which earned for him among his contemporaries the credit of establishing its observance.[1] He who, as the legate Roland, had nearly paid, under the avenging sword of Otho of Wittelsbach, the forfeit of his life for his rude boldness at the imperial court, was little likely to abate one jot of the claims which the church asserted on the obedience of layman and clerk; and he recognized too fully the potency of the canons of Lateran and Rheims not to insist upon their observance. The very necessity under which he found himself, however, of repeating those canons shows how utterly neglected they had been, and how successfully the clergy had thus far resisted their reception and acknowledgment. Thus when, in 1163, he held the council of Tours, he was obliged to content himself with a canon which allowed three warnings to those who publicly kept concubines, and it was only after neglect of these warnings that they were threatened with deprivation of functions and benefice;[2] and when, in 1172, his legates presided over the council of Avranches, which absolved Henry II. for the murder of A'Becket, the Norman clergy were emphatically reminded that those who married in holy orders must put away their wives, and this in terms which indicate that the rule had not been previously obeyed.[3] Yet notwithstanding this formal declaration, only a few years later we find the Archbishop of Rheims applying to him for counsel in the case of a deacon who had committed matrimony, to which Alexander of course replied that the marriage was no marriage, and that the offending ecclesiastic must be separated from the woman, and undergo due penance.[4] The persistence of the pope, and the necessity of his urgency, are farther shown by sundry epistles to various English bishops, in which the rule is enunciated as absolute

---

[1] Et constituit ut nullus in sacris ordinibus habeat uxorem vel concubinam.—Chron. S. Ægid. in Brunswig.

[2] Concil. Turon. ann. 1163, can. 4 (MS. St. Michael. ap. Harduin. Tom. VI. P. ii. p. 1600).

[3] Qui autem a subdiaconatu vel supra ad matrimonia convolaverint, mulieres etiam invitas et renitentes relinquant.—Concil. Abrincens. ann. 1172, c. 1. I give this on the authority of the Abate Zaccaria (Nuova Giustificazione del Celibato Sacro, p. 120); there is no such canon among those attributed to the council by Hardouin (T. VI. P. II. p. 1634).

[4] Post Concil. Lateran. P. XVIII. c. 12.

and unvarying;[1] and he takes occasion to stigmatize such marriages with the most degrading epithet, when he graciously pardons those concerned, and permits their restitution after a long course of penitence, on their giving evidence of a reformed life.[2]

Yet even Alexander was forced to abate somewhat of his stern determination, in consideration of the incorrigible perversity of the time, though he seems not to have remarked that he abandoned the principle by admitting exceptions, and that the reasons assigned in such individual cases might, with equal cogency, be applied to the total withdrawal of the rule. When the Calabrian bishops informed him that clerks in holy orders throughout their dioceses committed matrimony, he ordered that priests and deacons should be irrevocably separated from their wives; but, in the case of subdeacons of doubtful morals, he instructed the prelates that they should tacitly connive at the irregularity, lest in place of one woman, many should be abused, and a greater evil be incurred, in the endeavor to avoid a less.[3] This worldly wisdom also dictated his orders to the Bishop of Exeter, in whose diocese subdeacons were in the habit of openly marrying. He directs an examination into the lives and characters of the offenders; those whose regular habits and staid morality afford fair expectation of their chastity in celibacy, are to be forcibly separated from their wives; while those whose disorderly character renders probable their general licentiousness if condemned to a single life, are not to be disturbed—taking care, however, that they do not minister at the altar, or receive ecclesiastical benefices.[4]

---

[1] Post Concil. Lateran. P. XVIII. c. 2, 6.

[2] Sane sacerdotes illi, qui nuptias contrahunt, quæ non nuptiæ sed contubernia sunt potius nuncupanda, post longam pœnitentiam et vitam laudabilem continentes, officio suo restitui poterunt, et ex indulgentia sui episcopi ejus executionem habere. —Can. 4 Extra, Tit. iii. Lib. III.

[3] Si vero subdiaconi contraxerint matrimonium, eos dummodo ante tales fuerint, quod timendum sit ne pro una pluribus abutantur, dissimulare poteris cum suis mulieribus remanere, quia tolerandum est malum ut pejora vitentur.—Post Concil. Lateran. P. XVIII. c. 4.

[4] Post Concil. Lateran. P. XVIII. c. 13.—In a decretal addressed to the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln, Alexander grants permission of marriage to a certain subdeacon, and forbids interference with such legitimate marriage, giving as a reason that the subdiaconate of the person referred to carried with it no preferment.—Ibid. c. 14.

Alexander adopted the principle that a simple vow of chastity did not prevent marriage or render it null, but that a formal vow, or the reception of orders, created a dissolution of marriage, or a total inability to enter into it;[1] but Celestin III. carried the principle still farther, and decreed that a simple vow, while it did not dissolve an existing connection, was sufficient to prevent a future one.[2]

Alexander did not confine himself to this portion of the question, but with ceaseless activity labored to enforce the observance of celibacy in general, and to repress the immorality which disgraced the church throughout Christendom —immorality which led Alain de l'Isle, the "Universal Doctor," to characterize the ecclesiastics of his time as being old men in their inefficiency and young men in their unbridled passions.[3] Alexander's efforts were particularly directed to put an end to the practice of hereditary priesthood, and its constant consequence, hereditary benefices. If I have made little allusion to this subject during the century under consideration, it is not that the church had relaxed her exertions to place some limit on this apparently incurable

---

[1] Post Concil. Lateran. P. VI. c. 9.

[2] Votum simplex impedit sponsalia de futuro, non autem dirimit matrimonium sequens; secus in voto solenni.—Can. 6 Extra Lib. IV. Tit. vi.

The practical rule deduced by a shrewd lawyer in the latter half of the thirteenth century from this varying legislation is, "Note deus relles; que simple vou et sollempnié lie maeme quant à Deu; et simple vou empêche à marier, mès il ne tost pas ce qui est fet; et note que vou, de la nature de soi, ne dépièce pas mariage, mès c'est de constitucion d'yglise."—(Livres de Jostice et de Plet, Liv. x. chap. vi. § 6.) This is likewise the conclusion reached by Thomas Aquinas, Summ. Theol. Supp. Quæst. LIII. Art. i. ii.

[3] Sacerdotes nostri temporis senes sunt et pueri. . . . Senes, quidem, morum desipientia, pueri lascivia; senes animi imbecillitate, pueri animi instabilitate; senes divini caloris defectu, pueri adulterini caloris effectu, etc.—Alani ab Insulis Lib. Pœnitentialis.

How little progress practically resulted from Alexander's labors, and how endless was the struggle perpetually recurring throughout Christendom, is well illustrated in a privilege addressed by his successor Lucius III. to Maurice de Sully, Bishop of Paris, about the year 1181.—"Relatum est nobis ex parte tua, quosdam presbiteros in tua diocesi constitutos infamia laborare, quod non erubescant detinere publice concubinas. Cum autem illos queris corrigere, obstaculum appellationis opponunt, ut canonicam correctionem evitent, et tamen a vitio et prava consuetudine non recedunt." (Chartular. Eccles. Paris. I. 35.) In 1189 we find a council at Rouen forbidding the clergy to keep "focariæ," without threatening any punishment, as though the prohibition were a novelty.—Concil. Rotomag. ann. 1180, can. iv.

disorder, or that the passive resistance to her efforts had been less successful than we have seen it on previous occasions. The perpetual injunctions of Alexander show at once the universality of the vice, and the determination of the pontiff to eradicate it. At the same time it became a frequent, and no doubt a profitable portion of the duties of the papal chancery, to grant special dispensations when those who held such preferment, or who desired to retain their wives, underwent the dangers and expense of a journey to Rome, and were rewarded for their confidence in the benignity of the Holy Father by a rescript to their bishops, commanding their reinstatement in the benefices from which they had been ejected.[1] The power to grant such dispensations was shrewdly reserved as the exclusive privilege of the papal court;[2] and a high churchman of the period assures us that there was no difficulty in obtaining them.[3] It need not, therefore, surprise us that Alexander's successor, Lucius III., found the hereditary transmission of the priestly office claimed as an absolute right.[4]

This conflicting legislation, at times enforced, and at times dispensed with by the supreme power, led to innumerable complications and endless perplexity in private life. Indeed, a large portion of the canons are founded on responses given by the popes to settle cases of peculiar difficulty arising from ignorance or neglect of the discipline enjoined, and many of these reveal extreme hardship inflicted on those who could be convicted of no intentional guilt. Perhaps the most noteworthy instance of the troubles caused by the new regulations was that of Bossaert d'Avesnes, which resulted in a desperate war to determine the possession of the rich provinces of Flanders and Hainault. As it illustrates the doubts

---

[1] Post. Concil. Lateran. P. XIX. c. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10. — Can. 10, 11, 12, 14, Extra, Lib. I. Tit. XVII.

[2] Can. 17, 18, Extra, Lib. I. Tit. XVII.

[3] Quia de talibus absque difficultate curia Romana dispensat, quia et de subdiaconibus quibusdam audivimus a domino Papa dispensatum.—Girald. Cambrens. Gemm. Eccles. Dist. II. cap. V.

[4] Consuetudinem introductam quod filii eorum qui vestras ecclesias tenuerunt. . . . patribus . . . consecuti, sub reprehensibili collusione volunt ipsas ecclesias jure successionis habere, etc.—Lucii. PP. III. Epist. 88. —Cf. Concil. Rotomag. anu. 1189, can. vi.

which still environed these particular points, and the conflicting decisions to which they were liable, even from the infallibility of successive popes, it may be worth briefly sketching here.

When Baldwin of Flanders, Emperor of Constantinople, died in 1206, his eldest daughter Jane succeeded to his territories of Flanders and Hainault, while his second child, Margaret, was placed under the guardianship of Bossaert d'Avesnes. Bossaert was a relative of her mother, Mary of Champagne, and though he held the comparatively insignificant position of chantre of Tournay, he was yet a man of great repute and influence. With the assent and approbation of the estates of Flanders, Margaret and Bossaert were married, the issue of the union being three sons. Whether the fact of his having received the subdiaconate was publicly known or not is somewhat doubtful; but he seems at length to have been awakened to a sense of his uncertain position, when he went to Rome for the purpose of obtaining a dispensation and legitimating his children. Innocent III. not only refused the application, but commanded him to restore Margaret to her relatives and to do penance by a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Disregarding these injunctions, he lived openly with his wife after his return and was excommunicated in consequence. At length Margaret left him and married Guillaume de Dampierre, while Bossaert was assassinated during a second visit to Rome, where he was seeking reconciliation to the church. When at last, in 1244, the Countess Jane closed her long and weary career by assuming the veil at Marquette, without leaving heirs, the children of Margaret by both marriages claimed the succession, and Margaret favored the younger, asserting, without scruple, that her elder sons were illegitimate. The difficult question was referred to St. Louis for arbitration, and in 1247 the good king assigned Flanders to Gui de Dampierre and Hainault to Jean d'Avesnes, thus recognizing both marriages as legitimate. This, of course, satisfied neither party. Innocent IV. was appealed to, and in 1248 he sent commissioners to investigate the knotty affair. They reported that the marriage of Bossaert had been contracted in the face of all Flanders, and that the d'Avesnes were legiti-

mate, which judgment was confirmed by Innocent himself in 1252. Thus fortified, Jean d'Avesnes resisted the proposed partition, and a bloody civil war arose. The victory of Vacheren placed the Dampierre in the hands of their half brothers, and promised to be decisive, until Margaret called in Charles de Valois, bribing him with the offer of Hainault to complete the disinheriting of her first-born. The war continued until Louis, returning from the East in 1255, compelled the combatants to lay down their arms, and to abide by his arbitration.[1]

Yet even the resolute spirit of Alexander III., dismayed at the arduous nature of the struggle, or appalled at the ineradicable vices which defied even papal authority, at times shrank from the contest and was ready to abandon the principle. If we may believe Giraldus Cambrensis, who, as a contemporary intimately connected with the highest ecclesiastical authorities in England, was not likely to be mistaken, and whose long sojourn at the court of Innocent III. would have afforded him ample opportunities of correcting a misstatement, Alexander had once resolved to introduce the discipline of the Greek church in Western Europe, permitting single marriages with virgins. To this he had obtained the assent of his whole court, except his chancellor Albert, who was afterwards pope under the name of Gregory VIII. The resistance of this dignitary was so powerful as to cause the abandonment of the project.[2] Alexander, indeed, was not alone in this conviction. Giraldus

---

[1] D'Oudegherst, Annales de Flandre, chap. CIII.—Baluz. et Mansi T. I.—Miræi Diplom. Lib. I. c. 88.—Grandes Chroniques, T. IV. pp. 339–42.

[2] In presbyteris autem nullum omnino remedium, nulla dispensatio locum habet, nisi forte per generale concilium, a summo pontifice et cardinalibus, consensu quoque totius ecclesiæ de desponsandis unicis et virginibus more Græcorum statueretur. Sicut de Alexandro tertio dicitur, quod id statuere propter pericula, quæ in occidentali ecclesia ex voti illius emissione cognoverat tanta, proculdubio proposuerat et firmiter animo decreverat; tota ecclesia Romana in hoc consentiente præter abbatem cancellarium, qui vir erat singulari quadam austeritate notabilis, qui et postmodum tamen tertius ab Alexandro est papa creatus et Gregorius quartus vocatus. Ob cujus dissensum solius tam utile tanti patris tamque discreti propositum, peccatis exigentibus, non fuit effectui mancipatum. —Girald. Cambrens. Gemm. Eccles. Div. II. cap. vi.

The "Gemma" was the favorite work of its author, who relates with pride the approbation specially bestowed upon it by Innocent III.

himself was fully convinced that such a change would be most useful to the church, though as archdeacon of St. David's he had displayed his zeal for the enforcement of the canon by measures too energetic for the degeneracy of the age, and though he occupies, in his "Gemma Ecclesiastica," twenty-one chapters with an exhortation to his clergy to abandon their evil courses.[1] Men of high character did not hesitate to take even stronger ground against the rule. The celebrated Peter Comestor, whose orthodoxy is unquestioned, taught publicly in his lectures that the devil had never inflicted so severe a blow on the church as in procuring the adoption of celibacy.[2]

These were but individual opinions. The policy of the church remained unaltered, and Alexander's successors emulated his example in endeavoring to enforce the canons. Clement III. took advantage of the profound impression which the capture of Jerusalem by Saladin (Oct. 1187) produced on all Europe, when the fall of the Latin kingdom was attributed to the sins of Christendom. He preached a general reformation. Abstinence from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays for five years, and various other kinds of mortification were enjoined on all to propitiate a justly offended Deity, but the clergy were the objects of special reproof. Their extreme laxity of morals, their neglect of the dress of their order, their worldly ambition and pursuits, drinking, gambling, and flocking to tournaments, and the unclerical deportment which left little difference between them and the laity, were some of the accusations brought against them. To their incontinence, however, was chiefly attributed the wrath of God, besides the measureless scandals to which their conduct exposed the church, and they were commanded to remove all suspected

---

[1] Yet so hopeless was this well-intentioned attempt, that Giraldus is willing to let off his recalcitrant clergy with the simple restriction demanded of the laity — abstinence for three days previous to partaking of the communion. "Qui igitur in immunditiæ veluti suo volutabro volvitur adhuc et versatur, hanc saltem altari sacro et sacrificiis reverentiam sacerdos exhibeat, ut vel tribus diebus et noctibus priusquam corpus Christi consecrare præsumat mundum . . . vas custodiat."—Ibid. cap. vii.

[2] Hoc autem magistrum Petrum Manducatorem in audientia totius scholæ suæ quæ tot et tantis viris literatissimis referta fuit dicentem audivi, quia nunquam hostis ille antiquus in aliquo articulo, adeo ecclesiam Dei circumvenit, sicut in voti illius emissione.—Ibid. cap. vi.

females from their houses within forty days, under pain of suspension from their functions and revenues.[1] That these rebukes were not the mere angry declamation of an ascetic is shown by the declaration of Celestine III., a few years later, that throughout Germany the custom still prevailed of fathers substituting in their benefices their sons, born during priesthood, so that frequently parent and offspring ministered together in the same church;[2] and the extent of the demoralization is evident when we find the sons of priests and deacons alluded to as a class ineligible to knighthood in a constitution of Frederic Barbarossa in 1187.[3]

Yet, with all his ardor, Clement admitted that celibacy was only a local rule of discipline, and that there was nothing really incompatible between marriage and the holy functions of the altar. The time had not yet come when the council of Trent could erect the inviolable continence of the priesthood into an article of faith, and Clement was willing to allow that priests of the Greek church, under his jurisdiction, could legitimately be married and could celebrate mass while their families were growing up around them.[4]

Innocent III., who, by the fortunate conjunction of the time in which he flourished with his own matchless force of character, enjoyed perhaps the culmination of papal power and prerogative, at length brought to the struggle an influence and a determination which could scarcely fail to prove decisive on any question capable of a favorable solution. By

---

[1] De incontinentia vero clericorum, unde ira Dei contra nos maxime provocatur, et scandala gravissima inter clerum et populum excitantur, apostolica auctoritate firmissime præcipimus, ut omnes suspectas personas de domo et procuratione sua, infra quadraginta dies removeant; quod si non fecerint, ab omni officio et beneficio ecclesiastico suspendantur. — Epist. Henr. Card. Albanens. (Ludewig, Rel. Msctor. II. 441).

[2] Baluz. et Mansi III. 380. Even the regular clergy shared in the general relaxation of discipline. In 1192, Odo, Bishop of Toul, deplored the wickedness of monks who left their monasteries and openly married. All such he excommunicated, with their wives and families.—Statut. Synod. Odon. Tullens. cap. vi. (Hartzheim, III. 456).

[3] De filiis quoque sacerdotum, diaconorum, rusticorum, statuimus, ne cingulum militare aliquatenus assumant; et qui jam assumpserunt, per judicem provinciæ a militia pellantur. —Feudor. Lib. v. Tit. x.—Conf. Conr. Urspergens. ann. 1187.

[4] Can. 7 Extra, Lib. v. Tit. xxxviii.

his decretals and his legates he labored assiduously to enforce obedience to the canons, and when, in 1215, he summoned the whole Christian world to meet in the fourth council of Lateran, that august assembly of about thirteen hundred prelates, acting under his impulsion, and reflecting his triumph over John of England and Otho of Germany, spoke with an authority which no former body since that of Nicæa had possessed. Its canons on the subject before us were simple, perhaps less violent in their tone than those of former synods, but they breathed the air of conscious strength, and there was no man that dared to openly gainsay them. A more rigid observance of the rules was enjoined, and any one officiating while suspended for contravention was punishable with perpetual degradation and deprivation of his emoluments. Yet the rule was admitted to be merely a local ordinance peculiar to the Latin church, for, in the effort made by the council to heal the schism with Constantinople, the right of the East to permit the marriage of its priests was acknowledged by a clause visiting with severe penalties those who by custom were allowed to marry, and who, notwithstanding this license, still permitted themselves illicit indulgences. The disgraceful traffic by which in some places prelates regularly sold permissions to sin was denounced in the strongest terms, as a vice equal in degree to that which it encouraged; and the common custom of fathers obtaining preferment in their own churches for their illegitimate offspring was reprobated as it deserved.[1]

---

[1] Ne vero facilitas veniæ incentivum tribuat delinquendi: statuimus, ut qui deprehensi fuerint incontinentiæ vitio laborare, prout magis aut minus peccaverint, puniantur secundum canonicas sanctiones, quas efficacius et districtius præcipimus observari, ut quos divinus timor a malo non revocat, temporalis saltem pœna a peccato cohibeat.

Si quis igitur hac de causa suspensus, divina celebrare præsumpserit, non solum ecclesiasticis beneficiis spolietur, verum etiam pro hac duplici culpa, perpetuo deponatur.

