

tune by declaring that it was an epidemic proceeding from a certain malignity in the constitution of the air, but in truth its spread was due to a certain infirmity in the constitution of man—an infirmity which had not been removed by the spiritual guidance under which he had been living.

To the medical efficacy of shrines must be added that of special relics. These were sometimes of the most extraordinary kind. There were several abbeys that possessed our Savior's crown of thorns. Eleven had the lance that had pierced his side. If any person was adventurous enough to suggest that these could not all be authentic, he would have been denounced as an atheist. During the holy wars the Templar-Knights had driven a profitable commerce by bringing from Jerusalem to the Crusading armies bottles of the milk of the Blessed Virgin, which they sold for enormous sums; these bottles were preserved with pious care in many of the great religious establishments. But perhaps none of these impostures surpassed in audacity that offered by a monastery in Jerusalem, which presented to the beholder one of the fingers of the Holy Ghost! Modern society has silently rendered its verdict on these scandalous objects. Though they once nourished the piety of thousands of earnest people, they are now considered too vile to have a place in any public museum.

How shall we account for the great failure we thus detect in the guardianship of the Church over Europe? This is not the result that must have occurred had there been in Rome an unremitting care for the spiritual and material prosperity of the continent, had the universal pastor, the successor of Peter, occupied himself with singleness of purpose for the holiness and happiness of his flock.

The explanation is not difficult to find. It is contained in a story of sin and shame. I prefer, therefore, in the following paragraphs, to offer explanatory facts derived from Catholic authors, and, indeed, to present them as nearly as I can in the words of those writers.

The story I am about to relate is a narrative of the transformation of a confederacy into an absolute monarchy.

In the early times every church, without prejudice to its agreement with the Church universal in all essential points, managed its own affairs with perfect freedom and independence, maintaining its own traditional usages and discipline, all questions not concerning the whole Church, or of primary importance, being settled on the spot.

Until the beginning of the ninth century, there was no change in the constitution of the Roman Church. But about 845 the Isidorian Decretals were fabricated in the west of Gaul—a forgery containing about one hundred pretended decrees of the early popes, together with certain spurious writings of other church dignitaries and acts of synods. This forgery produced an immense extension of the papal power, it displaced the old system of church government, divesting it of the republican attributes it had possessed, and transforming it into an absolute monarchy. It brought the bishops into subjection to Rome, and made the pontiff the supreme judge of the clergy of the whole Christian world. It prepared the way for the great attempt, subsequently made by Hildebrand, to convert the states of Europe into a theocratic priest-kingdom, with the pope at its head.

Gregory VII., the author of this great attempt, saw

that his plans would be best carried out through the agency of synods. He, therefore, restricted the right of holding them to the popes and their legates. To aid in the matter, a new system of church law was devised by Anselm of Lucca, partly from the old Isidorian forgeries, and partly from new inventions. To establish the supremacy of Rome, not only had a new civil and a new canon law to be produced, a new history had also to be invented. This furnished needful instances of the deposition and excommunication of kings, and proved that they had always been subordinate to the popes. The decretal letters of the popes were put on a par with Scripture. At length it came to be received, throughout the West, that the popes had been, from the beginning of Christianity, legislators for the whole Church. As absolute sovereigns in later times cannot endure representative assemblies, so the papacy, when it wished to become absolute, found that the synods of particular national churches must be put an end to, and those only under the immediate control of the pontiff permitted. This, in itself, constituted a great revolution.

Another fiction concocted in Rome in the eighth century led to important consequences. It feigned that the Emperor Constantine, in gratitude for his cure from leprosy, and baptism by Pope Sylvester, had bestowed Italy and the Western provinces on the pope, and that, in token of his subordination, he had served the pope as his groom, and led his horse some distance. This forgery was intended to work on the Frankish kings, to impress them with a correct idea of their inferiority, and to show that, in the territorial concessions they made to the Church, they were not giving but only restoring what rightfully belonged to it.

