

and metaphysical tendencies of the East discovered unnumbered doubtful points of belief, which were argued with exhaustive subtlety and supported by relentless persecution. However important it might be for any polemic to obtain for his favorite dogma the assent of the Roman bishop, whose decisions on such points thus constantly acquired increased authority, yet when the Pope undertook to issue laws and promulgate rules of discipline, whatever force they had was restricted to the limits of the Latin tongue. Accordingly, we find that the decretals of Siricius and Innocent I. produced no effect throughout the East. Asceticism continued to flourish there as in its birthplace, but it was voluntary, and there is no trace of any official attempt to render it universally imperative. The canon of Nicæa of course was law, and the purity of the church required its strict observance, to avoid scandals and immorality;¹ but beyond this and the ancient rules excluding digami and prohibiting marriage in orders no general laws were insisted on, and each province or patriarchate was allowed to govern itself in this respect. How little the Eastern prelates thought of introducing compulsory celibacy is shown by the fact that at the second general council, held at Constantinople in 381, only four or five years before the decretals of Siricius, there is no trace of any legislation on the subject; and this acquires increased significance when we observe that although this council has always been reckoned Œcumenic, and has enjoyed full authority throughout the church universal, yet out of one hundred and fifty bishops who signed the acts, but one—a Spanish prelate—was from the West.

This was not merely an omission of surplusage. Had the

¹ The strictness with which the Nicene canon was enforced is shown by an epistle of St. Basil, about the middle of the fourth century, in which he sternly reproves a priest named Paregorius, who at the age of 70 had thought himself sufficiently protected against scandal to allow to his infirmities the comfort of a housekeeper. The unlucky female is ordered to be forthwith immured in a convent, and, until this is accomplished, Paregorius is

forbidden to perform his priestly functions. The whole is based on the authority of the council of Nicæa.—“Nec primo nec soli (tibi Paregori) sancivimus, non debere mulierculas cohabitare viris. Lege canonem, a sanctis patribus nostris in Nicæna synodo constitutum: qui manifeste interdixit, ne quis mulierculam subintroductam habeat. Cœlibatus autem honestatem suam in eo habet, si quis a nexu mulieris secesserit.”

disposition existed to erect the custom of celibacy into a law, there was ample cause for legislation on the subject. Epiphanius, who died in the year 403 at a very advanced age, probably compiled his "Panarium" not long after this period; he belonged to the extreme school of ascetics, and lost no opportunity of asserting the most rigid rule with regard to virginity and continence, which he considered to be the base and corner-stone of the church. While assuming celibacy to be the rule for all concerned in the functions of the priesthood, he admits that in many places it was not observed, on account of the degradation of morals or of the impossibility of obtaining enough ministers irreprehensible in character to satisfy the needs of the faithful.¹

That Epiphanius endeavored to erect into a universal canon rules only adopted in certain churches is rendered probable by an allusion of St. Jerome, who, in his controversy with Vigilantius, urged in support of celibacy the custom of the churches of the East (or Antioch), of Alexandria, and of Rome.² He thus omits the great exarchates of Ephesus, Pontus, and Thrace, as not lending strength to his argument. Of these the first is perhaps explicable by the latitudinarianism of its metropolitan, Anthony, Bishop of Ephesus. At the council of Constantinople, held in 400, this prelate was accused of many crimes, among which were simony, the conversion to the use of his family of ecclesiastical property and even of the sacred vessels, and further, that after having vowed separation from his wife, he had had children by her.³ Even

¹ After stating that the church does not admit digami to orders, Epiphanius proceeds: "Quin eum insuper, qui adhuc in matrimonio degit, ac liberis dat operam, tametsi unius sit coni, presbyteri, episcopi, aut hypodiauxoris vir, nequaquam tamen ad diaconi ordinem admittit. Sed eum duntaxat qui ab unius uxoris consuetudine sese continuerit aut ea sit orbatus; quod in illis locis præcipue fit, ubi ecclesiastici canones accurate servantur. At enim nonnullis adhuc in locis presbyteri, diaconi et hypodiaconi liberos suscipiunt, Respondeo; non illud ex canonis autoritate fieri, sed propter hominum ignaviam, quæ certis tem-

poribus negligenter agere ac connivere solet, ob nimiam populi multitudinem, cum scilicet qui ad eas se functiones applicent non facile reperiuntur."—Hæres. LIX. c. 4.

² Quid facient Orientis ecclesiæ? Quid Ægypti et sedis Apostolicæ, quæ aut virgines clericos accipiunt, aut continentes: aut si uxores habuerint, mariti esse desistunt.—Lib. adv. Vigilant. c. 2.

³ Sextum, quod cum uxori propriæ abrenuntiasset, rursus illi congressus est, filiosque ex illa procreavit.—Baron. Annal. ann. 400, No. 73.

Egypt, the nursery of monachism, affords a somewhat suspicious example in the person of Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemais. This philosophic disciple of Hypatia, when pressed to accept the bishopric, declined it on various grounds, among which was his unwillingness to be separated from his wife, or to commit what was equivalent to adultery by living with her, the separation being particularly objectionable to him, as interfering with his desire for numerous offspring.¹ Synesius, however, was apparently able to reconcile the incompatibilities, for after accepting the episcopal office, we find, when the Libyans invaded the Pentapolis and he stood boldly forth to protect his flock, that two days before an expected encounter, he confided to his brother's care his children, to whom he asked the transfer of that tender fraternal affection which he himself had always enjoyed.²

It is easy to imagine what efforts were doubtless made to extend the rule and to render it as imperative throughout the East as it was becoming in the West, when we read the extravagant laudations of virginity uttered about this time by St. John Chrysostom, who lent the sanction of his great name and authority to the assertion that it is as superior to marriage as heaven is to earth, or as angels are to men.³ Strenuous as these efforts may have been, however, they have left no permanent record, and their effect was short-lived. Within thirty years of the time when Jerome quoted the example of the eastern churches as an argument against Vigilantius, Socrates chronicles as a novelty the introduction into Thessalia of compulsory separation between married priests and their wives, which he says was commanded by Heliodorus, Bishop of Trica, apparently to compensate for the amatory writings of his youth. The same rule, Socrates informs us, was observed in Greece, Macedonia, and Thessalonica, but throughout the rest of the East he asserts that such separa-

¹ Mihi igitur et Deus ipse, et lex, et sacra Theophili manus, uxorem dedit. Quare hoc omnibus prædico ac testor, neque me ab ea prorsus sejungi velle neque adulteri instar cum ea clanculum consuescere. Alterum enim nequaquam pium est, alterum illicitum. Sed hoc utique cupiam ac precabor,

plurimos mihi et quam optimos esse liberos.—Synesii Epist. cv.

² Ibid. Epist. cviii.

³ Et si placet, quanto etiam melior sit addam, quanto cælum terra, quanto hominibus angeli.—Lib. de Virgin. c. x.

tion was purely voluntary, and even that many bishops had no scruple in maintaining ordinary intercourse with their wives.¹

The influence of Jerome, Chrysostom, and other eminent churchmen, the example of the West, and the efforts of the Origenians in favor of philosophic asceticism, doubtless had a powerful effect during the first years of the fifth century in extending the custom, but they failed in the endeavor to render it universal and obligatory, and the testimony of Socrates shows how soon even those provinces which adopted it in Jerome's time returned to the previous practice of leaving the matter to the election of the individual. The East thus preserved the traditions of earlier times, as recorded in the Apostolic Constitutions and Canons, prohibiting marriage in orders and the ordination of digami, but imposing no compulsory separation on those who had been married previous to ordination.

Even these rules required to be occasionally enunciated in order to maintain their observance. In 530 a constitution of Justinian calls attention to the regulation prohibiting the marriage of deacons and subdeacons, and in view of the little respect paid to it, the Emperor proceeds to declare the children of such unions spurious (not even *nothi* or *naturales*) and incompetent to inherit anything; the wife is likewise incapacitated from inheritance, and the whole estate of the father is escheated to the church—the severity of which may perhaps be a fair measure of the extent of the evil which it was intended to repress.² Five years later Justinian recurs to the subject, and lays down the received regulations in all their

¹ Ipse porro in Thessalia aliam consuetudinem invaluisse novi, ut ibi qui clericus sit, si cum uxore quam cum esset laicus ducebat, postquam clericus factus sit, dormierit, clericatu abdicatus sit: id adeo cum omnes illustres presbyteri in Oriente, et episcopi etiam, modo ipsi voluerint, nulla lege coacti ab uxoribus abstineant; nam non pauci illorum dum episcopatum gerunt, etiam liberos ex uxore legitima procreant. Consuetudinis autem in Thessalia observatæ, author

fuit Heliodorus Tricæ, quæ est urbs illius regionis: cujus feruntur libri amatorii, quos cum esset adolescens composuit, eosque Æthiopica inscripsit. Eadem consuetudo etiam Thessalonice et in Macedonia et in Helade servatur.—Socrat. Hist. Eccles. Lib. v. c. 21.

² Constit. 45 Cod. i. 3. This law is preserved by Photius (Nomoc. Tit. ix. c. 29), but Balsamon (Schol. ad loc.) says that it is omitted in the Basilica.

details. Any one who keeps a concubine, who has married a divorced woman or a second wife, is to be held ineligible to the diaconate or priesthood. Any member of those orders or of the subdiaconate who takes a wife or a concubine, whether publicly or secretly, is thereupon to be degraded and to lose all clerical privileges; and though the strongest preference is expressed for those who though married preserve strict continence, the very phrase employed indicates that this was altogether a matter of choice, and that previous conjugal relations were not subject to any legislative interference.¹ These same regulations were repeated some ten years later in a law, promulgated about 545, which was preserved throughout the whole period of Greek jurisprudence, being inserted by Leo the Philosopher in his *Basilica*, quoted by Photius in the *Nomocanon*, and referred to as still in force by Balsamon in the thirteenth century.² At the same time Justinian tacitly admits the failure of previous efforts when he adds a provision by which an unmarried postulant for the diaconate is obliged to pledge himself not to marry, and any bishop permitting such marriage is threatened with degradation.³

Bishops, however, were subjected to the full severity of the Latin discipline. As early as 528, Justinian ordered that no one should be eligible to the episcopate who was burdened with either children or grandchildren, giving as a reason the engrossing duties of the office, which required that the whole mind and soul should be devoted to them, and still more significantly hinting the indecency of converting to the use of the prelate's family the wealth bestowed by the faithful on the church for pious uses and for charity.⁴ It is probable that this was not strictly observed, for in 535, when repeating the injunction, and adding a restriction on conjugal inter-

¹ "Nihil enim sic in sacris ordinationibus diligimus quam cum castitate viventes, aut cum uxoribus non cohabitantes, aut unius uxoris virum, qui vel fuerit vel sit, et ipsam castitatem eligentem." The lector could, by forfeiting his prospects of promotion, marry a second time, if pressed by overmastering necessity, but he was not allowed, under any excuse, to take a third wife.—Novell. vi. c. 5.—

These provisions were repeated the following year in Novell. xxii. c. 42.

² Novell. cxxiii. c. 12. Balsamon (*Schol. ad Nomoc. Tit. i. c. 23*) states that it is inserted in the *Basilica*, Lib. iii. Tit. i. c. 27.

³ Novell. cxxiii. c. 14.

⁴ Const. 42 § 1. Cod. i. 3.

course, he intimates that no inquiry shall be made into infractions previously occurring, but that it shall be rigidly enforced for the future.¹ The decision was final as regards the absence of a wife, for it was again alluded to in 548, and that law is carried through the Nomocanon and Basilica.² The absence of children as a prerequisite to the episcopate, however, was not insisted upon so pertinaciously, for Leo the Philosopher, after the compilation of the Basilica, issued a constitution allowing the ordination of bishops who had legitimate offspring, arguing that brothers and other relatives were equally prone to withdraw them from the duties of their position.³

It is not worth while to enter into the interminable controversy respecting the council held at Constantinople in 680, the canons of which were promulgated in 692, and which is known to polemics as the *Quinisext in Trullo*. The Greeks maintain that it was Œcumenic, and its legislation binding upon Christendom; the Latins, that it was provincial and schismatic; but whether Pope Agatho acceded to its canons or not; whether a century later Adrian I. admitted them, or whether their authentication by the second council of Nicæa gave them authority over the whole church or not, are questions of little practical importance for our purpose, for they never were really incorporated into the law of the West, and they are only to be regarded as forming a portion of the received ecclesiastical jurisprudence of the East. In one sense, however, their bearing upon the Latin church is interesting, for, in spite of them, Rome maintained communion with Constantinople for more than a century and a half, and the schism which then took place arose from altogether different causes. In the West, therefore, celibacy was only a point of discipline, of no doctrinal importance, and not a matter of heresy, as we shall see it afterwards become under the stimulus afforded by Protestant controversialists.

The canons of the Quinisext are very full upon all the questions relating to celibacy, and show that great relaxation

¹ Novell. vi. c. 1.

² Novell. cxxxvii. c. 2.—Balsamon. Schol. ad Nomocan. Tit. i. c. 23.

³ Leonis. Novell. Constit. ii.

had occurred in enforcing the regulations embodied in the laws of Justinian. Digami must have become numerous in the church, for the prohibition of their ordination is renewed, and all who had not released themselves from such forbidden unions by June 15th of the preceding year are condemned to suffer deposition. So marriage in orders had evidently become frequent, for all guilty of it are enjoined to leave their wives, when, after a short suspension, they are to be restored to their position, though ineligible to promotion.¹ A much severer punishment is, however, provided for those who should subsequently be guilty of the same indiscretion; for all such infractions of the rule are visited with absolute deposition²—thus proving that it had fallen into desuetude, since those who sinned after its restoration were regarded as much more culpable than those who had merely transgressed an obsolete law. Even bishops had neglected the restrictions imposed upon them by Justinian, for the council refers to most pious prelates in Africa, Libya, and elsewhere, who lived openly with their wives; and although this is prohibited for the future under penalty of deposition, and although all wives of those promoted to the episcopate are directed to be placed in nunneries at a distance from their husbands, yet the remarkable admission is made that this is done for the sake of the people, who regarded such things as a scandal, and not for the purpose of changing that which had been ordained by the Apostles.³

With regard to the future discipline of the great body of the clergy, the council, after significantly acknowledging that the Roman church required a promise of abstinence from married candidates for the diaconate and priesthood, proceeds to state that it desires to adhere to the Apostolic canon by keeping inviolate the conjugal relations of those in holy orders, and by permitting them to associate with their wives, only stipulating for continence during the time devoted to the ministry of the sacraments. To put an end to all opposi-

¹ Quinisext. can. 3.

² Ibid. c. 6.

³ Ibid. can. 12, 48.—“Hoc autem dicimus non ad ea abolenda et ever-
tenda quæ Apostolice antea consti-

tuta sunt, sed populorum salutis et ad meliora progressionis curam gerentes, et ne status ecclesiasticus ullo probro efficiatur.” The bishops against whom this is directed are styled *θεοφιλεστατοι προεδροι*.

tion to this privilege, deposition is threatened against those who shall presume to interfere between the clergy and their wives, and likewise against all who, under pretence of religion, shall put their wives away. At the same time, in order to promote the extension of the church, in the foreign provinces this latter penalty is remitted, as a concession to the prejudices of the "Barbarians."

The Eastern church thus formally and in the most solemn manner recorded its separate and independent discipline on this point, and refused to be bound by the sacerdotalism of Rome. It thus maintained the customs transmitted from the early period, when asceticism had commenced to complicate the simplicity of Apostolic Christianity, but it shrank from carrying out the principles involved to their ultimate result, as was sternly attempted by the inexorable logic of Rome. The system thus laid down was permanent, for the Quinisext was received unquestioningly as a general council, and its decrees were authoritative and unalterable. It is true that in the confusion of the two following centuries a laxity of practice gradually crept in, by which those who desired to marry were admitted to holy orders while single, and were granted two years after ordination during which they were at liberty to take wives, but this was acknowledged to be an abuse, and about the year 900 it was formally prohibited by a constitution of Leo the Philosopher.² Thus restored, the

¹ Quinisext. c. 13, 30.—The thirty-third canon shows how universally sacerdotal marriage was practised in some regions, when we learn that in Armenia the Levitical custom of the Jews was imitated, in the creation of a sacerdotal caste, transmitted from father to son, and confined to the priestly families. This the council condemns, and orders that all worthy of ordination shall be eligible.

² Consuetudo quæ in præsentî obtinet, iis quibus matrimonio conjungi in animo est concedit ut antequam uxorem duxerint, sacerdotes fieri possint, et deinde biennium ad perficiendam voluntatem jungi matrimonio volenti præstituit. Id igitur quia indecorum esse videmus, jubemus ut ad

vetus ecclesiæ et antiquitus traditum præscriptum dehinc creationes procedant.—Leonis Novell. Constit. III.

It is not improbable that this custom resulted from the iconoclastic schism of Leo the Isaurian and Constantine Copronymus which occupied nearly the whole of the eighth century. These emperors found their most unyielding enemies in the monks. In the savage persecutions which disgraced the struggle, Constantine endeavored to extirpate monachism altogether. The accounts which his adversaries have transmitted of the violence and cruelties which he perpetrated are doubtless exaggerated, but there is likelihood that his efforts to discountenance celibacy, as the foundation of the obnoxious institu-

Greek church has preserved its early traditions unaltered to the present day. Marriage in orders is not permitted, nor are digami admissible, but the lower grades of the clergy are free to marry, nor are they separated from their wives when promoted to the sacred functions of the diaconate or priesthood. The bishops are selected from the regular clergy or monks, and, being bound by the vow of chastity, are of course unmarried and unable to marry. Thus the legislation of Justinian is practically transmitted to the nineteenth century.

One branch of the Eastern church, however, relaxed these rules. In 431, Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, was excommunicated for his heretical subtleties as to the nature of the Godhead in Christ. Driven out from the Empire by the orthodox authorities, his followers spread throughout Mesopotamia and Persia, where, by the end of the century, their efforts had gradually converted nearly the whole population. About the year 480, Barsuma, metropolitan of Nisibi, added to his Nestorian heresy the guilt of marrying a nun, when to justify himself he assembled a synod in which the privilege of marriage was granted not only to priests, but even to monks. In 485, Babueus, Patriarch of Seleucia, held a council which excommunicated Barsuma and condemned his licentious doctrines; but, about ten years later, a subsequent patriarch, Babeus, in the council of Seleucia, obtained the enactment of canons conferring the privilege of marriage on all ranks of the clergy, from monk to patriarch. Some forty years later a debate recorded between the Patriarch Mar Aba and King Chosroes shows that repeated marriages were common among all orders, but Mar Aba subsequently issued a canon depriving patriarchs and bishops of the right,

tion, are correctly reported. "Publice defamavit et dehonestavit habitum monachorum in hippodromo, præcipiens unumquemque monachum manutenere mulierem, et taliter transire per hippodromum, sumptis injuriis ab omni populo cumulatis" (Baronii Annal. ann. 766, No. 1). He ejected the monks from the monasteries, which he turned into barracks; some of

the monks were tortured, others fled to the mountains and deserts, where they suffered every extremity, while others again succumbed to threats and temptations, and were publicly married—"alii corporeis voluptatibus addicti, suas etiam uxores circumducere non erubescabant" (Ibid. No. 28, 29).

and subjecting them to the rules of the Latin and Greek churches.¹

The career of the Nestorians shows that matrimony is not incompatible with mission-work, for they were the most successful missionaries on record. They penetrated throughout India, Tartary, and China. In the latter empire they lasted until the thirteenth century; while the Portuguese discoverers in the fifteenth century found them flourishing in Malabar. So numerous were they that during the existence of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem they are described, in conjunction with the Monophysite sect of the Jacobines, as exceeding in numbers the inhabitants of the rest of Christendom.² That after success so marked they should dwindle to their present insignificant condition, and that so large a portion of mankind should revert to the darkness of Mahometanism and Heathenism after receiving the benefits of even imperfect Christianity, is one of the insoluble problems of Providence.

Another segment of the Eastern church may properly receive attention here. The Abyssinians and Coptic Christians of Egypt can scarcely in truth be considered a part of the Greek church, as they are monophysite in belief, and have in many particulars adopted Jewish customs, such as circumcision, &c. Their observances as regards marriage, however, tally closely with the canons of the Quinisext, except that bishops are permitted to retain their wives. In the sixteenth century, Bishop Zaga Zabo, who was sent as envoy to Portugal by David, King of Abyssinia, left behind him a confession of faith for the edification of the curious. In this document he describes the discipline of his church as strict in forbidding the clericulture to illegitimates; marriage is not dissolved by ordination, but second marriage, or marriage in orders, is prohibited, except under dispensation from the Patriarch, a favor occasionally granted to magnates for public reasons. Without such dispensation, the offender is expelled from the

¹ For these details from the collection of Asseman I am indebted to the Abate Zaccaria's *Nuova Giustificazione del Celibato Sacro*, pp. 129-30.

² *Hi omnes Nestoriani . . . cum Jacobinis longe plures esse dicuntur quam Latini et Græci.*—Jac. de Vitriaco *Hist. Hierosol.* cap. lxxvi.

priesthood, while a bishop or other ecclesiastic convicted of having an illegitimate child is forthwith deprived of all his benefices and possessions.¹ These rules, I presume, are still in force. A recent traveller in those regions states that "if a priest be married previous to his ordination, he is allowed to remain so; but no one can marry after having entered the priesthood"—while a mass of superstitious and ascetic observances has overlaid religion, until little trace is left of original Christianity.²

¹ Calixt. de Conjug. Cleric. p. 415.

² Parkyns' Life in Abyssinia, chap. xxxi.—Mr. Parkyns sums up about

260 fast days in the year, most of them much more rigid than those observed in the Catholic church.

VII.

MONACHISM.

THE Monastic Orders occupy too prominent a place in ecclesiastical history, and were too powerful an instrument both for good and evil, to be passed over without some cursory allusion, although the secular clergy is more particularly the subject of the present sketch; and the rise and progress of monachism is a topic too extensive in its details to be thoroughly considered in the space which can be allotted to it.

