so compact in itself, yet so widely extended through all lands,—influencing all by its large possessions, and controlling every relation of life by its ministry,—was concentrating its mighty force under the obedience of one

chief, the temporal powers were crumbling into ruin. Already, in the beginning of the twelfth century, the Provost Gerohus ventured to say, 'It will at last come to this, that the golden image of the empire shall be shaken to dust; every great monarchy shall be divided into tetrarchates, and then only will the Church stand free and untrammelled beneath the protection of her crowned high priest.'" [33] Thus did Rome seize the golden moment when the iron of the German race, like that of the Carlovingian before it, had become mixed with miry clay, to complete her work of five centuries. She had watched and waited for ages; she had flattered the proud and insulted the humble; bowed to the strong and trampled upon the weak; she had awed men with terrors that were false, and excited them with hopes that were delusive; she had stimulated their passions and destroyed their souls; she had schemed, and plotted, and intrigued, with a cunning, and a malignity, and a success, which hell itself might have envied, and which certainly it never surpassed; and now her grand object was within her reach,—was attained. She had triumphed over the empire; she was lord paramount of Europe; nations were her footstool; and from her lofty seat she showed herself to the wondering tribes of earth, encompassed by the splendour, possessing the attributes, and wielding the power, not of earthly monarchs, but of the Eternal Majesty.

Accordingly, we are now arrived at the golden age of the Papacy. In A.D. 1197, Innocent ascended the papal chair. It was the fortune of this man, on whose shoulders had fallen the mantle of Lucifer, to reap all that the popes his predecessors had sowed in alternate triumphs and defeats. The traditions and principles of the papal policy descended to him matured and perfected. The man, too, was equal to the hour. He had the art to veil a genius as aspiring as that of Gregory VII. under designs less avowedly temporal and worldly. He affected to wield only a spiritual sceptre; but he held it over monarchs and kingdoms, as well as over priests and churches. "Though I cannot judge of the right to a fief," wrote he to the kings of France and England, "yet it is my province to judge where sin is committed, and my duty to prevent all public scandals." [34] So lofty were his notions of the spiritual prerogative, and so much did he regard temporal rule as its inseparable concomitant, that he disdained to hold it by a formal claim. He exercised an omnipotent sway over mind, and left it to govern the bodies and goods of men. We find De Maistre comparing the Catholic Church in the days of Charlemagne to an ellipse, with St. Peter in one of the foci, and the Emperor in the other. [35] But now, in the days of Innocent, the Church, or rather the European system, from being an ellipse, had become a circle. The two foci were gone. There was but one governing point,—the centre; and in that centre stood Peter's chair. The pontificate of Innocent was one continued and unclouded display of the superhuman glory of the popedom. From a height to which no mortal had before been able to climb, and which the strongest intellect becomes giddy when it contemplates, he regulated all the affairs of this lower world. His comprehensive scheme of government took in alike the greatest affairs of the greatest kingdoms, and the most private concerns of the humblest individual. We find him teaching the kings of France their duty, dictating to the emperors their policy, and at the same time adjudicating in the case of a citizen of Pisa who had mortgaged his estate, and to whom Innocent, by spiritual censures, compelled the creditor to make restitution of the goods on receiving payment of the money; and writing to the Bishop of