Prælati vero qui tales præsumpserint in suis iniquitatibus sustinere, maxime obtentu pecuniæ vel alterius commodi temporalis, pari subjaceant ultioni.

Qui autem secundum regionis suæ morem non abdicarunt copulam conjugalem, si lapsi fuerint, gravius puniantur, cum legitimo matrimonio possint uti.—Concil. Lateranens. IV. can. 14.

Ad abolendam pessiman, quæ in plerisque inolevit ecclesiis, corruptelam, firmiter prohibemus, ne canonicorum filii, maxime spurii, canonici fiant in sæcularibus ecclesiis, in quibus instituti sunt patres etc.—Ibid. can. 31.

There is nothing novel in these canons, nor can they in strictness be said to constitute an epoch in the history of sacerdotal celibacy. They enunciate no new principles, they threaten no new punishments, yet are they noteworthy as marking the settled policy of the church at a period when it had acquired that plenitude of power and vigor of organization which insured at least an outward show of obedience to its commands. The successive labors of so long a series of pontiffs, during more than a century and a half, carrying with them the cumulative authority of Rome, had gradually broken down resistance, and the Lateran canons were the definitive expression of its discipline on this subject. Accordingly, though we shall see how little was accomplished in securing the purity of the priesthood, which was the ostensible object of the rule, yet hereafter there are to be found few traces of marriage in holy orders. That was recognized as inadmissible, except in those countries which lay on the frontiers of Christendom, and even in them it was virtually extirpated long ere the close of the century.

XXI.

RESULTS.

THE unrelaxing efforts of two centuries had at length achieved an inevitable triumph. One by one the different churches of Latin Christendom yielded to the fiat of the successor of St. Peter, and their ecclesiastics were forced to forego the privilege of assuming the most sacred of earthly ties with the sanction of heaven and the approbation of man. Sacerdotalism vindicated its claim to exclusive obedience; the church successfully asserted its right to command the entire life of its members, and to sunder all the bonds that might allure them to render a divided allegiance. In theory, at least, all who professed a religious life or assumed the sacred ministry were given up wholly to the awful service which they had undertaken: no selfishly personal aspirations could divert their energies from the aggrandizement of their class, nor were the temporal possessions of the establishment to be exposed to the minute but all-pervading dilapidation of the wife and family.

If these were the objects of the movement inaugurated by Damiani and Hildebrand, and followed up with such unrelenting vigor by Calixtus and Alexander and Innocent, the history of the medieval church attests how fully they were attained. It is somewhat instructive, indeed, to observe that in the rise of the papal power to its culmination under Innocent III. it was precisely the pontiffs most conspicuous for their enforcement of the rule of celibacy who were likewise most prominent in their assertion of the supremacy, temporal and spiritual, of the head of the Roman church. Whether or not they recognized and acknowledged the connection, they labored as though the end in view was clearly appreciated,

and their triumphs on the one field were sure to be followed by corresponding successes on the other.

Yet in all this the ostensible object was always represented to be the purity of the church and of its ministers. The other advantages were either systematically ignored or but casually alluded to. If the results which were thus kept in the background were attained, what was the effect with regard to those which were held out as the sole and sufficient reason for reforming the great body of the church, and resuscitating the all but forgotten law which opened an impassable gulf between the ecclesiastic and the layman?

One warning voice, indeed, was raised, in a quarter where it would have at least commanded respectful attention, had not the church appeared to imagine itself superior to the ordinary laws of cause and effect. While Innocent II. was laboring to enforce his new doctrine that ordination and religious vows were destructive of marriage, St. Bernard, the ascetic reformer of monachism and the foremost ecclesiastic of his day, was thundering against the revival of Manicheism. The heresies of the Albigenses respecting marriage were to be combated, and, in performing this duty, he pointed out with startling vigor the evils to the church and to mankind of the attempt to enforce a purity incompatible with human nature. Deprive the church of honorable marriage, he exclaimed, and you fill her with concubinage, incest, and all manner of nameless vice and uncleanness.[1] It was still an age of faith; and while earnest men like St. Bernard could readily anticipate the evils attendant upon the asceticism of heretics, they could yet persuade themselves, as the Council of Trent subsequently expressed it, that God would not deny the gift of chastity to those who rightly sought it in the bosom of the true church. Thus, despite the divine warning, they were resolved deliberately to tempt the Lord, and it remains for us to see what was the success of the attempt.

---

[1] Tolle de ecclesia honorabile connubium et torum immaculatum; nonne reples eam concubinariis, incestuosis, seminifluis, mollibus, masculorum concubitoribus et omni denique genere immundorum?—Bernardi Serm. lxvi. in Cantic. § 3.—This series is understood to have been written in 1135.

It is somewhat significant that when, in France, the rule of celibacy was completely restored, strict churchmen should have found it necessary to revive the hideously suggestive restriction which denied to the priest the society of his mother or of his sister. Even in the profoundest barbarism of the tenth century, or the unbridled license of the eleventh; even when Damiani descanted upon the disorders of his contemporaries with all the cynicism of the most exalted asceticism, horrors such as these are not alluded to. It is reserved for the advancement of the thirteenth century and the enforcement of celibacy to show us how outraged human nature may revenge itself and protest against the shackles imposed by blind and unreasoning bigotry. In 1208, Guala, Cardinal of St. Martin, Innocent's legate in France, issued an order in which he not only repeated the threadbare prohibitions respecting focariæ and concubines, but commanded that even mothers and other relatives should not be allowed to reside with men in holy orders, the devil being the convenient personage on whom, as usual, was thrown the responsibility of the scandals which were known to occur under such circumstances.[1] That this decree was not allowed to pass into speedy oblivion is shown by a reference to it as still well known and in force a century later, in the statutes of the church of Tréguier.[2] And that the necessity for it was not evanescent may be assumed from its repetition in the regulations of the see of Nismes, the date of which is uncertain, but probably attributable to the close of the fourteenth century.[3] At the same time, we have evidence that Cardinal Guala's efforts were productive of little effect. Four years later, in 1212, we find Innocent formally authorizing the prelates of France to mercifully pardon those who had been excommunicated under Guala's rules, with the suggestive proviso that the power thus

---

[1] Moneantur quoque ne matres vel uxores, aliasque conjunctas personas secum habeant: cum quibus etsi nihil sævi criminis fœdus naturale existimari permittat, tamen frequenter, suggerente diabolo, cum talibus noscitur fuisse facinus perpetratum.—Constit. Gallonis cap. I. (Harduin. T. VI. P. II. p. 1975).—Giraldus Cambrensis, a few years earlier, makes the same assertion (Gemma. Eccles. Dist. II. cap. XV.).

[2] Statut. Eccles. Trecorens. c. 32 (Martene et Durand IV. 1102).

[3] Statut. Eccles. Nemausens. Tit. VII. c. 5 (Ibid. IV. 1044).

conferred was not to be used for the purpose of extorting unhallowed gains.[1] Still more significant is the fact that in the same year Innocent dispatched another legate, Cardinal Robert, duly commissioned to renew the endless task of purifying the Gallican church. Guala's efforts would seem to have already passed into oblivion, for in a council which Cardinal Robert held in Paris he gravely promulgated a canon forbidding the priesthood from keeping their concubines so openly as to give rise to scandal, and threatening the recalcitrant with excommunication if they should persist in retaining their improper consorts for forty days after receiving notice.[2]

The clergy of France were not exceptional, and, unfortunately, there can be no denial of the fact that notorious and undisguised illicit unions, or still more debasing secret licentiousness, was a universal and pervading vice of the church throughout Christendom. Its traces amid all the ecclesiastical legislation of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries are too broad and deep to be called into question, and if no evidence remained except the constant and unavailing efforts to repress it, that alone would be sufficient. National and local synods, pastoral epistles, statutes of churches, all the records of ecclesiastical discipline are full of it. Now deploring and now threatening, exhausting ingenuity in devising new regulations and more effective punishments, the prelates of those ages found themselves involved in a task as endless and as bootless as that of the Danaidæ. Occasionally, indeed, it is lost sight of momentarily, when the exactions and usurpations of the laity, or the gradual extension of secular jurisdiction monopolized the attention of those who were bound to defend the privileges of their class; but, with these rare exceptions, it may be asserted as a general truth that scarcely a synod met, or a body of laws was drawn up to govern some local church, in which the subject did not receive a prominent position and careful consideration. It would be wearisome and unprofitable to recapitulate here the details of this fruit-

---

[1] Innocent. PP. III. Regest. Lib. xv. Epist. 113.

[2] Concil. Parisiens. ann. 1212, can. 4 (Harduin. T. VI. P. II. p. 2001).

less iteration. Without by any means exhausting the almost limitless materials for investigation, I have collected a formidable mass of references upon the subject, but an examination of them shows so little of novelty and so constant a recurrence to the starting point, that no new principles can be evolved from them, and their only interest lies in their universality, and in demonstrating how resultless was the unceasing effort to remove the uneffaceable plague-spot.[1]

Nor is it only from these sources that are to be collected the evidences of the open and avowed shame of the church. The Neapolitan code, promulgated about 1231 by the enlightened Frederic II., absolutely interfered to give a quasi legitimacy to the children of ecclesiastics, and removed, to a certain extent, their disability of inheritance. The imperial officials were ordered to assign appropriate shares in parental property to such children, notwithstanding their illegitimacy, conditioned on the payment of an annual tax to the imperial court; and parents were not allowed to alienate their property to the prejudice of such children, any more than in

---

[1] One reference, perhaps, may be allowed, from its comprehensiveness. When, in 1259, Alexander IV. sought to check the licentiousness which shamelessly paraded the concubines of the clergy before the faces of the people, he did not hesitate to attribute to the dissolute ecclesiastics all the evils under which the church was groaning. "Per tales maxime nomen Dei Domini blasphematur in terris: per tales derogatur sacramentis fidei orthodoxæ, cum vasa Domini pollutis eorum manibus profanantur: per tales ergo perdit religionem Catholicam devotio reverentiæ Christianæ: per tales decipitur populus in divinis, et ecclesiastica substantia dissipatur. Hinc detrahitur verbo Dei, dum immundis labiis talium nunciatur: hinc hæretici mussitant et insultant: hinc tyranni sæviunt: hinc perfidi persequuntur: hinc grassantur audacius in Christi patrimonio sacrilegi exactores, a quibus, proh pudor! ob hujusmodi carnes putridas, quas disciplinalis mucro non resecat, sicut decet, sincerum Catholicæ matris corpus in ostentum ducitur et contemptum." The sincerity of his conviction was manifested by his ordering the prelates of Christendom to prosecute all such offences with the utmost severity under the canons, and, as the only way to render this effectual, he forbade all appeals to Rome in such cases, thus surrendering the power which had cost his predecessors so many struggles to obtain.—Chron. Augustens. ann. 1260 (Freher. et Struv. I. 546–7).

This Bull caused considerable stir. Many prelates were stimulated by it to reform their flocks, and large numbers of ecclesiastics were expelled from the church. A contemporary rhymester, Adam de la Halle (better known perhaps as Le Bossu d'Arras), thus alludes to its effects:—

Et chascuns le pape encosa
Quant tant de bons clers desposa.—
—Romme a bien le tierche partie
Des clers fais sers et amatis.

(Michel, Théat. Frau. au Moyen Age, p. 23.)

cases of the offspring of lawful wedlock.[1] The numbers and influence of the class thus protected must indeed have been great to induce such interference in their favor.

The direct encouragement thus given to these illicit connections, by providing for the children sprung from them, contravened one of the principal modes by which the church endeavored to suppress them. The innumerable canons issued during this period, forbidding and pronouncing null and void all testamentary provisions in favor of concubines and descendants, prove not only how much stress was laid upon it as an efficient means of repression, but also how little endeavor was made by the guilty parties to conceal their sin. As all testaments came within the sphere of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, it would seem that there should have been no difficulty in enforcing regulations of this kind, yet their constant repetition proves either that those who were intrusted with their execution were habitually remiss, or else that the popular feelings were in favor of the unfortunates, and interfered with the efficacy of the laws.

A single instance, out of many that might be cited, will illustrate this. In 1225 the Cardinal-legate Conrad held, at Mainz, a national council of the German empire, of which one of the canons declared that, in order to abolish the custom of ecclesiastics leaving to their concubines and children the fruits of their benefices, not only should such legacies be void, but those guilty of the attempt should lie unburied, and all who endeavored to enforce such testaments should be anathematized.[2] The terrible rigor of these provisions shows how deep seated was the evil aimed at; nor were they uncalled for when we see a will, executed in 1218 by no

---

[1] Constit. Sicular. Lib. III. Tit. 25, c. 1.—"Quia filii clericorum in paternis et maternis bonis vel rebus, pro legitimo defectu natalium, jus successionis amittunt . . . ea quæ per successionem habere non possunt, jure locationis a nostra clementia recognoscant."

It is possible that Frederick's legislation may have attracted attention to the irregularities of the Neapolitan church, for in 1230 Gregory IX. addressed an encyclical letter to the prelates of that kingdom "præsertim super cohabitatione mulierum;" and two years later he deemed it necessary to repeat his admonitions.—Raynaldi Annal. ann. 1230, No. 20.

[2] Concil. Mogunt. ann. 1225, c. 5. This council was assembled to check the prevalent vices of concubinage and simony, and its elaborate provisions show how fruitless previous efforts had been.

less a personage than Gotfrid, Archdeacon of Wurzburg, in which he leaves legacies to the children whom he confesses to have been born in sin, and of whom he expects his relatives to take charge.[1] Had any earnest attempt been made to enforce the canons of the Legate, they would have been amply sufficient to eradicate the evil; yet their utter inefficiency is demonstrated by the council of Fritzlar in 1246, and that of Cologne in 1260. The former of these was held by the Archbishop of Mainz; it has no canons directed against concubinage, which was as public as ever, but it deplores the dilapidation of the temporalities of the church by the testamentary provisions of priests in favor of their guilty partners and children, and it repeats, with additional emphasis, the regulations of 1225.[2] The latter renews the complaint that priests not only continue their evil courses throughout life, but are not ashamed, on their death-beds, to leave to their children the patrimony of Christ; and another provision is equally significant in forbidding priests to be present at the marriages of their children, or that such marriages should be solemnized with pomp and ostentation.[3] The following year another council, held at Mainz, repeated the prohibition as to the diversion of church property to the consorts and natural children of priests;[4] while that regarding the solemnization of their children's marriages was renewed by the synod of Olmutz in 1342.[5]

---

[1] Puerulis etiam quos in peccato generavi, ne ad illicita cogantur opera, lego maiori xx. marcas, etc.—(Gudeni Cod. Diplom. II. 36.) Not a few testaments of this kind are preserved.

[2] Concil. Fritzlar. ann. 1246, can. xi. (Hartzheim, III. 574).

[3] Concil. Coloniens. ann. 1260, c. 1.

[4] Concil. Mogunt. ann. 1261, can. xxvii. xxxix. (Hartzheim, III. 604, 607). The latter canon is very prolix and earnest, and inveighs strongly against the "cullagium," or payment exacted by archdeacons and deans for permitting irregularities. The authorities apparently grew gradually tired of attempting the impossible. In 1284 the Council of Passau, in a series of long and elaborate canons, contented itself with a vague threat of prosecuting priests who publicly kept concubines, and with prohibiting them from ostentatiously celebrating the marriage of their children. —Concil. Patav. ann. 1284, can. ix. xxxi. (Ibid. pp. 675, 679).

[5] Synod. Olomucens. ann. 1342, cap. viii. (Hartzheim, IV. 338). In 1416 the synod of Breslau deplores that the old canons were forgotten and despised, and that priests were not ashamed to bequeath to their bastards accumulations of property which would form fit portions for

We have already seen ecclesiastical authority for the assertion that in the Spanish Peninsula the children sprung from such illicit connections rivalled in numbers the offspring of the laity. That they were numerous elsewhere may be presumed when we see Innocent IV., in 1248, forced to grant to the province of Livonia the privilege of having them eligible to holy orders, except when born of parents involved in monastic vows,[1] for necessity alone could excuse so flagrant a departure from the canons enunciated during the preceding two centuries. A similar conclusion is deducible from the fact that in the municipal code in force throughout Northern Germany during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they were deemed of sufficient importance to be entitled to a separate place in the classification of wehr-gilds, or blood-moneys; while the aim of the lawgiver to stigmatize them is manifested by his placing them below the peasant, deeming them only superior to the juggler;[2] and that this was not a provision of transient force is clear from the commentary upon it in a body of law dating from the end of the fourteenth century.[3] Nor is the evidence less convincing which may be drawn from the use of the old German word *pfaffenkind*, or priest's son, which became generally used as equivalent to bastard.[4] It would not, indeed, be difficult to understand the numbers of this class of the population if ecclesiastics in general followed the example of Henry III., Bishop of Liége, whose natural children amounted to no less than sixty-five.[5]

---

lofty nobles.—Synod. Wratislav. ann. 1416, § 1 (Hartzheim, V. 153).

How thoroughly it was deemed a matter of course for the children of ecclesiastics to marry well, and have good dowries, is to be seen in Chaucer's description of the wife of "deinous Simekin," the proud miller of Trompington—

A wif he hadde, comen of noble kin;
The person of the toun hire father was.
With hire he yaf ful many a panne of bras,
For that Simkin shuld in his blood allie.
She was yfostered in a nonnerie, etc.

—The Reves Tale.

[1] Baluz. et Mansi I. 211.

[2] Specul. Saxon. Lib. III. art. 45.

[3] Richstich Landrecht, Lib. II. c. 25.

[4] Michelet, Origines des Loix, p. 68. This popular phrase gives point to the story told by Henri Estienne of a German ambassador to Rome, to whom, on his farewell audience, the pope gave a message to his master, commencing, "Tell our well-beloved son"—The honest Teuton could not contain himself at what he took to be a flagrant insult, and he interrupted the diplomatic courtesies with an angry exclamation that his noble master was not the son of a priest.—Apol. pour Herodote Liv. I. chap. iii.

[5] This admirable prelate, after en-

As time wore on, and the clergy, despite the innumerable admonitions and threats which were everywhere showered upon them, persisted in retaining their female companions, they appear, in some places, to have gradually assumed the privilege as a matter of right; and, what is even more remarkable, they seem to have had a certain measure of success in the assumption. The pious Charles the Lame of Naples, whose close alliance with Rome rendered him eager in everything that would gratify the head of the church, about the year 1300 imposed a heavy fine on the concubines of priests if they persisted in their sin for a year after excommunication. This law, like so many similar ones, soon fell into desuetude, but in 1317, under his son Robert the Good, the justiciary of the Principato Citra undertook to put it into execution. In the diocese of Marsico the clergy openly resisted these proceedings, boldly laid their complaints before the king, and were so energetic that Robert was obliged to issue an ordinance directing the discontinuance of all processes before the lay tribunals, and granting that the concubines should be left to the care of the ecclesiastical courts alone. These women thus, by reason of their sinful courses, came to be invested with a quasi-ecclesiastical character, and to enjoy the dearly prized immunities attached to that position, at a time when the church was vigorously striving to uphold and extend the privileges which the civil lawyers were systematically laboring to undermine. Nor was the pretension thus advanced suffered to lapse. Towards the close of the

---

joying the episcopate for twenty-seven years, was at length deposed in 1274 by Gregory X., at the council of Lyons, in consequence of the complaints of his flock "super defloratione virginum ac aliis factis enormibus."—Mag. Chron. Belgic.