Allusions have been made in a previous section to the vows which, at an early period in the history of the church, had already become common among female devotees. In fact an order of widows, employed in charitable works and supported from the offerings of the faithful, was apparently one of the primitive institutions of the Apostles. To prevent any conflict between the claims of the world and of the church, St. Paul directs that they shall be childless and not less than sixty years of age, so that on the one hand there might be no neglect of the first duty which he recognized as owing to the family, nor, on the other hand, that the devotee should be tempted by the flesh to quit the service which she had undertaken.¹

This admirable plan may be considered the germ of the countless associations by which the church has in all ages earned the gratitude of mankind by giving to Christianity its truest practical exposition. It combined a refuge for the desolate with a most efficient organization for spreading the faith and admin-

¹ I. Tim. v. 3-14. cf. Act. IX. 39-41. In process of time, it even became a question whether these women were not to be regularly ordained—an error forbidden by the

council of Laodicæa (Can. xi.) in 372.—By the council of Chalcedon, however, in 451 (Can. xv.), it appears that deaconesses were then formally ordained by the imposition of hands.

istering charity; and there was no thought of marring its utility by rendering it simply an instrument for exaggerating and propagating asceticism. St. Paul, indeed, expressly commands the younger ones to marry and bring up children;¹ and he could little have anticipated the time when this order of widows, so venerable in its origin and labors, would, by the caprice of ascetic progress, come to be regarded as degraded in comparison with the virgin spouses of Christ, who selfishly endeavored to purchase their own salvation by shunning all the duties imposed on them by the Creator.²

In the early church, as has been already shown, all vows of continence and dedication to the service of God were a matter of pure volition, not only as to their inception, but also as to their duration. The male or female devotee was at liberty to return to the world and to marry at any time;³ although, during the purer periods of persecution, such conduct was doubtless visited with disapprobation and was attended with loss of reputation. As, moreover, there was no actual segregation from the world and no sundering of family ties, there was no necessity for special rules of disci-

¹ *Volo ergo juniores [viduas] nubere, filios procreare, matresfamilias esse, nullam occasionem dare adversario.*—I. Tim. v. 14.

² See Leon. I. Epist. lxxxvii. cap. 2. (Harduin. I. 1775.)

³ If further proof of this be required, beyond what has already been incidentally adduced, it is to be found in the 19th canon of the council of Ancyra, held about the year 314. By this, the vow of celibacy or virginity when broken only rendered the offender incapable of receiving holy orders. He was to be treated as a "digamus," showing evidently that no punishment was inflicted, beyond the disability which attached to second marriages.

In 365 the Emperor Valens ordered the violent removal and restoration to secular life of those who had entered monasteries in order to escape the duties which they owed to the state (see *ante*, p. 59), and in 376 he persecuted those who refused obedience.

Even in the time of St. Augustine monks were frequently married, as we learn from his remarks concerning the heretics who styled themselves Apostolici and who gloried in their superior asceticism—"eo quod in suam communionem non reciperent utentes conjugibus et res proprias possidentes; quales habet Catholica [ecclesia] et monachos et clericos plurimos."—Augustin. de Hæresib. No. xl.

Even Epiphanius, the ardent admirer of virginity, when controverting the errors of the same sect, declares that those who cannot persevere in their vows had better marry and reconcile themselves by penitence to the church rather than to sin in secret—"Melius est lapsum a cursu palam sibi uxorem sumere secundum legem et a virginitate multo tempore pœnitentiam agere et sic rursus ad ecclesiam induci, etc."—Panar. Hæres. lxi.

We shall see hereafter how long it took to enforce the strict segregation of the cenobite from the world.

plaine. When, under the Decian persecution, Paul the Thebæan, and shortly afterwards St. Antony, retired to the desert in order to satisfy a craving for ascetic mortification which could only be satiated by solitude, and thus unconsciously founded the vast society of Egyptian cenobites, they gave rise to what at length became a new necessity.¹ The associations which gradually formed themselves required some government, and the institution of monachism became too important a portion of the church, both in numbers and influence, to remain long without rules of discipline to regulate its piety and to direct its powers.

A portion of the church, adhering to ancient tradition, looked reprovingly on these exaggerated pietistic vagaries. Lactantius, for instance, in a passage written subsequent to the conversion of Constantine, earnestly denounces the life of a hermit as that of a beast rather than of a man, and urges that the bonds of human society ought not to be broken, since man cannot exist without his fellows.² All such protests, however, were vain. The tide had fairly set in, and we have seen that soon after the middle of the fourth century the increasing multitudes who sought refuge in the cell of the anchorite had already attracted the imperial attention and had called for restrictive measures. It is easy to understand the impulsion which drove so many to abandon the world. No small portion of pastoral duty consisted in exhortations to virginity, the praises of which were reiterated with ever increasing vehemence, and the rewards of which, in this world and the next, were magnified with constantly augmenting promises. Indeed, a perusal of the writings of that age seems to render it difficult to conceive how any truly devout

¹ St. Jerome vindicates for Paul the priority which was commonly ascribed to Antony, but he fully admits that the latter is entitled to the credit of popularizing the practice.—“*Alii, autem, in quam opinionem vulgus omne consentit, asserunt Antonium hujus propositi caput, quod ex parte verum est: non enim tam ipse ante omnes fuit, quam ab eo omnium incitata sunt studia,*” etc.—Hieron. Vit. Pauli cap. 1.—Epist. xxii. ad Eustoch. cap. 36. Jerome also asserts that monachism

was unknown in Palestine and Syria until it was introduced there by Hilarion, a disciple of St. Antony.—Vit. Hilarion. cap. 14.

² *Huic vero qui se ipse dissociat ac secernit a corpore, non ritu hominis sed ferarum more vivendum est. Quod fieri si non potest, retinendum est igitur omni modo vinculum societatis humanæ, quia homo sine homine nullo modo potest vivere.*—Instit. Divin. Lib. vi. cap. 10.—Cf. c. 17.

soul could remain involved in worldly duties and pleasures, when the abandonment of all the ties and responsibilities imposed by Providence was represented as rendering the path to heaven so much shorter and more certain, and when every pulpit resounded with perpetual amplifications of the one theme. Equally efficacious with the timid and slothful was the prospect of a quiet retreat from the confusion and strife which the accelerating decline of the empire rendered every day wilder and more hopeless; while the crushing burdens of the state, in spite of all the efforts of the civil power, drove many to seek their escape in the exemptions accorded to those connected with the church. When to these classes are added the penitents—prototypes of St. Mary of Egypt, who retired to the desert as the only refuge from her profligate life, and for seventeen years waged an endless struggle with the burning passions which she could control but could not conquer—it is not difficult to estimate how vast were the multitudes unconsciously engaged in laying the foundations of that monastic structure which was eventually to overshadow all Christendom.¹ Indeed, even the church itself at times became alarmed at the increasing tendency, as when the council of Saragossa, in 381, found it necessary to denounce the practice of ecclesiastics abandoning their functions and embracing the monastic life, which it assumes was done from unworthy motives.²

Certain definite rules for the governance of these crowds of all stations, conditions, and characters became of course necessary, but it was long before they assumed an irrevocable and binding force. The treatise which is known as the rule of St. Oriesis is only a long and somewhat mystic exhortation to asceticism. That which St. Pachomius is said to have received from an angel is manifestly posterior to the date of that saint,

¹ As early as the commencement of the fourth century, we find Faustus, in his "tu quoque" defence of Manicheism, asserting that in the Christian churches the number of professed virgins exceeded that of women not bound by vows.—Augustin. contra

Faust. Manich. Lib. xxx. c. iv.

² Propter luxum vanitatemque præsumptam.—Concil. Cæsaraug. I. ann. 381, c. vi.—Disobedience to the prohibition is threatened with prolonged suspension from communion.

and probably belongs to the commencement of the fifth century. Minute as are its instructions, and rigid as are its injunctions respecting every action of the cenobite, yet it fully displays the voluntary nature of the profession and the lightness of the bonds which tied the monk to his order. A stranger applying for admission to a monastery was exposed only to a probation of a few days, to test his sincerity and to prove that he was not a slave; no vows were imposed, his simple promise to obey the rules being only required. If he grew tired of ascetic life, he departed, but he could not be again taken back without penitence and the consent of the archimandrite.¹ Even female travellers applying for hospitality were not refused admittance, and an inclosure was set apart for them, where they were entertained with special honor and attention; a place was likewise provided for them in which to be present at vespers.²

A similar system of discipline is manifested in the detailed statement of the regulations of the Egyptian monasteries left us by John Cassianus, Abbot of St. Victor of Marseilles, who died in 448. No vows or religious ceremonies were required of the postulant for admission. He was proved by ten days' waiting at the gate, and a year's probation inside, yet the slender tie between him and the community is shown by the preservation of his worldly garments, to be returned to him in case of his expulsion for disobedience or discontent, and also by the refusal to receive from him the gift of his private fortune—although no one within the sacred walls was permitted to call the simplest article his own—lest he should leave the convent and then claim to revoke his donation, as not unfrequently happened in institutions which neglected this salutary rule.³ So, in a series of directions for cenobitic life,

¹ Regul. S. Pachom. c. 26, 79, 95.— Qui absque ordine fratrum recesserit et postea acta pœnitentia redierit, non erit in ordine suo absque majoris imperio. . . . Si quis promiserit observare regulas monasterii, et facere cœperit, easque dimiserit, postea autem reversus egerit pœnitentiam, obtendens infirmitatem corpusculi, &c.

² Ibid. c. 29. This is a particularly

striking contrast with mediæval monachism, which, as we shall see hereafter, considered the sacred precincts polluted by the foot of woman.

³ Cassian. de Cœnob. Instit. Lib. iv. c. 3, 4, 5, 6, 13.—Cassianus declares chastity to be the virtue by which men are rendered most like angels.

How completely the system of reli-

appended to a curious Arabic version of the Nicene canons, the punishment provided for persistent disobedience and turbulence is expulsion of the offender from the monastery.¹

As a temporary refuge from the trials of life, where the soul could be strengthened by seclusion, meditation, peaceful labor, and rigid discipline, thousands must have found the institution of Monachism most beneficial who had not resolution enough to give themselves up to a life of ascetic devotion and privation. These facilities for entrance and departure, however, only rendered more probable the admission of the turbulent and the worldly; and the want of stringent and effective regulations must have rendered itself every day more apparent, as the holy multitudes waxed larger and more difficult to manage, and as the empire became covered with wandering monks, described by St. Augustine as beggars, swindlers, and peddlers of false relics, who resorted to the most shameless mendacity to procure the means of sustaining their idle and vagabond life.²

gious asceticism succeeded in its object of destroying all human feeling is well exemplified by the shining example of the holy Mucius, who presented himself for admission in a monastery, accompanied by his child, a boy eight years of age. His persistent humility gained for him a relaxation of the rules, and father and son were admitted together. To test his worthiness, however, they were separated, and all intercourse forbidden. His patience encouraged a further trial. The helpless child was neglected and abused systematically, but all the perverse ingenuity which rendered him a mass of filth and visited him with perpetual chastisement failed to excite a sign of interest in the father. Finally the abbot feigned to lose all patience with the little sufferer's moans, and ordered Mucius to cast him in the river. The obedient monk carried him to the bank and threw him in with such promptitude that the admiring spectators were barely able to rescue him. All that is wanting to complete the hideous picture is the declaration of the abbot that in Mucius the sacrifice of Abraham was completed. (Ibid. Lib. v. c. 27, 28.) This

epitomizes the whole system—the transfer to man of the obedience due to God—and shows how little, by this time, was left of the hopeful reliance on a beneficent God which distinguished the primitive church, and which led Athenagoras, in the second century, to argue from the premises “Deus certe ad ea quæ præter naturam sunt neminem movet.” The extravagant lengths to which this implicit subjection was habitually carried are further illustrated by Cassianus in Lib. iv. c. 10.

The Rule which passes under the name of John, Bishop of Jerusalem, I believe is universally acknowledged to be spurious, and therefore requires no special reference.

¹ De Monach. Decret. can. x. (Harduin. Concil. I. 498.)

² Nusquam missos, nusquam fixos, nusquam stantes, nusquam sedentes. Alii membra martyrum, si tamen martyrum, venditant; alii fimbrias et phylacteria sua magnificent . . . et omnes petunt, omnes exigunt, aut sumptus lucrosæ egestatis, aut simulatæ pretium sanctitatis etc.—Augustin. de Opere Monachor. cap. 28.

The weaker sex, whether from the greater value attached to the purity of woman or from her presumed frailty, as well as from some difference in the nature of the engagement entered into, was the first to become the object of distinct legislation, and the frequency of the efforts required shows the difficulty of enforcing the rule of celibacy and chastity. Allusion has already been made to a law of Jovian which, as early as 364, denounced the attempt to marry a nun as a capital crime. Subsequent canons of the church show that this was wholly ineffectual. The council of Valence, in 374, endeavored to check such marriages. The synod of Rome, in 384, alludes with horror to these unions, which it stigmatizes as adultery, and, drawing a distinction between virgins professed and those who had taken the veil, it prescribes an indefinite penance before they can be received back into the church, but at the same time it does not venture to order their separation from their husbands.¹ A year later, the bolder Siricius commands both monks and nuns guilty of unchastity to be imprisoned, but he makes no allusion to marriage.² Notwithstanding the fervor of St. Augustine's admiration for virginity and the earnestness with which he waged war in favor of celibacy, he pronounces that the marriage of nuns is binding, ridicules those who consider it as invalid, and deprecates the evil results of separating man and wife under such circumstances, but yet his asceticism, satisfied with this concession to common sense, pronounces such unions to be worse than adulterous.³ From this it is evident that these infractions of

¹ Synod. Roman. ann. 384, c. 1, 2.

² Siricii Epist. 1, c. 6.—A rather curious episode in monastic discipline is a law promulgated in 390 by Theodosius the Great prohibiting nuns from shaving their heads under severe penalties. "Fœminæ quæ crinem suum contra divinas humanasque leges instinctu persuasæ professionis absciderint ab ecclesiæ foribus arceantur," and any bishop permitting them to enter a church is threatened with deposition.—Lib. xvi. Cod. Theod. Tit. ii. l. 27.

³ Proinde qui dicunt talium nuptias

non esse nuptias sed potius adulteria non mihi videntur satis acute ac diligenter considerare quid dicant . . . Fit autem per hanc minus consideratam opinionem, qua putant lapsarum a sancto proposito fœminarum, si nupserint, non esse conjugia, non parvum malum; ut a maritis separentur uxores, quasi adulteræ sint, non uxores; et cum volent eas separatas reddere continentia, faciunt maritos earum adulteros veros, cum suis uxoribus vivis, alteras duxerint. . . . Sed plane non dubitaverim dicere lapsus et ruinas a castitate sanctiore, quæ vovetur Domino, adulteriis esse pejores.

discipline were far from uncommon, and that the stricter churchmen already treated such marriages as null and void, which resulted in the husbands considering themselves at liberty to marry again. This view of monastic vows was not sustained by the authorities of the church, for about the same period Innocent I., like St. Augustine, while condemning such marriages as worse than adulterous, admitted their validity by refusing communion to the offenders until one of the partners in guilt should be dead; and, like the synod of 384, he considered the transgression as somewhat less culpable in the professed virgin than in her who had consummated her marriage with Christ by absolutely taking the veil.¹ The same general principle had been enunciated a few years previous by the first council of Toledo which decided that the nun who married was not admissible to penitence during the life of her husband, unless she separated herself from him.²

It is evident from all this that an effort had been made to have such marriages condemned as invalid, and that it had failed. We see, however, that the lines had gradually been drawn more tightly around the monastic order, that the vows could no longer be shaken off with ease, and that there was a

—De Bono Viduit. c. 10, 11. It will be seen hereafter that in the twelfth century the church adopted as a rule of discipline the practice condemned by St. Augustine, and that in the sixteenth century the council of Trent elevated it into a point of faith.

¹ Innocent. Epist. ad Victricium, c. 12, 13. The assumed marriage with Christ, a theory which St. Cyprian shows to be as old as the third century, is very strongly stated by Innocent. "Si enim de omnibus hæc ratio custoditur, ut quæcumque vivente viro alteri nupserit habeatur adultera, nec ei agendæ pœnitentiæ licentia concedatur, nisi unus ex eis fuerit defunctus; quanto et illa magis tenenda est, quæ ante immortalis se sponso conjunxerat, et postea ad humanas nuptias transmigravit?" It was probably this mystic marriage which rendered the church so much more sensitive to the frailty of their female devotees

than to that of the men.

The difficulty of the questions which arose in establishing the monastic system is shown in an epistle of Leo I. to the Mauritanian Bishops concerning some virgins professed who had suffered violence from the Barbarians. He decides that they had committed no sin, and could be admitted to communion if they persevered in a life of chastity and religious observance, but that they could not continue to be numbered with the holy maidens, while yet they were not to be degraded to the order of widows; and he further requires that they shall exhibit their sense of shame and humiliation. The problem evidently was one which transcended the acuteness even of Leo to solve.—Leonis I. Epist. Episcop. per Cæsariem Mauritan. cap. ii. v. (Harduin. I. 1775-6).

² Concil. Toletan. I. c. 16.

growing tendency to render the monastic character ineffaceable when once assumed. Towards the middle of the fifth century, however, a reaction took place, possibly because the extreme views may have been found impracticable. Thus Leo I. treats recalcitrant cenobites with singular tenderness. He declares that monks cannot without sin abandon their profession, and therefore that he who returns to the world and marries must redeem himself by penitence, for however honorable be the marriage tie and the active duties of life, still it is a transgression to desert the better path. So professed virgins, who throw off the habit and marry, violate their duty, and those who in addition to this have been regularly consecrated commit a great crime—and yet no further punishment is indicated for them.¹ It is true that about the same time St. Patrick endeavored to enforce the sterner rule of separation in such cases under penalty of excommunication;² but such efforts were futile, and the little respect still paid to the indelible character claimed for monachism is shown by the manner in which the civil power was ready to interfere for the purpose of putting an end to some of the many abuses arising from monastic institutions. In 458 Majorian promulgated a law in which he inveighs with natural indignation against the parents who, to get rid of their offspring, compel their unhappy daughters to enter convents at a tender age, and he orders that, until the ardor of the passions shall be tempered by advancing years, no vows shall be administered. The minimum age for taking the veil is fixed at forty years, and stringent measures are provided for insuring its observance. If infringed by order of the parents, or by an orphan

¹ Leo Epist. ad Rusticum c. 12, 13, 14. "Propositum monachi, proprio arbitrio aut voluntate susceptum, deseri non potest absque peccato. . . . Unde qui relicta singularitatis professione, ad militiam vel ad nuptias devolutus est, publicæ pœnitentiæ satisfactione purgandus est; quia etsi innocens militia et honestum potest esse conjugium, electionem tamen meliorum deseruisse transgressio est." So the second council of Arles, in 441 (Can.

52), excommunicates the nun who marries until due penance shall have been performed, but does not indicate separation.

² Virgo quæ voverit Deo permanere casta et postea nupserit carnalem sponsum, excommunicationis sit donec convertatur; si conversa fuerit et demiserit adulterum, pœnitentiam agat, et postea non in una domo nec in una villa habitent.—Synod. S. Patricii ann. 456, c. 17.

girl of her own free will, one-third of all the possessions of the offender is confiscated to the state, and the ecclesiastics officiating at the ceremony are visited with the heavy punishment of proscription. A woman forced into a nunnery, if her parents die before she reaches the age of forty, is declared to be free to leave the order and to marry, nor can she be disinherited thereafter.¹ Fruitless as this well-intentioned effort proved, it is highly suggestive as to the wrongs which were perpetrated under the name of religion, the stern efforts felt to be requisite for their prevention, and the power exercised to annul the vows, not yet recognized as indissoluble.

In the East, the tendency was to give a more rigid and unalterable character to the vows, nor is it difficult to understand the cause. Both church and state began to feel the necessity of reducing to subjection under some competent authority the vast hordes of idle and ignorant men who had embraced monastic life. In the West, monachism was as yet in its infancy, and was to be stimulated rather than to be dreaded, but it was far otherwise in the East. The examples of Antony and Pachomius had brought them innumerable followers. The solitudes of the deserts had become peopled with vast communities, and as the contagion spread, monasteries arose everywhere and were rapidly filled and enlarged. The blindly bigoted and the turbulently ambitious found a place among those whose only aim was retirement and peace; while the authority wielded by the superior of each establishment gave him a degree of power which rendered him not only important but dangerous. The monks thus became in time a body of no little weight which it behooved the church to thoroughly control, as it might become efficient for good or evil. By encouraging and directing it, she gained an instrument of incalculable force, morally and physically, to consolidate her authority and extend her influence. How that influence was used, and how the monks became at times a terror even to the state is written broadly on the history of the age. Even early in the fifth century the hordes of savage Nitrian

¹ Novell. Majorian. Tit. vi. This law continued in force for but five years, being abrogated in 463 by Severus.—Novell. Severi. Tit. I.

cenobites were the janizaries of the fiery Cyril, with which he lorded it over the city of Alexandria, and almost openly bade defiance to the imperial authority. The tumult in which Orestes nearly lost his life, the banishment of the Jews, and the shocking catastrophe of Hypatia show how dangerous an element to society they were even then, when under the guidance of an able and unscrupulous leader.¹ So the prominent part taken by the monks in the deplorable Nestorian and Euty-chian controversies, the example of the Abbot Barsumas at "the synod of Robbers" in Ephesus, the exploits of Theodosius of Jerusalem and Peter of Antioch, who drove out their bishops and usurped the episcopal chairs, the career of Euty-ches himself, the bloodthirsty rabble of monks who controlled the synod of Ephesus and endeavored to overawe that of Chalcedon, and, in the succeeding century, the insurrections against the Emperor Anastasius which were largely attributable to their efforts—all these were warnings not lightly to be neglected. The monks, in fact, were fast becoming not only disagreeable but even dangerous to the civil power; their organization and obedience to their leaders gave them strength to seriously threaten the influence even of the hierarchy, and the effort to keep them strictly under subjection and within their convent walls became necessary to the peace of both church and state.