Ferentino, giving his decision in the case of a simple maiden for whose hand two lovers contended.^[36] Thus the thunder of Rome broke alike over the heads of puissant kings and humble citizens. The Italian republics he gathered under his own sceptre, and, binding them in leagues, cast them into the political scale, to counterpoise the empire. The kings of Castile and Portugal, as they hung on the perilous edge of battle, were separated by a single word from his legate. The king of Navarre held some castles of Richard's, which his power did not enable him to retake. The pontiff hinted at the spiritual thunder, and the castles were given up. Monarchs, intent only on a present advantage, failed to see that, by accepting the aid of such a power, they were the abettors of their own future vassalage. The King of France had offended the Pope by repudiating his wife and contracting a new marriage. An interdict fell upon the realm. The churches were closed, and the clergy forbore their offices to both the living and the dead. The submission of the powerful Philip Augustus illustrated the boundless spirit and appeased the immeasurable pride of Innocent. After this great victory, we name not those which he gained over the kings of Spain and England, the latter of whom he excommunicated, placing his kingdom under interdict, and compelling him to hold his crown and realm as the vassal of the Roman see. But the coronation of the Emperor Otho IV., and the varied and substantial concessions included in the oath which Otho took on that occasion, are worthy of being enumerated among the trophies of this mighty pope. The terror of his name extended to distant lands,—to Bohemia, to Hungary, to Norway. The pontifical thunder was heard rolling in even the latter northern region, where it smote a certain usurper of the name of Swero. As if all these labours had been too little, Innocent, from his seat on the Seven Hills, guided the progress of those destructive tempests which swept along the shores of Syria and the Straits of the Bosphorus. Constantinople fell before the crusaders, and the kings of Bulgaria and Armenia acknowledged the supremacy of Innocent.

“His legs bestrid the ocean; his reared arm
Crested the world; his voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends
And when he meant to quail and shake the orb,
He was as rattling thunder.
. In his livery
Walked crowns and crownets.”

But the mightiest efforts of Innocent were reserved for the extirpation of heresy. He was the first to discover the danger to the popedom which lurked in the Scriptural faith, and in the mental liberty of the Albigenses and Waldenses. On them, therefore, and not on eastern schismatics or recalcitrating sovereigns, fell the full storm of the pontifical ire. Assembling his vassal kings, he pointed to the peaceful and thriving communities in the provinces of the Rhone, and inflamed the zeal and fury of the soldiers by holding out the promise of immense booty and unbounded indulgence. For a forty days' service a man might earn paradise, not to speak of the worldly spoil with which he was certain to return laden home. The poor Albigenses were crushed beneath an avalanche of murderous fanaticism and inappeasable rapacity. To Innocent history is indebted for one of her

bloodiest pages,—the European crusades; and the world owes him thanks for its most infernal institution, the Inquisition. He had for his grand object to bestow an eternity of empire upon the papal throne; and, to accomplish this, he strove to inflict an eternity of thralldom upon the human mind. His darling aim was to make the chair of Peter equally stable and absolute with its fellow-seat in pandemonium.[\[37\]](#)

The noon of the Papacy synchronises with the world's midnight. Innocent III. was emphatically the Prince of the Darkness. There was but one thing in the universe which he dreaded, and that was light. The most execrable shapes of night could not appal him;—these were congenial terrors: he knew they had no power to harm him or his. But the faintest glimmer of day on the horizon struck terror into his soul, and he contended ceaselessly against the light, with all the artillery of anathemas and arms. During the whole century of his pontificate the globe was seen reposing in deep shadow, girdled round with the chain of the papal power, and corruscated fearfully with the flashes of the pontifical thunder. Like a crowned demon, Innocent sat upon the Seven Hills, muffled up in the mantle of Lucifer, and governed earth as Satan governs hell. At a great distance below, realizing by anticipation the boldest vision of the great poet, were the crowned potentates and mitred hierarchies of the world over which he ruled, lying foundered and overthrown, like the spirits in the lake, in the same degrading and shameful vassalage. Princes laid their swords, and nations their treasures, at the foot of the pontifical throne, and bowed their necks to be trodden upon by its occupant. Innocent might say, as Caesar to the conquered queen of Egypt,—

“I'll take my leave.”

And the subject nations might reply with Cleopatra,—

“And may, through all the world: 'tis yours; and we
Your scutcheons, and your signs of conquest, shall
Hang in what place you please.”

