

says that "upon these spurious decretals was built the great fabric of papal supremacy over the different national churches: a fabric that has stood after its foundation crumbled beneath it; for no one has pretended to deny, for the last two centuries, that the imposture is too palpable for any but the most ignorant ages to credit."

We may gather something of the nature of this gigantic fraud from the words of D'Aubigny, the historian of the Reformation: "In this collection of pretended decrees of the popes, the most ancient bishops, the contemporaries of Tacitus and Quintilian spoke the barbarous Latin of the ninth century. The customs and constitutions of the Franks were gravely attributed to the Romans of the time of the emperors; popes quoted the Bible in the Latin translation of St. Jerome, who lived one, two or three centuries after them; and Victor, bishop of Rome, in the year 192, wrote to Theophilus, who was archbishop of Alexandria, in 395. The impostor who had forged this collection strove to make out that all the bishops derived their authority from the bishop of Rome, who derived his immediately from Jesus Christ."

These Decretals spread an indefinite gloom and terror over the kingdoms and churches of Europe. A superstitious dread of the Pope's power spread through the ignorant minds of the people and none seemed fully settled as to the extent or limit of his power and will to inflict torture or distress upon individuals or nations. But the brooding shadows gathered deeper, as the setting of the sun until "gross darkness covered the minds of the people" and the Pope became, by shameless forgery, the master of the western world. The protestations of Hincmar and his ecclesiastical colleagues were unavailing; the continuous and unscrupulous encroachments of the Holy See wore away the rock of their strength; the superstitious fanaticism of the people, the opposition of the monastic orders whom the Pope had won to his side by exempting them from the jurisdiction of their rightful bishops, but, above all their own mutual jealousies, operating with telling force against their efforts for freedom until they were at length compelled to yield to Papal despotism.

Thus successful over the churches, the Holy See now directed greater attention to the subjugation of the state. As before hinted, the demoralization of the latter by the broils of the Carolingian princes would have rendered this comparatively easy but for the mire of utter vice and degradation into which the papal chair itself was fallen. In the ninth and tenth centuries we find the latter often disposed of by immoral women, to their paramours and favorites and the grossest immoralities practised in a court and by the occupants of a throne that pretended to be highest of any on earth, that aimed to govern all other sovereigns and claimed to represent the Sovereign God. The papal office became a bone of contention between the lords of the Italian feudalism, being bestowed in tenure as a sort of appanage or princely dower upon the house that proved itself strongest in the

contest. In this the house of Tuscany generally gained the ascendancy.

In 1033 Theophylact, a scion of the noble family of Tuscany, a boy of twelve years, brought up in vice and debauchery, was placed upon the Papal throne with the title of Benedict IX. His manhood did not belie his early promise. Adultery, murder, extortion and tyranny culminated in his sale of the sacred office to a relative, John, whose papal title became Gregory VI. The disgusted people had already resolved to depose their sensual spiritual head and had appointed a rival pope in the person of John, bishop of Sabina, with the title of Sylvester III. The powerful kindred of Benedict brought the prodigal back to reclaim his dishonored throne. Here was a "pretty kettle of fish"—three rival popes, each denouncing the other and ready to defend his pretensions with armed force!

But Nemesis was at their heels. Henry III, emperor of Germany, received a hint of what was going on in his Italian principality and made a sudden descent upon it to ascertain facts for himself. The result was that he determined to cleanse the sacred chair by discharging its corrupt, contending incumbents and substituting a Pope of his own appointing—Clement II, of the abbey of Cluny in Burgundy, where a vigorous reform had recently been instituted. Three similar appointments succeeded this from the same abbey. The vigor and uprightness of this new line of popes, eminent among whom was Leo IX, formed the strongest possible contrast with the preceding administrations, retrieved the honor that had been so sullied and lost, and instituted the reform and firmer establishment of the church.

Again the papacy prosecuted its policy of spiritual and temporal encroachment which had been retarded by the degrading vices of its representatives. Its most conspicuous doctrine was that he who exalted the church proved thereby the victory of the spirit over the flesh, the triumph of God and religion over the world and the devil.

Hildebrand, who ascended the papal throne in 1073 as Gregory VII seemed almost the embodiment of all that was most worldly and ambitious in this principle. He claimed equal authority over each bishop in Christendom with that of an abbot over the inmates of his monastery, and supplemented this pretense with a similar claim of supremacy over lay members, no matter how aristocratic or royal they might be.

We must here digress for a few moments to show how these aggressions produced the greatest turmoil and contention of the middle ages:

The investiture of episcopal officers by the laity (which was practiced mostly by kings and emperors) was resolutely opposed by Gregory. That is, the temporal estates and honors which were concomitant with the office of bishop or clerk (clergyman) had not only been granted by laymen with the fental ceremonies and conditions but had been the cause of spiritual offices being bestowed upon favorites or upon such as could bargain and pay for them (an abuse known, in that day by the name of simony). The emperor had also exercised the function of nominating, recommending, or confirming the pope. The temporal emoluments and proud honors and rich estates which had accom-

panied the offices in the church, were too good to be surrendered for the bare spiritual prerogatives of religion. Gregory aimed to emancipate the church from the imperial suzerainty, to render her wholly independent of all temporal authority, and yet not only retain all material interests and possessions but material and civil authority and power as well. He argued that for ecclesiastics to receive investiture at the hands of laymen was to subject the higher for the lower principle and he issued a decree forbidding the practice, either in receiving or granting, upon pain of excommunication. The emperor and nobility were tenacious of their rights of investiture and the clergy were as desirous to retain their rights of acceptance; but the populace were on the side of Gregory and the protracted turmoils known as the Wars of the Investitures were the result.

Henry IV, who was the principal combatant with the powerful Gregory, died excommunicated, and the latter years of his life were embittered by his deposition and the rebellion of his sons, to which they were instigated by Pope Paschal II in the hope that his successor, Henry V, would renounce the right of investiture. On his occasion, however, the latter clung to his traditional rights astenaciously as his father had done and the wars were consequently continued.

This resistance to investiture by a class whose temporal possessions were so extensive, struck at the root of feudalism and played no small part in its overthrow.

Hildebrand, or Gregory VII, which was his papal title, as we have before mentioned, did not find much time in which to fight the principle of investitures. This was determined by subsequent generations with great concessions on both sides. His inordinate ambition, however, aimed at the subjugation of the civilized world. Germany, France, Hungary and Spain were menaced and claimed as a fief of the holy see, by turn but his success was not always equal to his arrogant pretensions, though he won much for his successors. The celibacy of clergymen was a principle for which he contended strenuously and with large success.

Space forbids our further following of this subject except to say that it was in the pontificate of Innocent III—1194 to 1216—that the papacy rose to its highest power. In the words of the historian: In each of the three leading objects which Rome has pursued, independent sovereignty, supremacy over the Christian church, control over the princes of the earth, it was his fortune to conquer.

There are many things to study and consider in connection with the history and pretensions of the Romish church. One cannot peruse her history and at the same time find his desire increased that her power, temporal or spiritual, should ever be restored. But while we hope and pray that she may be subdued forever, deeper and yet deeper, we would still object to her tyrannous persecution as sometimes advocated by the A. P. A. No good comes of such methods and we always find the vitality of the old saying, "the blood of the church," spruiging up in all the various walks of life, whether they be right or wrong.

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*Gallican—derivative of Gaul, was a term used to distinguish the equal rights of bishops against the despotic pretensions of Rome, known as ultramontane—over the mountains.