In 451 the church endeavored to protect itself from these disorders by establishing a rigorous discipline and placing the monastic institutions under the supervision and control of the prelates. The Œcumenic council of Chalcedon in that year adopted a series of canons which declared that monks and nuns were not at liberty to marry; but while excommunication was the punishment provided for the offence, power

¹ Socrat. Hist. Eccles. Lib. vii. c. 13, 14, 15.—Even before this, in the province of Africa, the political utility of such enthusiastic disciples had been recognized and acted on. At the council of Carthage, in 411, where the Donatists were condemned, the Imperial Commissioner, in pronouncing sentence, warned the Donatist bishops that they must restrain the turbulent monks within their dioceses —“ *li autem qui in præsiidiis suis circumcellionum turbas se habere cognoscunt, sciant nisi eorum insolentiam omnimodis comprimere et refrenare gestierint, maxime ea loca fisco mox occupanda.*”—Concil. Carthag. ann. 411, Cognit. iii. cap. ult. (Harduin. I. 1190.)

was given to the bishops to extend mercy to the offenders. The council deplored the turbulence of the monks who, leaving their monasteries, stirred up confusion everywhere, and it commanded them to devote themselves solely to prayer and fasting in the spot which they had chosen as a retreat from the world. It forbade them to abandon the holy life to which they had devoted themselves, and pronounced the dread sentence of the anathema on the renegades who refused to return and undergo due penance. The whole system was placed under the supervision and control of the bishops. No monastery was to be founded without the license of the bishop of the locality, and he alone could give permission to a monk to leave it for any purpose.¹

This legislation was well adapted to the end in view, but the evil was too deep-seated and too powerful to be thus easily eradicated. Finding the church unable to enforce a remedy, the civil power was compelled to intervene. As early as 390 Theodosius the Great had ordered the monks to confine themselves strictly to deserts and solitudes.² Two years later he repealed this law and allowed them to enter the cities.³ This laxity was abused, and in 466 the Emperors Leo and Anthemius issued an edict forbidding for the future all monks to go beyond the walls of their monasteries on any pretext, except the *apocrisarii*, or legal officers, on legitimate business alone, and these were strictly enjoined not to engage in religious disputes, not to stir up the people, and not to preside over assemblages of any nature.⁴

History shows us how little obedience this also received, nor is it probable that much more attention was paid to the imperial rescript when, in 523, Justinian confirmed the legislation of his predecessors, and added provisions forbidding those who had once taken the vows from returning to the world under penalty of being handed over to the *curia* of their municipality, with confiscation of their property, and personal

¹ Concil. Chalced. c. 4, 7, 16.

² Quicumque sub professione monachi repperiuntur, deserta loca et vastas solitudines sequi atque habi-

tare jubeantur.—Lib. xvi. Cod. Theod. iii. 1.

³ Lib. xvi. Cod. Theod. iii. 2.

⁴ Const. 29, Cod. i. 3.

punishment if penniless.¹ Had the effort then been successful, he would not have been under the necessity of renewing it in 535 by a law making over to the monastery, by way of satisfaction to God, the property of any monk presuming to abandon a life of religion and returning to the cares of the world.² The prevalent laxity of manners is further shown by another provision according to which the monk who received orders was not allowed to marry, even if he entered grades in which marriage was permitted to the secular clergy, the penalty for taking a wife or a concubine being degradation and dismissal, with incapacity for serving the state.³ Ten years later, further legislation was found necessary, and at length the final expedient was hit upon, by which the apostate monk was handed over to the bishop to be placed in a monastery, from which if he escaped again he was delivered to the secular tribunal as incorrigible.⁴

Thus gradually the irrevocable nature of monastic vows became established in the East, more from reasons of state than from ecclesiastical considerations. In the West, matters were longer in reaching a settlement, and the causes operating were somewhat different. Monachism there had not become a terror to the civil power, and its management was left to the church; yet, if its influence was insufficient to excite tumults and seditions, it was none the less disorganized, and its disorders were a disgrace to those on whom rested the responsibility.

The Latin church was not by any means insensible to this disgrace, nor did it underrate the importance of rendering the vows indissoluble, of binding its servants absolutely and forever to its service, and of maintaining its character and influence by endeavoring to enforce a discipline that should insure purity. During the period sketched above, and for the two following centuries, there is scarcely a council which

¹ Const. 53 § 1 Cod. i. 3.

² Novell. v. c. 4, 6.

³ Novell. v. c. 8.

⁴ Novell. cxxiii. c. 42. The trouble

was apparently incurable. Three hundred and fifty years later, Leo the Philosopher deploras it, and orders all recalcitrant monks to be returned to their convents as often as they may escape.

did not enact canons showing at once the persistent effort to produce these results and the almost insurmountable difficulty of accomplishing them. It would lead us too far to enter upon the minutiae of these perpetually reiterated exhortations and threats, or of the various expedients which were successively tried. Suffice it to say that the end in view was never lost sight of, while the perseverance of the wrongdoer seems to have rivalled that of the disciplinarian. The anvil bade fair to wear out the hammer, while the confusion and lawlessness of those dismal ages gave constantly increasing facilities to those who desired to escape from the strictness of the ascetic life to which they had devoted themselves. Thus arose a crowd of vagabond monks, *gyrovagi*, *acephali*, *circiliones*, *sarabaitæ*, who, without acknowledging obedience to any superior, or having any definite place of abode, wandered over the face of the country, claiming the respect and immunities due to a sacred calling, for the purpose of indulging in an idle and dissolute life—vagrants of the worst description, according to the unanimous testimony of the ecclesiastical authorities of the period.¹

Thus, up to the middle of the fifth century, no regular system of discipline had been introduced in the monastic establishments of the church of Rome. About that period Cassianus, the first abbot of St. Victor of Marseilles, wrote out, for the benefit of the ruder monasticism of the West, the details of discipline in which he had perfected himself among the renowned communities of the East. He deploras the absence of any fixed rule in the Latin convents, where every abbot governed on the plan which suited his fancy; where more difficulty was found in preserving order among two or

¹ St. Benedict of Nursia, the real founder of Latin monachism, who quitted the world in 494, thus describes the wandering monks of his time: "Tertium vero monachorum teterrimum genus est Sarabaitarum . . . qui bini aut terni, aut certe singuli sine pastore, non Dominicis sed suis inclusi ovilibus, pro lege eis est desideriorum voluptas; cum quidquid putaverint vel elegerint, hoc dicunt sanctum, et quod noluerint putant non licere.

Quartum vero genus est monachorum quod nominatur gyrovagum, qui tota vita sua per diversas provincias ternis aut quaternis diebus per diversorum cellas hospitantur, semper vagi et nunquam stabiles, et propriis voluptatibus et gulæ illecebris servientes, et per omnia deteriores Sarabaitis: de quorum omnium miserrima conversatione melius est silere quam loqui."—Regul. S. Benedicti c. 1.

three monks than the Abbot of Tabenna in the Thebaïd experienced with the flock of five thousand committed to his single charge; and where each individual retained his own private hoards, which were carefully locked up and sealed to keep them from the unscrupulous covetousness of his brethren.¹ How little all these efforts accomplished is clearly manifested when, in 494, we find Gelasius I. lamenting the incestuous marriages which were not uncommon among the virgins dedicated to God, and venturing only to denounce excommunication on the offenders, unless they should avert it by undergoing public penance. As for widows who married after professing chastity, he could indicate no earthly chastisement, but only held out to them the prospect of eternal reward or punishment, and left it for them to decide whether they would seek or abandon the better part.²

A new apostle was clearly needed to aid the organizing spirit of Rome in her efforts to regulate the increasing number of devotees, who threatened to become the worst scandal of the church, and who could be rendered so efficient an instrument for its aggrandizement. He was found in the person of St. Benedict of Nursia, who, about the year 494, at the early age of sixteen, tore himself from the pleasures of the world, and buried his youth in the solitudes of the Latian Apennines. A nature that could wrench itself away from the allurements of a splendid career dawning amid the blandishments of Rome was not likely to shrink from the austerities which awe and attract the credulous and the devout. Tempted by the Evil Spirit in the guise of a beautiful maiden, and finding his resolution on the point of yielding, with a supreme effort Benedict cast off his simple garment and threw himself into a thicket of brambles and nettles, through which he rolled until his naked body was lacerated from head to foot. The experiment, though rude, was eminently successful; the flesh was effectually conquered, and Benedict was never again tormented by rebellious desires.³ A light so shining was not

¹ Cassiani de Cœnob. Instit. Lib. II. c. 3; Lib. v. c. 1, 15.

² Gelasii PP. I. Epist. IX. cap. XX., XXI.

³ Greg. Mag. Vit. S. Benedicti c. 2. — Juan Cirita, a Spanish saint of the twelfth century, was exposed to the same temptation as St. Benedict, the devil visiting him in the shape of a

created for obscurity. Zealous disciples assembled around him, attracted from distant regions by his sanctity, and after various vicissitudes he founded the monastery of Monte Cassino, on which for a thousand years were lavished all that veneration and munificence could accumulate to render illustrious the birthplace and capital of the great Benedictine Order.

The rule promulgated by Benedict, which virtually became the established law of Latin Monachism, shows the more practical character of the western mind. Though pervaded by the austere asceticism, yet labor, charity, and good works occupy a much more prominent place in its injunctions than in the system of the East. Salvation was not to be sought simply by abstinence and mortification, and the innate selfishness of the monastic principle was relaxed in favor of a broader and more human view of the duties of man to his Creator and to his fellows. This gave to the institution a firmer hold on the affections of mankind and a more enduring vitality, which preserved its fortunes through the centuries, in spite of innumerable aberrations and frightful abuses.

Still there were as yet no formal vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience exacted of the novice. After a year of probation he promised, before God and the Saints, to keep the Rule under pain of damnation, and he was then admitted with imposing religious ceremonies. His worldly garments were, however, preserved, to be returned to him in case of expulsion, to which he was liable if incorrigibly disobedient. If he left the monastery, or if he was ejected, he could return

lovely woman who sought refuge from her pursuers in his cell. During a sleepless night, feeling his resolution giving way, he roused his fire and with a glowing brand burned his arm to the bone, whereupon the devil vanished, loading him with reproaches (Henri-quez Vit. Joannis Cirita cap. ii.). Legends of this nature are not uncommon, nor are there wanting those of another class in which the immediate and visible agency of the Evil Spirit is not called into play. Thus the holy Godric, a Welsh saint of the twelfth century, endeavored to subdue his

rebellious flesh in the manner which St. Benedict found so effectual, but without success. He then buried a cask in the earthen floor of his cell, filled it with water and fitted it with a cover, and in this receptacle he shut himself up whenever he felt the titillations of desire. In this manner, varied by occasionally passing the night up to his chin in a river of which he had broken the ice, he finally succeeded in mastering his fiery nature. —Girald. Cambrens. Gemm. Eccles. Div. ii. c. x.

twice, but after the third admission, if he again abandoned the order, he was no longer eligible.¹ Voluntary submission was thus the corner-stone of discipline, and there was nothing irrevocable in the engagement which bound the monk to his brethren.

Contemporary with St. Benedict was St. Cæsarius of Arles, whose Rule has been transmitted to us by his nephew, St. Tetradius. It is very short, but is more rigid than that of Benedict, inasmuch as it requires from the applicant the condition of remaining for life in the convent, nor will it permit his assumption of the habit until he shall have executed a deed bestowing all his property either on his relatives or on the establishment of his choice, thus insuring the rule of poverty, and depriving him of all inducement to retire.²

The Rule of St. Benedict, however, overcame all rivalry, and was at length universally adopted. Under it were founded the innumerable monasteries which sprang up in every part of Europe, and were everywhere the pioneers of civilization; which exercised a more potent influence in extending Christianity over the Heathen than all other agencies combined; which carried the useful arts into barbarous regions, and preserved to modern times whatever of classic culture has remained to us. If they were equally efficient in extending the authority of the Popes, and in breaking down the independence of local and national churches, it is not to be rashly assumed that even that result was a misfortune, when the anarchical tendencies of the Middle Ages were to be neutralized principally by the humanizing force of religion, and consolidation was requisite to carry the church through the wilderness. Until the thirteenth century the Benedictines were practically without rivals, and their numbers and holiness may be estimated by the fact that in the fifteenth century one of their historians computed that the order had furnished fifty-five thousand five hundred and five blessed members to the calendar of saints.³

¹ Regul. S. Benedicti c. 58, 28, 29.

² Tetrad. Regul. c. 1.

³ Quinquaginta quinque millia quingenta
quinque
Omnes canonizati a te sunt translati.

Est monachus sanctus. Caput vero Benedictus.—

(Birck de Monast. Campidonens. c. 25.)

Bishop Trithemius is more mode-

Yet it could not but be a scandal to all devout minds that a man who had once devoted himself to religious observances should return to the world. Not only did it tend to break down the important distinction now rapidly developing between the clergy and the laity, but the possibility of such escape interfered with the control of the church over so large a class of its members, and diminished their utility in aiding the progress of its aggrandizement. We cannot be surprised, therefore, that within half a century after the death of St. Benedict, among the reforms energetically inaugurated by St. Gregory the Great, in the first year of his pontificate, was that of commanding the forcible return of all who abandoned their profession—the terms of the decretal showing that no concealment had been thought necessary by the renegades in leading a secular life and in publicly marrying.¹ Equally determined were his efforts to reform the abuses which had so relaxed the discipline of some monasteries that women were allowed perfect freedom of access, and the monks contracted such intimacy with them that they openly acted as godfathers to their children;² and when, in 601, he learned that the monks of St. Vitus, on Mount Etna, considered themselves at liberty to marry, apparently without leaving their convent, he checked the abuse by the most prompt and decided commands to the ecclesiastical authorities of Sicily.³

By the efforts of Gregory the monk was thus, in theory at least, separated irrevocably from the world, and committed to

rate, his estimate amounting to only 15,559. (Miræi Orig. Benedict.)

¹ Et quia aliquos monachorum usque ad tantum nefas prosiliisse cognovimus, ut uxores publice sortiantur; sub omni eos vigilantia requiras et inventos digna coercitione in monasteriis quorum monachi fuerunt, retransmittas.—Gregor. I. Lib. i. Epist. 42. Six years later he had to repeat his commands in stronger terms. (Cf. Lib. vii. Epist. 35. Lib. ii. Epist. 28. Lib. iv. Epist. 27. Lib. x. Epist. 8.) Yet when the offender was a man of rank and power, as in the case of Venantius, Patrician of Syracuse, Gregory could lay aside the tone of lofty command and condescend to tender

entreaty and earnest exhortation (Lib. i. Epist. 34), without even a threat of excommunication, and remain for years on the friendliest terms with him (Lib. xi. Epist. 30, 35, 36), showing that the rule was as yet by no means firmly established. In another case, however, nothing can be more indignant and peremptory than his commands. (Lib. viii. Epist. 8, 9.)

² Gregor. I. Lib. iv. Epist. 42.

³ Gregor. I. Lib. x. Epist. 22, 23.—He states “ut etiam monachis ibidem degentibus mulieribus sejungere sine metu sit licitum” which he characterizes as “res . . . omnino detestabilis et nefanda.”

an existence which depended solely upon the church. Cut off from family and friends, the door closed behind him forever, and his only aspirations, beyond his own personal wants and hopes, could but be for his abbey, his order, or the church, with which he was thus indissolubly connected. Such was the theory, and it worked as designed, although it was too much in opposition to the immutable tendencies of human nature to be universally enforced without a struggle which lasted for nearly a thousand years.¹

To follow out in detail the vicissitudes of this struggle would require too much space. Its nature will be indicated by occasional references in the following pages, and meanwhile it will be sufficient to show how little was accomplished in his own age by the energy and authority even of Gregory. It was only a few years after his death that the council of Paris, in 615, shows us that residence in monasteries was not considered necessary for women who took the vows, and that the civil power had to be invoked to prevent their marriage.² Indeed, it was not uncommon for men to turn their houses, nominally at least, into convents, living there surrounded with their wives and families, and deriving no little worldly profit from the assumption of superior piety, to the scandal of the truly religious.³ St. Isidor of Seville, about the same period, copies the words of St. Augustine in describing the wandering monastic impostors who lived upon the credulous charity of the faithful;⁴ and he also enlarges upon the dis-

¹ There was one exception, however, to this general rule. No married man was allowed to become a monk unless his wife assented, and likewise became a nun. The marriage tie was too sacred to be broken, unless both parties agreed simultaneously to embrace the better life. Thus, on the complaint of a wife, Gregory orders her husband to be forcibly removed from the monastery which he had entered and to be restored to her. (Gregor. I. Lib. xi. Epist. 50.) We shall see hereafter how entirely the church in time outgrew these scruples, and how insignificant the sacrament of marriage became in comparison with that of ordination or the vow of religion.

² Concil. Parisiens. V. ann. 615, c. xiii.—In the decree of Clotair II., confirming the acts of this council, we find—"Puellas et viduas religiosas, aut sanctimoniales, quæ se Deo voverunt, tam quæ in propriis domibus resident, quam quæ in monasteriis positæ sunt, nullus nec per præceptum nostrum competat, nec trahere nec sibi in conjugio sociare penitus præsumat etc."—Edict. Chlot. II. ann. 615, c. xviii. (Baluze).

³ S. Fructuosi Bracarens. Regul. Commun. cap. 1.

⁴ De Ecclesiast. Offic. Lib. ii. cap. xvi. § 7.

graceful license of the *acephali*, or clerks bound by no rule, whose vagabond life and countless numbers were an infamy to the western kingdoms which they infested.¹ The quotation of this passage by Louis-le-Débonnaire, in his attempt to reform the church, shows that these degraded vagrants continued to flourish unchecked in the ninth century;² and, indeed, Smaragdus, in his Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict, assures us that the evil had rather increased than diminished.³

Monachism was but one application of the doctrine of justification by works, which, by the enthusiasm and superstition of ages, was gradually built into a vast system of sacerdotalism. Through it were eventually opened to the medieval church sources of illimitable power and wealth by means of the complicated machinery of purgatory, masses for the dead, penances, indulgences, &c., under the sole control of the central head, to whom were committed the power of the keys and the dispensation of the exhaustless treasure of salvation bestowed on the church by the Redeemer. To discuss these collateral themes, however, would carry us too far from our subject, and I must dismiss them with the remark that at the period now under consideration there could have been no anticipation of these ulterior advantages to be gained by assuming to regulate the mode in which individual piety might seek to propitiate an offended God. Sufficient motives for the assumption existed in the evils and aspirations of the moment without our anticipating others which only received their fullest development under the skilful logic of the Thomists.

¹ Solutos atque oberrantes, sola turpis vita complectitur et vaga, . . . quique dum, nullum metuentes, explendæ voluptatis suæ licentiam consectantur, quasi animalia bruta, libertate ac desiderio suo feruntur, habentes signum religionis, non religionis officium, hippocentauris similes, neque equi neque homines, . . . quorum

quidem sordida atque infami numerositate satis superque nostra pars occidua pollet.—Ibid. Lib. ii. c. iii.

² Ludov. Pii de Reform. Eccles. cap. 100. (Goldast. Const. Imp. III. 199.)

³ Smaragd. Comment. in Regul. Benedict. c. 1.

VIII.

THE BARBARIANS.

WHILE the Latin church had thus been engaged in its hopeless combat with the incurable vices of a worn-out civilization, it had found itself confronted by a new and essentially different task. The Barbarians who wrenched province after province from the feeble grasp of the Cæsars had to be conquered, or religion and culture would be involved in the wreck which blotted out the political system of the Empire. The destinies of the future hung trembling in the balance, and it might not be an uninteresting speculation to consider what had been the present condition of the world if Western Europe had shared the fate of the East, and had fallen under the domination of a race bigoted in its own belief and incapable of learning from its subjects. Fortunately for mankind the invaders of the West were not semi-civilized and self-satisfied; their belief was not a burning zeal for a faith sufficiently elevated to meet many of the wants of the soul; they were simple barbarians, who, while they might despise the cowardly voluptuaries on whom they trampled, could not fail to recognize the superiority of a civilization awful even in its ruins. Fortunately, too, the Latin church was a more compact and independently organized body than its Eastern rival, inspired by a warmer faith and a more resolute ambition. It faced the difficulties of its new position with consummate tact and tireless energy; and whether its adversaries were Pagans like the Franks, or Arians like the Goths and Burgundians, by alternate pious zeal and artful energy it triumphed where success seemed hopeless, and where bare toleration would have appeared a sufficient victory.

While the celibacy, which bound every ecclesiastic to the church and dis severed all other ties, may doubtless be credited

with a share in this result, it introduced new elements of disorder where enough existed before. The chaste purity of the Barbarians at their advent aroused the wondering admiration of Salvianus, as that of their fathers four centuries earlier had won the severe encomium of Tacitus;¹ but the virtue which sufficed for the simplicity of the German forests was not long proof against the allurements accumulated by the cynicism of Roman luxury. At first the wild converts, content with the battle-axe and javelin, might leave the holy functions of religion to their new subjects, their strength scarcely feeling the restraint of a faith which to them was little more than an idle ceremony; but as they gradually settled down in their conquests, and recognized that the high places of the church conferred riches, honor, and power, they coveted the prizes which were too valuable to be monopolized by an inferior race. Gradually the hierarchy thus became filled with a class of warrior bishops, who, however efficient in maintaining and extending ecclesiastical prerogatives, were not likely to shed lustre on their order by the rigidity of their virtue, or to remove, by a strict enforcement of discipline, the scandals inseparable from endless civil commotions.