The most potent instrument of the new papal system was Gratian's *Decretum*, which was issued about the middle of the twelfth century. It was a mass of fabrications. It made the whole Christian world, through the papacy, the domain of the Italian clergy. It inculcated that it is lawful to constrain men to goodness, to torture and execute heretics, and to confiscate their property; that to kill an excommunicated person is not murder; that the pope, in his unlimited superiority to all law, stands on an equality with the Son of God!

As the new system of centralization developed, maxims, that in the olden times would have been held to be shocking, were boldly avowed—the whole Church is the property of the pope to do with as he will; what is simony in others is not simony in him; he is above all law, and can be called to account by none; whoever disobeys him must be put to death; every baptized man is his subject, and must for life remain so, whether he will or not. Up to the end of the twelfth century, the popes were the vicars of Peter; after Innocent III. they were the vicars of Christ.

But an absolute sovereign has need of revenues, and to this the popes were no exception. The institution of legates was brought in from Hildebrand's time. Sometimes their duty was to visit churches, sometimes they were sent on special business, but always invested with unlimited powers to bring back money over the Alps. And since the pope could not only make laws, but could suspend their operation, a legislation was introduced in view to the purchase of dispensations. Monasteries were exempted from episcopal jurisdiction on payment of a tribute to Rome. The pope had now become "the universal bishop;" he had a concurrent jurisdiction in all the dioceses, and could bring any

cases before his own courts. His relation to the bishops was that of an absolute sovereign to his officials. A bishop could resign only by his permission, and sees vacated by resignation lapsed to him. Appeals to him were encouraged in every way for the sake of the dispensations; thousands of processes came before the Curia, bringing a rich harvest to Rome. Often when there were disputing claimants to benefices, the pope would oust them all, and appoint a creature of his own. Often the candidates had to waste years in Rome, and either died there, or carried back a vivid impression of the dominant corruption. Germany suffered more than other countries from these appeals and processes, and hence of all countries was best prepared for the Reformation. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the popes made gigantic strides in the acquisition of power. Instead of recommending their favorites for benefices, now they issued mandates. Their Italian partisans must be rewarded; nothing could be done to satisfy their clamors, but to provide for them in foreign countries. Shoals of contesting claimants died in Rome; and, when death took place in that city, the Pope claimed the right of giving away the benefices. At length it was affirmed that he had the right of disposing of all church-offices without distinction, and that the oath of obedience of a bishop to him implied political as well as ecclesiastical subjection. In countries having a dual government this increased the power of the spiritual element prodigiously.

Rights of every kind were remorselessly overthrown to complete this centralization. In this the mendicant orders were most efficient aids. It was the pope and those orders on one side, the bishops and the parochial clergy on the other. The Roman court had seized

the rights of synods, metropolitans, bishops, national churches. Incessantly interfered with by the legates, the bishops lost all desire to discipline their dioceses; incessantly interfered with by the begging monks, the parish priest had become powerless in his own village; his pastoral influence was utterly destroyed by the papal indulgences and absolutions they sold. The money was carried off to Rome.

Pecuniary necessities urged many of the popes to resort to such petty expedients as to require from a prince, a bishop, or a grand-master, who had a cause pending in the court, a present of a golden cup filled with ducats. Such necessities also gave origin to jubilees. Sixtus IV. established whole colleges, and sold the places at three or four hundred ducats. Innocent VIII. pawned the papal tiara. Of Leo X. it was said that he squandered the revenues of three popes, he wasted the savings of his predecessor, he spent his own income, he anticipated that of his successor, he created twenty-one hundred and fifty new offices and sold them; they were considered to be a good investment, as they produced twelve per cent. The interest was extorted from Catholic countries. Nowhere in Europe could capital be so well invested as at Rome. Large sums were raised by the foreclosing of mortgages, and not only by the sale but the resale of offices. Men were promoted, for the purpose of selling their offices again.