The boast better became his mouth than it did the proud Assyrian who first uttered it. “By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man. And my hand hath found, as a nest, the riches of the people; and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.”[\[38\]](#)

Thus have we traced the course of the papal power, from its feeble rise in the second century, to its full development in the thirteenth. We have seen how the infant pontiff was suckled by the imperial wolf (for the fables of heathen mythology find their truest realization in the Papacy, and, from being myths, become vaticinations), and how, waxing strong on the pure milk of Paganism, he grew to manhood, and, being grown, discovered all the genuine pagan and vulpine qualities of the mother that nursed him,—the passion for

images and the thirst for blood. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin; and the world has now found out that the beast of the Roman hill is but a wolf in sheep's clothing. How often have slaughter and carnage covered the fold which he professed to guard! Take it all in all, the story of the papal power is a dismal drama,—the gloomiest that darkens history! We look back upon the past; and, as we behold this terrible power growing continually bigger and darker, and casting fresh shadows, with every succeeding age, upon the liberty and religion of the world, till at last both came to be shrouded in impenetrable night, we are reminded of those tragedies and horrors with which the imagination of Milton has given grandeur to his song. To nothing can we liken the progress of the Papacy, through the wastes of the middle ages to the universal domination of the thirteenth and succeeding centuries, save to the passage of the fiend from the gates of pandemonium to the sphere of the newly-created world. The old dragon of Paganism, broken loose from the abyss into which he had been cast, sallied forth in quest of the world of young Christianity, as Satan from with the like fiendish intent of marring and subjugating it. He had no "narrow frith" to cross; but he held his way with as cautious a step and as dauntless a front as his great prototype. His path, more especially in its first stages, was bestrewn with the wrecks of a perished world, and scourged by those tempests which attend the birth of new states. On this hand he shunned the whirlpool of the sinking empire, and on that guarded himself against the fiery blast of the Saracenic eruption. There he buffeted the waves of tumultuous revolutions, and here he planted his foot on the crude consistence of a young and rising state. Now "the strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud" hurried him aloft, and, "that fury stayed," he was anon "quenched in a boggy Syrtis." Now he was upborne on the shield of kings; and now his foot trode upon their necks. Now he hewed his way with the bloody brand; and now, in more crafty fashion, with the forged document. Sometimes he wore his own shape, and showed himself as Apollyon; but more frequently he hid the hideous lineaments of the destroyer beneath the fair semblance of an angel of light. Thus he maintained the struggle through the weary ages, till at last the thirteenth century saw

"His dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful deep; with him enthroned
Sat sable vested night, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon."

The scheme of Rome, viewed simply as an intellectual conception, is the most comprehensive and gigantic which the genius and ambition of man ever dared to entertain. There is a unity and vastness about it, which, apart from its moral aspect, compels our admiration, and awakens a feeling of mingled astonishment and terror. The depth of its essential principles, the boldness of the design, the wisdom and talent brought into play in achieving its realization, the perseverance and vigour with which it was prosecuted, and the marvellous success with which it was at last crowned, were all equal, and were all colossal. It is at once the grandest and the most iniquitous enterprise in which man ever embarked. But, as we have shown in our opening

chapter, we ought not to regard it as a distinct and separate enterprise, springing from principles and contemplating aims peculiar to itself, but as the full development and consummation of man's original apostacy. The powers of man and the limits of the globe do not admit of that apostacy being carried higher; for had it been much extended, either in point of intensity or in point of duration, the human species would have perished. A corruption so universal and a tyranny so overwhelming would in due time have utterly depopulated the globe. In the domination of the Papacy we have a glimpse of what would have been the condition of the world had no scheme of salvation been provided for it. The history of the Papacy is the history of the rebellion of our race against Heaven.