Reference has been made above to the perpetual iteration of the canon of celibacy, and of ingenious devices to prevent its violation, by the numerous councils held during this period, showing at once the disorders which prevailed among the clergy and the fruitlessness of the effort to repress them. The history of the time is full of examples illustrating the various phases of this struggle.

The episcopal chair, which at an earlier period had been filled by the votes of the people, and which subsequently came under the control of the Papacy, was at this time a gift in the hands of the untamed Merovingians, who carelessly

¹ Quamquam severa illic matrimonia; nec ullam morum partem magis laudaveris, nam prope soli barbarorum singulis uxoribus contenti sunt. . . Paucissima in tam numerosa gente adulteria; quorum poena praesens et maritis permissa. . . Plusque ibi boni

mores valent quam alibi bonae leges. —De Mor. German. c. 18, 19.

It is a little singular that Salvianus names the Alamanni as the only exception to the character for chastity which he bestows on the Barbarians in general.

bestowed it on him who could most lavishly fill the royal coffers, or who had earned it by courtly subservience or warlike prowess. The supple Roman or the turbulent Frank, who perchance could not recite a line of the Mass, thus leaped at once from the laity through all the grades;¹ and as he was most probably married, there can be no room for surprise if the rule of continence, thus suddenly assumed from the most worldly motives, should often prove unendurable for those untrained to self-command. When a man of repute like Genebaldus, married to the niece of the holy St. Remy, and placed in the see of Laon, could not restrain his passions until after the appearance of a son and daughter, whom he named *Latro* and *Vulpecula* in confession of his sin,² it was scarcely to be expected that the illiterate and untutored nominees of a licentious court could overcome the temptations which it required the virtue of a Felix of Nantes to surmount—virtue which must have been somewhat uncommon to attract attention and merit special record.³ That in fact they could not or did not is indicated by the frequent injunctions of the councils that bishops must regard their wives as sisters; while a canon promulgated by the council of Macon, in 581, ordering that no woman should enter the chamber of a bishop without two priests, or at least two deacons, in her company, shows how little hesitation there was in publishing to the world the

¹ From such chance allusions as are made by Gregory of Tours, this would almost seem to be the general rule, and not the exception. Thus he mentions that Apollinaris obtained the see of Rhodéz at the solicitation of his wife and sister (*Hist. Franc. Lib. III. c. 2*), and shortly afterwards the same episcopate is filled by the appointment of "Innocentius Gabalitanorum comes" (*Ibid. Lib. VI. c. 38*). Sulpitius, when nominated to that of Bourges, "ad clericatum deductus, episcopatum . . . suscepit" (*Ibid. Lib. VI. c. 39*). Badesilus, Clotair's mayor of the palace, received the bishopric of Le Mans "qui tonsuratus, gradus quos clerici sortiuntur ascensus," was duly installed (*Ibid. Lib. VI. c. 9*). Indeed, in his catalogue of the Bishops of Tours, Gregory specifies of Euphronius, the

eighteenth bishop, that he was "ab ineunte ætate clericus," showing how unusual it was to be regularly bred to the church.

² Hincmari Vit. S. Remig. c. 42.

³ The wife of Felix, banished from his bed on his elevation to the episcopate, rebelled against the separation. Finding her husband obdurate to her enticements, she was filled with jealousy, believing that only another attachment could account for his coldness. Hoping to detect his infidelity, she stole into the chamber where he was sleeping, and saw on his breast a lamb shining with heavenly light, indicative of the peaceful repose which had taken the place of all earthly passions in his heart.—Greg. Turon. de Glor. Confess. c. 78.

suspicious that were generally entertained.¹ How the rule was sometimes obeyed by the wild prelates of the age, while trampling upon other equally well-known canons, is exemplified by the story of Macliavus of Brittany. Conon, Count of Brittany, had made way with three of his brothers; the fourth, Macliavus, after an unsuccessful conspiracy, sought safety in flight, entered the church, and was created Bishop of Vannes. On the death of Conon, he promptly seized the vacant throne, left the church, threw off his episcopal robes, and took back to himself the wife whom he had quitted on obtaining the see of Vannes—for all of which he was duly excommunicated by his brother prelates.²

When such was the condition of morals and discipline in the high places of the church, it is not to be wondered at if the second council of Tours, in 567, could declare that the people suspect, not indeed all, but many of the arch-priests, vicars, deacons, and subdeacons, of maintaining improper relations with their wives, and should command that no one in orders should visit his own house except in company with a subordinate clerk, without whom, moreover, he was never to sleep; the clerk refusing the performance of the duty to be whipped, and the priest neglecting the precaution to be deprived of communion for thirty days. Any one in orders found with his wife was to be excommunicated for a year, deposed, and relegated among the laity; while the arch-priest who neglected the enforcement of these rules was to be imprisoned on bread and water for a month. An equally suggestive illustration of the condition of society is afforded by another canon, directed against the frequent marriages of nuns, who excused themselves on the ground that they had taken the veil to avoid the risk of forcible abduction. Allusion is made to the laws of Childebert and Clotair, maintained in vigor by Charibert, punishing such attempts severely, and girls who anticipate them are directed to seek temporary asylum in the church until their kindred can protect them under the royal authority, or find suitable husbands for them.³

¹ Concil. Matiscon. I. c. 3.

² Greg. Turon. Hist. Franc. Lib. iv. c. 4.

³ Concil. Turon. II. c. 19, 20.

That morals were not much better among the Arian Wisigoths of Spain than among the true believers of France is shown by the proceedings of the third council of Toledo, held in 589 to confirm the reunion of that kingdom with the orthodox church. It complains that the converted bishops, priests, and deacons are found to be publicly living with their wives, which it forbids for the future under threat of degrading all recalcitrants to the rank of lector.¹ The conversion of the kingdom to Catholicism did not improve matters. The clergy continued not only to associate with their wives, but also to marry openly, for the secular power was soon afterwards forced to interfere, and King Recared I. issued a law directing that any priest, deacon, or subdeacon connecting himself with a woman by marriage or otherwise, should be separated from his guilty consort by either the bishop or judge, and be punished according to the canons of the church, while the unfortunate woman was subjected to a hundred lashes and denied all access to her husband. To insure the enforcement of the edict, the heavy mulct of two pounds of gold was levied on any bishop neglecting his duty in the premises.² Recared also interposed to put a stop to the frequent marriages of nuns, whose separation from their husbands and condign punishment were decreed, with the enormous fine of five pounds of gold exacted of the careless ecclesiastic who might neglect to carry the law into effect—a fair measure of the difficulties experienced in enforcing the rule of celibacy.³ This legislation had little effect, for a half century later the eighth council of Toledo, in 653, shows us that all ranks of the clergy, from bishops to sub-deacons, had still no scruple in publicly maintaining relations with wives and concubines;⁴

¹ Concil. Toletan. III. c. 5. Priestly marriage formed no part of the Arian doctrine, but as the heresy originated prior to the council of Nicæa, and professed no obedience to that or any other council or decretal, it was left entirely to such influence as individual asceticism might exercise. Having no acknowledged head to promulgate canons or to cause their observance, no rule of the kind, even

if theoretically admitted, could be generally enforced.

² L. Wisigoth. Lib. III. Tit. iv. l. 18. This law is preserved in the *Fuero Juzgo*, or medieval Romance version of the code (Lib. III. Tit. iv. ley 18).

³ L. Wisigoth. Lib. III. Tit. v. l. 2.

⁴ Concil. Toletan. VIII. ann. 653, can. iv. v. vi.—These measures were

and, despite these well-meant efforts, clerical morals went from bad to worse until the licentious reign of King Witiza broke down all the accustomed barriers. According to the monkish chroniclers, that reckless prince issued, in 706, a law authorizing not only polygamy but unlimited concubinage to both laity and clergy; a privilege of which it is not unreasonable, from what we have seen, to suppose that they largely availed themselves.¹ There seems to be no record of any remonstrance on the part of the Gothic prelates, and when, three years later, Pope Constantine took cognizance of the innovation, and threatened Witiza with dethronement if he should not abrogate his iniquitous legislation, the monarch retorted with a promise to repeat the exploits of his predecessor Alaric, in sacking and plundering the Apostolic city. It is a little singular, however, that one of the first acts of the usurper, Don Roderic, in 711, was the repeal of this obnoxious law.² If he had any intentions of undertaking the reform of his subjects' morals, however, his adventure with Count Julian's daughter and the Saracenic invasion caused its indefinite postponement.

Italy was almost equally far removed from the ideal purity of Jerome and Augustine. Nothing can be more suggestive of the demoralization of her church than the permission granted about the year 580 by Pelagius II. for the elevation to the diaconate of a clerk at Florence, who while a widower had had children by a concubine. What renders the circumstance peculiarly significant is the fact that the Pope pleads the degeneracy of the age as his apology for this laxity.³

as fruitless as the preceding. Cf. Concil. Toletan. IX. ann. 655, can. x.

¹ Rex Witiza se effrenate præceptans per omne genus flagitii, legem nequissimam tulit; ut more sarracenicorum cuilibet laico et clerico liceret, quotquot posset alere, uxores et concubinas impune domi suæ retinere.—Liutprandi Chron. No. 174, ann. 706.

² Ibid. No. 181 ann. 709; No.

188 ann. 711. Without entering into the question of the correctness with which this chronicle has been attributed to Liutprand of Cremona, I may say that it has every appearance of being an authentic remnant of antiquity. (Cf. Antonii Biblioth. Hispan. I. 585.)

³ Defectus temporum nostrorum, quibus non solum merita sed corpora ipsa hominum defecerunt.—Pelagii PP. II. Epist. xiv.

Such was the condition of the Christian world when Gregory the Great, in 590, ascended the pontifical throne. He was too devout a churchman and too sagacious a statesman not to appreciate thoroughly the importance of the canon in all its various aspects—not only as necessary to ecclesiastical purity according to the ideas of the age, but also as a prime element in the influence of the church over the minds of the people, as well as an essential aid in extending ecclesiastical power, and in retaining undiminished the enormous possessions acquired by the church through the munificence of the pious. The prevailing laxity, indeed, was already threatening serious dilapidation of the ecclesiastical estates and foundations. How clearly this was understood is shown by Pelagius I. in 557, when he refused for a year to permit the consecration of a bishop elected by the Syracusans. On their persisting in their choice he wrote to the Patrician Cethegus, giving as the reason for his opposition the prelate's wife and children, by whom, if they survive, the substance of the church is wont to be jeopardized;¹ and his consent was finally given only on the condition that the bishop elect should provide competent security against any conversion of the estate of the diocese for the benefit of his family, a detailed statement of the property being made out in advance to guard against attempted infractions of the agreement. That this was not a merely local abuse is evident from a law of the Wisigoths, which provides that on the accession of any bishop, priest, or deacon, an accurate inventory of all church possessions under his control shall be made by five freemen, and that after his death an inquest shall be held for the purpose of making good any deficiencies out of the estate of the decedent, and forcing the restoration of anything that might have been alienated.²

There evidently was ample motive for a thorough reformation, and Gregory accordingly addressed himself energetically to the work of enforcing the canons. In his decretals there

¹ Superstes uxor aut filii, per quos ecclesiastica solet periclitari sub-

stantia.—Pelagii PP. I. Cethego Patricio.

² L. Wisigoth. Lib. v. Tit. i. l. 2.

are numerous references to the subject, showing that he lost no opportunity of reviving the neglected rules of discipline regarding the ordination of digami,¹ the residence of women, and abstinence from all intercourse with the sex.² In his zeal he even went so far as to decree that any one guilty of even a single lapse from virtue should be forever debarred from the ministry of the altar³—a law nullified by its own severity, which rendered its observance impossible. There is not much trace in contemporary history of any improvement resulting from these efforts, and towards the very close of his pontificate, in 602, we find him entreating Queen Brunhilda to exercise her power in restraining the still unbridled license of the Frankish clergy—a task which he assures her is essential if she desires to transmit her possessions in peace to her posterity.⁴ He also endeavored to reform the perennial abuse of the residence of women, a reform which the church has been vainly attempting ever since the canon of Nicæa.⁵ That Gregory's zeal, however, exercised some influence is manifested by the fact that tradition in the Middle Ages occasionally associated his name with the introduction of celibacy in the church. The impression which he produced is shown by the wild legend which relates that, soon after issuing and strictly enforcing a decretal on the subject, he happened to have his fish-ponds drawn off, when the heads of no less than six thousand infants were found in them—the offspring of eccle-

¹ Gregor. I. Lib. XIII. Epist. vi.—This rule had come to be very generally neglected. The importance attached to it, however, by strict disciplinarians is well illustrated in the firmness displayed by John, Patriarch of Alexandria, a contemporary of Gregory, whose bountiful charity had earned for him the title of Eleemosynarius. In a time of extreme famine, a wealthy aspirant offered him 200,000 bushels of corn and 100 pounds of gold for the grade of deacon. He had unluckily been twice married, and John refused the dazzling bribe, although the episcopal treasury had been exhausted in relieving the necessities of the suffering people. (Thomassin, *Discip. de l'Eglise*, Pt. II. Liv. 3, c. 15.)

² Gregor. I. Lib. XIII. Epist. 35, 36.

³ Gregor. I. Lib. IV. Epist. 26; Lib. V. Epist. 3; Lib. VIII. Epist. 24.—Similar attempts had previously been made by sundry provincial councils. In the case of Andrew, Bishop of Tarentum, who was accused of maintaining relations with a former concubine, Gregory, recognizing the impossibility of obtaining proofs, leaves it to his own conscience. If he has had any commerce with her since his ordination, he is commanded at once to resign his position as the only mode of insuring his salvation. (Gregor. Lib. III. Epist. 45, 46.)

⁴ Gregor. I. Lib. XI. Epist. 69.

⁵ Ibid. Lib. IX. Epist. 106.

siastics, destroyed to avoid detection—which filled him with so much horror that he abandoned the vain attempt.¹ Yet in Italy the residence of wives was still permitted to those in orders, under the restriction that they should be treated as sisters;² and Gregory relates as worthy of all imitation the case of a holy priest of Nursia who, following the example of the saints in depriving himself of even lawful indulgences, had persistently relegated his wife to a distance. When at length he lay on his death-bed, to all appearance inanimate, the wife came to bid him a last farewell, and placed a mirror to his lips, to see whether life was yet extinct. Her kindly ministrations roused the dominant asceticism in his expiring soul, and he gathered strength enough to exclaim, “Woman, depart! Take away the straw, for there is yet fire here”—which supreme effort of self-immolation procured him on the instant a beatific vision of St. Peter and St. Paul, during which he lapsed ecstatically into eternity.³

In considering so thoroughly artificial a system of morality, it is perhaps scarcely worth while to inquire into the value of a virtue which could only be preserved by shunning temptation with so scrupulous a care.

¹ Udalric. Bamberg. Cod. Lib. II. Epist. 10.

² Gregor. I. Lib. I. Epist. 52; Lib. IX. Epist. 60.

³ Gregor. I. Dial. Lib. IV. cap. XI.

IX.

THE CARLOVINGIANS.

EVEN the energy and authority of Gregory the Great were powerless to restore order in the chaos of an utterly demoralized society. In Spain, the languishing empire of the Wisigoths was fast sinking under the imbecility which invited the easy conquest of the Saracens. In France, Brunhilda and Fredegonda were inflaming the fierce contentions which eventually destroyed the Merovingian dynasty, and which abandoned the kingdom at once to the vices of civilization and the savage atrocities of barbarism.¹ In Italy, the Lombards, more detested than any of their predecessors, by their ceaseless ravages made the Ostrogothic rule regretted, and gleaned with their swords such scanty remnants of plunder as had escaped the hordes which had successively swept from the gloomy forests of the North across the rich valleys and fertile plains of the mistress of the world. Anarchy and confusion everywhere scarce offered a field for the exercise of the humbler virtues, nor could the church expect to escape the corruption which infected every class from which she could draw her recruits. Still, amid the crowd of turbulent and worldly ecclesiastics, whose only aim was the gratification of the senses or the success of criminal ambition, some holy men were to be found who sought the mountain and forest as a refuge from the ceaseless and all-pervading disorder around them. St. Gall and St. Columba, Willibrod and Boniface, were types of these. Devoted to the severest asceticism, burying

¹ In 649 we find Amandus, Bishop of Maestricht, resigning his office on account of the impossibility of enforcing the canons among his priests and deacons. Martin I. endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, and urged his proceeding with the utmost rigor against all transgressors. (Hartzeim Concil. German. I. 28.)

themselves in the wilderness and subsisting on such simple fare as the labor of their hands could wring from a savage land, the selfishness of the anchorite did not extinguish in them the larger aims of the Christian, and by their civilizing labors among the heathen they proved themselves worthy disciples of the Apostles.

Thicker grew the darkness as Tarik drove the Gothic fugitives before him on the plains of Xeres, and as the house of Pepin d'Heristel gradually supplanted the long-haired descendants of Clovis. The Austrasian Mayors of the Palace had scanty reverence for mitre and crozier, and it is a proof how little hold the clergy had earned upon the respect and affection of the people, when the usurpers in that long revolution did not find it necessary to conciliate their support. In fact, the policy of those shrewd and able men was rather to oppress the church and to parcel out its wealth and dignities among their warriors, who made no pretence of piety nor deigned to undertake the mockery of religious duties. Rome could interpose no resistance to these abuses, for, involved alternately in strife with the Lombards and the Iconoclastic Emperors, the Popes implored the aid of the oppressor himself, and were in no position to protest against the aggressions which he might commit at home.

In Italy, the condition of discipline may be inferred from the fact that, in 721, Gregory II. considered it necessary to call a synod for the special purpose of condemning incestuous unions and the marriages of nuns, which he declared were openly practised,¹ and the canons then promulgated received so little attention that they had to be repeated by another synod in 732.² In France, of course, it was even worse. For eighty years scarce a council was held; no attempts were made to renew or enforce the rules of discipline, and the observances of religion were at length well nigh forgotten. In 726, Boniface even felt scruples as to associating in ordinary intercourse with men so licentious and depraved as the

¹ Hinc namque est quod ingemiscens dico, quia populi Christiani aliquos per provinciam Italiam commorantes, audio temere contra Catholicam fidem et patrum statuta patrare, ita ut Deo

sacratas fœminas ducere præsumant mulieres, et propinquas in conjugio sociant.—Concil. Roman. ann. 721.

² Chron. Gradensis Supplement.

Frankish bishops and priests, and he applied to Gregory II. for the solution of his doubts. Gregory, in reply, ordered him to employ argument in endeavoring to convince them of their errors, and by no means to withdraw himself from their society,¹ a politic toleration of vice contrasting strangely with his fierce defiance of the iconoclastic heresy of Leo the Isaurian, when he risked the papacy itself in his eagerness to preserve his beloved images.

When, however, the new dynasty began to assume a permanent position, it sought to strengthen itself by the influence of the church. Like the modern Charlemagne, it saw in a restoration of religion a means of assuring its stability by linking its fortunes with those of the hierarchy. A radical in opposition becomes of necessity a conservative in power; and the arts which had served to supplant the hereditary occupants of the throne were no longer advisable after success had indicated a new line of policy. As Clovis embraced Christianity in order to consolidate his conquests into an empire, so Carloman and Pepin-le-Bref sought the sanction of religion to consecrate their power to their descendants, and the Carlovingian system thenceforth became that of law and order, organizing a firm and settled government out of the anarchical chaos of social elements.

It was the pious Carloman who first saw clearly how necessary was the aid of the church in any attempt to introduce civilization and subordination among his turbulent subjects. Immediately on his accession, he called upon St. Boniface to assist him in the work, and the Apostle of Germany undertook the arduous task. How arduous it was may be conceived from his description of the utterly demoralized condition of the clergy, when he appealed to Pope Zachary for advice and authority to assist in eradicating the frightful promiscuous licentiousness which was displayed with careless cynicism throughout all grades of the ecclesiastical body.²

¹ Gregor. PP. II. Epist. 14 cap. 12.

² Modo autem maxima ex parte episcopales sedes traditæ sunt laicis cupidis ad possidendum, vel adulteratis clericis, scortatoribus et publi-

canis sæculariter ad perfruendum . . . Si invenero inter illos diaconos quos nominant, qui a pueritia sua semper in stupris, semper in adulteriis et in omnibus semper spurcitiis vitam du-

The details are too disgusting for translation, but the statement can readily be believed when we see what manner of men filled the controlling positions in the hierarchy.

Charles Martel had driven out St. Rigobert, Archbishop of Rheims, and had bestowed that primatial see on one of his warriors named Milo, who soon succeeded in likewise obtaining possession of the equally important archiepiscopate of Trèves.¹ He is described as being a clerk in tonsure, but in every other respect an irreligious laic, yet Boniface, with all the aid of his royal patrons, was unable to oust him from his inappropriate dignities, and in 752, ten years after the commencement of his reforms, we find Pope Zachary, in response to an appeal for advice, counselling him to leave Milo and other similar wolves in sheep's clothing to the divine vengeance.² These men openly defied all attempts to remove them. One, who is described as "pugnator et fornicator," gave up, it is true, the spiritualities of his see, but held to the temporalities with a gripe that nothing could loosen; another utterly disregarded the excommunications launched at his head, and Zachary and Boniface at last were fain to abandon him to his evil courses.³ Somewhat more success, indeed, he had with Servilio, son and successor to Geroldus, Bishop of Mainz.

centes, sub tali testimonio venerunt ad diaconatum, et modo in diaconatu concubinas quatuor vel quinque vel plures noctu in lecto habentes, evangelium tamen legere et diaconos se nominare non erubescunt, nec metunt: et sic in talibus incestis ad ordinem presbyteratus venientes, in iisdem peccatis perdurantes, et peccata peccatis adjicientes, presbyteratus officio fungentes, dicunt se pro populo posse intercedere, et sacras oblationes offerre. Novissime, quod pejus est, sub talibus testimoniis per gradus singulos ascendentes, ordinantur et nominantur episcopi. Si usquam tales invenero inter illos, rogo ut habeam præceptum et conscriptum auctoritatis vestræ, quid de talibus diffiniatis, et per responsum Apostolicum convincantur et arguantur peccatores.—Bonifacii Epist. 132.