Though against the papal theory, which denounced usurious practices, an immense papal banking system had sprung up, in connection with the Curia, and sums at usurious interest were advanced to prelates, place-hunters, and litigants. The papal bankers were privileged; all others were under the ban. The Curia had discovered that it was for their interest to have ecclesi-

astics all over Europe in their debt. They could make them pliant, and excommunicate them for non-payment of interest. In 1327 it was reckoned that half the Christian world was under excommunication: bishops were excommunicated because they could not meet the extortions of legates; and persons were excommunicated, under various pretenses, to compel them to purchase absolution at an exorbitant price. The ecclesiastical revenues of all Europe were flowing into Rome, a sink of corruption, simony, usury, bribery, extortion. The popes, since 1066, when the great centralizing movement began, had no time to pay attention to the internal affairs of their own special flock in the city of Rome. There were thousands of foreign cases, each bringing in money. "Whenever," says the Bishop Alvaro Pelayo, "I entered the apartments of the Roman court clergy, I found them occupied in counting up the gold-coin, which lay about the rooms in heaps." Every opportunity of extending the jurisdiction of the Curia was welcome. Exemptions were so managed that fresh grants were constantly necessary. Bishops were privileged against cathedral chapters, chapters against their bishops; bishops, convents, and individuals, against the extortions of legates.

The two pillars on which the papal system now rested were the College of Cardinals and the Curia. The cardinals, in 1059, had become electors of the popes. Up to that time elections were made by the whole body of the Roman clergy, and the concurrence of the magistrates and citizens was necessary. But Nicolas II. restricted elections to the College of Cardinals by a two-thirds vote, and gave to the German emperor the right of confirmation. For almost two centuries there was a struggle for mastery between the cardinal oligarchy and

papal absolutism. The cardinals were willing enough that the pope should be absolute in his foreign rule, but they never failed to attempt, before giving him their votes, to bind him to accord to them a recognized share in the government. After his election, and before his consecration, he swore to observe certain capitulations, such as a participation of revenues between himself and the cardinals; an obligation that he would not remove them, but would permit them to assemble twice a year to discuss whether he had kept his oath. Repeatedly the popes broke their oath. On one side, the cardinals wanted a larger share in the church government and emoluments; on the other, the popes refused to surrender revenues or power. The cardinals wanted to be conspicuous in pomp and extravagance, and for this vast sums were requisite. In one instance, not fewer than five hundred benefices were held by one of them; their friends and retainers must be supplied, their families enriched. It was affirmed that the whole revenues of France were insufficient to meet their expenditures. In their rivalries it sometimes happened that no pope was elected for several years. It seemed as if they wanted to show how easily the Church could get on without the Vicar of Christ.

Toward the close of the eleventh century the Roman Church became the Roman court. In place of the Christian sheep gently following their shepherd in the holy precincts of the city, there had arisen a chancery of writers, notaries, tax-gatherers, where transactions about privileges, dispensations, exemptions, were carried on; and suitors went with petitions from door to door. Rome was a rallying-point for place-hunters of every nation. In presence of the enormous mass of business-processes, graces, indulgences, absolutions, commands,

and decisions, addressed to all parts of Europe and Asia, the functions of the local church sank into insignificance. Several hundred persons, whose home was the Curia, were required. Their aim was to rise in it by enlarging the profits of the papal treasury. The whole Christian world had become tributary to it. Here every vestige of religion had disappeared; its members were busy with politics, litigations, and processes; not a word could be heard about spiritual concerns. Every stroke of the pen had its price. Benefices, dispensations, licenses, absolutions, indulgences, privileges, were bought and sold like merchandise. The suitor had to bribe every one, from the doorkeeper to the pope, or his case was lost. Poor men could neither attain preferment, nor hope for it; and the result was, that every cleric felt he had a right to follow the example he had seen at Rome, and that he might make profits out of his spiritual ministries and sacraments, having bought the right to do so at Rome, and having no other way to pay off his debt. The transference of power from Italians to Frenchmen, through the removal of the Curia to Avignon, produced no change—only the Italians felt that the enrichment of Italian families had slipped out of their grasp. They had learned to consider the papacy as their appanage, and that they, under the Christian dispensation, were God's chosen people, as the Jews had been under the Mosaic.

At the end of the thirteenth century a new kingdom was discovered, capable of yielding immense revenues. This was Purgatory. It was shown that the pope could empty it by his indulgences. In this there was no need of hypocrisy. Things were done openly. The original germ of the apostolic primacy had now expanded into a colossal monarchy.