Before dismissing this subject, let us glance a moment at another and different picture. What became of Truth in the midst of such monstrous errors? Where was a shelter found for the Church during storms so fearful? To understand this, we must leave the open plains and the wealthy cities of the empire, and retire to the solitude of the Alps. In primitive times the members of the then unfallen Church of Rome had found amid these mountains a shelter from persecution. He who built an ark for the one elect family of the antediluvian world had provided a retreat for the little company chosen to escape the mighty shipwreck of Christianity. God placed his Church aloft on the eternal hills, in the place prepared for her.[\[39\]](#) Nature had enriched this abode with pine forests, and rich mountain pastures, and rivers which issue from the frozen jaws of the glacier, and made it strong as beautiful by a wall of peaks that pierce the clouds, and look down on earth from amidst the firmament's calm, white with everlasting snows. Here it is that we find the true apostolic Church. Here, far from the magnificence of Dom, the fragrance of incense, and the glitter of mitres, holy men of God fed the flock of Christ with the pure Word of Life. Ages of peace passed over them. The storms that shook the world, the errors that darkened it, did not approach their retreat. Like the traveller, amid their own mountains they could mark the clouds gather and hear the thunders roll far below, while they enjoyed the uninterrupted sunshine of a pure gospel. An overruling Providence made the same events which brought trouble to the world to minister peace to them. Rome was entirely engrossed with her battles with the empire, and had no time to think of those who were bearing a testimony against her errors by the purity of their faith and the holiness of their lives. Besides, she could see danger only in the material power of the empire, and never dreamt the while that a spiritual power was springing up among the Alps, before which she was destined at last to fall. By and by these professors of primitive Christianity began to increase, and to spread themselves over the surrounding regions, to an extent that is but little known. Manufactures were established in the valley of the Rhone, and in those provinces of France which border on the Mediterranean or lie contiguous to the Pyrenees; as also in Lombardy and the towns of northern Italy. In fact, this region of Europe became in those ages the depot of the western world as regards arts and manufactures of all kinds. Villages grew into cities, new towns sprung up, and the population of the surrounding districts were insufficient to supply the looms and forges of these industrial hives. The pious mountaineers descended from their native Alps to find employment in the workshops of the plains, just as at this day we see the population of the Highlands crowding to Glasgow and Manchester,

and other great manufacturing centres; and, as they brought their intelligence and steadiness along with them, they made admirable workmen. The workshop became a school, conversions went on, and the pure faith of the mountains extended itself over the plains, like the dawn, first seen on the hill-tops, but soon to descend and gladden the valley. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries manufactures and Christianity,—the loom and the Bible—went hand in hand, and promised to achieve the peaceful conquest of Europe, and rescue it from the hands of those pontifical and imperial barbarians who were doing their best to convert it into an unbroken expanse of solitudes and ruins. These manufacturing and Christian societies took possession of the whole of the Italian and French provinces adjoining the Alps. The valley of the Rhone swarmed with these busy and intelligent communities. They covered with population, industry, and wealth, the provinces of Dauphine, Provence, Languedoc, and, in short, all southern France. They were found in great numbers in Lombardy. Their factories, churches, and schools, were spread over all northern Italy. They planted their arts and their faith in the valley of the Rhine, so that a traveller might journey from Basle to Cologne, and sleep every night in the house of a Christian brother. In some of the dioceses in northern Italy there were not fewer than thirty of their churches with schools attached. These professors of an apostolic creed were noted for leading pure and peaceful lives, for the pains they took in the instruction of their families, for their readiness to benefit their neighbours both by good offices and religious counsel, for their gift of extempore prayer, and for the large extent to which their memories were stored with the Word of God. Many of them could recite entire epistles and gospels, and some of them had committed to memory the whole of the New Testament. The region which they occupied formed a belt of country stretching on both sides of the Alps and the Pyrenees, from the sources of the Rhine to the Garonne and the Ebro, and from the Po and the Adriatic to the shores of the Mediterranean. Monarchs found that this was the most productive and the most easily governed part of their dominions. Amid the wars and feudalism that oppressed the rest of Europe, in which towns were falling into decay, and the population in some spots were becoming extinct, and little appeared to be left, especially in France, “but convents scattered here and there amid vast tracts of forest,” [40] this Populous tract, rich in the marvels of industry and the virtues of true religion, resembled a strip of verdure drawn across the wastes of the desert. Will it be believed that human hands rooted out this paradise, which a pure Christianity had created in the very heart of the desert of European Catholicism? Rome about this time had brought to an end her wars with the empire, and her popes were reposing, after their struggle of centuries, in the proud consciousness of undoubted supremacy. The light had been spreading unobserved, and the Reformation was on the point of being anticipated. The demon Innocent III. was the first to descry the streaks of day on the crest of the Alps. Horror-stricken, he started up, and began to thunder from his Pandemonium against a faith which had already subjugated provinces, and was threatening to dissolve the power of Rome in the very flush of her victory over the empire. In order to save the one half of Europe from perishing by heresy, it was decreed that the other half should perish by the sword. The monarchs of Europe dared not disobey a summons which was enforced by the most dreadful adjurations and threats. They assembled their vassals, and girded on the sword, not to repel an invader or to quell