¹ Milo quidam, tonsura clericus, moribus, habitu, et actu irreligiosus lai-

cus, episcopia Remorum ac Trevorum usurpans insimul, per multos annos pessumdederit. — Hinemar. Epist. xxx. c. 20.—Sola tonsura clerico, qui secum processerat ad bellum.—Flodoard. Hist. Remens. Lib. II. c. 12.—It was for this especially, among his numerous similar misdeeds, that Charles Martel was condemned to eternal torture. St. Eucherius in a vision saw him plunged into the depths of Hell, and on consulting St. Boniface and Fulrad, Abbot of St. Denis, it was resolved to open Charles' tomb. The only tenant of the sepulchre was found to be a serpent, and the walls were blackened as though by fire, thus proving the truth of the revelation and holding out an awful warning to similar wrong doers for the future. (Flodoard. loc. cit.)

² Bonifacii Epist. 142.

³ Ibid.

The latter, accompanying Carloman in an expedition against the Saxons, was killed in battle. Bishop Servilio, in another foray, recognized his father's slayer, invited him to a friendly interview, and treacherously stabbed him, exclaiming, in the rude poetry of the chronicler "Accipe jam ferrum quo patrem vindico carum." This act of filial piety was not looked upon as unclerical, until Boniface took it up; Servilio was finally forced to abandon the see of Mainz, and it was given to Boniface himself.¹ When such were the prelates, it is not to be supposed that rules of abstinence and asceticism received much attention from their subordinates. Boniface admits, in an epistle to King Ecgberht, that, in consequence of the universal licentiousness, he was compelled to restore the guilty to their functions after penitence, as the canonical punishment of dismissal would leave none to perform the sacred offices.²

How much of this was indiscriminate concubinage, and how much was merely intercourse with legitimate wives, we have no means of ascertaining. The latter Boniface succeeded in suppressing, for the church could control her sacraments.³ The former was beyond his power.

Armed with full authority from Pope Zachary, Carloman and Boniface commenced the labor of reducing to order this chaos of passion and license. Under their auspices a synod was held April 23, 742, in which all unchaste priests and deacons were declared incapable of holding benefices, were degraded and forced to do penance. Bishops were required to have a witness to testify to the purity of their lives and doctrines, before they could perform their episcopal functions. For all future lapses from virtue, priests were to be severely whipped and imprisoned for two years on bread and water, with prolongation of the punishment at the discretion of their bishops. Other ecclesiastics, monks and nuns, were to be whipped thrice and similarly imprisoned for one year, besides

¹ Othlon. Vit. S. Bonifac. Lib. 1. c. 44.

² Bonifacii Epist. 85.

³ Et tam laicorum injusta concubi-

narum copula partim exhortante sancto viro separata est, quam etiam clericorum nefanda cum uxoribus conjunctio sejuncta ac separata.—Willibald. Vit. S. Bonifac. c. 9.

the stigma of having the head shaved. All monasteries, moreover, were to adopt and follow rigidly the rule of St. Benedict.¹

The stringency of these measures shows not only the extent of the evil requiring such means of cure, but the fixed determination of the authorities to effect their purpose. The clergy, however, did not submit without resistance. It is probable that they stirred up the people, and that signs of general disapprobation were manifested at a rigor so extreme in punishing faults which for more than two generations had passed wholly unnoticed, for during the same year Zachary addressed an epistle to the Franks with the object of enlisting them in the cause. The ill-success of their arms against the Pagans he attributes to the vices of their clergy, and he promises them that if they show themselves obedient to Boniface, and if they can enjoy the prayers of pure and holy priests, they shall in future have an easy triumph over their heathen foes.² Yet many adulterous priests and bishops, noted for the infamy of their lives, pretended that they had received from Rome itself dispensations to continue in their ministry—an allegation which Zachary of course repelled with indignation.³

Carloman, however, pursued his self-imposed task without flinching. On March 1st, 743, he held another synod at Leptines, where the clergy promised to observe the ancient canons, and to restore the discipline of the church. The statutes enacted the previous year were again declared to be in full vigor for future offences, while for previous ones penitence and degradation were once more decreed.⁴

These regulations affected only Austrasia, the German portion of the Frankish empire, ruled by Carloman. His brother, Pepin-le-Bref, who governed Neustria, or France, was

¹ Capit. Caroloman. ann. 742 c. 1, 3, 6.

² Et dum hæc ita sint, et tales in vobis fuerint sacerdotes, quomodo victores contra vestros inimicos esse poteritis? Nam si mundos et castos ab omni fornicatione et homicidio liberos habueritis sacerdotes, ut sacri præcipiunt canones, et nostra vice prædicat

præfatus Bonifacius, frater noster, et ei in omnibus obedientes extiteritis, nulla gens ante conspectum vestrum stabit, sed corruent ante faciem vestram omnes paganæ gentes, et eritis victores.—Bonifacii Epist. 137.

³ Ibid. Epist. 132, 142.

⁴ Capit. Caroloman. ann. 743 c. 1.

less pious, and had not apparently as yet recognized the policy of reforming out of their possessions the warrior vassals whom his father had gratified with ecclesiastical benefices. At length, however, he was induced to lend his aid, and in 744 he assembled a synod at Soissons for the purpose. So completely had the discipline of the church been neglected and forgotten, that Pepin was obliged to appeal to Pope Zachary for an authoritative declaration as to the grades in which marriage was prohibited.¹ Yet his measures were but lukewarm, for he contented himself with simply forbidding unchastity in priests, the marriage of nuns, and the residence of stranger women with clerks, no special punishment being threatened, beyond a general allusion to existing laws.²

Thus assailed by both the supreme ecclesiastical and temporal authorities, the clergy still were stubborn. Some defended themselves as being legitimately entitled to have a concubine—or rather, we may presume, a wife. Among these we find a certain Bishop Clement described as a pestilent heresiarch, with followers who maintained that his two children, born during his prelacy, did not unfit him for his episcopal functions; and a synod held in Rome, October 31st, 745, was required for his condemnation, the local authorities apparently proving powerless. Even this was not sufficient, for in January, 747, we find Zachary directing Boniface to bring him before a local council, and if he still proved contumacious, to refer the matter again to Rome.³ Others, again, unwilling to forego their secular mode of existence, or to abandon the livelihood afforded by the church, were numerous and hardy enough to ask Pepin and Carloman to set apart for them churches and monasteries in which they could live as they were accustomed to do. So nearly did they succeed in this attempt, that Boniface found it necessary to appeal to Zachary to prevent so flagrant an infraction of the canons, and Zachary wrote to the princes with instructions as to the mode of answering the petition.⁴ Others, still more audacious, assailed

¹ Zachar. PP. Epist. 8, c. 11, 18.

² Pippini Capit. ann. 744 c. 4, 8, 9.

³ Bonifac. Epist. 135, 139 (Zachar. PP. Epist. 9).

⁴ Othlon. Vit. S. Bonif. Lib. II. c. 11.

Boniface in every way, endeavored to weary him out, and even, rightly regarding him as the cause of their persecution and tribulations, made attempts upon his life.¹

That he should have escaped, indeed, is surprising, when the character of the age is considered, and the nature of the evils inflicted on those who must have regarded the reform as a wanton outrage on their rights. As late as 748, Boniface describes the false bishops and priests, sacrilegious and wandering hypocrites and adulterers, as much more numerous than those who as yet had been forced to compliance with the rules. Driven from the churches, but supported by the sympathizing people, they performed their ministry among the fields and in the cabins of the peasants, who concealed them from the ecclesiastical authorities.² This is not a description of mere sensual worldlings, and it is probable that by this time persecution had ranged the evil-disposed on the winning side. Those who thus exercised their ministry in secret and in wretchedness, retaining the veneration of the people, were therefore men who believed themselves honorably and legitimately married, and who were incapable of sacrificing wife and children for worldly advantage or in blind obedience to a rule which to them was novel, unnatural, and indefensible.

Boniface, however, escaped from the vengeful efforts of those who suffered from his zeal, to fall, in 755, under the sword of the equally ungrateful Frisians. It is probable that up to the time of his death he was occupied with the reformation of the clergy in conjunction with his missionary labors, for in 752 we still find him engaged in the hopeless endeavor to eject the unclerical prelates, who even yet held

¹ Bonifacii Epist. 135.—S. Ludgeri Vit. S. Bonifacii.

² Eos autem quos reperisse affata est fraternitas tua pseudosacerdotes multo majores numeri quam Catholicos, erroneos simulatores sub nomine episcoporum vel presbyterorum, qui nunquam ab episcopis Catholicis fuerunt ordinati, illudentes populo et ministeria ecclesiæ confundentes et conturbantes, aut falsos, gyrovagos,

adulteros, sacrilegos, hypocritas et multos servos tonsuratos. . . Qui sine episcopo, proprio arbitrio viventes, populares defensores habentes, contra episcopos, ut sceleratos mores eorum non confringant, seorsum populum consentaneum congregant, et illud erroneum ministerium, non in ecclesia Catholica, sed per agrestia loca, per cellas rusticorum, ubi eorum imperita stultitia celari episcopos possit, perpetrant, &c."—Bonifacii Epist. 140.

over from the iron age of Charles Martel. His disappearance from the scene, however, made but little change in the movement which had owed so much to his zeal.

In 747 Carloman's pious aspirations had led him from a throne to a cloister, and the monastery of Monte Cassino welcomed its most illustrious inmate. Pepin received the whole vast kingdom, and his ambitious designs drew him daily closer to the church, the importance of whose support he commenced to appreciate. His policy, in consolidating the power of his house and in founding a new dynasty, led him necessarily to reorganize the anarchical elements of society. As an acknowledged monarch, a regularly constituted hierarchy and recognized subordination to the laws, both civil and ecclesiastical, were requisite to the success of his government and to the establishment of his race. Accordingly, we find him carrying out systematically the work commenced by Carloman and Boniface, to which at first his support had been rather negative than positive.

Six weeks after the martyrdom of Boniface, Pepin held a synod in his royal palace of Verneuil, in which this tendency is very apparent. Full power was given to the bishops in their respective dioceses to enforce the canons of the church on the clergy, the monks, and the laity. The monasteries were especially intrusted to the episcopal care, and means were provided for reducing the refractory to submission. The rule of Benedict was proclaimed as in force in all conventual establishments, and cloistered residence was strictly enjoined. All ecclesiastics were ordered to pay implicit obedience to their bishops, and this was secured by the power of excommunication, which was no longer, as in earlier ages, the simple suspension from religious privileges, but was a ban which deprived the offender of all association with his fellows, and exposed him, if contumacious, to exile by the secular power. By the appointment of metropolitans, a tribunal of higher resort was instituted, while two synods to be held each year gave the opportunity both of legislation and of final judgment. Submission to their decisions was insured

by threatening stripes to all who should appeal from them to the royal court.¹

Such are the main features, as far as they relate to our subject, of this Capitulary, which so strikingly reveals the organizing system of the Carlovingian polity. Carried out by the rare intelligence and vigor of Charlemagne, it gave a precocious development of civilization to Europe, transitory because in advance of the age, and because it was based on the intellectual force of the ruler, and not on the virtue and cultivation of a people as yet too barbarous to appreciate it.

For a century we hear nothing more of sacerdotal marriage—and yet it may be doubted whether clerical morality had really been improved by the well-meant reforms of Boniface. These were followed up by Charlemagne with all of his resistless energy, and the importance which he attached to the subject is shown by an epistle of Adrian I. denying certain assertions made to the Frankish sovereign, inculpating the purity of the Roman clergy. Adrian, in defending his flock, assumes that the object of the slanders can only have been to produce a quarrel between himself and Charlemagne, who must evidently have made strong representations on the subject to the Pontiff.² Under such pressure perhaps there was something less of shameless licentiousness; the episcopal chairs were no longer defiled by the cynical lubricity of unworthy prelates; but in the mass of the clergy the passions, deprived of all legitimate gratification, could not be restrained

¹ Capit. Pippini ann. 755.

In these efforts Pepin doubtless received efficient aid from his cousin, St. Chrodegang, Bishop of Metz, whose lofty rank and eminent piety gave him wide influence. Chrodegang virtually founded the order of Canons, by the Rule for their government which he promulgated in 762, and which became generally accepted. In this he strictly forbids all intercourse with women, and punishes transgressions with stripes, incarceration, and deposition. (Reg. S. Chrodeg. cap. xxix. lvi. lxviii. lxx.) This device of Chrodegang, by converting the cathedral

clergy into monks bound to implicit obedience towards their superiors, gave no little increase of power to the bishops, and enabled them to extend their authority and influence. It is no wonder, therefore, that the institution spread rapidly and was adopted in most of the dioceses.

² Cod. Carolini Epist. lxiv. (Patrolog. T. 98 p. 319). Yet even in 772 we find that a council in Bavaria found it necessary to prohibit the marriage of nuns.—Concil. Dingolwing. can. 2. (Hartzheim Concil. German. I. 129.)

in a race so little accustomed to self-control, and unchastity remained a corroding ulcer which Charlemagne and Louis-le-Débonnaire vainly endeavored to eradicate.

It would be an unprofitable task to recapitulate the constantly repeated legislation prohibiting the residence of women with the clergy and repressing the disorders and irregularities of the monastic establishments. It would be but a reiteration of the story already related in previous centuries, and its only importance would be in showing by the frequency of the edicts how utterly ineffectual they were. When Louis-le-Débonnaire, in 826, decreed that the seduction of a nun was to be punished by the death of both the partners in guilt; that the property of both was to be confiscated to the church, and that the count in whose district the crime occurred, if he neglected its prosecution, was to be degraded, deprived of his office, undergo public penance, and pay his full wehr-gild to the fisc,¹ the frightful severity of the enactment is the measure of the impossibility of effecting its purpose, and of the inefficiency of the reformation so elaborately prepared and so energetically promulgated by Louis in 817.²

But perhaps the most convincing evidence of the debased morality of the clergy, and of the low standard which even the most zealous prelates were forced to adopt, is to be found in a curious fabrication by the authors of the False Decretals. The collection of decretals which they put forth in the names of the early Popes embodied their conception of a perfect church establishment, as adapted to the necessities and aspirations of the ninth century. While straining every point to throw off all subjection to the temporal power, and to obtain for the hierarchy full and absolute control over all ecclesiastical matters and persons, they seem to have felt it necessary to relax in an important point the rigor of the canons respecting sacerdotal purity. Gregory the Great had proclaimed in the clearest and most definite manner the rule that a single lapse from virtue condemned the sinner to irrevocable degra-

¹ Ludov. Pii Capit. Ingelenheim. c. 5.

² Capit. Aquisgran. ann. 817. Cf. Miræi Cod. Donat. Piar. c. 13.—This

Capitulary regulating monastic life was generally adopted as a supplement to the rule of Benedict. (Leo. Ostiens. Chron. Cassinens. Lib. 1. c. 16.)

dation, and rendered him forever unfit for the ministry of the altar.¹ Yet "Isidor Mercator" added to a genuine epistle of Gregory a long passage elaborately arguing the necessity of forgiveness for those who expiate by repentance the sin of impurity, "of which, among many, so few are guiltless."² The direct testimony is notable, but not less so is the indirect evidence of the prevalent laxity which could induce such a bid for popularity on the part of high churchmen like those concerned in the Isidorian forgeries.

Evidence, also, is not wanting, that the denial of the appropriate and healthful human affections led to the results which might be expected of fearful and unnatural crimes. That the inmates of monasteries, debarred from female society, occasionally abandoned themselves to the worst excesses, or, breaking through all restraint, indulged in less reprehensible but more open scandals, is proclaimed by Charlemagne, who threatened to vindicate the outrage upon religion with the severest punishment.³ Nor were the female convents more successfully regulated, for the council of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 836, states that in many places they were rather brothels than houses of God; and it shows how close a supervision over the spouses of Christ was thought requi-

¹ See ante, p. 127. Cf. Pseudo-Hormisdæ Epist. Encyc. (Migne's Patrol. T. LXIII. p. 527.)

² Quid enim est gravius carnale delictum admittere sine quo in multis pauci inveniuntur, an Dei filium timendo negare? in quo uno ipsum beatum Petrum apostolorum principem, ad cuius nunc corpus indigni sedemus, lapsum esse cognoscimus, sed post negationem pœnitentia secuta, et post pœnitentiam misericordia data. — Pseudo-Gregor. Epist. ad Secundinum.

It is not easy to explain the manufacture of two canons, one prohibiting bishops from celebrating the marriage of nuns under seventy years of age; the other forbidding priests from marrying, under a penalty of ten years' suspension, with a threat of perpetual deprivation for contumacy. (Constit. Pseudo-Sylvestri cap. x. xix.) The denial of marriage was too gene-

rally recognized to render forgery requisite to strengthen it, and I can only suggest, from the peculiarity of the rules enunciated, that these canons may have been genuine ones, borrowed from some forgotten council of the sixth or seventh century.

³ Nam pervenit ad aures nostras opinio perniciosissima, in fornicatione et abominatione et immunditia multos jam in monasteriis esse deprehensos . . . ut inde maximam spem salutis omnibus Christianis oriri crederent, id est de vita et castitate monachorum, in tantum ut aliquis ex monachis sodomitas esse auditum. . . . certe amplius quid tale ad aures nostras pervenerit, non solum in eos, sed etiam et in ceteros qui talia consentiant, talem ultionem facimus ut nullus Christianus qui hoc audierit nullatenus tale quid perpetrare amplius præsumperit. — Capit. Carol. Mag. l. ann. 802 c. 17.

site when it proceeds to direct that nunneries shall be so built as to have no dark corners in which scandals may be perpetrated out of view.¹ The effect of these efforts may be estimated from a remark in a collection of laws which bears the name of Erchenbald, Chancellor of Charlemagne, but which is rather attributable to the close of the ninth century, that these disorders commonly resulted in a worse crime—infanticide.² As regards the secular clergy, even darker horrors are asserted by Theodulf, Bishop of Orleans, and other prelates, who forbade to their clergy the residence of mother, aunt, and sister, in consequence of the crimes so frequently perpetrated with them at the instigation of the devil;³ and the truth of this hideous fact is unfortunately confirmed by the declarations of councils held at various periods.⁴

¹ De monasteriis puellarum quæ in quibusdam locis lupanaria potius videntur esse quam monasteria.—Concil. Aquisgran. ann. 836, de vit. et doc. infer. ordin. can. xii., xiv.

² Et notandum quod in illo scelere aliud immane flagitium subterlatet, id est homicidium. Quia dum illæ meretrices, sive monasteriales sive sæculares, male conceptas soboles in peccatis genuerunt, sæpe maxima ex parte occidunt.—Capitul. add. iv. cap. clx. (Baluze, I. 1227).

³ Quia, instigante diabolo, etiam in illis scelus frequenter perpetratum invenitur, aut etiam in pedisequis earum. Nec igitur matrem, neque amitam, neque sororem permittimus ultra habitare in domo una cum sacerdote.—Theodulf. Aurelian. Capit. Secund. (Baluz. et Mansi II. 99.)

He had previously (Epist. c. 12) promulgated the prohibition, assigning for it the more decent reason, in imitation of St. Augustine, of the danger arising from female attendants. In this he was imitated, about 850, by Rodolf of Bourges (Capit. Rodulf. Bituricens. c. 16), and about 871 by Walter of Orleans (Capit. Walteri Aurelian. c. 3).

In 889, however, Riculfus of Soissons declares the lamentable truth without reserve: "Nos vero etiam a matribus, amitis, sororibus vel pro-

pinquis cavendum dicimus, ne forte illud eveniat quod in sancta scriptura legitur de Thamar sorore Absalon . . . de Loth etiam . . . Quod si aliquis vestrum matrem, sororem vel amitam ad convescendum vocaverit, expleto convivio ad domos suas vel ad hospitia a domo presbyteri remota, cum luce diei eas faciat remeare; periculosum quippe est ut vobiscum habitent."—Riculfus Suess. Const. c. 14.

⁴ Thus the council of Mainz in 888—"Quod multum dolendum est, sæpe audivimus per illam concessionem plurima scelera esse commissa, ita ut quidam sacerdotum, cum propriis sororibus concumbentes, filios ex eis generassent, et idcirco constituit hæc sancta synodus, ut nullus presbyter ullam fœminam secum in domo propria permittat, quatenus occasio malæ suspicionis vel facti iniqui penitus auferatur" (Concil. Mogunt. ann. 888, c. 10). In the same year the third canon of the council of Metz repeats the prohibition; while in 895 the council of Nantes declares—"Sed neque illas quas canones concedunt; quia instigante diabolo, etiam in illis scelus frequenter perpetratum reperitur, aut etiam in pedisequis illarum, scilicet matrem, amitam, sororem."—Concil. Namnetens. ann. 895, c. 3.

It is true that some authorities,

we can readily believe was generally the case, these formidable difficulties could not be overcome, and the necessary number of witnesses were not ready to sacrifice themselves, then the accused could purge himself of the sins imputed to him by his own oath, supported by one, three, or six compurgators of his own order; and Hincmar himself bears testimony to the associations which were formed among the clergy to swear each other through all troubles.¹

Under these regulations, Hincmar orders an annual investigation to be made throughout his province, but the results would appear to have been as unsatisfactory as might have been expected. In 874, at the Synod of Rheims, he complains that his orders have been neglected and despised, and he warns his clergy that proof of actual criminality will not be required, but that undue familiarity with women, if persisted in, will be sufficient for condemnation when properly proved.²

In the presence of facilities for escape such as were afforded by the practice of ecclesiastical law as constructed by the decretalists, and as expounded by Hincmar himself, the threats in which he indulged could carry but little terror. We need not wonder, therefore, if we meet with but slender indications of priestly marriage during all this disorder, for there was evidently little danger of punishment for the unchaste priest who exercised ordinary discretion in his amours, while the penalties impending over those who should openly brave the canonical rules were heavy, and could hardly be avoided by

¹ Hincmari Capit. Presbyteris data. cap. XXI.-XXV.—“Proinde de concubitu presbyterorum cum fœminis per parochianos vel vicinos cujuscumque presbyteri inquirere non laborabimus . . . Non igitur de hoc inverecunde quæremus.”