The excesses of the lower orders of the clergy are scarcely to be wondered at when we consider the prevalent superstitions which deemed them almost irresponsible to God or man. In the early part of the fifteenth century there was a wide-spread belief that even a layman insured his eternal salvation, no matter what crimes he might have committed, by wrapping himself up in the Franciscan habit on his death-bed. For ages the robe of the monk had thus assuaged the fears of the dying sinner, but the merits of St. Francis gave peculiar virtue to this claim upon his special protection, for every year he visited purgatory, and carried with him to heaven the souls of his followers. So easy a purchase of salvation, however, was equally dangerous to the welfare of the faithful and to the revenues of the church, and the superstition was promptly condemned as a most pernicious error. — Concil. Hammaburg. ann. 1406 (Hartzheim, VI. 2).

same century, Carlo Malatesta of Rimini applied to Ancarono, a celebrated doctor of canon and civil law ("juris canonici speculum et civilis anchora"), to know whether he could impose penalties on the concubines of priests, and the learned jurist replied decidedly in the negative; while other legal authorities have not hesitated to state that such women are fully entitled to immunity from secular jurisdiction, as belonging to the families of clerks—*de familia clericorum*.[1] When a premium was thus offered for sin, and the mistresses of priests—like the *maîtresses-en-titre* of the Bourbons—acquired a certain honorable position among their fellows from the mere fact of their ministering to the unhallowed lusts of their pastors, it is not to be wondered at if such connections multiplied and flourished, and if the humble laity came to regard them as an established institution.

Robert of Naples was not the only potentate who found an organized resistance to his well-meant endeavors to restore discipline. When, in 1410, the stout William, Bishop-elect of Paderborn, had triumphed with fire and sword over his powerful foes, the Archbishop of Cologne and the Count of Cleves, he turned his energies to the reformation of the dissolute morals of his monks. They positively refused to submit to the ejection of their women from the monasteries, and he at length found the task too impracticable even for his warlike temper. For seven long years the quarrel lasted, legal proceedings being varied by attempts at poison on the one side, and reckless devastations by the episcopal troops on the other, until the prelate, worn out by the stubbornness of his flock, was obliged to give way.[2]

---

[1] Giannone, Apologia cap. XIV.

[2] Gobelinæ Personæ Cosmodrom. Ætat. VI. c. 92, 93.—How utterly monastic discipline was neglected in Germany is shown by the fact that a century earlier, in 1307, a council of Cologne found it necessary to denounce the frequency with which nuns were seduced, left their convents, lived in open and public profligacy, and then returned unblushingly to their establishments, where they seem to have been received as a matter of course.—Concil. Colon. ann. 1307, c. XVII. (Hartzheim, IV. 113.) That this had little effect is proved by a repetition of the threats of punishment, three years later (Concil. Colon. ann. 1310, c. IX.; Hartzheim, IV. 122). In 1347, John van Arckel, Bishop of Utrecht, was obliged to prohibit men from having access to the nunneries of his diocese, in order to put an end to the scandals which were apparently frequent (Hartzheim, IV. 350). In 1350, the Emperor Charles IV. felt called

Equal success waited on the resistance of the Swiss clergy when, in 1230, the civil authorities of Zurich sacrilegiously ordered them to dismiss their women. They resolutely replied that they were flesh and blood, unequal to the task of living like angels, and unable to attend to the kitchen and other household duties. The townsmen entered into a league against them, and succeeded in driving away some of the sacerdotal consorts, when the Bishop of Constance and his chapter, allowing perhaps the pride of the churchman to get the better of ascetic zeal, interfered with a threat of excommunication on all who should presume to intervene in a matter which related specially to the church. He absolved the leaguers from the oaths with which they were mutually bound, and thus restored security to the priestly households. About the same time Gregory IX. appointed a certain Boniface to the see of Lausanne. On his installation, the new bishop commenced with ardor to enforce the canons, but the clergy conspired against his life, and were so nearly successful that he incontinently fled, and never ventured to return.[1]

If the irregular though permanent connections which everywhere prevailed had been the only result of the prohibition of marriage, there might perhaps have been little practical evil flowing from it, except to the church itself and to its guilty members. When the desires of man, however, are once tempted to seek through unlawful means the relief denied to them by artificial rules, it is not easy to set bounds to the unbridled passions which, irritated by the fruitless effort at repression, are no longer restrained by a law which has been broken or a conscience which has lost its power. The records of the Middle Ages are accordingly full

---

upon to address an earnest remonstrance to the Archbishop of Mainz concerning the unclerical habits of his canons and clergy who spent the revenues of the church in jousts and tourneys, and who, in dress, arms, and mode of life, were not to be distinguished from laymen (Ibid. IV. 358). How little was effected by these efforts is manifest when, in 1360, William, Archbishop of Cologne, was obliged to refute the assertions of those monks and nuns who alleged in their defence that custom allowed them to leave their convents and contract marriage "etiamsi allegent, quod de consuetudine monasteria sua deserere et matrimonium contrahere possint."—(Ibid. IV. 493.)

[1] Henke, Append. ad Calixt. pp. 585–6.

of the evidences that indiscriminate license of the worst kind prevailed throughout every rank of the hierarchy. The subject is too repulsive to be presented in all its loathsome details, but one or two allusions may be permitted as completing the picture of the moral condition of the medieval church.

The abuse of the awful authority given by the altar and the confessional was a subject of sorrowful and indignant denunciation in too many synods for a reasonable doubt to be entertained of its frequency or of the corruption which it spread throughout innumerable parishes.[1] The almost entire impunity with which these and similar scandals were perpetrated led to an undisguised and cynical profligacy which the severer churchmen themselves admitted to exercise a most deleterious influence on the morals of the laity, who thus found in their spiritual guides the exemplars of evil.[2] Chaucer, with his wide range of observation and shrewd native sense, was not likely to let a matter so important escape him, and in the admirable practical sermon which forms his "Persone's Tale," he records the conviction which every pure-minded man felt with regard to the demoralizing tendency of the sacerdotal licentiousness of the time.[3] Thomas of

---

[1] Graviore autem sunt animadversione plectendi, qui proprias filias spirituales, quas baptizaverint vel semel ad confessionem admiserint, violaverint.—Constit. Synod. Gilb. Episc. Circestrens. ann. 1289. (Wilkins, II. 169.) Similar allusions are unfortunately too frequent, and, as we shall see hereafter, are to be found until a comparatively recent period.

[2] In his bull of 1259, Alexander IV. does not hesitate to state that the people, instead of being reformed, are absolutely corrupted by their pastors —"Prout testatur nimia de plerisque regionibus clamans Christiani populi corruptela, quæ cum deberet ex sacerdotalis antidoti curari medelis, invalescit proh dolor! ex malorum contagione quod procedit a clero." The evil continued undiminished. In 1414, at the request of Henry V., the University of Oxford prepared a series of articles for the reformation of the church. The 38th of the series is directed against priestly immorality, and declares "Quia carnalis vita et lubrica sacerdotum universam hodie scandalizat ecclesiam, et eorum publica fornicatio penitus impunita, nisi forte levi et latente pœna pecuniaria perniciosis cæteris trahitur in exemplum, sanctum igitur videtur ad expurgationem ecclesiæ quod sacerdos, cujuscumque ordinis extiterit, si publicus fornicator existat, a celebratione missarum abstineat, per tempus limitatum in jure, et pœnas in publico subeat corporales." (Wilkins, III. 364–5.) It is not easy to imagine a more humiliating confession.

[3] Swiche preestes be the sones of Hely . . . hem thinketh that they be free and have no juge, no more than

Cantinpré, indeed, one of the early lights of the Dominican order, is authority for a legend which represents the devil as thanking the prelates of the church for conducting almost all Christendom to hell.[1] The popular feeling on the subject perhaps receives its fittest expression in a satire on the mendicant friars, written by a Franciscan novice who became disgusted with the order and turned Wickliffite. The exaggerated purity and mortification of the early followers of the blessed St. Francis had long since yielded to the temptations which attended on the magnificent success of the order; and the asceticism, which had been powerful enough to cause visions of the holy Stigmata, degenerated into sloth and crime which took advantage of the opportunities afforded by the privilege to hear confessions.[2]

---

hath a free boll, that taketh which cow that him liketh in the toun. So faren they by women; for right as on free boll is ynough for all a toun, right so is a wicked preest corruption ynough for all a parish, or for all a countree.

The demoralization caused by the clergy, in fact, was an inexhaustible subject of indignation or mockery with the poets and popular writers. Thus, in the earliest French pastoral, "Li Gieus de Robin et de Marion," written in the latter half of the thirteenth century, occurs the following dialogue:—

WARNIERS. Segneur je sui trop courechiés.
GUIOS. Comment?
WARNIERS. Mehalès est agute,
M'amie, et s'a esté dechute;
Car on dist que ch'est de no prestre.
ROGAUS. En non Dieu! Warnier, bien puet estre;
Car ele i aloit trop souvent.
WARNIERS. Hé, las! jou avoie en couvent
De li temprement espouser.
GUIOS. Tu te puès bien trop dolouser,
Biaus très dous amis; ne te caille,
Car ja ne meteras maaille,
Que bien sai, à l'enfant warder.

(Michel, Théatre Français au Moyen Age, p. 129.)

[1] According to Thomas of Cantinpré, this occurrence took place at Paris, in a synod held in 1248, and Satan explained his candor by saying that he was compelled to it by God.—(Hartzheim, IX. 663.)

[2] I cannot quote the grosser accusations, which are unfitted to the ideas of modern decency, but the spirit in which the friars were regarded is sufficiently indicated by the following verses—

For when the gode man is fro hame
And the frere comes to oure dame,
He spares, nauther for synne ne shame,
That he ne dos his will.
* * * * *
Ich man that here shal lede his life
That has a faire doghter or a wyfe
Be war that no frer ham shryfe
Nauther loude ne still.

(Monumenta Franciscana, pp. 602-4.)

This testimony concerning the Franciscans is not confined to heretics and laymen. About the close of the fourteenth century, a council of Magdeburg took occasion to reprove them for the dissolute and unclerical mode of life of which they offered a conspicuous example. It appears that they dignified with the name of "Marthas" the female companions who, in primitive ages, were known as "agapetæ," and who had latterly acquired among the secular clergy the title of "focariæ"—"et in domibus suis frequenter soli cum mulieribus quas ipsorum *Martas* (ut eorum verbis utamur) habitare non verentur."—Concil. Magdeburg. ann. 1403, Rubr. de Pœnis. (Hartzheim, V. 717.)

When such was the moral condition of the priesthood, and such were the influences which they cast upon the flocks intrusted to their guidance, it is not to be wondered at if those who deplored so disgraceful a state of things, and whose respect for the canons precluded them from recommending the natural and appropriate remedy of marriage, should regard an organized system of concubinage as a safeguard. However deplorable such an alternative might be in itself, it was surely preferable to the mischief which the unquenched and ungoverned passions of a pastor might inflict upon his parish; and the instances of this were too numerous and too glaring to admit of much hesitation in electing between the two evils. Even Gerson, the leader of mystic ascetics, who recorded his unbounded admiration for the purity of celibacy in his "Dialogus Naturæ et Sophiæ de Castitate Clericorum," saw and appreciated its practical evils, and had no scruple in recommending concubinage as a preventive, which, though scandalous in itself, might serve to prevent greater scandals.[1] It therefore requires no great stretch of credulity to believe the assertion of Sleidan that, in some of the Swiss Cantons, it was the custom to oblige a new pastor, on entering upon his functions, to select a concubine, as a necessary protection to the virtue of his female parishioners, and to the peace of the families intrusted to his spiritual direction.[2] Indeed, we have already seen, on the authority of the council of Palencia in 1322, that such a practice was not uncommon in Spain.

---

[1] Vel inexperti forte erant hi doctores quam generale et quam radicatum sit hoc malum, et quod deteriora flagitia circa uxores aut filias parochianorum et abominationes horrendæ in aliis provenerint apud multas patrias, rebus stantibus ut stant, si quærentur per tales censuras arceri. Scandalum certe magnum est apud parochianos curati ad concubinam ingressus, sed longe deterius si erga parochianas suas non servaverit castitatem.—De Vita Spirit. Animæ. Lect. IV. Corol. xiv. prop. 3.

[2] De Statu. Relig. Lib. I. (Giannone Apolog. cap. 14.)

In 1398, Cardinal Peter d'Ailly, Bishop of Cambrai, speaks of the manner in which his clergy lived with their concubines, as man and wife, and brought up their children without concealment in their houses—"tenentes secum in suis domibus suas concubinas, et mulieres publice suspectas, in scandalum plurimorum cohabitant simul copulati, eisdem domo, mensa, et lecto, residendo, acsi essent vir et uxor matrimonialiter conjuncti: proles super terram gradientes ex hujusmodi suis concubinis susceptas una cum eisdem in suis domibus publice secum habendo et tenendo."—(Hartzheim, VI. 709.)

Even supposing that this fearful immorality were not attributable to the immutable laws of nature revenging themselves for their attempted violation, it could readily be explained by the example set by the central head. Scarcely had the efforts of Nicholas and Gregory put an end to sacerdotal marriage in Rome when the morals of the Roman clergy became a disgrace to Christendom. How little the results of the reform corresponded with the hopes of the zealous puritans who had brought it about may be gathered from the martyrdom of a certain Arnolfo, who, under the pontificate of Honorius II., preached vehemently against the scandals and immorality of the ecclesiastics of the apostolic city. They succeeded in making way with him, notwithstanding the protection of Honorius, and the veneration of the nobles and people who regarded him as a prophet.[1] When such was the condition of clerical virtue, we can scarcely wonder that sufficient suffrages were given in 1130 by the sacred college to Cardinal Pier-Leone to afford him a plausible claim to the papacy, although he was notoriously stained with the foulest crimes. Apparently his children by his sister Tropea, and his carrying about with him a concubine when travelling in the capacity of papal legate, had not proved a bar to his elevation in the church nor to his employment in the most conspicuous and important affairs.[2]

What were the influences of the papal court in the next century may be gathered from the speech which Cardinal Hugo made to the Lyonese, on the occasion of the departure of Innocent IV. in 1251 from their city, after a residence of eight years—"Friends, since our arrival here, we have done much for your city. When we came, we found here three or four brothels. We leave behind us but one. We must own, however, that it extends without interruption from the eastern to the western gate"—the crude cynicism of which greatly disconcerted the Lyonese ladies present.[3] Robert Grosseteste,

---

[1] Platina sub Honor. II.

[2] Pagi, Critica IV. 464.

[3] Amici magnam fecimus postquam in hanc urbem venimus, utilitatem et eleemosynam. Quando enim primo huc venimus, tria vel quatuor prostibula invenimus. Sed nunc recedentes, unum solum relinquimus. Verum ipsum durat continuatum ab Orientali porta civitatis usque ad Occidentalum.—Matt. Paris ann. 1251.

Bishop of Lincoln, therefore only reflected the popular conviction when, on his deathbed in 1253, inveighing against the corruption of the papal court, he applied to it the lines—

Ejus avaritiæ totus non sufficit orbis,
Ejus luxuriæ meretrix non sufficit omnis.[1]

A hundred years later saw the popes again in France. For forty years they had bestowed on Avignon all the benefits, moral and spiritual, arising from the presence of the Vicegerent of Christ, when Petrarch recorded, for the benefit of friends whom he feared to compromise by naming, the impressions produced by his long residence there in the household of a leading dignitary of the church. Language seems too weak to express his abhorrence of that third Babylon, that Hell upon Earth, which could furnish no Noah, no Deucalion to survive the deluge that alone could cleanse its filth—and yet he intimates that fear compels him to restrain the full expression of his feelings. Chastity was a reproach and licentiousness a virtue. The aged prelates surpassed their younger brethren in wickedness as in years, apparently considering that age conferred upon them the license to do that from which even youthful libertines shrank; while the vilest crimes were the pastimes of pontifical ease.[2] Juvenal and Brantôme can suggest nothing more shameless or more foul.

---

[1] Matt. Paris Hist. Angl. ann. 1253. —The same author preserves a legend that when Innocent IV. heard of the death of Grosseteste, he ordered a letter to be prepared commanding Henry III. to dig up and cast out the remains of the bishop. The following night, however, Grosseteste appeared in his episcopal robes and with his crozier inflicted a severe castigation on the vengeful pope, who thereupon abandoned his unchristian purpose.—Ibid. ann. 1254.

[2] Portions of Petrarch's descriptions are unfit for transcription; the following, however, will give a sufficient idea of his impressions. "Veritas ibi dementia est, abstinentia vero rusticitas, pudicitia probrum ingens. Denique peccandi licentia magnanimitas et libertas eximia, et quo pollutior eo clarior vita, quo plus scelerum eo plus gloriæ, bonum nomen cœno vilius, atque ultima mercium fama est. . . . Taceo utriusque pestis artifices, et concursantes pontificum thalamis proxonætas . . . Quis, oro, enim non irascatur et rideat, illos senes pueros coma candida, togis amplissimis, adeoque lascivientibus animis ut nihil illuc falsius videatur quam quod ait Maro 'Frigidus in Venerem senior.' Tam calidi tamque præcipites in Venerem senes sunt, tanta eos ætatis et status et virium capit oblivio, sic in libidines inardescunt, sic in omne ruunt dedecus, quasi omnis eorum gloria non in cruce Christi sit, sed in commessationibus et ebrietatibus, et quæ has sequuntur in cubilibus, im-

The Great Schism perhaps could scarcely be expected to improve the morals of the papal court. Yet when the church universal, to close that weary quarrel, agreed to receive one of the competitors as its head, surely it might have selected, as the visible representative of God upon earth, some more worthy embodiment of humanity than Balthazar Cossa, who, as John XXIII., is alone, of the three competitors, recognized in the list of popes. When the great council of Constance in 1415 adopted the awful expedient of trying, condemning, and deposing a pope, the catalogue of crimes—notorious incest, adultery, defilement, homicide, and atheism—of which the fathers formally accused him, and which he confessed without defending himself,[1] gives a fearful insight into the corruption which could not only spawn such a monster but could elevate him to the highest place in the hierarchy, and present him for the veneration of Christendom.

The latter half of the fifteenth century scarcely saw a supreme pontiff without the visible evidences of human frailty around him, the unblushing acknowledgment of which

---

pudicitiis: . . . atque hoc unum senectutis ultimæ lucrum putant, ea facere quæ juvenes non auderent . . . Mitto stupra, raptus, incestus, adulteria qui jam pontificalis lasciviæ ludi sunt, etc." (Lib. sine Titulo, Epist. xvi.)

In his VII. Eclogue Petrarch describes the cardinals individually. Their portraits, though metaphorically drawn, correspond with the general character of the above extracts. See also the Lib. sine Titulo Epist. vii. viii. ix.

[1] Quod dominus Johannes papa cum uxore fratris sui et cum sanctis monialibus incestum, cum virginibus stuprum, et cum conjugatis adulterium et alia incontinentiæ crimina, propter quæ ira Dei descendit in filios diffidentiæ commisit. . . . Item quod dictus dominus Johannes papa fuit et sit homo peccator, notorie criminosus de homicidio, veneficio, et aliis gravibus criminibus quibus irretitus dicitur graviter diffamatus, dissipator bonorum ecclesiæ et dilapidator eorundem, notorius simoniacus, pertinax hæreticus et ecclesiam Christi notorie scandalizans. Item quod dictus Johannes Papa XXIII. sæpe et sæpius coram diversis prælatis et aliis honestis et probis viris pertinaciter, diabolo suadente, dixit, asseruit, dogmatizavit et adstruxit, vitam æternam non esse, neque aliam post hanc, etc. —Concil. Constantiens. Sess. XI.

Even supposing some of these special charges to have been manufactured for the purpose of effecting the desirable political object of getting rid of the objectionable pontiff, yet the profound conviction of his vileness, evinced by the proffering of such accusations, is almost equally damaging.