insurrection, but to extirpate those very men whose industry had enriched their realm, and whose virtue and loyalty formed the stay of their power.

Lest the work of vengeance should slacken, Rome held out dazzling bribes, equally compounded of paradise and gold. She could afford to be prodigal of both, for neither cost her anything. Paradise is always in her gift for those who will do her work, and the wealth of the heretic is the lawful plunder of the faithful. With such a bank, and permission to draw upon it to an unlimited amount, Rome had no motive, and certainly would have had no thanks, for any ill-judged economy. The fanatics who mustered for the crusade hated the person and loved the goods of the heretic. Onward they marched, to earn heaven by desolating earth. The work was three centuries a-doing. It was done effectually at last, however. "Neither sex, nor age, nor rank, have we spared," says the leader of the war against the Albigenses; "we have put all alike to the sword."^[41] The churches and the workshops, the Christianity and the industry, of the region, were swept away by this simoom of fanaticism. Before it was a garden, behind it a desert. All was silent now, where the solemn melody of praise and the busy hum of trade had before been so happily blent. Monarchs had drained their exchequers to desolate the wealthiest and fairest portion of their dominions; nevertheless they held themselves abundantly recompensed by the assurance which Rome gave them of crowns and kingdoms in paradise.

[1] Ranke's History of the Popes, vol. i. p. 15. [\[Back\]](#)

[2] It is still undecided among Romanist writers whether the Pope's ejection of Childeric was a point of authority or a point of casuistry. The Ultramontanists maintain the former. [\[Back\]](#)

[3] As the author's object here is simply to trace the influence of admitted facts upon the development of the Papacy, he thinks it enough to refer generally to his authorities. His leading authorities are, Ranke, vol. i.; Gibbon, vol. ix.; Mosheim, cent. ix. and x.; Hallam's Hist. of the Middle Ages, vol. i. chap. vii.; Sismondi's Fall of the Roman Empire, chap. xix. xx.; &c. &c. [\[Back\]](#)

[4] See Du Pin, cent. ix.; Hallam, vol. i. pp. 523, 524. [\[Back\]](#)

[5] Romanist historians have drawn this part of the pontifical annals in colours as dark as those employed by Protestant writers. The best friends of the Popedom, such as Petavius, Luitprand, Baronius, Hermann, Labbe, Du Pin, &c. &c. labour for language to depict the enormous abuses of the papal rule. Baronius speaks of these pontiffs entering as *thieves*, and dying, as they deserved, by the rope. Of the three candidates which occasioned the Schism Of A.D. 1044, Binius and Labbe remark, "A three-headed BEAST, rising from the gates of hell, infested in a woful manner the holy chair." This monster, of course, is a link in the chain of apostolic succession. (See Edgar's Variations, chap. i.) [\[Back\]](#)

[6] See Gibbon, vol. ix. p. 200; and even the papal historians of the period.