Hincmar repeats his instructions, with some amplifications, in another document, in which he declares them to be the received traditional rules—“a majoribus nostris accepimus” (De Presbyt. criminos. c. XI.-XVIII.). That they were generally practised is shown in their almost literal repetition by the council of Trosley in 909—with

the exception that in some cases fourteen or twenty-one witnesses were required for conviction. (Concil. Troslei. c. ix.)

No doubt the rule was already in force, enunciated by Gratian, rejecting the testimony of the woman with whom the accused had been guilty, although her confession was good as against herself—“Quia ergo ista de se confitetur super alienum crimen ei credi non oportet; sed contra eam sua confessio interpretanda est.”—Caus. xv. q. 3, Comment. in can. 5.)

² Capit. Synod. Remens. ann. 874, c. 3.

any one who should dare to unite himself publicly to a woman in marriage. Every consideration of worldly prudence and passion therefore induced the priest to pursue a course of illicit licentiousness—and yet, as the century wore on, traces of entire neglect or utter contempt of the canons began to manifest themselves. How little the rule really was respected by the ecclesiastical authorities, when anything was to be gained by its suppression, is shown in the decision made by Nicholas I., the highest of high churchmen, when encouraging the Bulgarians to abandon the Greek church, although the separation between Rome and Constantinople was not, as yet, formal and complete. To their inquiry whether married priests should be ejected, he replied that though such ministers were objectionable, yet the mercy of God was to be imitated, who causes his sun to shine on good and evil alike, and as Christ did not dismiss Judas, so they were not to be dismissed. Besides, laymen were not to judge priests for any crime, nor to make any investigation into their lives, such inquiries being reserved for bishops.¹ As no bishops had yet been appointed by Rome, the answer was a skilfully tacit permission of priestly marriage, while avoiding an open avowal.

It need awaken no surprise if those who united recklessness and power should openly trample on the canons thus feebly supported. A somewhat prominent personage of the period was Hubert, brother of Teutberga, Queen of Lotharingia, and his turbulent conduct was a favorite theme for animadversion by the quiet monastic chroniclers. That he was an abbot is perhaps no proof of his clerical profession, but when we find his wife and children alluded to as a proof of his abandoned character, it shows that he was bound by vows or ordained within the prohibited grades, and that he publicly violated the rules and defied their enforcement.²

The earliest absolute evidence that has reached us, however, of marriage committed by a member of the great body

¹ Nicholai I. Respons. ad Consult. Bulgar. c. 70.

² Efficitur ad hæc uxorius, liberos

procreans, et ad suæ damnationis cumulum nil sibi clericale præter tonsuram præferens.—Folcuin. de Gest. Abbat. Laubiens. c. 12.

of the plebeian clergy, subsequent to the reforms of Boniface, occurs about the year 893. Angelric priest of Vasnau appealed to the synod of Chalons, stating that he had been publicly joined in wedlock to a woman named Grimma. Such an attempt by a priest, the consent of the woman and her relatives, and the performance of the ceremony by another priest all show the prevailing laxity and ignorance, yet still there were found some faithful and pious souls to object to the transaction, and Angelric was not allowed to enjoy undisturbed the fruits of his sin. Yet even the synod was perplexed, and unable to decide what ought to be done. It therefore only temporarily suspended Angelric from communion, while Mancio, his bishop, applied for advice to Fulk of Rheims, metropolitan of the province, and the ignorance and good faith of all parties are manifested by the fact that Angelric himself was sent to Fulk as the bearer of the letter of inquiry.¹

With the ninth century the power, the cultivation, and the civilization of the Carlovingians may be considered virtually to disappear, though for nearly a hundred years longer a spectral crown encircled the brows of the ill-starred descendants of Pepin. Centralization, rendered impossible in temporal affairs by feudalism, was transferred to the church, which, thenceforth, more than ever independent of secular control, became wholly responsible for its own shortcomings; and the records of the period make only too plainly manifest how utterly the power, so strenuously contended for, failed to overcome the ignorance and the barbarism of the age.

¹ Mantion. Episc. Catalaun. Epist. ad Fulc. Remens. (Migne's Patrol. T. 131, p. 23).

X.

THE TENTH CENTURY.

THE tenth century, well characterized by Cave as the "Sæculum Obscurum," is perhaps the most repulsive in Christian annals. The last vestiges of Roman culture have disappeared, while the dawn of modern civilization is as yet far off. Society, in a state of transition, is painfully and vainly seeking some form of security and stability. The marauding wars of petty neighboring chiefs become the normal condition, only interrupted when two or three unite to carry destruction to some more powerful rival. Though the settlement of Normandy relieved Continental Europe to a great extent from the terror of the Dane, yet the still more dreaded Hun took his place and ravaged the nations from the Danube to the Atlantic, while England bore the undivided fury of the Vikings, and the Saracen left little to glean upon the shores of the Mediterranean.

When brutal ignorance and savage ferocity were the distinguishing characteristics of the age, the church could scarce expect to escape from the general debasement. It is rather a matter of grateful surprise that religion itself was not overwhelmed in the general chaos which engulfed almost all the previously existing institutions. When the crown of St. Peter became the sport of barbarous nobles, or of a still more barbarous populace, we may grieve, but we cannot affect astonishment at the unconcealed dissoluteness of Sergius III., whose bastard, twenty years later, was placed in the pontifical chair by the influence of that embodiment of all possible vices, his mother Marozia.¹ The last extreme of depravity

¹ Quo mortuo, ipsius Marotiae filium | constituunt. — Liutprand. Antapod.
Johannem nomine, quem ex Sergio | Lib. III. c. 43.
papa meretrix ipsa genuerat, papam

would seem attained by John XII., but as his deposition in 963 by Otho the Great loosened the tongues of his accusers, it is possible that he was no worse than some of his predecessors. As for him, no extreme of wickedness was beyond his capacity; the sacred palace of the Lateran was turned into a harem; incest gave a flavor to crime when simple profligacy palled upon his exhausted senses, and the honest citizens of Rome complained that the female pilgrims who formerly crowded the holy fanes were deterred from coming through fear of his promiscuous and unbridled lust.¹

With such corruption at the head of the church, it is lamentably ludicrous to see the popes inculcating lessons of purity, and urging the maintenance of canons which they set the example of disregarding so utterly. The clergy were now beginning to arrogate to themselves the privilege of matrimony, and marriage, so powerful a corrective of indiscriminate vice, was regarded with peculiar detestation by the ecclesiastical authorities, and awoke a far more energetic opposition than the more dangerous and corrupting forms of illicit indulgence. The pastor who intrigued in secret with his penitents and parishioners was scattering the seeds of death in place of the bread of life, and was abusing his holy trust to destroy the souls confided to his charge, but this worked no damage to the temporal interests of the church at large. The priest who, in honest ignorance of the canons, took to himself a wife, and endeavored faithfully to perform the duties of his humble sphere, could scarcely avoid seeking

¹ In the council which condemned John, the accusers stated—"De adulterio dixerunt quod oculis non viderent, sed certissime scirent, viduam Rainerii et Stephanam patris concubinam, et Annam viduam cum nepte sua abusum esse, et sanctum palatium lupanar et prostibulum fecisse" (Liutprand. Hist. Otton. c. 10). So the Romans in their address to Otho—"Testis est Stephana ejus amita, quæ in effusione quod ex eo conceperat recens hominem exivit. Quid si cuncta taceant, Lateranense palatium, sanctorum quondam hospitium, nunc prostibulum meretricum, non silebit,

amitam conjugem, Stephaniam alterius concubinam sororem. Testis omnium gentium præter Romanarum absentia mulierum, quæ sanctorum apostolorum limina orandi gratia timent visere, cum nonnullas ante dies paucos hunc audierint conjugatas, viduas, virgines vi oppressisse." (Ibid. c. 4.)

Equally suggestive, though more reticent, is the character given of him by another contemporary—"Diligebat collectio feminarum. . . . Tanta denique libidine sui corporis exarsit, quanta nunc possumus enarrare."—Chron. Benedict. S. Andreae Monach. c. 35.

the comfort and worldly welfare of his offspring, and this exposed the common property of all to dilapidation and embezzlement. Disinterested virtue perhaps would not be long in making a selection between the comparative evils, but disinterested virtue was not a distinguishing characteristic of the age.

Yet a motive of even greater importance than this rendered matrimony more objectionable than concubinage or licentiousness. By the overruling tendency of the age, all possessions previously held by laymen on precarious tenure were rapidly becoming hereditary. As the royal power slipped from hands unable to retain it, offices, dignities, and lands became the property of the holders, and were transmitted from father to son. Had marriage been openly permitted to ecclesiastics, their functions and benefices would undoubtedly have followed the example. An hereditary caste would have been established, who would have held their churches and lands of right; independent of the central authority, all unity would have been destroyed, and the collective power of the church would have disappeared. Having nothing to gain from obedience, control would have become impossible, and, laymen in all but name, the ecclesiastics would have had no incentive to perform their functions, except what little influence, under such circumstances, might have been retained over the people by maintaining the sacred character thus rendered a mockery.

In an age when everything was unsettled, yet with tendencies so strongly marked, it thus became a matter of vital importance to the church to prevent anything like hereditary occupation of benefices or private appropriation of property, and against these abuses its strongest efforts were directed. The struggle lasted for centuries, and it is indeed most fortunate for our civilization that sacerdotalism triumphed, even at the expense of what at the moment may appear of greater importance. I cannot here pause to trace the progress of the struggle in its long and various vicissitudes. It will be found constantly reappearing in the course of the following pages, and for the present it will suffice to group together a

few evidences to show how rapidly the hereditary tendency developed itself in the period now under consideration.

The narrowness of the escape from ecclesiastical feudalization is well illustrated by an incident at the council of Tours, in 925, where two priests, *father and son*, Ranald and Raymond, appeared as complainants, claiming certain tithes detained from them by another priest. They gained the suit, and the tithes were confirmed to them and their successors forever.¹ Even more suggestive is the complaint, some thirty years later, of Ratherius, Bishop of Verona, who objects strenuously to the ordination of the children sprung from these illegal marriages, as each successive father made his son a priest, thus perpetuating the scandal indefinitely throughout the church; and as he sorrowfully admits that his clergy could not be restrained from marriage, he begs them at least to bring their children up as laymen.² This, however, by his own showing, would not remove the material evil, for in another treatise he states that his priests and deacons divided the church property between them, that they might have lands and vineyards wherewith to provide marriage portions for their sons and daughters.³ This system of appropriation also forms the subject of lamentation for Atto, Bishop of Vercelli, whose clergy insisted on publicly keeping concubines—as he stigmatizes those who evidently were wives—to whom they left by will everything that they could gather from the possessions of the church, from the alms of the pious, or from any other source, to the ruin of ecclesiastical property and to the deprivation

¹ Rainaldo et filio suo Raimoni in synodali conventu talem notitiam accipere, quo neque suo neque successorum suorum tempore, aliqua contentio pro ipsis decimis posset oriri.—Concil. Turon. ann. 925. (Mart. et Dur. IV. 73.)

² Presbyter vero aut diaconus uxorem legitimam non possit habere. Si filium de ipsa fornicatione, vel quod pejus est, adulterio, genitum facit presbyterum, ille alterum de se similiter genitum facit presbyterum; ille iterum suum, suum alter iterum; pullulans illud usque in finem sæculi taliter

adulterium, cujus est nisi illius qui illud primitus seminavit? Quocirca monendi et obsecrandi fratres, ut quia prohiberi, proh dolor! a mulieribus valetis nullo modo, filios de vobis generatos dimitteretis saltem esse laicos, filias laicis jungeretis, ut vel in fine saltem vestro terminaretur, et nusquam in finem sæculi duraret adulterium vestrum.—Ratherii de nuptu cujusdam illicito c. 4.

³ Ut ditati videlicet . . . habeant quoque unde filiis uxores, filiabus acquirant maritos, vineas et campos.—Ratherii de contemptu canon. P. 1. c. 4.

of the poor.¹ The same complaint was uttered among the Anglo-Saxons. "It is all the worse when they have it all, for they do not dispose of it as they ought, but decorate their wives with what they should the altars, and turn everything to their own worldly pomp. . . . Let those who before this had the evil custom of decorating their women as they should the altars, refrain from this evil custom, and decorate their churches, as they best can; then would they command for themselves both divine counsel and worldly worship. A priest's wife is nothing but a snare of the devil, and he who is ensnared thereby on to his end, he will be seized fast by the devil."²

It will be observed that, as the century advanced, sacerdotal marriage became more and more common. Indeed, in 966, Ratherius not only intimates that his clergy all were married, but declares that if the canon prohibiting repeated marriages were put in force, only boys would be left in the church, while even they would be ejected under the rule which rendered ineligible the offspring of illicit unions.³ It was not that the ancient canons were forgotten,⁴ nor that strenuous efforts were not made to enforce them, but that the temper of the times created a spirit of personal independence so complete that the power of the ecclesiastical authorities seemed utterly inadequate to control the growing license. About the year 938, Gerard, Archbishop of Lorsch and Papal Legate for

¹ Præterea quod dicere pudet, tacere autem periculum, quidam in tantum libidine mancipantur, ut obscenas meretriculas sua simul in domo secum habitare, una cibum sumere, ac publice degere permittant. Quarum illecebris illecti, suæ domui cunctæque familiæ ac suppellectili eas præesse dijudicant, suumque post obitum scortum hæredem constituunt, et quidquid de facultatibus ecclesiæ, vel eleemosynis, sese undecunque acquirere possunt, hujusmodi manibus distrahendum relinquunt. . . . Et unde meretrices ornantur, ecclesiæ vastantur, pauperes tribulantur.—Atton. Vercell. Epist. ix.

² Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical, c. 19, 23 (Thorpe, Ancient Laws, &c. of England, II. 329, 337).

³ Rursum si lectum impleretur "Si quis presbyter uxorem duxerit, deponatur;" magis autem pelli debet si adulterium perpetraverit; quis ex vobis indepositus esset? . . . Si multinubos a clericatu repellerem, quem nisi puerulos in ecclesia relinquerem? Si manzeres abjicerem, quem ex eisdem puerulis stare in choro permetterem?—Ratherii Itinerar. c. 5.

⁴ Gunzo the Grammarian, in his learned treatise, makes use of the recognized celibacy of the clergy as a comparison. "Non enim una eademque res bona, licet æque omnibus conceditur. Siquidem nuptiæ, laicis concessæ, sacris ordinibus denegantur."—Gunzonis Epist. ad Augienses.

Southern Germany, laid before Leo VII. a series of questions relating to various points in which the ancient canons were set at naught throughout the region under his supervision. Leo answered by a decretal addressed to all the princes and potentates of Europe, in which he laments over Gerard's statement of the public marriages of priests, and replies to his inquiry as to the capacity of their children for ecclesiastical promotion. The first he pronounces forbidden by the canons, and those guilty of it he orders to be deprived of their benefices. As for the offspring of such marriages, however, he says that they are not involved in the sins of their parents.¹

The unusual liberality of this latter declaration, however, was not a precedent. The church always endeavored to prevent the ordination of the children of ecclesiastics, and Leo, in permitting it, was only yielding to a pressure which he could not withstand. It was a most dangerous concession, for it led directly to the establishment of the hereditary principle. An effort was soon after made, by an appeal to the temporal power, to recover the ground lost, and about the year 940 Otho the Great was induced to issue an edict prohibiting the sons of deacons, priests, and bishops from occupying the positions of notary, judge, or count²—the bare necessity of which shows how numerous and powerful the class had already become.

Although, as early as 925, the council of Spalatro seemed to find nothing to condemn in a single marriage, but threatened excommunication against those who so far forgot themselves as to contract a second,³ and though by the middle of the

¹ Dehinc intulit lamentabile et nimis lugendum, ut Domini sacerdotes publice ducant uxores, et si filii eorum valeant promoveri? Quod scelus . . . juxta sacros canones modis omnibus prohibemus . . . Et qui in tali scelere fuerint reperti nostra apostolica auctoritate ab omni priventur honore. Filii vero eorum immunes ab eorum peccato sunt, dicente propheta: filius non portabit iniquitatem patris, et in sacro baptisate omnia dimittuntur peccata.—Leon. PP. VII. Epist. 15.

² Diaconorum episcoporum presbyterorum filios, notarios sculdacios comites judices fieri, omnibus modis prohibemus.—Constit. Otton. ann. 940, c. 12.

³ Quod si sacerdotes incontinenter propter ipsam continentiam primam quam sortitus est, separati a consortio cellæ, teneat uxorem; si vere aliam duxerit, excommunicetur.—Concil. Spalatens. ann. 925, c. 15.

The passage is evidently corrupt, but its intention is manifest. The reading

century the practice had become generally established, yet some rigid prelates continued to keep alive the memory of the ancient canons by fruitless protests and ineffectual efforts at reform. In 948, the synod of Engelheim, under the presidency of Marino, Bishop of Ostia and Papal Vicar, condemned such marriages as incestuous and unlawful.¹ In 952, at the council of Augsburg, the assembled German and Italian prelates made a further and more desperate effort. Deposition was pronounced against the subdeacon, deacon, priest, or bishop who should take to himself a wife; separation of those already married was ordered, and even the lower grades of the clergy, who had not previously been subjected to any such rule, were commanded to observe the strictest continence. An attempt was also made to prevent concubinage by visiting suspected women with stripes and shaving; but there evidently was some difficulty anticipated in enforcing this, for the royal power is invoked to prevent secular interference with the sentence.²

This stringent legislation of course proved utterly nugatory, but, futile as it was, it yet awakened considerable opposition. St. Ulric, in whose episcopal town of Augsburg the council was held, addressed a long epistle to the Pope, remonstrating against his efforts to enforce the rule of celibacy, and arguing the question, temperately but forcibly, on the grounds both of scriptural authority and of expediency. He pointed out how much more obnoxious to Divine wrath were the promiscuous and nameless crimes indulged in by those who were foremost in advocating the reform, than the chaste and single marriages of the clergy; and the violent distortion of the sacred texts by those who sought authority to justify the canon he not unhappily characterized as straining the breast of Scripture until it yielded blood in place of milk.³

suggested by Batthyani may be reasonably accepted. "Quod si sacerdotes incontinentes propter ipsam continentiam quam quis primam sortitus est, separati a consortio cellæ, teneant uxorem, tolerantur; si vero aliam duxerint, excommunicentur." (Batthyani, *Legg. Eccles. Hungar.* I. 333-4.)

¹ Reliquis autem diebus decretum

est de incestis et illicitis presbyterorum conjugis.—Richeri *Hist. Lib. II.* c. 81. The canons of the council, however, as they have reached us, are silent on the subject.

² *Concil. Augustan. ann. 952, c. 1, 4, 11.*

³ In nimirum non recte intellexe-

Despite the inefficiency of these attempts, the clergy were not allowed to enjoy their unlawful domestic ties in peace, and, where the votaries of asceticism were bold and determined, the contest was sometimes severe. The nature of the struggle is well illustrated by the troubles which arose between RATHERIUS of Verona and the ecclesiastics of his diocese. In April, 967, JOHN XIII. held a council at Ravenna which commanded those who were in holy orders to give up at once either their wives or their ministry, and Otho the Great was induced to issue a precept confirming this peremptory decree. RATHERIUS had long been vainly wishing for some authority on the subject more potent than the ancient and now obsolete canons;¹ and on his return from Ravenna he summoned a synod for the purpose of promulgating the new regulations. His clergy got wind of his intention; very few of them obeyed the summons, and those who came boldly declared that they would neither be separated from their wives nor abandon their functions; in fact, they did not scruple to maintain that marriage was not only permissible, but even necessary to protect the

runt Scripturam, ejus mammillam qui durius presserint sanguinem pro lacte biberunt. . . Quid divinæ maledictioni obligatius, quam cum aliqui eorum vel episcopi videlicet et archidiaconi ita præcipites sint in libidinem, ut neque adulteria neque incestus, neque masculorum pro pudor! turpissimos sciant abhorre concubitus, quod casta clericorum conjugia sibi dicunt foetere, et ab eis non veræ justitiæ compassione, sed falsæ justitiæ dedignatione clericos . . . ut servos jubeant vel cogant abstinere.—Cod. Bamberg. Lib. II. Epist. 10.

St. Ulric is noteworthy as the first subject of papal canonization, having been enrolled in the calendar by the council of Rome in 993. That priestly marriage should be advocated by so pious and venerable a father was of course not agreeable to the sacerdotal party, and his evidence against celibacy has not infrequently been ruled out of court by discrediting the authenticity of the epistle. The compiler of the collection containing it, made in 1125, prefixed the name of Nicholas

as that of the pope to whom it was addressed, and as St. Ulric was about equidistant between Nicholas I. in the ninth, and Nicholas II. in the eleventh century, it has been suggested that the epistle was addressed to the latter, on the occasion of his reforms in 1059, the use of St. Ulric's name being assumed as a mistake of the compiler. That this is not so is shown by the fact that already in 1079 it was known as St. Ulric's, being condemned as such in that year by Gregory VII.—“scriptum quod dicitur sancti Ondalrici ad papam Nicholaum, de nuptiis presbiterorum” (Bernald. Constant. Chron. ann. 1079). The authenticity of the document, I believe, is generally admitted by unprejudiced critics.