The good fathers of the council themselves were apparently not all given to mortifying the flesh, for, in a list of the multitudes assembled at Constance, we find, after an enumeration of the numbers of cardinals, bishops, abbots, and nobles, "Item, fistulatores, tubicenæ, joculatores, 516; item, meretrices, virgines publicæ, 718."—Laur. Byzynii Diar. Bell. Hussit.

is the fittest commentary on the tone of clerical morality. The success of Innocent VIII. in increasing the population of Rome was a favorite topic with the wits of the day;[1] but the epitaph which declared that filth, gluttony, avarice, and sloth lay buried in his tomb[2] did not anticipate the immediate resurrection of the worst of those vices in the person of his successor Alexander VI. If the crimes of Borgia were foul, their number and historical importance have rendered them so well known that I may be spared more than a passing allusion to a career which has made his name synonymous with all that can degrade man to a level at once with the demon and the brute.[3]

Such men as Alexander can hardly be deemed exceptional, save inasmuch as brilliant talents and native force of character might enable them to excel their contemporaries in guilt as in ambition. They were the natural product of a system which for four centuries had bent the unremitting energies of the church to securing temporal power and wealth, with exemption from the duties and liabilities of the citizen. Such were the fruits of the successful theocracy of Hildebrand, which, intrusting irresponsible authority to fallible humanity, came to regard ecclesiastical aggrandizement as a full atonement for all and every crime. That the infection had spread even to the ultimate fibres of the establishment can readily be believed.

My object has been to consider the subject of ascetic celibacy as a portion simply of ecclesiastical history, and yet I cannot well conclude this section without a hasty glance at its influence on society at large. That influence, as far as the

---

[1] Innocuo priscos æquum est debere Quirites.
Progenie exhaustam restituit patriam.
(Sannazarii Epigram. Lib. I.)

[2] Spurcities, gula, avaritia, atque ignavia deses,
Hoc, Octave, jacent quo tegeris tumulo.
(Marulli Epigram. Lib. IV.)

[3] Sannazaro, as was meet in a Neapolitan, hated Alexander cordially, and was never weary of assailing his wickedness. The relations between him and his daughter Lucretia were a favorite topic—

Ergo te semper cupiet Lucretia Sextus?
O fatum diri nominis! hic pater est?
(Sannazar. Epigr. Lib. II.)

Humana jura, nec minus cœlestia,
Ipsosque sustulit Deos:
Ut silicet liceret (heu scelus) patri
Natæ sinum permingere,
Nec execrandis abstinere nuptiis
Timore sublato simul.
(Ibid.)

secular clergy were its instruments, was evidently one of almost unmixed evil. The parish priest, if honestly ascetic, was thereby deprived of the wholesome common bond of human affections and sympathies, and was rendered less efficient for good in consoling the sorrows and aiding the struggles of his flock. If, on the other hand, he was a hypocrite, or if he had found too late that the burden he had assumed was too heavy for his strength, the denial of the natural institution of marriage was the source of immeasurable corruption to those intrusted to his charge, who looked up to him not only as a spiritual director, but as a superior being who could absolve them from sin, and whose partnership in guilt was in itself almost an absolution. That such was the condition of innumerable parishes throughout Europe, there is unfortunately no reason to doubt. The incongruity of this may perhaps explain to some extent the anomaly of the practical grossness of the Middle Ages, combined with the theoretical ascetic purity which was held out as the duty of every Christian who desired to be acceptable to his Creator. The curious contrasts and confusion of the standard of morality, arising from this striving against nature, are well illustrated by a tract of the thirteenth century which has been recently published.

This is a homily against marriage addressed to youthful nuns, which exhausts all the arguments that the ingenuity of the writer could suggest. On the one hand he appeals to the pride which could be so well gratified by the exalted state of virginity; he pictures the superior bliss vouchsafed in heaven to those who were stained by no earthly contamination, confidently promising them a higher rank and more direct communing with the Father than would be bestowed on the married and the widowed; he rapturously dwells upon the inward peace, the holy ecstasy which are the portion of those who, wedded to Christ, keep pure their mystic marriage vow; and his ascetic fervor exhausts itself in depicting the spiritual delights of a life of religious seclusion. Mingled inextricably with these exalted visions of beatific mysticism, he presents in startling contrasts the retribution awaiting the sin of licentiousness and the evils inseparable from a life of domestic

marriage. With a crude nastiness that is almost inconceivable, he minutely describes all the discomforts and suffering, physical and mental, attendant upon wifehood and maternity, entering into every detail and gloating over every revolting circumstance that his prurient imagination can suggest. The license of Shakspeare, the plain speaking of Chaucer, Boccaccio, and the medieval trouvères show us what our ancestors were, and what they were is easily explained when such a medley of mysticism and grossness could be poured into the pure ears of innocent young girls by their spiritual director.[1]

In considering, however, the influence of the regular clergy, or monastic orders, we find a more complex array of motives and results. The earlier foundations of the West, as we have seen, to a great extent neutralized the inherent selfishness of monachism by the regulations which prescribed a due proportion of labor to be mingled with prayer. The duty which man owes to the world was to some extent recognized as not

---

[1] Hali Meidenhad. (Early English Text Society, 1866.) The author at times trenches closely on Manicheism. It is true that he revives, with some variation, the ancient computation of the relative merits of the various conditions of life—"For wedlock has its fruit thirtyfold in heaven, widowhood sixtyfold; maidenhood with a hundredfold overpasses both" (p. 22); but while he thus faintly disavows an intention to revile marriage, he again and again alludes to it as wicked and impure *per se*. "Well were it for them, were they on the day of their bridal borne to be buried. . . . If thou askest why God created such a thing to be, I answer thee: God created it never such; but Adam and Eve turned it to be such by their sin, and marred our nature" (p 8).

Virginity he asserts to be the highest attribute of humanity, and in heaven virgins are the equals of angels and the superiors of saints.—"Maidenhood is a grace granted thee from heaven. . . 'Tis a virtue above all virtues, and to Christ the most acceptable of all" (p. 10). "To sing that sweet song and that heavenly music which no saints may sing, but maidens only in heaven. . . . But the maiden's song is altogether unlike these, being common to them with angels. Music beyond all music in heaven. In their circle is God himself; and his dear mother, the precious maiden, is hidden in that blessed company of gleaming maidens, nor may any but they dance and sing" (pp. 18–20).

As for matrimony and maternity, nothing can redeem them in the eyes of the ascetic.—"All other sins are nothing but sins, but this is a sin and besides denaturalizes thee and dishonoreth thy body. It soileth thy soul and maketh it guilty before God, and moreover defileth thy flesh. . . . Now what joy hath the mother? She hath from the misshapen child sad care and shame, both, and for the thriving one fear, till she lose it for good, though it would never have been in being for the love of God, nor for the hope of heaven, nor for the dread of hell" (p. 34).—But I dare not follow him in his more nauseous flights of imagination.

incompatible with the duty which he owes to his God, and civilization has had few more efficient instruments than the self-denying work of the earnest men who, from Columba to Adalbert, sowed the seeds of Christianity and culture among the frontier lands of Christendom. When discipline such as these men inculcated could be enforced, the benefits of monachism far outweighed its evils. All the peaceful arts, from agriculture to music, owed to the Benedictines their preservation or their advancement, and it would be difficult to estimate exactly the influence for good which resulted from institutions to which the thoughtful and studious could safely retire from a turbulent and barbarous world. These institutions, however, from their own inherent defects, carried in them the germs of corruption. The claims to supereminent sanctity, which secured for them the privileges of asylums, were inevitably used as means for the accumulation of wealth wrung from the fears or superstition of the sinner. With wealth came the abandonment of labor; and idleness and luxury were the prolific parents of license. True-hearted men were not wanting to combat the irrepressible evil. From Chrodegang to St. Vincent de Paul, the history of monachism is full of illustrious names of those who devoted themselves to the mission of reforming abuses and restoring the ideal of the perfect monk, dead to the seductions of the world, and living only to do the work which he deems most acceptable to God. Many of these mistakenly assumed that exaggerated mortification was the only gateway to salvation, and the only cure for the frightful immorality which pervaded so many monastic establishments. Others, with a truer insight into the living principles of Christianity, sought to turn the enthusiasm of their disciples to account in works of perennial mercy and charity, at a period when no other organizations existed for the succor of the helpless and miserable.

Yet when we reflect how large a proportion of the wealth and intellect of Europe was absorbed in the religious houses, it will be seen that the system was a most cumbrous and imperfect one, which gave but a slender return for the magnitude of the means which it involved. Still, it was the only system existing, and possibly the only one which could

exist in so rude a structure of society, individualized to a degree which destroyed all sense of public responsibility, and precluded all idea of a state created for the well-being of its component parts. Thus, the monastery became the shelter of the wayfarer, and the dispenser of alms to the needy. It was the principal school of the poor and humble; and while the Universities of Oxford and Paris were devoting their energies to unprofitable dialectics and the subtle disputations of Aristotelian logic, in thousands of abbey libraries quiet monks were multiplying priceless manuscripts, and preserving to after ages the treasures of the past. When fanciful asceticism did not forbid the healing of the sick, monks labored fearlessly in hospitals and pest-houses, and distributed among the many the benefactions which they had wrung from the late repentance of the few. As time wore on, even the religious teaching of the public passed almost exclusively into their hands, and to the followers of Dominic and Francis of Assisi the people owed such insight as they could obtain into the promises of the gospel. If the enthusiasm which prompted labors so strenuous did not shrink from lighting the fires of persecution, we must remember that religious zeal, accompanied by irresponsible power, has one invariable history.

While thus, in various ways, the ascetic spirit led to institutions which promoted the progress of civilization, in others it necessarily had a directly opposite tendency. Nothing contributes more strongly to the advance of knowledge and of culture than the striving for material comfort and individual advancement in worldly well-being. Luxury and ambition thus have their uses in stimulating the inquiring and inventive faculties of man, in rendering the forces of nature subservient to our use, and in softening the rugged asperities which are incompatible with the regular administration of law. Every instinct of human nature has its destined purpose in life, and the perfect man is to be found in the proportionate cultivation of each element of his character, not in the exaggerated development of those faculties which are deemed primarily good, nor in the entire repression of those which are evil only when their prominence

destroys the balance of the whole. The ascetic selected for eradication one group of human aspirations, which was the most useful under proper discipline, and not perhaps the worst even in its ordinary excess. Only those who have studied the varied aspects of medieval society can rightly estimate the enormous influence which the church possessed, in those ages of faith, to mould the average habits of thought in any desired direction. It can readily be seen that if the tireless preaching of the vanity of human things and the beatitude of mortification occasionally produced such extravagances as those of the flagellants, the spirit which now and then burst forth in such eruption must have been an element of no little power in the forces which governed society at large, and must have exercised a most depressing influence in restraining the general advance of civilization. Not only did it thus more or less weigh down the efforts of almost every man, but the ardent minds that would otherwise have been leaders in the race of progress were the ones most likely, under the pervading spirit of the age, to be the foremost in maceration and self-denial; while those who would not yield to the seduction were either silenced or wasted their wisdom on a generation which believed too much to believe in them. When idleness was holy, earnest workers had little chance.

It required the unbelief of the fifteenth century to give free rein to the rising commercial energies and the craving for material improvement that paved the way for the overthrow of ascetic sacerdotalism. The fearful corruptions of the church, which indirectly caused and accompanied that awakening of the human mind, will be alluded to hereafter when we come to consider the movements leading to the great Protestant Reformation. At present we must turn aside for a moment to consider one or two external developments of the religious activity of the Middle Ages.

XXII.

THE MILITARY ORDERS.

The Military Orders were the natural expression of the singular admixture of religious and warlike enthusiasm, reacting on each other, which produced and was fostered by the Crusades. When bishops considered that they rendered a service acceptable to God in leading vast hosts to slaughter the Paynim, it was an easy transition for soldiers to turn monks, and to consecrate their swords to the bloody work of avenging their Redeemer.

When the Hospitallers—Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, or of Malta—first emerged from their humble position of ministering to the afflictions of their fellow-pilgrims, and commenced to assume a military organization under Raymond du Puy, about the year 1120, their statutes required the three ordinary monastic vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity.[1] In fact, they were at first Benedictines; but when they became numerous enough to form a separate body, they adopted the rule of St. Augustine.

When the rule for the Templars—"Regula pauperum commilitonum sanctæ civitatis"—was adopted in 1128, at the council of Troyes, it contained no special injunction to administer a vow of celibacy, but the context shows that such a condition was understood as a matter of course.[2] Some

---

[1] Videlicet castitatem, obedientiam . . . atque vivere sine proprio.—Statut. Ord. S. Johan. Hierosol. Tit. I. § 1 (Lünig Cod. Ital. Diplom. T. II. p. 1743).

[2] Thus Cap. LV.: "Hoc enim injustum consideramus ut cum fratribus Deo castitatem promittentibus fratres hujusmodi in una eademque domo maneant." Cap. LVI. and LXXII., by the latter of which even the kiss of a mother was denied them, render evident the extreme asceticism which was proposed by the founders of the order. (Harduin. T. VI. P. II. pp. 1142, 1146.)

At a subsequent period we learn that the Templar's oath of initiation promised "obedientiam, castitatem, vivere sine proprio, et succurrere terræ sanctæ pro posse suo."—See the proceedings against them in 1309, in Wilkins, II. 331 et seq.

little difficulty was evidently experienced at first, since, from the nature of the case, novices had to be trained warriors who must frequently have been bound by family ties, and whose education had not been such as to fit them for the restraints of their new life. It is probable also that the perpetual nature of the obligations assumed was not easy to be enforced upon the fierce members of the brotherhood, for, in 1183, Lucius III., in confirming the privileges of the order, specially commands that no one who enters it shall be allowed to return to the world.[1]

The history of these two orders is too well known to require it to be traced minutely here. If, with the growth of their reputation and wealth, the austere asceticism of their early days was lost, and if luxury and vice took the place of religious enthusiasm and soldierly devotion to the Cross, they but obeyed the universal law which in human institutions is so apt to render corruption the consequence of prosperity. One conclusion may be drawn, however, from the proceedings by which the powerful order of the Temple was extinguished at the commencement of the fourteenth century. Notwithstanding the open and scandalous licentiousness of the order, it is a little singular that the interminable articles of accusation against the members contain no allusion to unchastity, while crimes most fantastic, practices most beastly, and charges most frivolous are heaped upon them in strange confusion.[2] As the object of those who conducted the prosecution was to excite a popular abhorrence that would justify the purposed spoliation, it is evident that the simple infraction of vows of chastity was regarded as so venial a fault and so much a matter of course that its proof could in no way serve the end of rousing indignation against the accused.

It is somewhat remarkable that the same century which saw the foundation of the orders of the Hospital and Temple also witnessed one which, although bound by the rule of St. Augustine, and subjected to the ordinary vows of obedience, property in common, and inability to return to the world, yet

---

[1] Post factam in vestra militia professionem et habitum religionis assumptum revertendi ad sæculum nullam habere præcipimus facultatem.—Rymer, Fœdera, I. 55.

[2] Wilkins, II. 331–2.—Raynouard Condamnation des Templiers, p. 83.

allowed to its members the option of selecting either marriage or celibacy. This was the Spanish Order of St. James of the Sword. What we have seen of the want of respect paid by the Spanish church to asceticism may lessen surprise at the founding of an order based upon such regulations, yet it is difficult to understand how so great a violation of established principles could be sanctioned by Alexander III., who confirmed the order in 1175,[1] or by Innocent III. and Honorius III., who formally approved their privileges.[2] Perhaps these military vassals of the pope, to whom they were bound in implicit obedience as their head, were too important a source of power and influence to be lightly rejected. Perhaps, also, Honorius III. may have quieted his conscience when, in confirming their charters in 1223, he commanded that their principal care and watchfulness should be devoted to seeing that those who were married preserved conjugal fidelity, and that those who elected a single life maintained inviolable chastity.

The example was one of evil import in the Peninsula. During the universal license of the fifteenth century, when ascetic vows became a mockery, and the profligacy of those who took them exposed all such observances to contempt, Eugenius IV. released the ancient and renowned Order of Calatrava from the obligation of celibacy, for reasons which would have led him to extend the privilege of marriage to the whole church, had the purity of ecclesiastics been truly the object of the rule. He recounts with sorrow the disorderly lives of the knights, and, quoting the text which says that it is better to marry than to burn, he grants the privilege of marriage because he deems it preferable to live with a wife than with a mistress.[3] How could he avoid applying his own reasoning to the church in general?

---

[1] Alexandri III. Epist. Append. III. No. 20 (Harduin. VI. P. II. p. 1557).

[2] Raynald. Annal. ann. 1210, No. 6, 7; ann. 1223, No. 54; ann. 1496, No. 33.

[3] Concessimus ut illius ordinis professio non contineret castitatis votum . . . audiebamus præterea multos inhoneste vivere, et ea agere quæ merito apud Deum et homines reprehendi possent, et cum secundum Apostoli sententiam melius esset nubere quam uri, visum est nobis utilius cum uxore vivere quam cum meretrice (Raynaldi Annal. ann. 1441, No. 20).—The Order of Calatrava was under the strictest of the rules, the Cistercian. (Giustiniani Ordini Militari s. v.)

Similar arguments were employed to extend the same privilege to the Orders of Avis and of Jesus Christ, of Portugal. The former was founded in 1147 by Alphonso I., under the Cistercian rule, and chastity was one of its fundamental obligations;[1] the latter was the continuation of the order of the Temple, which, preserved in Portugal by the humanity of King Dionysius, assumed in the fourteenth century the name of Jesus. Both institutions became incurably corrupted; their preceptories were dens of avowed and scandalous prostitution, and their promiscuous amours filled the kingdom with hate and dissension. When at length, in 1496, King Emanuel applied to Alexander VI. to grant the privilege of marriage, in hopes of reforming the orders, it is interesting to observe how instinctively the minds of men turned to this as the sole efficient remedy for the immorality which all united in attributing to the hopeless attempt to enforce a purity impossible in the existing condition of society. Alexander assented to the request, and bestowed on the orders the right of marriage on the same conditions as those enjoined on the Knights of St. James of the Sword.[2]

There was another Portuguese order of a somewhat different character. Twenty years after founding the Knights of Avis, Alphonso I., in 1167, to commemorate his miraculous victory over the Moors at Santarem, instituted the Order of St. Michael. The knights were allowed to marry once; if widowed, they were obliged to embrace celibacy; and the Abbot of Alcobaça, who was the superior of the Order, was empowered to excommunicate them for irregularity of life,

---

[1] Quibus munus sit religionem defendere in bello, charitatem exercere in pace, castitatem servare in toro.—Reg. Ord. Mil. Avisii a B. Joanne Cirita edita (Migne's Patrologia, T. 188, p. 1669).

[2] Alexander's Bull declares that "Milites dictarum militiarum pro majori parte, continentiæ et castitatis voto, qui in eorum professione emittunt, contempto, concubinas etiam plures, et in eorum ac præceptoriarum et prioratum dictarum militiarum propriis domibus et locis, non sine magno religionis opprobrio, publice tenere et eis cohabitare, et etiam adulteria cum aliis mulieribus conjugatis committere non verentur: ex quo ab eorundem regnorum incolis et habitatoribus maximo odio habentur, dissensiones et inimicitiæ oriuntur, diversa scandala quotidie concitantur etc."—Raynaldi Annal. ann. 1496, No. 33.

Raynaldus quotes a passage from Osorius to the effect that this greatly lowered the character of the orders, diverted them from the object of their institution, opened the door to unworthy members, and dissipated their property.

to compel them to give up their mistresses. They were moreover bound to perform the same religious exercises as lay brothers of the Cistercians. The Order is interesting as forming a curious link between the secular, religious, and military elements of the period.[1]

During all this, the knights of St. John adhered to their ancient statutes, and endeavored from time to time to reform the profligacy which seemed inseparable from the institution. When the ascetic Antonio Fluviano, who held the grand mastership from 1421 to 1437, promulgated a regulation that any one guilty of public concubinage should receive three warnings, with severe penalties for contumacy,[2] it suggests a condition of morals by no means creditable to the brethren. So, a century later, the stern Villiers de l'Isle-Adam was forced to declare that any one openly acknowledging an illegitimate child should be forever after incapacitated for office, benefice, or dignity.[3] What the knights were soon afterwards, the scandalous pages of Brantôme sufficiently attest.