[\[Back\]](#)

[7] Sismondi's Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. ii. p. 244.; Lond. 1834. [\[Back\]](#)

[8] Ranke, vol. i. p. 18. [\[Back\]](#)

[9] Hallam, vol. i. p. 538. [\[Back\]](#)

[10] Ranke, vol. i. chap. i. sec. iii. [\[Back\]](#)

[11] Gibbon's Decline and Fall, vol. ix. pp. 193,194. [\[Back\]](#)

[12] Ranke's History of the Popes, vol. i. p. 11. [\[Back\]](#)

[13] Gibbon's Decline and Fall, vol. ix. p. 212. [\[Back\]](#)

[14] Ranke, vol. i. p. 17. [\[Back\]](#)

[15] Dunham's Europe during the Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 100. [\[Back\]](#)

[16] Euseb. Vita Const. lib. ii. cap. xxi. xxxix. [\[Back\]](#)

[17] Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 501. [\[Back\]](#)

[18] Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. i. chap. vii. [\[Back\]](#)

[19] Du Pin, Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 209: Dunham's Europe during the Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 150. [\[Back\]](#)

[20] Du Pin, Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 211. [\[Back\]](#)

[21] Du Pin, Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 212; Gibbon, vol. ix. p. 201, 202. [\[Back\]](#)

[22] Dunham's Europe during the Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 158. [\[Back\]](#)

[23] Concil. Carthag. can. xxii. "Ut nullus ordinetur clericus, nisi probatus vel episcoporum examine vel populi testimonio." (Harduin. vol. i. p. 963.) [\[Back\]](#)

[24] Concil. Aurelian. can. iii. "Ipse tamen metropolitanus a comprovincialibus episcopis, sicut decreta sedis Apostolicae continent, cum consensu cleri vel civium eligatur; quia aequum est, sicut ipsa sedes Apostolica dixit, ut qui praeponendus est omnibus, ab omnibus eligatur." (Harduin. vol. ii. p. 1424.) [\[Back\]](#)

[25] Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 535. [\[Back\]](#)

[26] Dunham's Europe during the, Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 147,148: Du Pin, Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 206. [\[Back\]](#)

[27] Machiavelli's History of Florence, book i.: Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 539. [\[Back\]](#)

- [28] Ranke's History of the Popes, vol. i. p. 21. [[Back](#)]
- [29] Du Pin, Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 212-216: Dunham's Europe in the Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 158. [[Back](#)]
- [30] The extensive gap in the city of Rome, extending from the Lateran to the Coliseum, formerly covered with ruins, but now with vineyards, remains a monument of the war of investitures. [[Back](#)]
- [31] Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 543. [[Back](#)]
- [32] Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 546. [[Back](#)]
- [33] Ranke's History of the Popes, vol. i. p. 22. [[Back](#)]
- [34] Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 552. [[Back](#)]
- [35] Du Pape, Discours Preliminaire. [[Back](#)]
- [36] Du Pin, Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 402. [[Back](#)]
- [37] Du Pin, Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. pp. 401-422 : Sismondi's Italian Republics, pp. 60-64; Lond. 1832: Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. xi. p. 145: Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. i. pp. 551-556: Sismondi's Crusades, pp. 10-20; Lond. 1826. [[Back](#)]
- [38] Isaiah, x. 13, 14. [[Back](#)]
- [39] Revelations, xii. 6. [[Back](#)]
- [40] Sismondi's Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. ii. p. 169. [[Back](#)]
- [41] Ranke's History of the Popes, vol. i. p. 24. [[Back](#)]
-

Continued in [Chapter V. Foundation and Extent of the Supremacy.](#)

All chapters History of the Papacy

- [History of the Papacy By Rev. J.A. Wylie, LL.D](#)
- [Chapter I. Origin of the Papacy](#)
- [Chapter II. Rise and Progress of Ecclesiastical Supremacy.](#)
- [Chapter III. Rise and Progress of the Temporal Sovereignty.](#)
- [Chapter IV. Rise and Progress of the Temporal Supremacy.](#)
- [Chapter V. Foundation and Extent of the Supremacy.](#)
- [Chapter VI. The Canon Law](#)
- [Chapter VII. That the Church of Rome Neither has Nor Can Change Her Principles on the Head of the Supremacy](#)