¹ The previous year (966) RATHERIUS had issued an elaborate series of precepts to his clergy, in which he had only ventured to prohibit them from conjugal intercourse during the periods forbidden likewise to laymen, in Advent, Christmas, Lent, &c. (RATHERII Synodica c. 15.)

church from the most hideous vices.¹ Ratherius had passed through too many vicissitudes in his long and agitated career to shrink from the collision, now that he was backed by both the papal and imperial authority. He promptly threw the recalcitrant pastors into prison, declaring that they should lie there until they paid a heavy fine for the benefit of the cathedral of the Virgin, and he further commanded the presence of those who had failed to appear. The clergy of the diocese, finding that the resistance of inertia was unavailing, took more decided steps, and appealed for protection to the temporal power, in the person of Nanno, Count of Verona. He promptly espoused their cause, and his *missus* Gilbert forbade their obedience to the summons of their bishop for a year. Ratherius remonstrated vehemently against the assumption of Nanno that the priests were his vassals, subject to his jurisdiction, and entitled to his protection. He therefore invoked the power of Otho, in a letter to Ambrose, the Imperial Chancellor.² The clergy were too powerful; the imperial court decided against the bishop, and before the end of the year Ratherius was forced to withdraw from the unequal contest and to take refuge in the peaceful abbey of Lobbes, whence he had been withdrawn a quarter of a century before to fill the see of Verona. Three times had he thus been driven from that city, and an intermediate episcopate of Liége, with which one of his periods of exile was gratified, had been terminated in the same abrupt manner by the unruly clergy, unable to endure the severity of his virtue.³ How great was the revolution to which he sacrificed his life is shown by his declaration that ecclesiastics differed from laymen only in

¹ Putent adeo fieri non modo licere sed etiam oportere, ut nemo hoc facere devitans videatur eis pessimo illo . . . scelere posse carere. . . Quam perdita tonsuratorum universitas tota, si nemo in eis qui non aut adulter aut sit arsenoquita. Adulter enim nobis est qui contra canones uxorius est.—Ratherii Discordia, c. 1.

Some, indeed, professed that their poverty did not permit them to live without the assistance of their wives, and asserted their readiness for a

separation if a regular stipend could be assured to them. (Ibid. c. 6.)

² Ratherii Epist. XI., XII.—His letter to the Empress Adelaide, announcing his willingness to retire from the contest, and to seek the congenial shades of a monastery, is most uncourtly. (Epist. XIII.)

³ Ruotgeri Vit. S. Brunonis c. 38.—Ratherius consoled himself epigrammatically by condensing his misfortunes in the Leonine verse—"Veronæ præsul, sed ter Ratherius exsul."

shaving and the tonsure, in some slight fashioning of their garments, and in the careless performance of the church ritual.¹

That the Veronese clergy were not alone in obtaining from the secular potentates protection against these efforts on the part of reforming bishops, is evident from the lamentations of Atto of Vercelli. That estimable prelate deploras the blindness of those who, when paternally warned to mend their evil ways, refuse submission, and seek protection from the nobles. If we may believe him, however, they gained but little by this course, for their criminal lives placed them at the mercy of the secular officials, whose threats to seize their wives and children could only be averted by continual presents. Thus they not only plundered the property of their churches, but forfeited the respect and esteem of their flocks; all reverence for them was thereby destroyed, and, living in perpetual dread of the punishment due to their excesses, in place of commanding obedience, they were exposed to constant oppression and petty tyranny.²

When prelates so sincere and so earnest as Ratherius and Atto were able to accomplish so little, it is easy to understand what must have been the condition of the dioceses intrusted to the great mass of bishops, who were rather feudal nobles than Christian prelates. St. Wolfgang of Ratisbon might issue thousands of exhortations to his clergy, inculcating chastity as the one indispensable virtue, and might laboriously reform his monasteries in which monks and nuns led a life almost openly secular;³ but he was well nigh

¹ De Contempt. Canon. P. II. c. 2. This was written in 964. The progress of sacerdotal marriage during the preceding quarter of a century is shown by a similar comparison drawn by Ratherius some thirty years before, in which matrimony is included among the few points of difference, along with shaving and the tonsure. (Præloquiorum Lib. v. c. 18.)

The existing confusion is well exemplified by another remark. "Expertus sum talem qui ante ordinationem adulterium perpetravit, postea quasi

continenter vixit; alterum qui post ordinationem uxorem duxit; et iste illum, ille istum carpebat."—De Contempt. Canon. P. I. c. 11.

² Atton. Vercell. Epist. 9. In another epistle (No. 10) Atto congratulates himself on the reform of some of his clergy, and threatens the contumacious with degradation.

³ Othloni Vit. S. Wolfkangi, c. 15, 16, 17, 23. Præ omnibus ut castitatem sequerentur milies inculcavit.

powerless for good compared with the potentiality of evil conveyed by the example of such a bishop as Segenfrid of Le Mans, who, during an episcopate which lasted for thirty-three years, took to himself a wife named Hildeberga, and who stripped the church for the benefit of his son Alberic, the sole survivor of a numerous progeny by her whom he caused to be revered as his *Episcopissa*.¹ Guarino of Modena might hope to stem the tide of license by refusing preferment to all who would not agree to hold their benefices on a sort of feudal tenure of chastity;² but he had much less influence on his age than such a man as Alberic of Marsico, whose story is related as a warning by Peter Damiani. He was married (for, in the language of Damiani, "obscæna meretricula" may safely be translated a wife), and had a son to whom he transferred his bishopric, as though it had been an hereditary fief. Growing tired of private life, however, he aspired to the abbacy of Monte Casino. That humble foundation of St. Benedict had become a formidable military power, of which its neighbors the Capuans stood in constant dread. Alberic leagued with them, and a plot was laid by which the reigning abbot's eyes were to be plucked out, and Alberic placed in possession, for which service he agreed to pay a heavy sum, one-half in advance, and the rest when the abbot's eyes should be delivered to him. The deed was

¹ "Ad cumulum damnationis suæ, accepit mulierem, nomine Hildeburgam, in senectute, quæ, ingresso illo ad se, concepit et peperit filios et filias, &c." The chronicler makes the end of this aged sinner an example of poetical justice such as may frequently be found in the monkish annals of those times — "Qui dum esset febotomatus, nocte insecuta dormivit cum Episcopissa; qua de re vulnus cœpit intumescere, et dolor usque ad interiora cordis devenire." Finding his end approaching, he assumed the monastic habit and took the vows, after which he immediately expired.—Act. Pontif. Cenoman. c. 29 (Dom Bouquet, X. 384-5).

Fulbert of Chartres has left us a lively sketch of the military bishops

of the period.—"Tyrannos potius appellabo, qui bellicis occupati negotiis, multo stipati latus milite, solidarios pretio conducunt, ut nullos sæculi reges aut principes noverim adeo instructos bellorum legibus, totam armorum disciplinam in procinctu militiæ servare, digerere turmas, ordines componere, ad turbendam ecclesiæ pacem, et Christianorum, licet hostium, sanguinem effundendum." — Fulbert. Carnot. Epist. 112.

² This singular oath has been published by Muratori (Antiq. Ital. Diss. xx.).—"Ego Andrea presbiter promitto coram Deo et omnibus sanctis, et tibi Guarino episcopo, quod carnalem commistionem non faciam; et si fecero, et onoris mei et beneficio ecclesiæ perdam."

accomplished, but while the envoys were bearing to Alberic the bloody tokens of success, they were met by tidings of his death, and on comparing notes they found that he had expired at the very moment of the perpetration of the atrocious crime.¹

So St. Abbo of Fleury might exhaust his eloquence in inculcating the beauty and holiness of immaculate purity, and might pile authority on authority to demonstrate the punishments which, in this world and the next, attended on those who disobeyed the rule;² yet when he endeavored, in the monastery of La Réole, a dependency on his own great abbey of Fleury, to put his precepts into practice, the recalcitrant monks flew to arms and murdered him in the most brutal manner, not even sparing the faithful Adalard, who was reverently supporting the head of his beloved and dying master.³ How little disposed were the ecclesiastical authorities in general to sustain the efforts of puritans like St. Abbo was clearly shown in the council of St. Denis, convened in 995 for the purpose of restoring the neglected discipline of the church, which, passing over the object of its assembling, devoted its whole attention to the more practically interesting question of tithes.⁴

All prelates, however, were not either feudal chiefs or

¹ S. Petri Damiani Epist. Lib. iv. Epist. 8.—Leo Marsicanus (Chron. Cassinens. Lib. ii. c. 16) asserts that in his youth he himself had seen and conversed with a priest who had been one of the eye-bearers.

² Abbon. Floriac. Epist. 14.

³ Although Aimoin, who was an eye-witness, does not specially mention the cause that excited the monks to ungovernable fury, yet a casual allusion shows that women were responsible for it.—“Cæterum, tantæ cladis compilatores certissime agnoscetes beatum obiisse Abbonem, certatim cuncti in fugam vertuntur, ita ut, terris reddito die, ne mulieres quidam in universis forensibus ipsius villæ invenirentur domibus”—(Abbon. Floriac. Vit. c. xx.)—and the day after his death “una ex his mu-

lieribus quæ clamore suo seditionem concitaverant” became suddenly mad, and was struck with incurable leprosy—(Aimoin. Mirac. S. Abbonis, c. 2).

Damiani might well exclaim, when bewailing the unfortunate fate of abbots, on whom was thrown the responsibility of the morals of their communities—

Phinees si imitatur,
Fugit vel expellitur;
Si Eli, tunc irridetur
Atque parvipenditur;
Odiosus est, si fervens,
Et vilis, si tepidus.—Carm. cexxi.

⁴ Qui, cum de fidei puritate, de corrigendis tam suis quam subditorum pravis moribus sermocinari debuissent, juxta vulgare proverbium cunctum suum sermonem ad decimas verterunt ecclesiarum.—Aimoin. Vit. S. Abbonis, c. 9.

ascetic puritans. Some, who were pious and virtuous, had so far become infected with the prevailing laxity that they regarded the stricter canons as obsolete, and offered no opposition to the domestic aspirations of their clergy. Thus Constantine, Abbot of the great house of St. Symphorian of Metz, in his life of Adalbero II., who was Bishop of Metz from 984 to 1005, actually praises him for his liberality in not refusing ordination to the sons of priests, and attributes discreditable motives to those bishops who insisted on the observance of the canons prohibiting all such promotions.¹ As Constantine was a monk and a disciple of Adalbero, the tone which he adopts shows that the higher prelates and the regular clergy were beginning to recognize sacerdotal marriage as a necessity of the age. This view is strengthened by the fact that no effort to reform an abuse so universal was made at the great synod of Dortmund, held in 1005 for the special purpose of restoring the discipline of the church.²

How completely, indeed, marriage came to be regarded as a matter of course is manifest when in 1019 an assembly of German bishops, with the Emperor St. Henry at their head, gravely deliberated over the knotty question whether, when a noble permitted his serf to enter into holy orders, and the serf, presuming upon his new-born dignities and the wealth of his benefices, married a free woman and endeavored to withhold his children from the servitude which he still owed to his master, such infraction of his master's rights could be permitted out of respect to his sacerdotal character. Long and vehement was the argument among the learned prelates, until finally St. Henry decided the point authoritatively by pronouncing in favor of the servitude of the children.³

But perhaps the most instructive illustration of the character and temper of the age may be found in the three prelates who for more than a century filled the rich and powerful

¹ *Episcopi sui temporis aliqui fastu superbiæ, aliqui simplicitate cordis, filios sæcularium sacerdotum ad sacros ordines admittere dedignabantur, nec ad clericatum eos recipere volentes; hic vero beatus, neminem despiciebat, neminem spernens, passim*

cunctos recipiebat. — Constant. S. Symphon. Vit. Adalbero. II. c. 24.

² *Dithmar. Merseberg. Lib. vi. c. 24.*

³ *S. Heinrici Sentent. de Conjug. Cleric. (Patrologiæ T. 140, p. 231).*

archiepiscopal see of Rouen. Hugh, whose episcopate lasted from 942 to 989, was nominated at a period when William Longsword, Duke of Normandy, was contemplating a retirement from the world to shroud his almost regal dignity under the cowl of the monk, yet what little is known of his archbishop is that, though he was a monk in habit, he was an habitual violator of the laws of God¹—in short, we may presume, a man well suited to the wild half-pagan times which witnessed the assassination of Duke William and the minority of Richard the Fearless. On his death in 989, Duke Richard, whose piety was incontestably proved by the liberality of his monastic foundations and by his zeal for the purity of his monkish protégés,² filled the vacant see with his son Robert, who held the position until 1037. Robert was publicly and openly married, and by his wife Herleva he had three sons, Richard, Rodolf, and William, to whom he distributed his vast possessions. Ordericus, the conscientious cenobite of the twelfth century, looks, in truth, somewhat askance at this disregard of the rules accepted during the latter period,³ yet no blame seems to have attached to Robert in the estimation of his contemporaries. The family chronicler characterizes him as “Robert bons clers, honestes hom,” and assures us that he was highly esteemed as a wise and learned prelate

Li secunz fu genz e aperz
Et si fu apelez Roberz.
Clerc en firent, mult aprist bien,
Si fi sage sor tote rien ;

¹ A nullo scriptorum qui de illo sive de episcopo ejus locuti sunt, laudatus est. Palam memorant quod habitu non opere monachus fuerit.

Successit Hugo, legis Domini violator
Clara stirpe satus, sed Christi lumine cassus.—
Order. Vital. Lib. v. c. 10 § 41.

² About the year 990, for instance, we find Duke Richard reforming the celebrated Abbey of Fécamp and replacing with Benedictines the former occupants — canons whose secular mode of life outraged his pious sensibilities — “contigit Fiscannenses canonicos aliorum canonicorum mores imitari, latas perditionis vias ingredi,

et rerum temporalium luxus et desideria voluptuose sectari.” — Anon. Fiscannens. c. 17.

³ Nam conjugem nomine Herlevam, ut comes, habuit, ex qua tres filios, Richardum, Radulfum et Guillelmum genuit; quibus Ebroicensem comitatum et alios honores amplissimos secundum jus sæculi distribuit.—
Orderic. Vital. Lib. v. c. 10 § 42.

So in the Normanniæ Nova Chronica, published by Chérueil in 1850, “Iste Robertus fuit uxoratus, et ex Herleva conjugis sua tres filios habuit, Richardum, Radulfum et Willelmum.”

De Roem out l'arcevesquié
Honoré fu mult e preisié.¹

His successor, Mauger, son of Duke Richard II., and archbishop from 1037 to 1054, was worthy of his predecessors. Abandoned to worldly and carnal pleasures, his *legitimate* son Michael was a distinguished knight, and half a century later stood high in the favor of Henry I. of England, in whose court he was personally known to the historian.² The times were changing, however, and Mauger felt the full effects of reformatory zeal, for he was deposed in 1054; the see was bestowed on Maurilio, a Florentine abbot, who had been driven out by his monks on account of the severity of his rule, and the Norman clergy, as we shall see hereafter, experienced their share of suffering in the mutation of discipline.

Notwithstanding this all-pervading laxity, the canons of the church remained unaltered, and their full force was theoretically admitted. Hopeless efforts, moreover, were occasionally made to re-establish them, as in the council of Anse in 990, which reminded the clergy that intercourse with wives after ordination was punishable with forfeiture of benefice and deprivation of priestly functions;³ and in that of Poitiers about the year 1000, which prohibited concubines under pain of degradation.⁴ In a similar spirit, a Penitential of the period recapitulates the severe punishments of a former age, involving degradation and fearfully long terms of penance.⁵

¹ Bénéoit, Chronique des Ducs de Normandie, v. 32427, 24912. We may fairly conclude from these expressions that Robert was educated for the priesthood.

² Voluptatibus carnis mundanisque curis indecenter inhæsit, filiumque nomine Michaellem probum militem et legitimum genuit, quem in Anglia jam senem rex Henricus honorat et diligit.—Orderic. Vital. Lib. v. c. 10, § 43.

³ Concil Ansan. ann. 990, c. 5.

⁴ Concil. Pictaviens. c. ann. 1000. c. 3.

⁵ Si clericus superioris gradus, qui uxorem habuit, et post confessionem vel honorem clericatus iterum eam cognoverit, sciat sibi adulterium commisisse, sicut superiore sententia unusquisque juxta ordine suo pœniteat [i. e. diaconus et monachi vii. (annos) iii. ex his pane et aqua. Presbyter x. Episcopus xii., v. ex his pane et aqua.] . . . Si quis clericus aut monachus postquam se devoverit ad sæcularem habitum iterum reversus fuerit aut uxorem duxerit, x. annos pœniteat, iii. ex his in pane et aqua, nunquam postea in conjugium copuletur.—Judicium Pœnitentis, ex Sacrament. Rhenaug.

All this, however, was practically a dead letter. The person who best represents the active intelligence of the age was Gerbert of Aurillac, the most enlightened man of his time, who, after occupying the archiepiscopal seats of Rheims and Ravenna, finally became pope under the name of Sylvester II. The lightness with which he treats the subject of celibacy is therefore fairly a measure of the views entertained by the ruling spirits of the church, beyond the narrow bounds of cloistered asceticism. Gerbert, describing in a sermon the requisites of the episcopal and sacerdotal offices, barely refers to the "unius uxoris vir," which he seems to regard in an allegorical rather than in a literal sense; he scarcely alludes to chastity, while he dilates with much energy on simony, which he truly characterizes as the almost universal vice of his contemporaries.¹ So when, in 997, he convened the council of Ravenna to regulate the discipline of his church, he paid no attention whatever to incontinence, while strenuously endeavoring to root out simony.² At an earlier period, while Abbot of Bobbio, in an epistle to his patron, the Emperor Otho II., refuting various calumnies of his enemies, he alludes to a report of his having a wife and children in terms which show how little importance he attached to the accusation.³

Such, at the opening of the eleventh century, was the condition of the church as regards ascetic celibacy. Though the ancient canons were still theoretically in force, they were practically obsolete everywhere. Legitimate marriage or promiscuous profligacy was almost universal, in some places unconcealed, in others covered with a thin veil of hypocrisy, according as the temper of the ruling prelate might be indulgent or severe. So far, therefore, Latin Christianity had gained but little in its struggle of six centuries with human nature. Whether the next eight hundred

¹ Gerberti Sermo de Informat. Episcoporum.

² Gerberti Opp. p. 197 sqq. (Ed. Migne).

³ "Taceo de me quem novo locutionis genere equum emissarium susurrant, uxorem et filios habentem, propter partem familiæ meæ de Francia recol-

lectam."—Gerberti Epist. Sect. I. No. XI.—Gerbert's reputation for sanctity is not such as to render scandalous the suspicion that the family thus gathered around him might afford legitimate occasion for gossip, notwithstanding his abbacy and the fact that he had been bred in a convent.

years will show a more favorable result, remains for us to develop.

Before proceeding, however, to discuss the events of the succeeding century, it will be well to cast a rapid glance at a portion of Christendom, the isolation of which has thus far precluded it from receiving attention.

XI.

SAXON ENGLAND.

WHATEVER of virtue or purity may have distinguished the church of Britain under Roman domination was speedily extinguished in the confusion of the Saxon occupation. Gildas, who flourished in the first half of the sixth century, describes the clergy of his time as utterly corrupt.¹ Under Saxon rule, Christianity was probably well-nigh trampled out, except in the remoter mountain districts, to be subsequently restored in its sacerdotal form under the direct auspices of Rome.

Meanwhile, the British Isles were the theatre of another and independent religious movement. While the Saxons were subverting Christianity in Britain, St. Patrick was successfully engaged in laying the foundations of the Irish church.² We have seen that he apparently hesitated in establishing compulsory celibacy for his sacerdotal class; but this was of comparatively little moment, for he took the strictest views as to monastic asceticism,³ and the church which he founded was peculiarly monastic in its character. That the principles which he established were long preserved is evident from a curious collection of Hibernian canons, made in the eighth century, of which selections have been published by d'Achery and Martène. Some of these are credited by the compilers to Gildas, and thus show the discipline of the early British as well as of the Irish church.⁴ Their tendency is

¹ Ita ut clerici (quod non absque dolore cordis fateor) impudici, bilingues, ebrii, turpis lucri cupidi, habentes fidem, et ut verius dicam, infidelitatem, in conscientia impura, non probati in bona, sed in malo opere præsciti ministrantes, et innumera crimina habentes, sacro ministerio adsciscantur.—Gildæ de Excid. Britan. Pt. III. cap. 23—Cf. cap. 1, 2, 3.

² Modern criticism has raised doubts as to the existence of St. Patrick. Whether they are well-grounded or not is a matter of little importance here, as we are concerned only with the institutions bearing his name, which institutions undoubtedly did

exist. Meanwhile I may add that few remote events appear to rest on better authority than the conversion of the Gaeidhil, about the year 438, by a person known to his contemporaries as Patraic, or Patricius; and the name of Cain Patraic applied to the secular code attributed to him, dates from a very high antiquity.—See *Senchus Mor*, Hancock's Ed. Dublin, 1865.

³ Synod. S. Patricii I. can. 17. Synod. II. can. 17.

⁴ *Abedoc et Ethelvolfi Canon. Lib. xxxviii. cap. 7.* (D'Achery).—Præfat. *Gildæ de Pœnitent. cap. 1.* (Martene et Durand. IV. 7.)

towards the purest asceticism. A penance of forty days was even enjoined on the ecclesiastic who, without thought of evil, indulged in the pleasure of converse with a woman.¹ So in Ireland, a council held in 672 decrees that a priest guilty of unchastity, although removable according to the strict rule of discipline, may be allowed, if truly contrite, to retain his position on undergoing ten years of penitence²—an alternative, one might think, rather of severity than of mercy.

The missionary career by which the Irish church repaid the debt that it owed to Christianity is well known, but the form of faith which it spread was almost exclusively monastic. Luanus, one of the monks of Benchor, is said to have founded no less than a hundred monasteries;³ and when Columba established the Christian religion in Scotland, he carried with him this tendency to asceticism and inculcated it among his Pictish neophytes. His Rule enjoins the most absolute purity of mind as well as body;⁴ and that his teachings were long obeyed is evident when we find that, a hundred and fifty years later, his disciples are praised for the chastity and zeal of their self-denying lives by the Venerable Bede, who was fully alive to the importance of the rule, and who would have wasted no such admiration on the Culdees had they lived in open disregard of it.⁵ Equally convincing is the fact that Scotland and the Islands were under the supremacy of the see of York, and that during the long controversy requisite

¹ Lib. de Remed. Peccat. cap. de Fornicat. (Martene IV. 23). — Cf. Synod. Aquilon. Britan. cap. 1. (Ibid. p. 9.)