The Marian or Teutonic Order, perhaps the most wealthy and powerful of all, was founded in 1190, and adopted the rule of the Templars as regards its religious government, with that of the Hospitallers to regulate its duties of charity and hospitality. Transferred from the Holy Land to Northeastern Germany, it bore a prominent part in Christianizing those regions, and what it won by the sword it retained possession of in its own right. With wealth came indolence and luxury, and its history offers nothing of special interest to us until, in 1525, the grand master Albert of Brandenburg went over to Lutheranism with many of his knights, founded the hereditary dukedom of Prussia, and married—of which more hereafter. Those of the order who adhered to Catholicism maintained the organization on the rich possessions which the piety of ages had bestowed upon them, throughout Germany, until this worn-out relic of the past disappeared in the convulsions of the Napoleonic wars.

---

[1] Patrologia, T. 188, p. 1674.

[2] Statut. Ord. S. Johan. Hierosol. Tit. XVIII. § 50.

[3] Ibid. Tit. XVIII. § 51.

XXIII.

THE HERESIES.

ALLUSION has already been made to the introduction of Manicheism into Western Europe through Bulgaria and Lombardy. Notwithstanding its stern and unrelenting suppression wherever it was discovered during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, its votaries multiplied in secret. The disorders of the clergy, their oppression of the people, and their quarrels with the nobles over their temporal possessions, made them many enemies among the laity; and the simplicity of the Manichean belief, its freedom from aspirations for temporal aggrandizement, and its denunciations of the immorality and grasping avidity of the priesthood, found for it an appreciative audience and made ready converts. Towards the close of the twelfth century the South of France was discovered to be filled with heretics, in whom the names of Cathari, Paterins, Albigenses, &c., concealed the more odious appellation of Manicheans.

It is not our province to trace out in detail the bloody vicissitudes of Dominic's Inquisition and Simon de Montfort's crusades. It is sufficient for our purpose to indicate the identity of the Albigensian belief with that of the ancient sect which we have seen to exercise so powerful an influence in moulding and encouraging the asceticism of the early church. The Dualistic principle was fully recognized. No necessity was regarded as justifying the use of meat, or even of eggs and cheese, or in fact of anything which had its origin in animal propagation. Marriage was an abomination and a mortal sin, which could not be intensified by adultery or other excesses.[1]

---

[1] Communis opinio Catharorum est quod matrimonium carnale fuit semper mortale peccatum, et quod non punietur quis gravius in futuro propter adulterium vel incestum quam propter legitimum conjugium, nec

The Catholic polemics, in controverting the exaggerated asceticism of these heretics, had a narrow and difficult path to tread. Their own authorities had so exalted the praises of virgin purity, that it was not easy to meet the arguments of those who merely carried out the same principle somewhat further, in fearlessly following out the premises to their logical conclusion.[1] There is extant a curious tract, being a dialogue between a Catholic and a Paterin, in which the latter of course has the worst of the disputation, yet he presses his adversary hard with the texts which were customarily cited by the orthodox advocates of clerical celibacy—"qui habent uxores sint tanquam non habentes," "qui non reliquerit uxorem et filios propter me non est me dignus," &c.; and the Catholic can only elude their force by giving to them metaphorical explanations very different from those which of old had been assumed in the canons requiring the separation of man and wife on ordination.[2]

The stubborn resistance of the Albigenses to the enormous odds brought against them, shows the unconquerable vitality of the antisacerdotal spirit which was then so widely diffused

---

etiam inter eos propter hoc aliquis gravius puniretur.—Summa F. Renieri (Martene et Durand. V. 1761).

This Regnier describes himself as a heresiarch previous to his conversion, and his summary of the creed of his former associates may be regarded as correct in the main, though perhaps somewhat heightened in repulsiveness.

[1] Bishop Gerard, of Cambrai, confesses this in his refutation of the Artesian Manicheans in 1025—"De quibus nos responsuros quodam discretionis gubernaculo nostri sermonis carinam subire oportet, ne quasi inter duos scopulos naufragium incurrentes, occasionem demus in alterutrum, scilicet aut omnes indiscrete a conjugiis exterrendo, aut omnes indiscrete ad connubia commonendo."—Concil. Atrebatens. ann. 1025, cap. x. (Hartzheim, III. 89).

When St. Bernard, in his fiery denunciation of the Manichean errors, exclaimed, "non advertant qualiter omni immunditiæ laxat habenas qui nuptias damnat" (In Cantica Serm. lxvi. § 3), he did not pause to reflect how severe a sentence he was passing on the saints of the fifth century who, as we have seen, would only admit marriage to be a pardonable offence.

[2] Disputat. inter Cathol. et Paterin. c. ii. (Martene et Durand. V. 1712–13).

It is somewhat singular that Manicheism should have been attributed to a sect of heretics in Bosnia who styled themselves Christians, and who were brought back to the fold in 1203 by a legate of Innocent III. It would appear that, so far from entertaining Manichean doctrines, neglect of ecclesiastical celibacy was actually one of their erroneous practices, for in their pledge of reformation they promise that separation of man and wife shall thenceforth be enforced "neque de cætero recipiemus aliquem vel aliquam conjugatam, nisi mutuo consensu, continentia promissa, ambo pariter convertantur."—Batthyani, II. 293.

throughout Southern Europe. In a different shape it had already manifested itself during the first half of the twelfth century, when Pierre de Bruys infected all the South of France with the heresy called, after him, the Petrobrusian. This was an uncompromising revolt against the whole system of Roman Christianity. It not only abrogated pædo-baptism, and promulgated heretical notions respecting the Eucharist, but it abolished the visible symbols and ceremonies which formed so large a portion of the sacerdotal fabric—churches, crucifixes, chanting, fasting, gifts and offerings for the dead, and even the mass. But little is known respecting the Petrobrusians, except what can be derived from the refutation of their errors by Peter the Venerable. He says nothing specifically respecting their views upon ascetic celibacy, but we may assume that this was one of the doctrinal and practical corruptions which they assailed, from a passage in which, describing their excesses, he complains of the public eating of flesh on Passion Sunday, the cruel flagellation of priests, the imprisonment of monks, and their being forced to marry by threats and torments.[1] The controversial talents of Peter the Venerable were not the only means brought to the suppression of this formidable heresy. De Bruys was burned at the stake in 1146, and, though his disciple Henry maintained the contest for awhile, persecution finally triumphed.

In Britanny, about the same period, there existed an obscure sect concerning whom little is known, except that they were probably a branch of the Petrobrusians. Their errors were nearly the same, and the slender traces left of them show that their doctrine was a protest against the over-

---

[1] Die ipso passionis Dominicæ publice carnes comestæ, sacerdotes flagellati, monachi incarcerati et ad ducendas uxores terroribus sunt ac tormentis compulsi.—S. Petri Venerab. contra Petrobrusian.

In 1144, the church of Liége addressed to Lucius II. a letter concerning a heresy recently discovered in that city, which is probably a branch of the Petrobrusian. It is described as originating near Montélimart in Dauphiné, and pervading all France and the neighboring regions. Its sectaries denied the efficacy of baptism, the Eucharist, and the imposition of hands; rejected not only all oaths and vows, but marriage itself, and denied that the Holy Spirit could be gained except through the agency of good works. These heretics, however, had not in them the spirit of martyrdom, and speedily recanted on being discovered.—Epist. ad Lucium Papam, Epist. iv. (Patrolog. T. 179, p. 957).

whelming sacerdotalism of the period. The papal legate, Hugh, Archbishop of Rouen, sought to convert them by an elaborate denunciation of their tenets, among which he enumerates promiscuous licentiousness and disregard of clerical celibacy. Daniel, he gravely assures them, symbolizes virginity; Noah, continence; and Job, marriage. Then, quoting Ezekiel XIV. 13–20, wherein Jehovah, threatening the land with destruction, says, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls through their righteousness," he proceeds triumphantly to the conclusion that recantation alone can save his adversaries from the fate which their errors have deserved.[1]

Connected in some way with these movements of insubordination, was probably the career of the singular heresiarch, Éon de l'Étoile. During one of the epidemics of maceration and fanaticism which form such curious episodes in medieval history, Éon, born of a noble Breton family, abandoned himself to the savage life of a hermit in the wilderness. Drawn by a vision to attend divine service, his excited mysticism caught the words which ended the recitation of the collect, "Per *eum* qui venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos;" and the resemblance of "eum" with his own name inspired him with the revelation that he was the Son of God. Men's minds were ready for any extravagance, and Éon soon had disciples who adored him as a deity incarnate. Nothing can be wilder than the tales which are related of him by eye-witnesses—the aureole of glory which surrounded him, the countless wealth which was at the disposal of his followers,

---

[1] Omnes ergo qui per istos tres designantur, per Danielem virgines, per Noe continentes, et per Job conjuges, pro sua justitia salvantur. Cæteri hominum qui de aliquo istorum trium ordine nullatenus sunt, vel ab eis apostatando recidunt, mala imminentia atque promerita non evadunt. — Hugon. Rothomag. contra Hæret. Lib. III. cap. vi. This is by no means an unusual specimen of the inconsequential character of medieval polemics. Archbishop Hugh was a man of mark among his contemporaries, both as a theologian and as a statesman. It was he who, in 1139, at the council of Winchester, saved King Stephen from excommunication by the English bishops. (Willelmi Malmesb. Hist. Novell. Lib. II. § 26.) For a somewhat similar specimen of fanciful theology, the reader may consult the exposition of the esoteric meaning of the plagues of Egypt by St. Martin of Leon, a writer of the twelfth century.—S. Martin. Legionens. Serm. XV.

the rich but unsubstantial banquets which were served at his bidding by invisible hands, the superhuman velocity of his movements when eluding those who were bent upon his capture. Éon declared war upon the churches which monopolized the wealth of the people while neglecting the duties for which they had been enriched; and he pillaged them of their treasures, which he distributed lavishly to the poor. At last the Devil abandoned his protégé. Éon, when his time had come, was easily taken and carried before Eugenius III. at the Council of Rouen, in 1148. There he boldly proclaimed his mission and his power. Exhibiting a forked staff which he carried, he declared that when he held it with the fork upwards, God ruled heaven and hell, and he governed the earth; but that when he reversed its position, then he had at command two-thirds of the universe, and left only the remaining third to God. He was pronounced hopelessly insane, but even this would not have saved him had not his captor, the Archbishop of Rheims, represented that his life had been pledged to him on his surrender. He was, therefore, delivered to Suger, Abbot of St. Denis, to be imprisoned, and he soon afterwards died. Even this did not shake the faith of his disciples. Many of them, in their fierce fanaticism, preferred the stake to recantation, and numbers of them were thus put to death before the sect could be extinguished.[1]

When, about the middle of the twelfth century, the sudden death of a companion so impressed Peter Waldo of Lyons that he distributed his fortune among the poor, and devoted himself to preaching the supereminent merits of poverty, nothing was further from his thoughts than the founding of a new heresy. Ardent disciples gathered around him, disseminating his views, which spread with rapidity; but their intention was to establish a society within the church, and they applied, between 1181 and 1185, to Lucius III. for the

---

[1] Guillielm. Neubrig. (Harduin. Concil. T. VI. P. II. p. 1306).—Ottonis Frising. de Gest. Frid. I. Lib. I. cap. liv. lv.—Sigeberti Chron. Continuat. Gemblac. ann. 1146.—Ejusdem Continuat. Præmonstrat. ann. 1148.—Roberti de Monte Chron. ann. 1148.

papal authorization. Lucius, however, took exception to their going barefoot, to their neglect of the tonsure, and to their retaining the society of women. They were stubborn, and he condemned them as heretics.[1] The enthusiasm which the church might have turned to so much account, as it subsequently did that of the Franciscans and Dominicans, was thus diverted to unorthodox channels, and speedily arrayed itself in opposition. The beginning of revolt is shown in the *Nobla Leyczon*, written probably but a few years after this, which declares that all the popes, cardinals, bishops, and abbots together cannot obtain pardon for a single mortal sin; thus leading directly to the conclusion that no intercessor could be of avail between God and man—

> Tuit li papa que foron de Silvestre entro en aquest,
> Et tuit li cardinal et tuit li vesque e tuit li aba,
> Tuit aquisti ensemp non han tan de potesta,
> Que ilh poissan perdonar un sol pecca mortal.
> Solament Dio perdona, que autre non ho po far.[2]

Still, they did not even yet consider themselves as separated from the church, for they consented to submit their peculiar doctrines to the chances of a disputation, presided over by an orthodox priest. Of course, the decision went against them, and a portion of the "Poor men of Lyons" submitted to the result. The remainder, however, maintained their faith as rigidly as ever. From Bernard de Font-Cauld, who records this disputation, and from Alain de l'Isle, another contemporary, who wrote in confutation of their errors, we have a minute account of their peculiarities of belief. Their principal heresy was a strict adherence to the Hildebrandine doctrine that neither reverence nor obedience was due to priests in mortal sin, whose ministrations to the

---

[1] Conrad. Urspergens. ann. 1212.—"Hoc quoque probrosum in eis videbatur, quod viri et mulieres simul ambulabant in via, et plerumque simul manebant in una domo, ut de eis diceretur, quod quandoque simul in lectulis accubabant." The follies of the early Christians were doubtless imitated by the new sectaries.

[2] Quoted by Schmidt, Histoire des Cathares, II. 288.—Schmidt, I think, proves satisfactorily that the *Nobla Leyczon* dates from near the end of the twelfth century, and also that the antiquity claimed for their church by the Vaudois, as descended from the Leonistæ, through Claudius of Turin, has no foundation in fact, though admitted by many modern writers.

living and whose prayers for the dead were equally to be despised. In the existing condition of sacerdotal morals, this necessarily destroyed all reverence for the church at large, and Bernard and Alain had no hesitation in proving it to be most dangerously heterodox. Their recurrence to Scripture, moreover, as the sole foundation of Christian belief, with the claim of private interpretation, was necessarily destructive to all the forms of sacerdotalism, and led them to entertain many other heretical tenets. They admitted no distinction between clergy and laity. Every member of the sect, male or female, was a priest, entitled to preach and to hear confessions. Purgatory was denied, and the power of absolution derided. Lying and swearing were mortal sins, and homicide was not excusable under any circumstances.[1]

Such doctrines could only result in open revolt against sacerdotalism in general, and it shortly came. The Waldensian exaltation of poverty was grateful to the nobles, who were eager to grasp the possessions of the church; its condemnation of the pride and immorality of the clergy secured for its sectaries the goodwill of the people, who everywhere suffered from the oppression and vices of their pastors. Under such protection the sect multiplied with incredible rapidity, not only throughout France, but in Italy and Germany. Enveloped, with the Albigenses, in merciless persecution, they endured with fortitude the extremity of martyrdom. The Germans and Italians sought refuge in the recesses of the Alpine valleys, while some feeble remnants managed to maintain an obscure existence in Provence. Their tacit revolt, however, could not be forgotten or forgiven, and at intervals they were exposed to pitiless attempts at extermination. These are well known, and the names of Cabriéres and Merindol have acquired a sinister notoriety which renders further allusion to the Waldenses unnecessary, except to mention that in 1538 they formally merged themselves with the German reformers by an agreement of which the 8th and 9th articles declare that marriage is permissible,

---

[1] Bernardi Fontis Calidi Lib. contra Waldenses.—Alani de Insulis contra Hæret. Lib. II.

without exception of position, to all who have not received the gift of continence.[1]

The antisacerdotal spirit, however, did not develop itself altogether in opposition to the church. Devout and earnest men there were, who recognized the evil resulting from the overgrown power and wealth of the ecclesiastical establishment, without shaking off their reverence for its doctrine and its visible head, and the authorities saw in these men the effective means of combating the enemy. In thus availing themselves of one branch of the reformers to destroy the other and more radical portion, the chiefs of the hierarchy were adopting an expedient effective for the present, yet fraught with danger for the future. The Franciscans and Dominicans were useful beyond expectation. They restored to the church much of the popular veneration which had become almost hopelessly alienated from it, and their wonderfully rapid extension throughout Europe shows how universally the people had felt the want of a religion which should fitly represent the humility, the poverty, the charity of Christ. Yet when Innocent III. hesitated long to sanction the mendicant orders, he by no means showed the want of sagacity which has been so generally asserted by superficial historians; rather, like Lucius III. with the Waldenses, his far-seeing eye took in the possible dangers of that fierce ascetic enthusiasm which might at any moment break the bonds of earthly obedience, when its exalted convictions should declare that obedience to man was revolt against God.

Before the century was out, the result was apparent. When St. Francis erected poverty into an object of adoration, attaching to it an importance as insane as that attributed to virginity by the early ascetics, he at once placed himself in opposition to the whole system of the church establishment, though his exquisite humility and exhaustless charity might disguise the dangerous tendency of his doctrines.[2]

---

[1] Pluquet, Dictionnaire des Hérésies, art. Vaudois.

[2] The heresy of one age becomes the orthodoxy of another. The views of St. Francis, when promulgated in the fifth century by the Timotheists, were stigmatized as heretical.—v. Harduin. Concil. I. 525.

As his order grew in numbers and wealth with unexampled rapidity, it necessarily declined from the superhuman height of self-abnegation of which its founder was the model;[1] and this falling off naturally produced dissatisfaction among those impracticable spirits who still regarded St. Francis as their exemplar as well as their patron. The breach gradually widened, until at length two parties were formed in the order. The ascetics finally separated themselves from their corrupted brethren, and under the name of Begghards in Germany, Frèrots in France, and Fraticelli in Southern Europe, assumed the position of being the only true church. Their excommunication at the council of Vienne, in 1311, in no wise disconcerted them. The long-forgotten doctrines of Arnold of Brescia were revived and intensified. Poverty was an absolute necessity to true Christianity; the holding of property was a heresy, and the Roman church was consequently heretic. Rome, indeed, was openly denounced as the modern Babylon.

While thus carrying out to its necessary consequences the sanctification of poverty, which was the essence of Franciscanism, they were equally logical with regard to the doctrines of ascetic purity which had been so earnestly enforced by the church. Their admiration of virginity thus trenched closely on Manicheism, and in combating their errors the church was scarcely able to avoid condemning both the vow of poverty and that of celibacy, which were the corner-stones of the monastic theory.[2] Active persecution, of course,

---

[1] Already, in 1261, the council of Mainz can hardly find words severe enough to express its condemnation of the mendicant friars who wandered around, selling indulgences and squandering their unhallowed gains in the vilest excesses. — Concil. Mogunt. ann. 1261, can. xlviii. (Hartzheim, III. 612.)—One of these lights of the order publicly preached, in the horse-market of Strasburg, the doctrine that a nun who surrendered her virtue to a monk was less guilty than if she had an amour with a layman. (Ibid. 615.)