The Inquisition had made the papal system irresistible. All opposition must be punished, with death by fire. A mere thought, without having betrayed itself by outward sign, was considered as guilt. As time went on, this practice of the Inquisition became more and more atrocious. Torture was resorted to on mere suspicion. The accused was not allowed to know the name of his accuser. He was not permitted to have any legal adviser. There was no appeal. The Inquisition was ordered not to lean to pity. No recantation was of avail. The innocent family of the accused was deprived of its property by confiscation; half went to the papal treasury, half to the inquisitors. Life only, said Innocent III., was to be left to the sons of misbelievers, and that merely as an act of mercy. The consequence was, that popes, such as Nicolas III., enriched their families through plunder acquired by this tribunal. Inquisitors did the same habitually.

The struggle between the French and Italians for the possession of the papacy inevitably led to the schism of the fourteenth century. For more than forty years two rival popes were now anathematizing each other, two rival Curias were squeezing the nations for money. Eventually, there were three obediences, and triple revenues to be extorted. Nobody, now, could guarantee the validity of the sacraments, for nobody could be sure which was the true pope. Men were thus compelled to shrink for themselves. They could not find who was the legitimate thinker for them. They began to see that the Church must rid herself of the curialistic chains, and resort to a General Council. That attempt was again and again made, the intention being to raise the Council into a Parliament of Christendom, and make the pope its chief executive officer. But the vast inter-

ests that had grown out of the corruption of ages could not so easily be overcome; the Curia again recovered its ascendancy, and ecclesiastical trading was resumed. The Germans, who had never been permitted to share in the Curia, took the leading part in these attempts at reform. As things went on from bad to worse, even they at last found out that all hope of reforming the Church by means of councils was delusive. Erasmus exclaimed, "If Christ does not deliver his people from this multifarious ecclesiastical tyranny, the tyranny of the Turk will become less intolerable." Cardinals' hats were now sold, and under Leo X. ecclesiastical and religious offices were actually put up to auction. The maxim of life had become, interest first, honor afterward. Among the officials, there was not one who could be honest in the dark, and virtuous without a witness. The violet-colored velvet cloaks and white ermine capes of the cardinals were truly a cover for wickedness.

The unity of the Church, and therefore its power, required the use of Latin as a sacred language. Through this, Rome had stood in an attitude strictly European, and was enabled to maintain a general international relation. It gave her far more power than her asserted celestial authority, and, much as she claims to have done, she is open to condemnation that, with such a signal advantage in her hands, never again to be enjoyed by any successor, she did not accomplish much more. Had not the sovereign pontiffs been so completely occupied with maintaining their emoluments and temporalities in Italy, they might have made the whole continent advance like one man. Their officials could pass without difficulty into every nation, and communicate without embarrassment with each other, from Ireland to Bohemia, from Italy to Scotland. The possession of a common tongue

gave them the administration of international affairs with intelligent allies everywhere, speaking the same language.

Not without cause was the hatred manifested by Rome to the restoration of Greek and introduction of Hebrew, and the alarm with which she perceived the modern languages forming out of the vulgar dialects. Not without reason did the Faculty of Theology in Paris reëcho the sentiment that was prevalent in the time of Ximenes, "What will become of religion if the study of Greek and Hebrew be permitted?" The prevalence of Latin was the condition of her power; its deterioration, the measure of her decay; its disuse, the signal of her limitation to a little principality in Italy. In fact, the development of European languages was the instrument of her overthrow. They formed an effectual communication between the mendicant friars and the illiterate populace, and there was not one of them that did not display in its earliest productions a sovereign contempt for her.

The rise of the many-tongued European literature was therefore coincident with the decline of papal Christianity; European literature was impossible under Catholic rule. A grand, a solemn, an imposing religious unity enforced the literary unity which is implied in the use of a single tongue.

While thus the possession of a universal language so signally secured her power, the real secret of much of the influence of the Church lay in the control she had so skillfully obtained over domestic life. Her influence diminished as that declined. Coincident with this was her displacement in the guidance of international relations by diplomacy.

In the old times of Roman domination the encamp-