² In this long course of penance, three months were to be spent in solitary confinement, with bread and water at night; then eighteen months in fasting on bread and water; then bread and water three days in the week for five years and three months; then bread and water on Fridays for the remaining three years.—Gratian. Dist. LXXXII. c. 5.

³ Bernardi Vit. S. Malachiae, cap. vi.

⁴ S. Columbani Regul. cap. vi.

⁵ Reliquit (Columbanus) succes-

sores magna continentia ac divino amore regularique institutione insignes . . . pietatis et castitatis opera diligenter observantes. (Beda Hist. Eccles. Lib. III. c. 4, cf. also c. 26.) Bede's orthodoxy on the subject is unquestionable: "Sacerdotibus ut semper altari queant assistere, semper ab uxoribus continendum, semper castitas observanda præcipitur." (In Lucæ Evang. Exposit. Lib. I. cap. 1.)—"Quanta sunt maledictione digni qui prohibent nubere et dispositionem cælestis decreti quasi a diabolo repertam condemnant? . . . sed magis honoranda, majore est digna benedictione virginitas." (Hexæmeron. Lib. I. sub tit. Benedixitque illis.)

to break down their schismatic notions respecting the date of Easter and the shape of the tonsure, not a word was said that can lead to the supposition that they held any unorthodox views on the far more important subject of sacerdotal purity.¹

When, a hundred and fifty years after the Anglo-Saxon conquest, Gregory the Great undertook the conversion of the islanders, the missionaries whom he despatched under Augustine of course carried with them the views and ideas which then held undisputed sway in Rome. Apparently, however, asceticism found little favor at first with the new converts, rendering it difficult for Augustine to obtain sufficient co-laborers among his disciples, for he applied to Gregory to learn whether he might allow those who could not restrain their passions to marry and yet remain in the ministry. To this Gregory replied evasively, stating, what Augustine already knew, that the lower grades might marry, but making no reference whatever to the higher orders.² He apparently did not wish to assume the responsibility of relaxing the rule, while willing perhaps to connive at its suspension in order to encourage the infant Anglican church. If so, the indulgence was but temporary.

The attempt has been made to prove that marriage was permitted in the early Saxon church, and support for this supposition has been sought from a clause in the Doms of King Ina, of which the date is about the year 700, fixing the wehr-gild of the son of a bishop. But the caption of the law shows that it refers rather to a godson;³ and even if it were not so, we have already seen how often in France, at the same period, the episcopal office was bestowed on eminent or

¹ See, for instance, the proceedings of the synod of Whitby in 664, where the differences between the Scottish and Roman observances were fully discussed (Spelman. Concil. I. 145). So when, in 633, Honorius I. addressed the Scottish clergy, reproving their false computation of Easter and their Pelagianism, he made no allusion to any want of clerical purity.—(Bedæ Hist. Eccles. Lib. II. c. 19.)

² Opto enim doceri an clerici conti-

nere non valentes, possint contrahere; et si contraxerint, an debeant ad sæculum redire—to which Gregory responds with a long exhortation as to the duties of the “clerici extra sacros ordines constituti.”—Gregor. I. Regist. Lib. XI. Epist. lxiv. Respons. 2.

³ Si episcopi filius sit, sit dimidium hoc (Leg. Inæ c. LXXVI.). The rubric of the law is “De occidente filiolum vel patrinum alicujus” (Thorpe, Ancient Laws of England, II. 472).

influential laymen, who were obliged on its acceptance to part with their wives. The Magdeburg Centuriators, indeed, describe a council held in London in 712 or 714, by which image-worship was introduced and separation between priests and their wives was decreed,¹ but there is no authority cited, nor is such an assembly elsewhere alluded to, even Cave pronouncing it evidently supposititious.²

These speculations are manifestly groundless. The celebrated Theodore, who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 668 to 690, in his *Liber Pœnitentialis*, expresses the rule in the most positive and unequivocal form;³ nor can we suppose that his vigorous primacy would allow these canons to be wholly inoperative in a church sufficiently enlightened to produce the learning and piety of men like Bede and St. Aldhelm; where the admiration of virginity was as great as that which finds utterance in the writings of these fathers,⁴ and the principles of asceticism were so influential as to lead a powerful monarch like Ina to retire with his queen, Ethelberga, from the throne which he had gloriously filled, to the holy restrictions of a monastic life.

Ecgberht, who was Archbishop of York from 735 to 766,

¹ Denique promulgatur decretum . . . de abdicandis sacerdotum uxoribus.—Spelman. Concil. I. 216.

² Cave, Script. Eccles. Hist. pp. 424-5 (Ed. 1705).

³ Theodor. Lib. Pœnitent. cap. xviii. § 5. Si quis clericus vel superioris gradus qui uxorem habuit, et post conversionem vel honorem clericatus iterum eam cognovit, sciat sibi adulterium commisisse; sicut superiori sententia, unusquisque juxta ordinem suum pœniteat.—§ 6. Presbyter vel diaconus, si uxorem extraneam duxerit, in conscientia populi deponatur. Si vero adulterium perpetraverit cum illa, et in conscientia populi devenit, projiciatur extra ecclesiam, et pœniteat inter laicos quamdiu vixerit.

Cap. xviii. § 16. Si quis clericus aut monachus, postquam se Deo voverit . . . uxorem duxerit, x. annos pœniteat, iii. ex his in pane et aqua, et nunquam postea in conjugio copuletur.

So also in his "Capitula et Frag-

menta": "Episcopus aut presbyter aut diaconus, qui in fornicatione aut perjurio aut furto lapsus est, deponatur." (Thorpe, II. 74.)

⁴ See, for instance, St. Aldhelm's rhapsodies, "De laudibus virginitatis" and "De laudibus virginum." The orthodoxy of Bede on this question has already been alluded to.

According to the legend, St. Aldhelm tried his virtue by the same crucial experiments as those resorted to by some of the ardent devotees of the third century, concealing his motive in order that his humility might enjoy the benefit of undeserved reprobation. "Sancti Aldelmi Malmesburiensis, qui inter duas puellas, unam ab uno latere, alteram ab altero, singulis noctibus ut ab hominibus diffamaretur, a Deo vero cui nota fuerat conscientia ipsius et continentia copiosius in futurum remuneraretur, jacuisse describitur."—Girald. Cambrens. Gemm. Eccles. Dist. II. cap. xv.

is no less peremptory than Theodore, and the prominence which he gives to the various canons respecting sacerdotal purity shows the importance attached to the subject in the discipline of his church.¹ It is also probable that even the Britons, who derived their Christianity from the older and purer sources of the primitive church, preserved the rule with equal reverence. At the request of a national council, St. Aldhelm addressed an epistle to the Welsh king, Geruntius, to induce him to reform his church so as to bring it within the pale of Catholic unity. To accomplish this, he argues at length upon the points of difference, discussing the various errors of faith and discipline, such as the shape of the tonsure, the date of Easter, &c., but he is silent with regard to marriage or concubinage.² Had the Welsh church been schismatic in this respect, so ardent a celibatarian as Aldhelm would certainly not have omitted all reference to a subject of so much interest to him. The inference is therefore justifiable that no difference of this nature existed.

We may fairly conclude that the discipline of the church in these matters was reasonably well maintained by the Saxon clergy, with the exception of the nunneries, the morals of which institutions appear to have been deplorably and incurably lax. St. Boniface, whose zeal on the subject has already been sufficiently made manifest, about the year 746 paused in his reformation of the French priesthood to urge upon Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, the necessity of repressing the vices of the Saxon ecclesiastics. He dwells at considerable length upon their various crimes and misdemeanors—drunkenness, unclerical garments, neglect of their sacred functions, &c.—but he does not accuse them of unchastity, which he could not well have avoided doing had there been colorable grounds for such a charge. In fact, the only allusion connected with the question in his epistle is a request that some restrictions should be laid upon the permissions granted to women and nuns for pilgrimage to Rome, on account of the attendant dangers to their virtue; in illus-

¹ Egberti Excerptio. c. 15.—Confessional. c. 3, 4, 8, 12, 13, 19.—Pœnitential. Addit. c. 28.

² Epist. ad Geruntium.—Aldhelmi Opp. p. 83 (Ed. Oxon. 1844).

tration of which he states the lamentable fact that scarcely a city in Lombardy, France, or the Rhineland but had Saxon courtesans derived from this source, to the shame and scandal of the whole church.¹

Pope Zachary seconded these representations, and in 747 Cuthbert, yielding to the impulsion, held the celebrated council of Clyff, which adopted thirty canons on discipline, to remedy the disorders enumerated by Boniface. Among these, the only ones directed against unchastity relate solely to the nunneries, which are represented as being in a condition of gross immorality.² The council does not spare the vices of the secular clergy, and its silence with respect to their purity fairly permits the inference that there was not much to correct with regard to it, for had licentiousness been so prevalent that Cuthbert had feared to denounce it, or had sacerdotal marriage been passed over as lawful, the zeal of St. Boniface would have led to an explosion, and Zachary would not have sanctioned the proceedings by his approval.

The same argument is applicable to the council of Calchuth, held in 787 by the legates of Adrian I., under the presidency of Gregory, Bishop of Ostia. The vices and shortcomings of the Anglican church were there sharply reprovèd, but no allusion was made to any unchastity prevailing among the priesthood, with the exception, as before, of nuns, on whom we may infer that previous reformatory efforts had been wasted.³ That this reticence did not arise from any license

¹ *Perpaucae enim sunt civitates in Longobardia vel in Francia aut in Gallia, in qua non sit adultera vel meretrix generis Anglorum, quod scandalum est et turpitudine totius ecclesiae.*—Bonifacii Epist. 105.

² Can. 20 directs greater strictness with regard to visitors, "unde non sint sanctimonialium domicilia turpium confabulationum, commessionum, ebrietatum, luxuriantiumque cubilia." Can. 28 orders that nuns after taking the veil shall not wear lay garments; and can. 29 that clerks, monks, and nuns shall not live with the laity. (Spelman. Concil. I. 250-4.)

This demoralization of the nunneries is not to be wondered at when Boniface,

in reproving Ethelbald, King of Mercia, for his evil courses, could say, "Et adhuc, quod pejus est, qui nobis narrant adjiciunt: quod hoc scelus maxime cum sanctis monialibus et sacratis Deo virginibus per monasteria commissum sit."—Bonifacii Epist. 19.

³ Thus the council, in disinheriting illegitimate children, considered it necessary to declare (can. 16)—"Adulterinos namque filios ac sanctimonialium, autoritate apostolica, spuria ac adulteros judicamus. Virginem namque, quæ se Deo voverit, et ad instar sanctæ Mariæ vestem induerit, sponsam Christi vocitare non dubitamus." (Spelman. Concil. I. 298.)

granted for marriage is conclusively shown by the interpolation of the word *laicus* in the text I. Cor. VII. 2, which is quoted among the canons adopted.¹ To the same effect are the canons of the council of Celichyth, in 816, in which the only allusion to such matters is a provision to prevent the election of unfit persons to abbacies, and to punish monks and nuns who secularize themselves.²

On the other hand, it is true that about this time St. Swithin, after obtaining orders, was openly married; but his biographer states that he had a special dispensation from Leo III., and that he consented to it because, on the death of his parents, he was the sole representative of his family.³ As Swithin was tutor to Ethelwulf, son of King Ecgberht, the papal condescension is by no means impossible.

Such was the condition of the Anglo-Saxon church at this period. During the century which follows, the materials for tracing the vicissitudes of the question before us are of the scantiest description. The occasional councils which were held have left but meagre records of their deliberations, with few or no references to the subject of celibacy. It is probable, however, that a rapid deterioration in the strictness of discipline occurred, for even the power of the great Bretwalda Ecgberht was unequal to the task of repressing effectually the first invasions of the Northmen, and under his feeble successors they grew more and more destructive, until they culminated in the anarchy which gave occasion to the romantic adventures of Alfred.

It is to this period of darkness that we must attribute the introduction of sacerdotal marriage, which became so firmly established and was finally so much a matter of course that it attracted no special attention, until the efforts made for its abrogation late in the succeeding century. When Alfred undertook to restore order in his recovered kingdom, the

¹ Propter fornicationem fugiendam unusquisque *laicus* suam uxorem legitimam habeat.—Concil. Calchuth. can. 16.

² Concil. Celicyth. can. 4, 8.

³ De gradu in gradum . . . ad sacerdotii honorem proventus est . . . patre ejus decedente, cum præter eum nullus alius hæres superesset, Leone pontifice dispensante, uxorem duxit.—Goscelini Vit. S. Swithuni c. 1, 2.

body of laws which he compiled contains no allusion to celibacy, except as regards the chastity of nuns. The same may be said of the constitutions of Odo, Archbishop of Canterbury, to which the date of 943 is attributed, although they contain instructions as to the conduct of bishops, priests, and clerks¹—whence we may infer that the marriage even of consecrated virgins was not uncommon, and that it was the only infraction of the rule which aroused the opposition of the hierarchy. Simple immorality called forth an occasional enactment, as in the laws of Edward and Guthrun about the year 906, and in those of Edmund I. in 944,² yet even to this but little attention seems to have been attracted, until St. Dunstan undertook a reformation which was sorely needed.

St. Dunstan himself, although regularly bred to the church, with the most brilliant prospects both from his distinguished abilities and his powerful kindred, betrothed himself in marriage after receiving the lower orders. His uncle, St. Elphegus, Bishop of Winchester—apparently a churchman of the stricter school—vehemently opposed the union, but Dunstan was immovable in his determination. Elphegus, finding his worldly wisdom set at naught, appealed to the assistance of heaven. His prayer was answered, and Dunstan was attacked with a mysterious and loathsome malady, under which his iron resolution gave way. He sought Elphegus, took the monastic vow (the only inseparable bar to matrimony), and was ordained a priest.³ This stern experience might have taught him charity for the weakness of natures less unbending than his own, but his temperament was not one to pause half way. If, too, religious conviction urged him to the task of restoring the forgotten discipline of the church, worldly ambition might reasonably claim its share in his motives. He could not but feel that his authority would be vastly enhanced by rendering

¹ Leg. Aluredi c. 8, 18.—Constit. Odon. Cantuar. c. 7.

² Leg. Edwardi et Guthrun c. 3.—Leg. Eadmund. Eccles. c. 1.

³ Bridfrit. Vit. S. Dunstan. c. 5, 7. Bridfrith was a disciple of St. Dunstan, and composed his biography but a few years after the death of his patron.

He does not state what was the position of Dunstan at the time of his betrothal; but Osbern, a hundred years later, asserts that he had acquired the lower orders only, and that he received the priesthood and took the monastic vows simultaneously.—Osberni Vit. S. Dunstan. c. 8, 12.

the great ecclesiastical body dependent entirely upon him as the representative of Rome, and by sundering the ties which divided the allegiance due wholly to the church.

The opportunity to effect a reformation presented itself when the young king, Edgar the Pacific, in 963 violated all the dictates of honor and religion in his adventure with the nun at Wilton. Her resistance attested her innocence, and the birth of a daughter did not prevent her subsequent canonization as St. Wilfreda; but Edgar's crime and remorse were only the more heightened. When the terror-stricken king sought pardon and absolution, Dunstan was prepared with his conditions. Seven years of penitence, during which he was to abstain from wearing the crown, was the personal infliction imposed on him, but the most important portion of the sentence was that by which the vices of the king were to be redeemed by the enforced virtues of his subjects. He promised the founding of monasteries and the reformation of the clergy; and his implicit obedience to the demands of his ghostly judge is shown, perhaps, less in the fact that his coronation did not take place until 973, than in the active measures immediately set on foot with respect to the morals of the ecclesiastics.¹

That their morals, indeed, needed reformation is the unanimous testimony of all the chroniclers of the period. Among all the monasteries of England, formerly so noted for their zeal and prosperity, only those of Abingdon and Glastonbury were inhabited by monks.² The rest had fallen into ruin, or were occupied by the secular clergy, with their wives, or worse, and were notorious as places of the most scandalous dissipation and disorder.³ So low was the

¹ Osbern. Vit. S. Dūnstan. c. 35.—
Florent. Wigorn. ann. 964, 973.—
Matt. Westmonast. ann. 963.

² Nam hactenus in gente Anglorum
ea tempestate non habebantur mona-
chi nisi in Glastonia et Abendonia.—
Vit. S. Æthelwoldi c. 14.

³ Si ista solerti scrutinio curassetis,
non tam horrenda et abominanda ad
aures nostras de clericis pervenissent
. . . dicam dolens quo modo diffluant

in commessationibus, in ebrietatibus,
in cubilibus et impudiciis, ut jam
domus clericorum putentur prostibula
meretricum, conciliabulum histri-
num . . . Ad hoc ergo exhausserunt
patres nostri thesauros suos? ad hoc
fiscus regius, detractis redditibus
multis elargitus est? ad hoc ecclesiis
Christi agros et possessiones regalis
munificentia contulit, ut deliciis cleri-
corum meretrices ornentur? luxuriosæ
convivæ præparentur? canes ac aves

standard of morality that priests even scrupled not to put away the wives of whom they grew tired, and to form new connections, of open and public adultery;¹ and so common had this become that a code of ecclesiastical law, probably drawn up about this time, reproves this systematic bigamy, and appears to tacitly authorize marriage as legitimate and honorable.² One author declares that none but paupers could be found willing to bind themselves by monastic vows;³ and another asserts, with every show of reason, that the clergy were not only not superior to the laity in any respect, but were even far worse in the scandals of their daily life.⁴

When King Edgar made his peace with the church by consenting to the vicarious penitence of the priesthood, three rigid and austere monks were the ardent ministers of the royal determination. Of St. Dunstan, the primate of England, I have already spoken. St. Ethelwold, his pupil, Abbot of Abingdon, was elevated to the see of Winchester, and commenced the movement by expelling the occupants of the monastery there. A few who consented to take monastic vows were allowed to remain, and the remainder were replaced by monks; but even St. Ethelwold's rigor had to bend

et talia ludicra comparentur? Hoc milites clamant, plebs submurmurat, mimi cantant et saltant, et vos negligitis, vos parcitis, vos dissimulatis.—Oratio Edgari ann. 969 (Spelman. Concil. I. 477).

¹ Erat autem tunc in veteri monasterio (Wintonensi) ubi cathedra episcopalis habebatur malemorigerati clerici, elatione et insolentia ac luxuria præventi, adeo ut nonnulli eorum dedignarentur missas suo ordine celebrare; repudiantes uxores (quas illicitè duxerant) et alias accipientes, gulæ et ebrietati jugiter dediti.—Vit. S. Æthelwold. c. 12.—This biography was written by St. Ælfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was a contemporary.

² "Gif preorst cwenan forlæte and oðre nime, anapema sit" (Leg. Presbyt. Northumbriens. c. 35). Spelman's translation of this "Si presbyter concubinam suam dimiserit et aliam

acceperit, anathema sit" (Concil. I. 498) is perhaps hardly correct. Cwene can be interpreted in either a good or a bad sense, as a wife or a mistress; and the terms of the law show that the connection was a recognized one, the sin consisting in disregarding it. If the priest's companion were only a concubine, his guilt would not be measurably increased by merely changing his unlawful consort.

³ In his diebus corrupta erat tota religio Angliæ, propter incursionem paganorum, et propter austeritatem regulæ S. Benedicti, ita quod vix aliquis susciperet monachatum nisi pauper.—Chron. de Abbat. Abben-doniæ. (Chron. Abingdon. II. 279.)

⁴ Interea tanta clericalis ordo quibusdam in locis confusione agebatur, ut non solum a vita sæcularium excellentius nihil haberet, verum etiam improbis actibus longe inferior jaceret.—Osberni Vit. S. Dunstan. c. 36.

to the depravity of the age, and he was forced to relax the rigidity of the rule in order to obtain recruits of a better class.¹ The difficulties he encountered are indicated by the legend which relates that he was poisoned in his wine and carried from table to his couch in excruciating torment, where he lay hopeless till, reproaching himself with want of faith, he repeated the text—"Et si mortiferum quid biberint, non eis nocebitur," and was cured on the instant.² That his canons were quite capable of such an attempt may be assumed from the description given of them in the bull procured by Dunstan from John XIII., authorizing their ejection by the king. The pope does not hesitate to stigmatize them as vessels of the devil, hateful to all good Christians on account of their inveterate and ineradicable wickedness.³

The third member of the reforming triumvirate was St. Oswald, Bishop of Worcester, who undertook a similar transformation of the clergy occupying the monastery of St. Mary in his cathedral city. Many promises they made to conform to his wishes, and many times they eluded the performance, till, losing patience with the prolonged procrastination, he one day entered the chapel with a quantity of monkish habits as they were vigorously chanting "Servite Domino in timore," when he made practical application of the text by forcing them to put on the garments and take the vows on the spot, under the alternative of instant expulsion.⁴

These proceedings met the unqualified approbation of Edgar, who in 964, by his "Charter of Oswalde's Law," confirmed the ejection of the recreants who refused to part with their wives, and transferred all their rights and possessions to the newcomers. In the same document he boasted that he had instituted forty-seven abbeys of monks and nuns, and that he hoped to increase the number to fifty.⁵ The same year a similar summary process was carried out in the convents of

¹ Et ideo ut divites attraheret, instituit . . . et relaxavit quæ non sunt in regula S. Benedicti.—Chron. de Abbat. Abbendon. *loc. cit.*

² Vit. S. Æthelwold. c. 14, 15.

³ Joannis PP. XIII. Epist. xxii.

⁴ Concil. sub Dunstano (Spelman. I. 480).

⁵ Ædgari Charta de Oswalde's Law (Spelman. I. 433).