[2] Thus, a council held at Cologne in 1306, in denouncing the mendicancy of the Begghards, quotes Gen. III. 18: "In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane tuo," and proceeds: "Quod ad fortes et sui compotes moraliter intelligitur esse dictum: et tales in ocio victum vendicantes, eleemosynas rapiunt, quæ infirmis et debilibus fuerant pauperibus ministrandæ." And in objecting to their views of celibacy, "Ajunt etiam: Nisi mulier virginitatem in matrimonio deperditam doleat et dolendo deploret, salvari non potest: quasi matrimonium sit peccatum, cum tamen ipsum ante peccatum in loco sancto a sanctorum sanctissimo fuerit institutum: quæ vir-

aroused equally active resistance. The Fraticelli espoused the cause of the Emperor Louis of Bavaria, in his long and disastrous quarrel with John XXII., whom they did not hesitate to excommunicate. Exterminated after a prolonged and desperate struggle, their memory was blackened with the slanders disseminated by a priesthood incapable of emulating their ascetic virtues; and principal among these slanders was the accusation which we find repeated on all occasions when an adversary is to be rendered odious—that of promiscuous and brutal licentiousness. No authentic facts, however, can be found to substantiate it.[1]

The Fraticelli form a connecting link in the generations of heresy. Their errors, as taught by one of their most noted leaders, Walter Lolhard, who was burned at Cologne in 1322, had a tinge of the Manicheism of the Albigenses, for Satan was to them an object of compassion and veneration.[2] Their prevalence in Bohemia prepared the ground for Huss, and left deep traces in the popular mind which were not eradicated in the eighteenth century; while their proselytes in England served to swell the party of Wickliffe, and eventually gave to it their name, though their peculiar doctrines bore little resemblance to his.[3] Antisacerdotalism, however, was the common tie, and in this Luther, Zwingli, and Knox were the legitimate successors of Dolcino and Michael di Cesena.

---

ginitas in fœtum sobolis compensatur, per quam humana natura stabilitate perdurat," which contrasts strangely with the teachings quoted above from "Hali Meidenhad." Great stress, moreover, is laid upon the indissolubility of the marriage vow, and the wickedness of separating husband and wife. "Quomodo spiritu Dei agantur qui contra spiritum Dei agunt, prohibentis virum ab uxore, et e converso sine causa dimitti?" —Concil. Coloniens. ann. 1306, cap. i. ii. (Hartzheim, IV. 100–101). The good fathers of the council were discreetly blind to the antagonism of their teachings to the received doctrines and practices of the church.

[1] A collection of documents illustrating the history of this singular and powerful sect will be found in Baluze and Mansi, III. 206 et seq.

How persistent and profound was the conviction which created the heresy is shown by its prolonged existence. Even as late as 1421 Martin V. found it necessary to issue a Bull denouncing it (Raynaldi Annal. ann. 1421, No. 4); and in Germany the council of Wurzburg in 1446 revived the old denunciations against the Begghards and Beguines (Hartzheim, V. 336).

[2] Their customary salutation and password was an invocation of the fallen angel—"Salutet te injuriam passus."—"May the wronged one preserve thee!"—Trithem. Chron. Hirsaug. ann. 1315.

[3] Trithem. loc. cit.—Raynaldi Annal. ann. 1318, No. 44.—Hartzheim, Concil. German. IV. 630.

In the ineradicable corruption of the church, every effort to purify it could only lead to a heresy. Except on the delicate point of Transubstantiation, Wickliffe proposed no doctrinal innovation, but he keenly felt and energetically sought to repress the disorders which had brought the church into disrepute. His scheme swept away bishop, cardinal, and pope, the priesthood being the culminating point in his system of ecclesiastical polity. The temporalities which weighed down the spiritual aspirations of the church were to be abandoned, and with them the train of abuses by which the worldly ambition of churchmen was sustained—indulgences, simony, image-worship, the power of excommunication, and the thousand other arts by which the authority to bind and to loose had been converted into broad acres or current coin of the realm. In all this he was to a great extent a disciple of the Fraticelli, but his more practical mind escaped their leading error, and he denounced as an intolerable abuse the beggary of the mendicant friars. Indeed, the monastic orders in general were the objects of his special aversion, as having no justification in the precepts of Christ.[1] It is remarkable, however, that with all his tendency to regard the Scriptures as his sole authority, and notwithstanding the boldness with which he disregarded tradition, he adhered to celibacy with the fervor of a Jerome or a Hildebrand. The sternness of his mind made little allowance for human weakness, and, in his zeal for a purified church, he urged the necessity of chastity with a simple earnestness that had long become obsolete.[2] All this was unreasonable enough in a perverse and

---

[1] Inter omnia monstra quæ unquam intraverunt ecclesiam, monstrum horum fratrum est seductivius, infundabilius, et a veritate ac a charitate distantius.—Univ. Oxon. Litt. de Error. Wicklif. Art. 103. (Wilkins, III. 344.)

[2] For the gretnes of the synne in prestis, ouer the synne in other men is schewid be many resouns; and for it is mikil greuowsare than simple fornicacoun bi thwex an onlepy man and an onlepi womman, and it is grettar than spouse brokun of seculer men bodily, and neuer the lese both thwo are dedly synne. And that it be more semith bi this; for ai the heiar degre, the sarrar is the falle, but presthed is heiar degre than bodili matrimoyn, and thus the prest in doing fornicacoun doth sacrile and breakith his wow; for bi the vertu of his degre he made the vow of chastite.—Apology for Lollard Doctrines, p. 38 (Camden Soc. Ed.).

The strictness of the asceticism attributed to him is even more strikingly manifested in one of the heresies condemned by the Convocation of 1396, Art. 7, viz., that those who

stiff-necked generation, but his unpardonable error was his revival of the doctrine of Gregory VII. regarding the ministrations of unfaithful priests, which he carried out resolutely to its logical consequences. According to him, a wicked priest could not perform his sacred functions, and forfeited both his spiritualities and temporalities, of which laymen were justified in depriving him. Nay more, priest and bishop were no longer priest or bishop if they lived in mortal sin, and his definition of mortal sin was such as to render it scarce possible for any one to escape.[1]

It is easier to start a movement than to restrain it. Wickliffe might deny the authority of tradition, and yet preserve his respect for the tradition of celibacy, but his followers could not observe the distinction. They could see, if he could not, that the structure of sacerdotalism, to the overthrow of which he devoted himself, could not be destroyed without abrogating the rule which separated the priest from his fellow-men, and which severed all other ties in binding him to the church. In 1394, only ten years after Wickliffe's death, the Lollards, by that time a powerful party, with strong revolutionary tendencies, presented to Parliament a petition for the thorough reformation of the church, containing twelve conclusions indicating the points on which they desired change. Of these, the third denounced the rule of celibacy as the cause of the worst disorders, and argued the necessity of its abrogation; while the eleventh attacked the vows of nuns as even more injurious, and demanded permission for their marriage with

---

marry from any other motive than that of having offspring are not truly married—non vere matrimonialiter copulantur.—(Wilkins, III. 229.)

[1] Si Deus est, domini temporales possunt legitime ac meritorie auferre bona fortunæ ab ecclesia delinquente. —Conclus. Magist. Johan. Wycliff. Art. vi. (Wilkins, III. 123.)

Licet regibus auferre temporalia a viris ecclesiasticis ipsis abutentibus habitualiter. Ibid. Art. xvii.

So in the proceedings conducted by Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury, against Wickliffe in 1382, among the articles presented as extracted from his writings were—

Art. 4. Quod si episcopus vel sacerdos existat in peccato mortali, non ordinat, consecrat nec baptizat.

Art. 16. Quod nullus est dominus civilis, nullus est episcopus, nullus est prælatus dum est in peccato mortali.—(Wilkins, III. 157.)

Even "verbum otiosum" and "ira quantumlibet levis" were denounced by him as mortal sins according to the University of Oxford.—Litt. de Error. Art. 210, 211. (Wilkins, III. 347.)

but scanty show of respect.[1] This became the received doctrine of the sect, for in a declaration made in 1400 by Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, concerning the Lollard heresies, we find enumerated the belief that those in holy orders could take to themselves wives without sin, and that monks and nuns were at liberty to abandon their profession, and marry at pleasure.[2]

The fierce persecutions of Henry V., to repress what he rightly considered as a formidable source of civil rebellion as well as heresy, succeeded in depriving the sect of political power; yet its religious doctrines still continued to exist among the people, and even sometimes obtained public expression.[3] They unquestionably tended strongly to shake the popular reverence for Rome, and had no little influence in eventually paving the way for the revolt of the sixteenth century.

---

[1] Tertia conclusio est quod lex continentiæ injuncta sacerdotio, quæ in præjudicium mulierum prius fuit ordinata, inducit sodomiam in totam sanctam ecclesiam. . . . Corollarium istius est, privatæ religiones et inceptores sive origo istius peccati essent maxime dignæ adnullari. . . . Undecima conclusio, quod votum continentiæ factum in nostra ecclesia per mulieres, quia sunt fragiles et imperfectæ in natura, est causa inductionis maximorum horribilium peccatorum possibilium humanæ naturæ, &c. . . . Corollarium est quod viduæ et tales quæ accipiunt mantellum et annulum delicatæ pastæ vellemus quod essent desponsatæ, quia nescimus eas excusare a privatis peccatis.—Conclusiones Lollardorum. (Wilkins, III. 221-3.)

[2] Item, asserere quod presbyteri et constituti in sacris jure divino nubere possunt sine periculo et peccato. . . . Item, asserere quod licitum est et etiam meritorium religiosis personis utriusque sexus, et in quacumque religione approbata eorum libero arbitrio egredi religionem, et redire ad sæculum, et ducere uxores, et e converso. (Wilkins, III. 248.)

[3] In 1426, ten years after the execution of Lord Cobham, a Franciscan named Thomas Richmond was brought before the council of York for publicly preaching the high Wickliffite doctrine "Sacerdos in peccato mortali lapsus, non est sacerdos. Item quod ecclesia nolente vel non puniente fornicarios, licitum est sæcularibus eosdem pœna carceris castigare, et ad hoc astringuntur vinculo charitatis." (Wilkins, III. 488.) This practical application of the Hildebrandine principle did not suit the church of the fifteenth century. It was pronounced heretical, and Friar Thomas was forced to recant.

Equally offensive to the memory of Gregory was the decision of the Sorbonne in 1486, condemning as heretical the propositions of the puritan Bishop of Meaux—"3. Un prêtre fornicateur ne doit pas dire Dominus vobiscum ni reciter l'office en aucun lieu sacré. Ce qui est faux et suspect d'heresie."—"4. Les sacremens administrez ou l'office dit par un tel prêtre ne valent pas mieux que les cris des chiens. Proposition fausse et erronée dans la premiere partie, héretique scandaleuse et offensant les oreilles pieuses dans la seconde."—Fleury, Hist. Eccles. Liv. CXVI. No. 39.

John Huss was rather a reformer than a heresiarch. Admirer though he was of Wickliffe, even to the point of wishing to risk damnation with him,[1] he avoided the doctrinal errors of the Englishman on the subject of the Eucharist. Yet his predestinarian views were unorthodox, and he fully shared Wickliffe's Gregorian ideas as to the effect of mortal sin in divesting the priesthood of all claim to sacredness or respect. No one could be the vicar of Christ or of Peter unless he were an humble imitator of the virtues of him whom he claimed to represent; and a pope who was given to avarice was only the representative of Judas Iscariot.[2] This right of private judgment threatened results too formidable to the whole structure of sacerdotalism, and his condemnation was inevitable. Still, like Wickliffe, he was a devout believer in ascetic purity. His denunciations of the wealth and disorders of the clergy raised so great an excitement throughout Bohemia, that King Wenceslas was forced to issue a decree depriving immoral ecclesiastics of their revenues. The partisans of Huss took a lively interest in the enforcement of this law, and brought the unhappy ecclesiastics before the tribunals with a pertinacity which amounted to the persecution of an inquisition.[3]

Unlike the Lollards, the Hussites maintained the strictness of their founder's views on the subject of celibacy. If the fiercer Taborites cruelly revenged their wrongs upon the religious orders, it was to punish the minions of Rome, and not to manifest their contempt for asceticism; and, at the same time, even the milder Calixtins treated all lapses from clerical virtue among themselves with a severity which proved

---

[1] When, after the fearful disaster of Taass, the Council of Bâle, in 1432, commenced the conferences which resulted in the nominal reconciliation of the Hussites, the fathers of the council were much scandalized at hearing the Bohemian deputies reverently quote Wickliffe as the Evangelical Doctor. In fact, Peter Payne, his disciple, who first carried his doctrines into Bohemia, was still alive, and was one of the disputants. (Hartzheim, V. 762–4.)

[2] Artic. Damnat. Joannis Husz, No. viii. x. xi. xii. xiii. xxii. xxx. (Concil. Constantiens. Sess. xv.)

[3] Pluquet, Dict. des Hérésies, s. v. Huss.—Synod. Olomucens. ann. 1413, can. 1. "asserentes etiam . . . quod bona clericorum male viventium possunt rapere et eos spoliare sine pœna excommunicationis . . . Ex eadem radice et hæretica pravitate dicunt alii, quod sacerdos in mortali existens peccato, non possit conficere corpus Christi." (Hartzheim, V. 39, 40.)

their sincerity and earnestness, and which had long been a stranger to the administration of the church.[1] Traces of the teachings of the Fraticelli, moreover, are to be found in the doctrines which dissevered temporal from spiritual power, and denied to the clergy all ownership or dominion over landed possessions.[2]

The Hussite movement thus was a protest against some of the forms of sacerdotalism, but was too limited in its objects to require more than this passing allusion at our hands, even had its domination not been confined to so narrow a territory and so short an epoch as to deprive it of all lasting influence on the purification of the church. Against the wishes of the papacy, at the council of Bâle, the church assented to a reconciliation, and attempted an internal reformation, which postponed for a century the inevitable revolution.

Wickliffe and Huss were not the only inheritors of the anti-sacerdotal spirit of the Fraticelli. About the close of the fourteenth century there arose in Thuringia a heresiarch named Conrad Schmidt, whose teachings swept away the forms and observances which had so thickly incrusted the simple doctrines of Christianity. The sacrifice of the mass, image-worship, fasting, feasts, purgatory, confession, and absolution, all fell before the fearless logic of the reformer, and his disciples fondly treasured him in memory as a second incarnation of Enoch. For forty years the sect flourished in secret, but at length it was discovered in Meissen, where its members were known as Brethren of the Cross, and where it was exterminated in 1414 by the fagots of Sangerhausen. The licen-

---

[1] Conciliab. Pragens. ann. 1420, can. xii. xiii.—At this time the Hussites had full sway in Bohemia; the council was held by Conrad, Archbishop of Prague, who had adopted their faith, and its canons were intended for the internal regulation of their own church. (Hartzheim, V. 198.) In the long conferences, extending from 1431 to 1438, which resulted in their reunion with the Catholic church, there is no allusion to the subject of celibacy. (Ibid. 760–73.)

This did not, however, save them from the customary accusations of immorality. Thus, in 1431, Conrad, Archbishop of Mainz, in convoking a council to take action against them, says of the sect "exterminavit clerum et omnem cœlibatum commercio nefando stupravit."—Gudeni Cod. Diplom. IV. 185.

[2] Conciliab. Pragens. ann. 1429, can. viii.

tious doctrines attributed to them by the monkish chronicler show that sacerdotal celibacy was one of the observances which they repudiated.[1] Similar in its tendency, and almost identical in details, was the heresy which, in 1411, was condemned in Flanders by Pierre d'Ailly, Archbishop of Cambrai. Giles Cantor, a layman, and a Carmelite known as William of Hilderniss gathered around them followers who assumed the title of Men of Intelligence. Like Conrad Schmidt, they rejected the empty formalism which had to so great an extent usurped the place of religion, but there was little of the temper of martyrs about them, and a public renunciation of their errors at Brussels speedily deprived them of all importance.[2]

While thus trampling out these successive heresies, the church was blind to the lesson taught by their perpetual recurrence. The minds of men were gradually learning to estimate at its true value the claim of the hierarchy to veneration, and at the same time the vices of the establishment were yearly becoming more odious, and its oppression more onerous. The explosion might be delayed by attempts at partial reformation, but it was inevitable.

---

[1] The spirit of the sectaries of Schmidt is shown by one of their doctrines—"Propter sacerdotum nequitiam, licentiavit Deus et abjecit sacerdotium evangelicum," and by their argument for abolishing masses for the dead "nihil prosint defunctis, sed sint solatia vivorum et repleant marsupia clericorum."—Gobelin. Person. Cosmodrom. Ætat. VI. cap. xciii.

[2] Raynaldi Annal. anu. 1411, No. 11.

XXIV.

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

That the church was sorely in want of purification need hardly, I apprehend, be insisted on. Yet the great council of Constance, one of whose leading objects was its reformation, shrank timidly from the tremendous task, though it had dared to depose a pope, and had no scruples in immolating the unfortunate Huss. Exhausted, we may charitably believe, by these efforts, it could not, in all its three years of existence, find leisure for correcting the morals of its delinquent constituency, and in its canon "De Vita et Honestate Clericorum" it could only regulate the dress of ecclesiastics, the unclerical cut of whose sleeves was especially distasteful to the reverend fathers.[1]

Perhaps the council recognized that reformation was beyond its power, unless it was prepared to remodel the entire structure of the church. That a reformation was required it could not but know. One of its leading members, Nicholas de Clemangis, had publicly declared in writing that the corruption of the clergy was so universal that those who fulfilled their vows were the object of the most degrading and disgusting suspicions, so little faith was there in the possible purity of any ecclesiastic. He also records the extension of a custom to which I have already alluded, when he states that in a majority of parishes the people insisted on their pastors keeping concubines, and that even this was a precaution insufficient for the peace and honor of their families.[2]

Perhaps the council flattered itself that, in providing for the infamous John XXIII. a successor of unimpeachable character and high ability, the work which it had neglected

---

[1] Concil. Constant. Sess. XLIII.

[2] Taceo de fornicationibus et adulteriis, a quibus qui alieni sunt probro cæteris ac ludibrio esse solent, spadonesque aut sodomitæ appellantur; denique laici usque adeo persuasum habent nullos cœlibes esse, ut in plerisque parochiis non aliter velint presbyterum tolerare nisi concubinam habeat, quo vel sic suis sit consultum uxoribus, quæ nec sic quidem usquequaque sunt extra periculum.—Nic. de Clemangis de Præsul. Simoniac. (Bayle, Dict. Hist. s. v. Hall.)

would be performed. Martin V., in fact, did attempt it. In 1422 Cardinal Branda, of Piacenza, his legate, when sent to Germany to preach a crusade against the Hussites, was honored with the title of Reformer General, and full powers were given to him to effect this portion of his mission. The letters-patent of the pope bear ample testimony to the fearful depravity of the Teutonic church,[1] while the constitution which Branda promulgated declares that in a portion of the priesthood there was scarcely left a trace of decency or morality.[2] According to this document, concubinage, simony, neglect of sacred functions, gambling, drinking, fighting, buffoonery, and kindred pursuits, were the prevalent vices of the ministers of Christ; but the punishments which he enacted for their suppression—repetitions of those which we have seen proclaimed so many times before—were powerless to overcome the evils which had become part and parcel of the church itself.

While the Armagnacs and Burgundians were rivalling the English in carrying desolation into every corner of France, it could not be expected that the peaceful virtues could flourish, or sempiternal corruption be reformed. Accordingly, it need not surprise us to see Hardouin, Bishop of Angers, despondingly admit, in 1428, that licentiousness had

---

[1] For instance, as regards the religious houses—"In nonnullis quoque monasteriis . . . norma disciplinæ resputitur, cultus divinus negligitur, personæ quoque hujusmodi, vitæ ac morum honestate prostrata, lubricitati, incontinentiæ, et aliis variis carnalis concupiscentiæ voluptatibus et vitiis non sine gravi divinæ majestatis offensa tabescentes, vitam ducunt dissolutam."—Martin. V. ad Brandam § iii. (Ludewig, Reliq. Msctorum XI. 409.)

[2] Usque adeo nonnullorum clericorum corruptela excrevit, ut morum atque honestatis vestigia apud eos pauca admodum remanserint.—Constit. Brandæ § 1. (Op. cit. XI. 385.) This condition of affairs was not the result of any abandonment of the attempt to enforce the canons. Local synods were meeting every year, and scarcely one of them failed to call attention to the subject, devising fresh penalties to effect the impossible. The result is shown in the lament of the council of Cologne in 1423—"Quia tamen, succrescente malitia temporis moderni, labes hujusmodi criminis in ecclesia Dei in tantum inolevit, quod scandala plurima in populo sunt exorta, et verisimiliter exoriri poterunt in futurum, et ex fide dignorum relatione percepimus quod quidam ecclesiarum prælati et alii, etiam capitula . . . tales in suis iniquitatibus sustinuerunt et sustinent." So far, however, were the decrees of the council from being effective, that the Archbishop was obliged to modify them and to declare that they should only be enforced against those ecclesiastics who were notoriously guilty, and who kept their concubines publicly.—Concil. Coloniens. ann. 1423, can. i. viii. (Hartzheim, V. 217, 220.)

become so habitual among his clergy that it was no longer reputed to be a sin; that concubinage was public and undisguised, and that the patrimony of Christ was wasted in supporting the guilty partners of the priesthood. That gambling, swearing, drunkenness, and all manner of unclerical conduct should accompany these disorders, is too probable to require the concurrent testimony which the worthy bishop affords us.[1]

Such was the state of sacerdotal morals when the great council of Bâle attracted to itself the hopes of Christendom as the sole instrument by which the purification of the church could be effected—a purification which was felt to be the only safeguard against a revolutionary uprising of the indignant laity.[2] The good fathers evidently recognized the

---

[1] Adeo carnis vitium inolevit, et ideo factum est, quod peccatum quasi non reputatur. . . . et in inhonestarum hujusmodi mulierum sustentationem stipendia ecclesiastica, et Christi patrimonium et pauperum expendere non verentur.—Harduini Andegav. Epist. Statut. Præf. (Martene et Durand. IV. 523–4).

[2] See the curious letter addressed to Pope Eugenius in Dec. 1431 by his legate, Cardinal Cæsarini, refusing to obey the Bull dissolving the council: "Incitavit me huc venire deformitas et dissolutio cleri Alemaniæ, ex qua laici supra modum irritantur adversus statum ecclesiasticum. Propter quod valde timendum est, nisi se emendent, ne laici, more Hussitarum, in totum clerum irruant, ut publice dicunt. Et quidem hujusmodi deformatio magnam audaciam præbet Bohemis, multumque colorat errores eorum qui præcipue invehunt contra turpitudinem cleri. Qua de re, etiam si hic non fuisset generale concilium institutum, necessarium fuisset facere unum provinciale, ratione legationis per Germaniam pro clero reformando; quia revera timendum est, nisi iste clerus se corrigat, quod etiam, extincta hæresi Bohemiæ, susciterentur alia . . . Celebrata tot sunt diebus nostris concilia, ex quibus nulla sequuta est reformatio. Expectabant gentes ut ex hoc sequeretur aliquis fructus. Sed si hoc dissolvatur, dicetur quod nos irridemus Deum et homines. Et cum jam nulla spes supererit de nostra correctione, irruent merito laici in nos more Hussitarum: et certa fama publica de hoc est. Animi hominum prægnantes sunt: jam incipiunt evomere venenum, quo nos perimant: putabunt se sacrificium præstare Deo, qui clericos aut trucidabunt aut spoliabunt, quoniam reputabuntur jam in profundum malorum venisse, fiunt odiosi Deo et mundo, et cum modica nunc ad eos sit devotio, tunc omnis peribit. Erat istud concilium quoddam retinaculum sæcularium; sed cum viderint spem omnem deficere, laxabunt habenas publice persequendo nos." As a proof of his assertions, the legate refers to various local troubles, which he regards as symptoms of a wide-spread revolt on the point of breaking out. Magdeburg had expelled her archbishop and clergy, was preparing wagons with which to fight after the Bohemian fashion, and was even said to have sent for a Hussite to command her forces. Passau had revolted against her bishop, and was even then laying close siege to his citadel. Bamberg was engaged in a violent quarrel with her bishop and chapter. These cities were regarded as the centres of formidable secret confederacies, and were even said to be negotiating with the Hussites.—Æneæ Sylvii Comment. de Gest. Conc. Basil. ad calcem (Opp. Basil. 1551, pp. 66–68).

full magnitude of the danger, and addressed themselves resolutely to the removal of its cause. All who were guilty of public concubinage were ordered to dismiss their consorts within sixty days after the promulgation of the canon, under pain of deprivation of revenue for three months. Persistent contumacy or repetition of the offence was visited with suspension from functions and stipend until satisfactory evidence should be afforded of repentance and amendment. Bishops who neglected to enforce the law were to be held as sharing the guilt which they allowed to pass unpunished; and those prelates who were above the jurisdiction of local tribunals or synods were to be remanded to Rome for trial. The council deplored the extensive prevalence of the "cullagium," by which those to whom was intrusted the administration of the church did not hesitate to enjoy a filthy gain by selling licenses to sin. A curse was pronounced on all involved in such transactions; they were to share the penalties of the guilt which they encouraged, and were, in addition, to pay a fine of double the amount of their iniquitous receipts.[1]

Honest, well-meant legislation this; yet the fathers of the council could hardly deceive themselves with the expectation that it would prove effectual. If legislation could accomplish the desired result, there had already been enough of it since the days of Siricius. The compilations of canon-law were full of admirable regulations, by which generation after generation had endeavored to attain the same object by every imaginable modification of inquisition and penalty. Ingenuity had been exhausted in devising laws which were only promulgated to be despised and forgotten. Something more was wanting, and that something could not be had without overturning the elaborate structure so skilfully and laboriously built up by the craft, the enthusiasm, and the religion of ten centuries.

How utterly impotent, in fact, were the efforts of the council, is evident when, within five years after the adoption of the Basilian canons, Doctor Kokkius, in a sermon preached before the council of Freysingen, could scarcly find words

---

[1] Concil. Basiliens. Sess. xx. (Jan. 22, 1435).

strong enough to denounce the evil courses of the clergy as a class;[1] and when, within fifteen years, we find Nicholas V. declaring that the clergy enjoyed such immunity that they scarcely regarded incontinence as a sin—a declaration sustained by the regulations promulgated for the restraint of the officials of his own court, which imply the previous open and undisguised defiance of the canons.[2]

Even in this attempt of Nicholas, however, is to be seen one of the causes which perpetuated the corruption of the church. He orders that all who thereafter persist in keeping concubines in defiance of the regulations shall be incapable of receiving benefices without special letters of indulgence from the Holy See.[3] Shrouded under a thin veil of formality, this in substance indicates the degrading source of revenue which was so energetically condemned in inferior officials. The pressing and insatiable pecuniary needs of the papal court, indeed, rendered it impotent as a reformer, however honest the wearer of the tiara might himself be in desiring to rescue the church from its infamy. Reckless expenditure and universal venality were insuperable obstacles to any comprehensive and effective measures of reformation. Every one was preoccupied either in devising or in resisting extortion. The local synods were engaged in quarrelling over the subsidies demanded by Rome, while the chronicles of the period are filled with complaints of the indulgences sold year after year to raise money for various purposes. Sometimes the objects alleged are indignantly declared to be purely supposititious; at other times intimations are thrown out that the collections were diverted to the

---

[1] Quoniam nostri temporis clerici sunt, heu, affectu crudeles, affatu mendaces, gestu incompositi, victu luxuriosi, actu impii, et sub vacuo sanctitatis nomine sancti nominis derogant disciplinæ (Hartzheim, V. 266). The council contented itself with repeating the canons of Bâle.

[2] Quod plerique, propter illius impunitatem, sibi blandiuntur minime verendum, imo quasi non fore peccatum.—Lib. III. Tit. i. c. 3, in Septimo.

[3] Quicunque alii concubinas et mulieres hujusmodi, contra præsentem prohibitionem tenere præsumentes, inhabiles censeantur ad beneficia obtinenda, et in dicta curia officia hujusmodi exercenda, nec illorum executores efficiantur, nisi inhabilitatem suam antea per dictæ sedis literas obtinuerint aboleri.—Ubi sup.

private gain of the popes and of their creatures.[1] The opinion which the church in general entertained of the papal court is manifested with sufficient distinctness in a letter from Ernest, Archbishop of Magdeburg, to his ambassador at Rome. The prelate states that he has deposited five hundred florins in Fugger's bank at Augsburg, for which he desires to procure certain bulls, one to enable him to sell indulgences, the other to compel the chapter of Magdeburg to allow him to dispose of the salt-works of Halle, in defiance of the vested rights of his church—thus taking for granted a cynicism of venality which it would be difficult to parallel in the secular affairs of the most corrupt of courts.[2]

The aspirations of Christendom had culminated in the council of Bâle in the most potential form known to the church universal, and such were the results while the influences of the council were yet recent, and while the antagonistic papacy was under the control of men sincerely desirous to promote the best interests of the church, such as Nicholas V. and Pius II. We can feel no wonder, therefore, if the darkness continued to grow thicker and deeper under the rule of such pontiffs as Innocent VIII. and Alexander VI. Savonarola found an inexhaustible subject of declamation in the fearful vices of the ecclesiastics of his times, whom he describes as *ruffiani e mezzani*.[3] In the assembly of the Trois États of France, held at Tours in 1484, the orator of the Estates, Jean de Rély, afterwards Bishop of Angers, in his official address to Charles VIII., declared it to be notorious that the religious orders had lost all devotion, discipline, and obedience to their rule, while the canons (and he was himself

---

[1] Comp. Doeringii Chron. passim. Döringk was minister, or head of the powerful Franciscan order in Saxony, and therefore may be considered an unexceptionable witness.

[2] Ludewig Reliq. Msctorum. XI. 415.

[3] "Si vous saviez tout ce que je sais! des choses dégoûtantes! des choses horribles! vous en frémiriez! Quand je pense à tout cela, à la vie que mènent les prêtres, je ne puis retenir mes larmes." And again, "Ma peggio ancora. Quello che sta la notte con la concubina, quell' altro con il garzone, e poi la mattina va a dire messa, pensa tu come la va. Che vuoi tu fare di quella messa?"—Jérome Savonarole d'après les Documents Originaux, par F. T. Perrens, pp. 71-72. Paris, 1856.

a canon of Paris) had sunk far below the laity in their morals, to the great scandal of the church.[1]

In England, the facts developed by the examination which Innocent VIII. in 1489 authorized Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, to make into the condition of the religious houses, present a state of affairs quite as bad. Innocent describes them, in his bull to the archbishop, as wholly fallen from their original discipline, and this is fully confirmed by the results of the visitation. The old and wealthy abbey of St. Albans, for instance, was little more than a den of prostitutes, with whom the monks lived openly and avowedly. In two priories under its jurisdiction, the nuns had been turned out, and their places filled with courtezans, to whom the monks of St. Albans publicly resorted, indulging in all manner of shameless and riotous living, the details of which can well be spared.[2] These irregularities were emulated by the secular ecclesiastics. Among the records of the reign of Henry VII. is a memorial from the gentlemen and farmers of Carnarvonshire, complaining that the seduction of their wives and daughters was pursued systematically by the clergy.[3]

Spain was equally infected. When Cardinal Ximenes, in 1496, was elevated to the primatial see of Toledo, he undertook to reform the clergy of his diocese. A Franciscan himself, the members of his own order gave him especial trouble. After exhausting every expedient of opposition, rather than submit to the rule of their institution, more than one thousand monks left the country, and, according to some authori-

---

[1] Chascun sçet qu'il n'y a plus reigle, dévocion ne discipline religieuse, qui est chose fort préjudiciable au bien du roy et du royaume . . . quant on voit les lais meilleurs que les gens d'église, qui doivent estre la forme, l'exemple et le mirouer des autres, et quant on ne trouve point au chief le sens, le régime et la conduite qui se trouvent en la plante du pié, c'est grant scandale!—Masselin, Journal des États de Tours, pp. 197–99.

What were the teachings and the influence on the people of such a priesthood may be guessed from a remark in one of the sermons of Olivier Maillard, a celebrated Franciscan preacher of the period. "Sunt ne ibi mulieres et sacerdotes qui dicunt quod mulieres comedentes venenum ad expellendum materiam de matrice sua, ne fœtus veniat ad partum, antequam anima rationalis introducatur, non peccant mortaliter?"—Ap. H. Estienne, Apol. pour Herodote Liv. I. chap. vi.

[2] Wilkins, III. 630–33. Quod dictu horrendum est, persæpe loca sacra, etiam ipsa Dei templa, monialium stupro et sanguinis et seminis effusione profanare non verentur.

[3] Froude's History of England, I. 85.

ties, actually emigrated to Barbary, to escape the severity of Christian discipline. The general of the order was appealed to, and came from Rome to protect his persecuted flock, but Ximenes was unyielding, and, with the assistance of Queen Isabella, he forced the intruder to retire. Then Alexander VI. endeavored to interfere and to mitigate the sufferings of those who were condemned to live according to their vows, but again the royal influence was exerted: the pope withdrew his opposition, and even conferred additional powers upon the unflinching reformer.[1]

These were no special instances of peculiar depravity in the monastic orders. A bull of Alexander VI., issued in 1496 for the purpose of reforming the Benedictines, describes the inhabitants of many establishments of both sexes in that ancient and honored institution as indulging in the most shameless profligacy; and marriage itself was apparently not unfrequently practised.[2] Savonarola did not hesitate to declare that nuns in their convents became worse than harlots.[3] Even the strictest of all the orders—the Cistercian—yielded to the prevailing laxity. A general chapter, held in 1516, denounces the intolerable abuse indulged in by some abbots who threw off all obedience to the rule, and dared to keep women under pretence of requiring their domestic services.[4] To fully appreciate the force of this indication, it is requisite to bear in mind the stringency of the regulations which forbade the foot of woman to pollute the sacred retirement of the Cistercian monasteries.[5]

---

[1] Prescott, Ferd. and Isab. P. II. chap. 5.

[2] Rursus in certis monasteriis dicti ordinis, ipsæ moniales apertis claustris, indifferenter omnes homines etiam suspectos intromittunt, ac extra monasteria in curiis, castris et plateis vagantes, plura scandala committunt . . Similiter religiosi qui in sacris ordinibus constituti non sunt, relicto habito regulari, matrimonium contrahere dicuntur. . . . Præterea omnes et singulos monachos et moniales regulam S. Benedicti hujusmodi expresse vel tacite professos, qui habitum monasticum sine dispensatione legitima reliquerunt aut matrimonia contraxerunt, ad monasteria, *si illa exiverunt*, redire et habitum monasticum ac velum nigrum reassumere dicta auctoritate compellatis.—App. ad Chron. Cassinens. Ed. Dubreul, pp. 902–3.

The words italicized would seem to indicate that monks and nuns occasionally married without even quitting their monasteries.

[3] Perrens, Jérome Savonarole, p. 84.

[4] Statut. Ord. Cisterc. ann. 1516 (Martene et Durand. IV. 1636–7).

[5] Thus, in 1193, the general chapter

What was the condition of morals in Germany may be inferred from some proceedings of the chapter of Brunswick in 1476. The canons intimate that the commission of scandals and crimes has reached a point at which there is danger of their losing the inestimable privilege of exemption from episcopal jurisdiction. They therefore declare that for the future the canons, vicars, and officiating clergy ought not to keep their mistresses and concubines publicly in their houses, or live with them within the bounds of the church, and those

---

of the order promulgated the rule—"Si contigerit mulieres abbatiam ordinis nostri ex consensu intrare, ipse abbas a patre abbate deponatur absque retractatione. Et quicumque sine conscientia abbatis introduxerit, de domo ejiciatur, non reversurus, nisi per generale capitulum."—(Capit. General. Cisterc. ann. 1193, cap. 6—apud Martene et Durand. IV. 1276.) The strictness with which this was enforced is illustrated by the proceedings in 1205 against the abbot of the celebrated house of Pontigny, because he had allowed the Queen of France and her train to be present at a sermon in the chapel and a procession in the cloisters, and to spend two nights in the infirmary. He adduced in his defence a special rescript of the pope and a permission from the head of the order in favor of the queen, but these were pronounced insufficient, and sentence was passed that he merited instant deposition "quia tam enorme factum sustinuit, in totius ordinis injuriam," but that in consequence of the powerful intercession of the Archbishop of Rheims and other bishops, he was allowed to escape with lighter punishment.—(Hist. Monast. Pontiniac.—Martene et Durand. III. 1245.)

This rule, indeed, was almost universal in the ancient monasteries. The great house of St. Martin of Tours preserved it inviolate until the incursions of the Northmen rendered it an asylum for the inhabitants of the surrounding territory. (Leonis PP. VII. Epist. vi.) In that of Sithieu, from the time of its foundation early in the seventh century, it was preserved without infraction for more than three centuries. Even the license of the Carlovingian revolution did not cause its inobservance; and when, amid the disorders of the tenth century, the Counts of Flanders became lay abbots of the convent, and discipline was almost forgotten, the mediation of two bishops was required to obtain permission, about the year 940, for Adela, Countess of Flanders, prostrated with mortal sickness, to be carried in and laid before the altar, where she miraculously recovered.—(De Mirac. S. Bertin. Lib. II. c. 12.—Chron. S. Bertin. c. 23, 24.)

So when Boniface founded the abbey of Fulda, he prohibited the entrance of women in any of the buildings, even including the church. The rule was preserved uninfringed through all the license of the tenth and eleventh centuries, and when, in 1132, the Emperor Lothair came to Fulda to celebrate Pentecost, his empress was not allowed to witness the ceremonies. So when Frederic Barbarossa, in 1135, spent his Easter there, he was not permitted to enter the town, because his wife was with him. In 1398 Boniface IX., at the request of the Abbot John Merlaw, relaxed the rule and permitted women to attend at the services of the church—shortly after which it was destroyed by lightning, as a warning for the future.—(Paullini Chron. Badeslebiens. § viii.)—At the Grande Chartreuse, founded by St. Bruno towards the end of the eleventh century, women were not even allowed to enter on the lands of the community.—Chart. S. Hugon. Gratianopolit. (Patrolog. T. 166, p. 1571.)

who persist in doing so after three warnings shall be suspended from their prebends until they render due satisfaction.[1] In this curious glimpse into the domestic life of the cathedral close, it is evident that the worthy canons were moved by no sense of their guilt, but only by a wholesome dread of giving to their bishop an excuse for procuring the forfeiture of their dearly prized right of self-judgment.

The Hungarian church, by a canon dating as far back as 1382, had finally adopted a pecuniary mulct as the most efficacious mode of correcting offenders. The fine was five marks of current coin, and by granting one-half to the informer or archdeacon, and the other to the archiepiscopal chamber, it was reasonably hoped that the rule might be enforced. The guardians were not faithful, however, for two synods of Gran, one in 1450 and the other in 1480, reiterate the complaint, not only that the archdeacons and other officials kept the whole fine to themselves, but also, what was even worse, that they permitted the criminals to persevere in sin, in order to make money by allowing them to go unpunished.[2] The morals of the regular clergy were no better, for a Diet held by Vladislas II. in 1498 complained of the manner in which abbots and other monastic dignitaries enriched themselves from the revenues of their offices, and then, returning to the world, publicly took wives, to the disgrace of their order.[3]

In Pomerania the evil had at length partially cured itself, for the female companions of the clergy seem to have been regarded as wives in all but the blessing of the church. Benedict, Bishop of Camin, in 1492, held a synod in which he quaintly but vehemently objurgates his ecclesiastics for this wickedness; declares that no man can part such couples joined by the devil; alludes to their offspring as beasts creeping over the earth, and has his spleen peculiarly stirred by

---

[1] Publice cohabitare cum fornicariis seu concubinis publicis in curiis canonicorum seu vicariorum ac etiam toto districtu ecclesiæ nostræ, ac ipsas in domibus ipsorum detinere non debeant, nec aliquis eorum debeat.—Statut. Eccles. in Braunschweig. cap. 75. (Mayer, Thes. Jur. Eccles. I. 124.)

[2] Synod. Strigonens. ann. 1382, 1450, 1480 (Batthyani, III. 275, 481, 557).—"Et quod deterius est, criminosos in suis excessibus permanere permittentes, ut eos liberius emungant, et nulla sequatur correctio."

[3] Synod. Reg. ann. 1498, c. 16. (Batthyani, I. 551).

the cloths of Leyden and costly ornaments with which the fair sinners were bedecked, to the scandal of honest women.[1] His indignation was wasted on a hardened generation, for his successor, Bishop Martin, on his accession to the see in 1499, found the custom still unchecked. The new bishop promptly summoned a synod at Sitten in 1500, where he reiterated the complaints of Benedict, adding that the priests convert the patrimony of Christ into marriage portions for their children, and procure the transmission of benefices from father to son, as though glorying in the perpetuation of their shame.[2] What peculiarly exasperated the good prelate was that the place of honor was accorded as a matter of course to the priests and their consorts at all the merry-makings and festivities of their parishioners, which shows how fully these unions were recognized as legitimate, and, apparently, for prudential reasons, encouraged by the people.

Similar customs, or worse, doubtless prevailed in Sleswick, for when Eggard was consecrated bishop in 1494, he signalized the commencement of his episcopate by forbidding his clergy to keep such female companions. The result was that before the year expired he was forced to abandon his see, and five years later he died, a miserable exile in Rome.[3]

---

[1] Wiæ Hist. Episc. Camin. c. 41.—These irregularities were not of recent introduction. The canon referred to is copied almost literally from a synod held nearly forty years before by Bishop Henning. In fact, from the description given by the latter of the drinking, gambling, trading and licentiousness of the ecclesiastics of Camin, there was little of the clerical character about them.—Synod. Camin. ann. 1454 (Hartzheim, V. 930).

[2] Wiæ Hist. Episc. Camin. c. 42.—"Mulieres de incontinentia suspectas palam et publice in domibus eorum tenent et habent, non quasi famulas sed tanquam uxores legitimas venerantur, in mensa una comedunt et bibunt, vestimentis pretiosis et clenodiis ultra modum ad instar nobilium honestarum dominarum exornant, et ut semen eorum in nationibus pravis et adulterinis crescat, omnem substantiam, de patrimonio Christi acquisitam, in dotem filiorum et filiarum, ex tam damnabili coitu procreatorum, exponunt. Et quod deterius est, inquisitis ingeniis, in eorum beneficiis faciunt successores, volentes æternum de inquitatibus eorum gloriari. De oppido ad oppidum pariter in curribus ad solennitates nuptiarum et convivia laicorum vadunt, eminentiorem locum cum eorum Delila usurpando."—Synod. Sedinens. c. 5.

In West Prussia, in 1497, the synod of Ermeland expresses itself as scandalized by the priests taking their companions publicly to fairs and other gatherings, and, to put a stop to the practice, it offers to secret informers one-half of the fine imposed on such indiscretions.—Synod. Warmiens. ann. 1497, c. xxxix. (Hartzheim, V. 668).

[3] Boissen Chron. Slesvicens. ann. 1494.

That the clergy, as a body, had become a stench in the nostrils of the people is evident from the immense applause which greeted all attacks upon them. In 1476 a rustic prophet arose in the hamlet of Niklaushausen, in the diocese of Wurzburg, who was a fit precursor of Muncer and John of Leyden. John of Niklaushausen was a swineherd, who professed himself inspired by the Virgin Mary. From the Rhine-lands to Misnia, and from Saxony to Bavaria, immense multitudes flocked to hear him, so that at times he preached to crowds of twenty and thirty thousand men. His doctrines were revolutionary, for he denounced oppression both secular and clerical; but he was particularly severe upon the vices of the ecclesiastical body. A special revelation of the Virgin had informed him that God could no longer endure them, and that the world could not, without a speedy reformation, be saved from the divine wrath consequent upon them.[1] The unfortunate man was seized by the Bishop of Wurzburg; the fanatical zeal of his unarmed followers was easily subdued, and he expiated at the stake his revolt against the powers that were.

Such being the state of ecclesiastical morality throughout Europe, there can be little wonder if reflecting men sought occasionally to reform it in the only rational manner—not by an endless iteration of canons, obsolete as soon as published, or by ingeniously varied penalties, easily evaded or compounded—but by restoring to the minister of Christ the right to indulge legitimately the affections which bigotry might pervert, but could never eradicate. Even as early as the close of the thirteenth century, the high authority of Bishop William Durand had acknowledged the inefficacy of penal legislation, and had suggested the discipline of the Greek church as affording a remedy worthy of consideration.[2] As the depravity of the church increased, and as the

---

[1] Annuntia populo fideli meo, et die quod Filius meus avaritiam, superbiam et luxuriam clericorum et sacerdotum amplius sustinere nec possit nec velit. Unde nisi se quantocius emendaverint, totus mundus propter eorum scelera periclitabitur. —Trithem. Chron. Hirsaug. ann. 1476.

[2] Quum pene in omnibus conciliis et a plerisque Romanis pontificibus super cohibenda et punienda clericorum incontinentia, et eorum honestate servanda multa hactenus

minds of men gradually awoke from the slumber of the dark ages, and shook off the blind reverence for tradition, the suggestion presented itself with renewed force. When the council of Bâle was earnestly engaged in the endeavor to restore forgotten discipline, the Emperor Sigismund laid before it a formula of reformation which embraced the restoration of marriage to the clergy. His orator drew a fearful picture of the evils caused by the rule of celibacy—evils acknowledged by every one in the assembly—and urged that as it had produced more injury than benefit, the wiser course would be to follow the example of the Greek church.[1] A majority of the council assented to the principle, but shrank from the bold step of adopting it. Eugenius IV. had just been forced to acknowledge the legitimacy of the body as an œcumenic council; the strife with the papacy might again break forth at any moment, and it was not politic to venture on innovations too audacious. The conservatives, therefore, skilfully eluded the question by postponing it to a more favorable time, and the postponement was fatal.

One of the most celebrated members of the council, Cardinal Nicholas Tudeschi, surnamed Panormitanus, whose preeminence as an expounder of the canon law won for him the titles of "Canonistarum Princeps" and "Lucerna Juris," declared that the celibacy of the clergy was not essential to ordination or enjoined by divine law; and he records his unhesitating opinion that the question should be left to the option of the individual—those who had resolution to preserve their purity being the most worthy, while those who had not would be spared the guilt which disgraced them.[2]

---

emanaverint constituta; et nullatenus ipsorum reformari quiverit correctio morum: . . . videretur pensandum an expediret et posset provideri quod in ecclesia Occidentali, quantum ad votum continentiæ, servaretur consuetudo ecclesiæ Orientalis, quantum ad promovendos, potissime quum tempore Apostolorum consuetudo ecclesiæ Orientalis servaretur.—Durand. de Modo General. Concil. P. II. rubr. 46 (Calixtus, p. 537).—Durand was the author of several works of wide repute, which were among the first books on which the early printers tried their art. His Speculum Judiciale earned for him the well-known distinctive title of *Speculator*.

[1] Zaccaria, Nuova Giustificaz. pp. 121-2.—Milman, Latin Christ. Book XIII. chap. 12.

[2] De Thou, Hist. Univ. Lib. XXXVI. Not having the works of Tudeschi to refer to, I give his remarks as quoted by Villadiego (Fuero Juzgo, p. 177, No. 85) from Gloss. in cap. olim, de cleric. conjug.—"Quod deberet eccle-

So Æneas Sylvius, who as Pius II. filled the pontifical throne from 1458 to 1464, and who knew by experience how easy it was to yield to the temptations of the flesh, is reported to have said that marriage had been denied to priests for good and sufficient reasons, but that still stronger ones now required its restoration.[1] And we have already seen that Eugenius IV., in 1441, and Alexander VI., in 1496, granted permission of marriage to several military orders, as the only mode of removing the scandalous license prevailing among them.

This question of the power of the pope to dispense with the necessity of celibacy seems to have attracted some attention about this period. In 1505, Geoffroy Boussard, afterwards Chancellor of the University of Paris, published a tract discussing it and leaning to the affirmative, without venturing to decide the point absolutely. Cardinal Caietano afterwards treated the subject, and concluded that such power was inherent in the papal prerogative.[2]

When the advantages and the necessity of celibacy thus were doubted by the highest authorities in the church, it is no wonder if those who were disposed to question the traditions of the past were led to reject it altogether. In 1479 John Burckhardt, of Oberwesel, graduate of Tubingen, and Doctor of Theology, in his capacity of preacher at Worms, openly disseminated doctrines which differed in the main but little from those of Wickliffe and Huss. He denied the authority of popes, councils, and the fathers of the church to regulate matters either of faith or discipline. The Scripture was the only standard, and no one had a right to interpret it for his brethren. The received observances of religion, pray-

---

sia facere sicut bonus medicus, ut si medicina, experientia docente, potius offeit quam prodit, eam tollat; sic eorum voluntati relinqueretur, ita ut sacerdos qui abstinere noluisset, posset uxorem ducere, cum quotidie illicito coitu maculentur."

[1] Sacerdotibus magna ratione sublatas nuptias, majori restituendas videri.—Platina in Vit. Pii II.

[2] Grégoire, Mariage des Prêtres en France, p. 50. Boussard had no hesitation in admitting that sacerdotal marriage was permitted until the pontificate of Siricius. The time had not yet arrived when the attacks of the Reformers drove the defenders of celibacy to prove for it an apostolic origin.

ers, fasts, indulgences, were all swept away, and universal liberty of conscience proclaimed to all. Of course, sacerdotal celibacy shared the same fate, as a superstitious observance, contrived by papal ingenuity in opposition to evangelical simplicity.[1] Thus his intrepid logic far outstripped the views of his predecessors, and Luther afterwards acknowledged the obligations which he owed to the fearless reasoning of John of Oberwesel. Yet he had not the spirit of martyrdom, and the Inquisition speedily forced him to a recantation, which was of little avail, for he soon after perished miserably in the dungeon in which he had been thrust.[2]

Still more remarkable as an indication of the growing spirit of independence was an event which in July, 1485, disturbed the stagnation of the centre of theological orthodoxy—the Sorbonne. A certain Jean Laillier, priest and licentiate in theology, aspiring to the doctorate, prepared his thesis or "Sorbonique," in which he broached various propositions savoring strongly of extreme Lollardism. He denied the supremacy of the pope, and indeed reduced the hierarchy to the level of simple priesthood; he rejected confession, absolution, and indulgences; he refused to acknowledge the authority of tradition and legends, and insisted that the fasts enjoined by the church had no claim to observance. Celibacy was not likely to escape so audacious an inquirer, and accordingly, among his postulates were three, declaring that a priest clandestinely married required no penitence; that the Eastern clergy committed no sin in marrying, nor would the priests of the Western church, if they were to follow the example; and that celibacy originated in 1073, in the decretals of Gregory VII., whose power to introduce the rule he more than questioned. The Sorbonne, as might be anticipated, refused the doctorate to so rank a heretic, and Laillier had the boldness not only to preach his doctrines publicly,

---

[1] Quam [sc. continentiam] dixit esse superstitiosam et a Romanis pontificibus contra Evangelium excogitatam, et ideo sacerdotibus minime necessariam, sed eorum arbitrii, si velint continere vel non, propterea quod neque Christus neque apostoli continentiam præceperint.—Trithem. Chron. Hirsaug. ann. 1479.

[2] Serrarii Hist. Rer. Mogunt. Lib. I. c. 34.

but even to appeal to the Parlement for the purpose of forcing his admission to the Sorbonne. The Parlement referred the matter to the Bishop of Paris and to the Inquisitor; Laillier's audacity failed him, and he agreed to recant. He committed the unpardonable fault of being a half century too early.[1]

The corruption of the church establishment thus had reached a point which the dawning enlightenment of the age could not much longer endure. The power which had been intrusted to it, when it was the only representative of culture and progress, had been devoted to selfish purposes, and had become the instrument of unmitigated oppression in all the details of daily life. The immunity which had been necessary to its existence through centuries of anarchy had become the shield of unimaginable vices. The wealth, so freely lavished upon it by the veneration of Christendom, was wasted in the vilest excesses. All efforts at reformation from within had failed; all attempts at reformation from without had been successfully crushed and sternly punished. Intoxicated with centuries of domination, the muttered thunders of growing popular discontent were unheeded, and its claims to spiritual and temporal authority were asserted with increasing vehemence, while its corruptions were daily displayed before the people with more careless cynicism. There appeared to be no desire on the part of the great body of the clergy to make even a pretence of the virtue and piety on which were based their claims for reverence, while the laity were daily growing less reverent, were rising in intelligence, and were becoming more inclined to question where their fathers had been content to believe. Such a complication could have but one result.

---

[1] Fleury, Hist. Eccles. Liv. CXVI. No. 30–38.

XXV.

THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY.

The opening of the sixteenth century witnessed an ominous breaking down of the landmarks of thought. The revival of letters, which was fast rendering learning the privilege of all men in place of the special province of the legal and clerical professions; the discovery of America, which destroyed reverence for primeval tradition, and accustomed men's minds to the idea that startling novelties might yet be truths; the invention of printing, which placed within the reach of all inquirers who had a tincture of education the sacred writings for investigation and interpretation; the European wars, commencing with the Neapolitan conquest of Charles VIII., which brought the nations into closer contact with each other, and carried the seeds of culture, civilization, and unbelief, from Italy to the farthest Thule; all these causes, with others less notable, had been silently but effectually wearing out the remnants of that pious and unquestioning veneration which for ages had lain like a spell on the human mind.

In this bustling movement of politics and commerce, arts and arms, science and letters, religion could not expect to escape the spirit of universal inquiry. Even before opinion had advanced far enough to justify examination into doctrinal points and dogmas, there was a general readiness to regard the shortcomings of sacerdotalism, in the administration of its sacred trust, with a freedom of criticism which could not long fail to destroy the respect for claims of irrefragable authority. John of England and the Emperor Otho might gratify individual spite, in the intoxication of anticipated triumph, by

insultingly defying the sacerdotal power. Philippe-le-Bel, a man far in advance of his age, might reduce the papacy to temporary subjection by means of rare instruments such as Guillaume de Nogaret. Philippe de Valois, with the aid of his civil lawyers, might essay to limit the extent of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Wickliffe, and Huss, and Savonarola might raise the standard of opposition to papal usurpation—but these were sporadic instances of rebellion, resulting either from the selfish ambition of rulers or the fanatical enthusiasm of individuals, unsupported by the concurrent opinion of the masses of the people, and their permanent results were rather remote than direct. At the period to which we have arrived, however, the disposition to criticize the abuses of the ecclesiastical system, to note its shortcomings, and to apply remedial measures was general, and savored little of the respect which an infallible church had for so many centuries inculcated as one of the first of Christian duties. Its past services were forgotten in present wrongs. Its pretensions had, at one time, enabled it to be the protector of the feeble, and the sole defence of the helpless; but that time had passed. Settled institutions had replaced anarchy throughout Europe, and its all-pervading authority would no longer have been in place, even if exercised for the common benefit. When it was notorious, however, that the powers and immunities claimed by the church were everywhere employed for the vilest ends, their anachronism became too palpable, and their destruction was only a question of time.

Signs of the coming storm were not wanting. In 1510 a series of complaints against the abuses of Rome was solemnly presented to the emperor. The German churches, it was asserted, were confided by the successors of St. Peter to the care of those who were better fitted to be ostlers than pastors of men, and the pope was significantly told that he should act more tenderly and kindly to his children of Teutonic race, lest there might arise a persecution against the priesthood, or a general defection from the Holy See, after the manner of the Hussites.[1] The emperor was

---

[1] Ecclesiarum regimina minus dignis (Romæ videlicet) committuntur, qui ad mulos magis quam homines pascendos et regendos essent idonei.

warned, in his efforts to obtain the desired reform, not to incur the censures and enmity of the pope, in terms which show that only the political effects of excommunication were dreaded, and that its spiritual thunders had lost their terrors. He was further cautioned against the prelates in general, and the mendicant friars in particular, in a manner denoting how little reverence was left for them in the popular mind, and how thoroughly the whole ecclesiastical system had become a burden and reproach, a thing of the past, an excrescence on society, and no longer an integral part of every man's life, and the great motive power of Christendom.[1]

It was evident that the age was rapidly outstripping the church, and that the latter, to maintain its influence and position, must conform to the necessities of progress and enlightenment. On previous occasions it had done so, and had, with marvellous tact and readiness, adapted itself to the exigencies of the situation in the long series of vicissitudes which had ended by placing it supreme over Europe. But centuries of almost uninterrupted prosperity had hardened it. The corruption which attends upon wealth had rendered wealth a necessity, and that wealth could only be had by perpetuating and increasing the abuses which caused ominous murmurs of discontent in those nations not fortunate enough to be defended by Concordats or Pragmatic Sanctions. The church had lost its suppleness, and was immovable. A reform such as was demanded, while possibly increasing its influence over the souls of men, would have deprived it of control over

---

—Gravamina German. Nationis, No. VII.

Mitius ergo summus pontifex, velut pius pater, filiorum suorum amator, ac fidelis et prudens pastor, cum filiis suis Germanicæ nationis agat, ne propediem vel in universos Christi sacerdotes persequutio suboriatur, vel instar Bohemorum plerique ab ecclesia deficiant Romana.—Remed. contra Gravamina. (Freher. et Struv. II. 677–8.)

In the previous century some remonstrances against grievances had been uttered, but in a very different tone from this.

[1] Provideat etiam Cæsarea majestas ne fratres mendicantes contra ipsam prædicent, qui Sedi Apostolicæ libenter deferunt, timentes perdere privilegia sua, utinam Christo et naturæ innixa; quamvis justissimam causam dudum habuissent contra tantam avaritiam tantosque abusus prædicandi. . . . Timeat Cæsarea majestas omnes prælatos ecclesiarum, præcipue præpositos, qui ex juramento tenentur avisare papam.—Avisamenta ad Cæsar. Majest. (Ibid. p. 680.)

their purses; reform meant poverty. The sumpter-mule loaded with gold, wrung from the humble pittance of the Westphalian peasant, under pretext of prosecuting the war against the infidel, would no longer cross the Alps to stimulate with its treasure the mighty genius of Michael Angelo, or the fascinating tenderness of Raffaele; to provide princely revenues for the bastards of a pope, or to pay mercenaries who were to win them cities and lordships; to fill the antechamber of a cardinal with parasites, and to deck his mistresses with the silks and jewels of Ind; to feed needy men of letters and scurrilous poets; to soothe the itching palms of the Rota, and to enable all Rome to live on the tribute so cunningly exacted of the barbarian.[1] The wretched ending of the council of Bâle rendered any internal reformation impossible which did not derive its initiative and inspiration from Rome, as was shown by the failure of the council of Pisa. In Rome, it would have required the energy of Hildebrand, the stern self-reliance of Innocent, the unworldly asceticism of Celestin combined, to even essay a reform which threatened destruction so complete to all the interests accumulated by sacerdotalism around the Eternal City. Leo X. was neither Hildebrand, nor Innocent, nor Celestin. With his voluptuous nature, elegant culture, and easy temper, it is no wonder that he failed to read aright the signs of the times, and that he did not even recognize the necessity which should impose upon him a task so utterly beyond his powers. The fifth council of Lateran had no practical result. Blindly he plunged on; money must be had at any cost, until the salvation mongering of Tetzel, little if any worse than that of his predecessors, could no longer bear the critical spirit of the age, and Teutonic insubordination at length found a mouthpiece in the Monk of Wittenberg.

---

[1] See, for instance, the mode in which the annates of the see of Mainz were raised from 10,000 florins to 25,000; and this latter sum was exacted seven times in one generation, resulting in taxation on the peasantry so severe that an insurrection against the clergy was threatened: "Verum etiam incitantur ad rebellionem, et quærendam utcunque libertatem, et ubi possunt inter se susurrant de sævitia in clerum."—Remed. contra Gravam. (Freher. et Struv. II. 678.)